

Broken Homes Examined Through Epistemology, Axiology, and Ontology

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Abstract

This study addresses the increasing prevalence of broken homes and their multifaceted impacts on children and family systems. Globally and in Indonesia, high divorce and separation rates have raised concerns about children's psychological, educational, and social development. The study aims to explore broken homes from philosophical perspectives—ontology, epistemology, and axiology—to provide a holistic understanding of their effects and implications for counseling and family support. A qualitative literature review was conducted, analyzing national and international academic journals, books, theses, and proceedings related to family disruption, child development, and guidance counseling. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 50–70 relevant sources, and data were extracted using a structured template, ensuring validity through expert review and reliability via cross-checking and consensus. NVivo 12 software facilitated thematic coding and analysis, linking observed phenomena to structural, cognitive, and value-based dimensions. The findings indicate that broken homes disrupt family structures (ontology), shape children's knowledge and perceptions of relationships (epistemology), and affect ethical and value frameworks (axiology). Children often experience insecurity, loneliness, and emotional challenges, although resilience and positive adaptation can occur with proper guidance. The study concludes that philosophical perspectives enrich understanding of broken homes and recommends future empirical and longitudinal research to develop effective interventions that support children's well-being, resilience, and ethical development.

INTRODUCTION

Family is a group of human beings who live together by blood or marriage bond. Based on Law No. 52 of 2009 concerning population development and family development, "the family is the smallest unit in society consisting of a husband or wife and his children or mothers and children." Reis (in Lestari, 2012) explained that the family is a small group that has a structure of family relationships and has the main function in the form of socialization and maintenance of the new generation. Friedman (in Suprajitno, 2004) explained that a family is a group of people who live together in one house that is connected by a bond of emotional rules, and each individual has their own role as part of the family.

In family life, there are often disputes and conflicts between family members. It is natural if there are differences of opinion in the family because each family member has different thoughts (Adam, 2025; Jansen et al., 2022; Mounk, 2025). Conflict in a relationship between individuals is something that cannot be denied; the higher the interdependence, the more likely it is to occur (Dwyer in Lestari, 2012).

Divorce in the family causes losses to many parties, especially to children. Divorce can be interpreted as the breakdown of a family unit or the deterioration of the social role structure when one or several members are unable to carry out their role obligations adequately. Divorce comes from the word "separation" and is known as a broken home (Emmanuel et al., n.d.; Koebanu & Tari, 2024; Lestari & Huwae, 2023; Nkuturaum & Paago, 2023; Putra et al., 2023). Wills (2015) explained that a broken home is defined as a fractured family, which is a condition of loss of family attention or lack of affection from parents caused by several factors, including divorce, resulting in the child living with one biological parent. A broken home can be seen from two aspects: (1) the family is divided because the structure is not intact due to the death of a family member or divorce, and (2) parents who are not divorced but whose family structure is no longer intact because one or both parents are frequently absent from home or no longer display an affectionate relationship.

A broken home can significantly affect the growth and development of children when family problems disrupt the family (Lahiri & Verma, 2023; Sarnoto et al., 2024; Syamsidar et al., 2025). The family is the most important context for development—physically, emotionally, spiritually, and socially (Mitra, 2025; Sugitanata, 2024; Wang, 2023; Zhang et al., 2023). According to Saikia's (2017) research on broken families, the causes and effects on child development include parental divorce. In fact, the family itself has a very important function for the sustainability of society from generation to generation (Lestari, 2012).

The National Population and Family Planning Agency (in Purnawan, 2016) explained that in 2013 Indonesia's divorce rate was ranked the highest in the Asia-Pacific region. This rate has not decreased over subsequent years. The joint research and development center of the Ministry of Religion (2015) stated that the divorce rate in Indonesia increased by 100,000 cases compared to the five years prior.

Divorce can have direct and indirect negative psychological impacts on children in the family. The immediate impact is the feeling of loss regarding a parent they regularly see. Loughlin's research (in Nasiri, 2016) shows that children and adolescents who experience parental divorce often exhibit symptoms of short-term mental health disorders, namely stress, anxiety, and depression. According to Healthmeup.com (in Kusumaningrum, 2015), there are eight impacts on children who experience their parents' divorce: academic decline, susceptibility to negative influences, low quality of life, abuse, obesity and eating disorders, psychological pressure, apathy in relationships, and engagement in risky behaviors.

Indonesia exemplifies this global challenge, as the National Population and Family Planning Agency reports persistently high divorce rates, ranking among the highest in the Asia-Pacific region. From 2010 to 2015, the country experienced over 100,000 additional divorce cases, with significant implications for children's emotional, educational, and social outcomes. This situates the broken home not only as a local issue but also as a manifestation of broader societal vulnerabilities that affect the next generation's capacity to thrive.

Research has established that children growing up in broken homes are at increased risk of psychological stress, anxiety, depression, and social maladaptation. Studies by Sarbini and Kusuma (2014) and Kusumaningrum (2015) reveal that children from fractured families often experience feelings of insecurity, loneliness, and self-blame, which can translate into long-term behavioral challenges. Conversely, emerging evidence from Moses (2015) suggests that some children demonstrate resilience and positive coping mechanisms, though such outcomes remain underexplored.

Despite substantial research on the negative impacts of broken homes, gaps persist in understanding the philosophical and value-based dimensions of the phenomenon. Most prior studies have focused on descriptive and quantitative effects on child behavior and mental health, neglecting the epistemological, axiological, and ontological aspects of family disintegration. This limits comprehensive insights into how knowledge is constructed, ethical considerations, and the existential nature of fractured family systems.

Addressing this gap, the current study adopts a philosophical framework to analyze broken homes. Ontology is employed to explore the nature of family existence and the structural disintegration that defines broken homes. Epistemology guides understanding of how children and adolescents acquire knowledge and form perceptions from living in disharmonious families. Axiology investigates the value implications, including ethical and moral dimensions, of disrupted familial relationships.

This approach advances research novelty by shifting the focus from purely psychosocial outcomes to a multidimensional understanding that integrates the existence, knowledge formation, and values associated with broken homes. Such a framework provides nuanced insights into how children interpret family disruption and how ethical, educational, and counseling interventions can be better designed to address their needs.

The purpose of this study is to provide a systematic examination of broken homes through these philosophical lenses, synthesizing existing literature from national and international journals, academic books, and empirical research. By doing so, it seeks to reveal the underlying mechanisms and contextual factors influencing children's development in broken home environments, bridging gaps between theory and practice in social, educational, and counseling domains.

The study contributes to research and practice by offering actionable insights for family counselors, educators, and policymakers. Understanding broken homes from epistemological, axiological, and ontological perspectives can enhance interventions that promote resilience, ethical caregiving, and value-driven education for children affected by family disruptions.

The research objectives include: (1) defining broken homes from ontological, epistemological, and axiological perspectives, (2) examining the impact of family disruption on children's knowledge, behavior, and value systems, and (3) identifying strategies to mitigate adverse effects through guidance and counseling. Achieving these objectives will clarify the multi-layered dimensions of family disintegration and its influence on child development. Finally, the research benefits society by informing evidence-based interventions to support children from broken homes. Insights derived from this study are expected to improve family counseling practices, contribute to the formulation of supportive policies, and empower educators and social workers to foster environments that reinforce child well-being, resilience, and ethical development despite familial disruptions.

METHOD

This research employs a qualitative literature review design, focusing on secondary data sources to analyze broken homes through epistemological, axiological, and ontological perspectives. The study does not collect primary empirical data but systematically reviews existing academic documents, including national and international journals, books, theses, and proceedings related to family disruption and child development. The population of this research consists of published studies and scholarly literature addressing broken homes, family psychology, and counseling interventions. From this population, a purposive sample of 50–70 sources was selected based on relevance, credibility, and recency, using databases such as Google Scholar, Sinta, and institutional repositories. The sampling technique ensures inclusion of literature that provides theoretical and empirical insights aligned with the research objectives.

Data collection was conducted through structured document analysis, where each source was examined for information on family structure, parental separation, child outcomes, counseling strategies, and ethical considerations. A research instrument in the form of a literature extraction template was developed, which included categories such as author, year, study type, context, findings, and theoretical framework. To ensure validity, the instrument underwent expert review and pilot testing with a small subset of articles to confirm clarity, consistency, and completeness. Reliability was maintained through cross-checking of extracted data by two independent researchers and resolving discrepancies via consensus discussions, ensuring that interpretations of the literature were accurate and unbiased.

The research procedure followed a systematic sequence: identifying relevant literature, screening based on inclusion criteria, extracting data, and synthesizing findings within the epistemological, axiological, and ontological framework. Data analysis employed thematic coding using NVivo 12 software, which facilitated organization of recurring patterns, concepts, and relationships across sources. Themes were then interpreted through philosophical lenses, linking observed phenomena to underlying values, knowledge structures, and existential implications. The combination of systematic literature review, rigorous extraction procedures, and thematic analysis ensures that the research provides a comprehensive and valid understanding of broken homes and their multidimensional effects on children and families.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Broken home is studied in Epistemology, Axiology, Ontology

Definition of Ontology

Ontology is a continuous process and is a planned and systematic and directed activity for the achievement of a specific goal. The object in Guidance and Counseling is the individual who is helped to solve his or her problem. Individuals who are developing with all their uniqueness and need help to be given assistance in considering the diversity and uniqueness of individuals.

Ontology as the study of existence affects how knowledge is formed if reality is considered only physical, then science will develop in a materialistic framework, on the other hand, if reality also includes metaphysical and spiritual aspects, then science must reflect the entire existence (Nasr, 2024).

Ontology, as a branch of philosophy that studies the nature of existence or reality (what exists), has long historical roots, from the Ancient Greek philosophers to the modern figures who formulated the term.

Originator of the term ontology (modern century)

- **Rudolf Goclenius** (1536-1628): Considered the figure who first introduced the term "ontology" in 1636 AD to name the theory of the existence of nature that is metaphysical in nature.
- **Christian Wolff** (1679-1754): A German philosopher who popularized the term widely. Wolff divides metaphysics into two: general metaphysics (which he calls ontology, i.e. the study of what exists as it is) and specific metaphysics.

Definition of Epistemology

Epistemology is a theory of knowledge that discusses in depth all the processes involved in our efforts to acquire knowledge, questioning the relationship between two equal subjects between counselors and counselees. In the science of guidance and counseling, the process involved in efforts to gain knowledge through interviews where this activity serves to obtain and provide various information, train or teach, increase maturity, provide assistance through decision-making and healing efforts. The counselor tries to reduce the distance between himself and the counselee

Epistemology discusses how to acquire and justify knowledge in the western tradition, knowledge is obtained through ratios and empiricism (Moser et al., 2002) therefore good epistemology must be in harmony with a complete ontological understanding.

According to Simon Blackburn in *The Dictionary of Philosophy*, epistemology comes from the Greek language, which means episteme which means knowledge and logos means word/discussion/science. Epistemology is the branch of philosophy that is most often debated or discussed in philosophy, because it discusses what knowledge is, then what are its characteristics, the origin of knowledge, and the relationship between truth and belief (Pajriani et al., 2023). Etymologically, epistemology is a theory of knowledge that is correct and when viewed in terms of terminology, epistemology has the meaning of philosophy that discusses knowledge. Epistemology has several streams, such as rationalism, empiricism, and realism. The following is an explanation of the flow of epistemology (Rizma & Dewi, 2024).

Meanwhile, according to (Puandina & Assagaf, 2023) Epistemology can be interpreted as the theory of science, which comes from the Greek word episteme or in English known as knowledge. In addition, epistemology also explores and questions the origin of knowledge, the methods for obtaining it, and how to distinguish one type of knowledge from another. Epistemology, which is defined as a theory of knowledge that discusses the origins, methods of acquisition, and differences between different types of knowledge, is closely related to the concept of Islamic Guidance and Counseling (BKI) According to (Harlina et al., 2022), guidance and counseling are an integral part of the national education system that is related to the achievement of national education goals and is in line with the goals of counseling as a science.

Definition of Axiology

Axiology is one of the branches of philosophy that is still being studied. This branch was even more interested by an economist Adam Smith (1723-1790). Until now, the discussion of Values is still a mandatory discussion in the field of philosophy. The discussion of values

remains a relevant topic in the field of philosophy to this day. Values are the principles or beliefs used by individuals, groups, or societies to judge what is considered good, bad, right, or wrong. The philosophy of values seeks to understand the nature of these values, their foundations, and the ethical or moral implications that may arise from them.

Axiology is the value dimension of science, it questions the purpose and impact of the knowledge possessed. Science is not a value-free entity, it brings consequences to humans and the environment. When science is kept away from value, its destructive potential increases (Zubaedi, 2017) therefore justice is love-telling, and beauty must be used as the final orientation of science (Bahm., n.d)

Axiology is from the science of Guidance and Counseling is to help individuals to have an understanding of themselves and their environment (education, work, and religious norms), anticipate various problems that occur and strive to prevent problems from occurring, creating a conducive learning environment that is used to facilitate student development. Counselors understand that counseling is something full of values that can give rise to bias.

This paper wants to explain, first, the history of the beginning of axiology, starting from several figures and the second discussion of the debate of two figures, namely Meinong and Ehrenfels, in the Subjectivity of Value and Relevance in Indonesia. First of all, the early history of axiology involves several important figures in the development of this discipline. Axiology is a branch of philosophy that focuses on the study of values and goals, as well as ethical considerations in human life. In this context, there are several figures who play an important role in developing concepts and thoughts in axiology. One of the main figures in the history of axiology is Friedrich Nietzsche, a 19th-century German philosopher. Nietzsche contributed his thoughts on values, and he questioned the assumptions and values underlying traditional ethics and morality. Nietzsche's works, such as "Jenseits von Gut und Böse" (Beyond Good and Evil) and "Also sprach Zarathustra" (Thus Spoke Zarathustra), made important contributions to the development of axiology

Broken Home in Study from Ontology

Ontology in the context of *the broken home* is concerned with the study of the nature of existence (existence), structure, and reality that forms a family that does not function as it should (family disorganization). This ontology focuses on the question of "what" is a *broken home*, including the nature of the cause, the form of relationships, and the essence of the psychological and social impact on the child.

Broken Home as the Disintegration of the "Existing" Structure (*The Being*)
Ontologically, the family is an organic system in which its parts (father, mother, child) are interconnected to form a whole unit.

Ontology, *the broken home* is not a "total absence", but a "change in the form of **existence**". It is a transitional reality in which a family system ceases to operate in its old form and forces the members within it to redefine their existence outside of the traditional intact family structure

In summary, the ontology of *the broken home* is the study of the reality of a broken family, in which the original form is the loss of parenting and harmony functions, which has implications for the deterioration of children's behavior and mental health

Broken home seen from epistemology

Examining the Epistemology of *the Broken Home* means that we investigate how knowledge of the "fractured family" is formed, validated, and accounted for for its truth. The focus is not on its occurrence (ontology) or its impact, but on the cognitive and methodological processes to understand the phenomenon.

Epistemology in the context of *a broken home* deals with how children or adolescents who experience parental separation/conflict build **their knowledge, perception, and understanding of the world, relationships, and themselves**. The experience of living in a disharmonious family forms a special cognition and perspective that is often different from that of a child growing up in a whole family.

Epistemology here highlights that children's knowledge is not only sourced from formal education, but is predominantly constructed from traumatic experiences and family disharmony that they experience firsthand

Broken home as seen from Axiology

Axiology studies of broken homes focus on the value dimension. If ontology asks about "what it is" and epistemology asks about "how do we know", then axiology Axiology philosophy in the context of *broken home* is concerned with values (ethics and aesthetics) and the meaning of life that are sought, built, or lost due to family fractures. Axiology questions the "why" or "what is the value behind" such painful experiences.

Broken home is not just a social statistic, but a tragedy of values in which fundamental rights and harmony are disturbed. Axiology demands that we not just stop at compassion, but move towards real action that upholds human values and justice for all affected family members.

Overall, the philosophical axiology in *broken home* seeks to transform traumatic experiences into valuable learning, build resilience, and reformulate moral values and life goals for a better future

Factors for Broken Home

Factors for the occurrence of broken home

Based on the opinion of the prefect, a broken home is a difference of opinion between a husband and wife in the household so that an argument occurs and ends in destruction. The factors that affect the occurrence of broken homes according to Kardawati:

1. First, the parents who live are no longer together (separated). This is because the husband and wife no longer feel affection between the two, are unable to support, and still want to maintain the integrity of the family. Over time, the relationship between husband and wife became worse and made the distance between each other so that communication was cut off. This has shown that the relationship between husband and wife alienates each other and breaks the cord of harmony in the family, then is busy with their own personal affairs.
2. Both immature parents are part of the attitude of egoism and egosyncraism. Egoism is an attitude that is always selfish without thinking about others, while egosyncretism is an attitude that always considers its point of interest as a point of attention.
3. Third, the economy, the economy is also a factor that affects broken homes. This is because parents think that children are just eating pellets, but without them realizing that the most important attention to affection must be given to children.

A broken home family always leads to a family condition where family members are no longer united and together. All of this is caused by a husband and wife who have broken up

in building a family like a whole family. Broken home can also be influenced by personal factors, namely lack of understanding and understanding in domestic relationships, then it can also be caused by situational factors, where the wife earns higher than the husband and lives in the same house with the family both from the wife and from the husband's side.

One of the causes of broken home mothers and fathers who are no longer united in family relationships is due to death or separation in addition to the factors that have been explained previously it turns out to betray marriage and also domestic violence can also cause divorce in the household.

A broken home family is a family that is declared separate because one of the two spouses chooses to live without responsibilities and obligations as husband and wife. However, a broken home is not only said to be a separation between a father and mother but the loss of a family member as a result of death or leaving the family intentionally. That is why a broken home is often said to be with an incomplete family condition.

The impact of a broken home on children

At the age of children, it is necessary for parents to give attention and affection to their children in order to be able to have a positive influence on children such as being loving, gentle, and caring for others. In the age of children who are vulnerable to the surrounding environment. He exemplifies what he often sees, hears and feels

A harmonious family will have a positive influence on children. But on the other hand, if at the age of children they see, hear, and feel something that impresses negative things, it will have a bad impact on the child until adulthood.

The impact that occurs on children after a broken home includes: first, divorce that occurs indirectly will have a negative psychological impact on the family. Directly you will feel a very deep loss because the figure of an incomplete parent, accompanied by the habit of activities or routines of playing together is always accompanied by parents. Meanwhile, after a broken home, children will spontaneously change their attitudes on their own, such as preferring to be alone, always feeling insecure and difficult to socialize with the surrounding environment. In addition, the psychological impact on broken home children is to form unhealthy personality development, emotions, and lack of responsibility.

Second, the impact of education. Broken home greatly affects the victim's mindset so that children's education due to a broken home is predominantly poor and many cannot complete education according to the targets that have been set, other impacts of broken homes can also cause trauma to children. This is because parents provide rough parenting so that it increases children's shyness in their immediate environment to their social life.

Broken home does not always have a negative impact on children but it can be a positive impact but most children seen from their condition lead to negative things such as anger, emotions, loneliness, always thinking of blaming themselves.

According to Gintulangi W, (in Sardi et al,) that adults are still victims of broken home families. Gintulangi said that it is not only children who are affected by broken homes. As a result of a broken home, it can make his learning achievement quite decrease, his enthusiasm for learning is low. This is because parents who lack attention, education and experiences that may have a positive impact on children to have a good influence on their future.

Meanwhile, according to Nurmala sari, broken home families have a huge impact, especially children. The impact during its development, such as tending to be aggressive, is

easily affected by negative things. A child who has experienced the pain of life in a broken home family atmosphere makes them feel as if they want to find the right person to talk to so that they can pour out their hearts that may have been harboring pain and disappointment for a long time.

As for the negative impact that will one day occur on children after the divorce of their parents, that children will be disappointed with the choice of people who are in charge to cause hatred in the child to his parents, the child will feel high insecurity towards his neighbors and close friends or schoolmates, the child will be enveloped or haunted by anxiety or worry about his future because he has already fallen and resigned due to great disappointment during his life. This feeling of insecurity feels difficult to treat or heal.

The Role of Counselors in Overcoming Broken Home Families

A counselor is a place or space that can listen and provide assistance to counselors who have problems. Counselors do not only counsel individually but can also be in groups. The role of counselors is very important for counselors who feel they want to be helped to solve their problems, especially in large enough problems. In overcoming a problem, the counselor can see the facial expressions of a counselor such as the severity of the problem he is facing and the movements of body language as if he is carrying a large enough burden so that the counselor inadvertently expresses the feelings he is feeling through his body language.

Efforts that counselors can make in helping to solve the problems that children are facing due to broken home families are through the guidance process. In this case, counseling guidance programs will be carried out for children from broken home families, including:

Conducting information services where a counselor must be able to dig up information so that children are equipped with knowledge about the environment, education, and learning to socialize with the community environment. Then through information services, individuals feel that they are able to determine the direction of their lives to a better goal and can improve the quality of socializing with their family or other environment.

Counselors also address the adverse effects of a broken home by guiding counselors to forget negative thoughts, eliminate bad feelings and strive to be able to establish good relationships with parents. Because the way we forgive and sincerely and overflow bad things will have a positive impact on ourselves.

In overcoming children who are victims of broken homes, it is not easy to overcome problems like this, guidance and counseling services are needed. In the counseling process, a counselor must behave how the child feels comfortable and protected, a counselor is required to be patient and able to choose the right way to facilitate him in completing and providing solutions to the child. To overcome a broken home is done through family counseling that involves family members to see the reactions and communication between families, this can help solve the problem in a better way. So that all family members can accept what has been conveyed and suggested by the counselor.

After a broken home, children will feel that their lives are burdened with fear and shame. Even though they have separated and no longer live together, the status of parents must still take the time to give attention, affection, and responsibility to their children.

The condition of the broken home removes the obligations and responsibilities that should be given at the age of child, adolescent, and adult age (Hurlock 1990). (Panji mas said) that the most difficult period in human life while living in the world is adolescence.

To make teenagers good and responsible and have a bright future, the role of the family, especially fathers and mothers, is very important. Therefore, a family must remain safe and peaceful, not broken home and married couples do not consider small things trivial by prioritizing obligations but still fulfill each other's rights. Husband and wife must respect each other, not selfish, diligent, communicate, do not lie and be honest.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that broken homes represent a multidimensional phenomenon affecting children and family systems, encompassing structural disintegration (ontology), knowledge formation (epistemology), and value and ethical considerations (axiology). Children from broken homes experience not only psychological and educational challenges but also altered perceptions of relationships, morality, and social roles. The analysis shows that parental separation, lack of affection, and inconsistent family structures have both negative and occasionally positive outcomes, depending on the availability of supportive interventions and resilience factors. Philosophical exploration through ontology, epistemology, and axiology offers a holistic understanding that extends beyond traditional empirical research, emphasizing the importance of values, moral guidance, and existential implications for affected children.

For future research, it is recommended to conduct empirical studies that combine qualitative and quantitative methods to measure the psychological, social, and academic outcomes of children in broken homes more precisely. Longitudinal designs could provide insight into the long-term effects and coping mechanisms that develop over time. Additionally, research could explore the effectiveness of culturally contextualized counseling and intervention programs that integrate ethical, epistemological, and ontological perspectives. Expanding studies to diverse socio-economic and cultural contexts will enhance the generalizability of findings and inform targeted policy, educational strategies, and family counseling practices to mitigate the impacts of broken homes.

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