

Perceived Influence of Divorce on Academic Performance of Students in Secondary Schools in Enugu Education Zone.

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ABSTRACT

One of the social challenges and realities of modern Nigeria is the rise in divorced, separated and single parent homes. The direct consequences of divorce are just being assessed in Nigeria, however, more worrisome has been its impact on students academic development. The study investigated the perceived influence of divorce on academic performance of secondary school students in Enugu education zone. Three research questions guided the study. Three null hypotheses were formulated and tested at .05 level of significance. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population for the study consisted of 81 students from divorced families from Enugu education zone. There was no sampling because the population was manageable. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. The instrument was validated by three experts. A reliability coefficient of 0.68 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha method. Copies of the instrument were administered to the respondents by the researcher with the help of five research assistants. Mean with standard deviation was used to answer the research questions. The null hypotheses were tested using t-test statistic at 0.05 level of significance. Mean score of 2.50 and above was regarded as agree and items with mean less than 2.50 were regarded as disagree. The findings showed that interference from third party, lack of trust, infidelity and infertility are the major causes of divorce among couples in Enugu education zone. Furthermore, divorce is a risk factor which has exposed the affected students to low educational aspirations, which eventually negatively influences their academic performance, while the rural and urban students had uniform opinions on the causes, effects and preventive measures of divorce in Enugu Education Zone. It was concluded that there is a significant influence of parental divorce on academic performance of secondary school students in Enugu education zone. It was recommended among others that counsellors, psychologists, social workers and teachers should identify students from divorced families and counsel them. Again, the government should provide rehabilitative programme for the students of divorced family in schools so that they can adjust in their academic performance.

INTRODUCTION

The issue of divorce is an increasing social problem that has become a topic for discussion in recent times. Divorce is a legal dissolution of marriage bond (Thomas, Konstatina Vassilus & Panagiotis, 2014). According to Babalis (2017), divorce also known as dissolution of marriage is the process of terminating a marriage or marital union. It is traumatic for those who experience it. Those affected may experience grief, embarrassment, resentment, disappointment, intense anger

and divided loyalty. Once the couple decides to divorce, they are free to remarry again.

In Nigeria, there has been an increase in the rate of divorce both in rural and urban areas. According to Igbinosa (2014), the increasing rate of divorce in Nigeria can be associated with lack of commitment between couple, incompatibility, communication problem, extramarital affairs, substance abuse, domestic abuse,



interference from relatives and financial incompatibility. Oshew (2018) stated that the most common causes of divorce in both rural and urban areas are infidelity, lack of commitment, domestic violence, distance in the relationship/lack of physical intimacy, addiction, marrying too young, absence of romantic intimacy and lack of shared interest. There are two factors influencing the rising rate of divorce in Nigeria. The first factor in both men and women are relying less on one another for economic survival. As women gain status in their work place or on their businesses, they often want to stand on their own and prefer to control their life affairs which enable them to be less dependent on their husbands, the head of household. Secondly, it is perceived that when both male and female parents gain political status in the society, one seems to be superior over the other due to political gain (Akanbi, 2014).

Perception refers to how a person sees a situation or the feeling an individual has about a thing. According to Babalis (2017), perception is an idea, or an image you have as a result of how you see or understand a thing or people's view about a thing or situation. In the context of this study, perception means parents and students' view or opinions on the influence of divorce on academic performance of students in Enugu education zone. Wallerstein (2015) stated that influence is the capacity to have an effect on the character, development, or behaviour of someone or something or the effect itself. Therefore, this study seeks to find out the influence of divorce on academic performance of secondary school students.

Secondary education is the education which children receive in a school system after primary education and before the tertiary stage. Secondary education is of course a very important segment of the education ladder both in Nigeria and elsewhere. This

is because secondary education not only produces middle level manpower for the economy but also prepares its beneficiaries for tertiary education (Akanbi, 2014). According to Bartholomew and Kwadwo (2015), secondary education is a vehicle for economics, social and political development.

There has also been a growing commitment to secondary education by government, individual communities and missionary bodies (Mushtaq & Khan, 2012). The Commitment on the part of government and other non-state actors has extended to ensure that students are properly groomed and tutored towards enhancing their academic performance. According to Ashenafi and Ayenew (2021), to maintain academic expectations of the students is not only the concerns of schools and the government, but also parents, teachers and stakeholders. All are increasingly concerned with the academic performance of students as a measure of the effectiveness of higher institutions.

Academic performance is the learning outcomes of the students which can be measured by any form of assessment technique to ascertain academic gain of the students. Mapilay and Mercado (2015) state that academic performance is what a student is capable of achieving when tested or examined on what he/she has been taught. Academic performance is seen as the knowledge attained or skill shown in the school subject. To indicate such achievement, test scores or marks are assigned by the teachers. It is the school evaluation of the classroom work on the basis of the grades awarded.

Academic performance of students can be influenced by a number of factors. According to Igbinosa (2014), habits, family background, perseverance, attitudes, interest. All these affect academic

achievement in school, Ashenati and Ayenew (2021) state that factors influencing academic performance of students are classified into personal and institutional factors, personal factors relate to the individuals intelligence, knowledge and ability while institutional factors include family or parental influences, societal influences, school related factors such as student teacher rapport and teacher related factors like their accommodation and living condition.

Among institutional factors that affect academic performance of students, family/parents are important in providing environmental social and economic factors which have powerful effects on students academic lives. It has been documented that parents' stability lives play a major role in ensuring improved academic performance of their students (Biblarz & Gottainer, 2020). This implies that where there are parents instability as a result of divorce, achieving improved academic performance of students will be a mirage.

In Nigeria particularly, in Enugu Education Zone, divorce has become common place in today's society. It has great impact on children education. Divorce changes a considerable number of things in the child's life including possible changes in residence, relationship with parents, change in socio economic standing and exposure to mental conflict (Wallerstein, 2015). With all these changes in child's life, it is not surprising, its substantial impact on the development and academic performance of the students.

Generally, the home has been identified as an overwhelming factor affecting students' performance academically. It would appear, then, that divorce may present a very serious danger to the emotional, personality and mental adjustment of the children. This may impinge on students' academic achievement. Therefore, it became

imperative to carry out an empirical study on perceived influence of divorce on academic performance of students in Enugu Education Zone.

Statement of the Problem

Marriage contracts are on high increase as people who are not of age are getting into it. Surprisingly, disintegration of marriages is also on the increase due to marital dissatisfaction. This situation is not different in Nigeria and weekly newspapers always carry news publications and stories about problems in marriages leading to divorce. The situation in Enugu education zone is not an exception. The crude divorce rate in Nigeria and especially in Enugu State has grown exponentially (Nnajofofor, 2022).

The issues surrounding divorce largely impact on the growth of children. From who will take custody of children, financial responsibilities as well as the social and emotional support, all these take their toll on the social development of children from divorced homes. Even when these children come from rich homes or parents as the case may be, the deprivation and emotional trauma cannot be quantified. The effects of broken homes may impact greatly on the internal organization of the family and by extension affect a child's emotion, personality and academic performance. However, with a number of children in divorced homes, the study seeks to ascertain the influence of divorce on academic performance of students from divorced homes in this era of continuous lamentation of poor performance of students in both internal and external examination in Enugu Education Zone? This necessitated the need for the study.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to determine the perceived influence of divorce on academic performance of students in

Enugu education zone. Specifically, the study sought to;

1. ascertain the perceived causes of divorce among couples in Enugu education zone.
2. determine the perceived consequences of divorce on academic performance of students in Enugu education zone.
3. identify the perceived preventive measures of divorce among couples in Enugu education zone.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What are the perceived causes of divorce among couples in Enugu education zone?
2. What are the perceived consequences of divorce on academic performance of students in Enugu Education Zone?
3. What are the perceived preventive measures of divorce to be adopted by couples in Enugu education zone.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at .05 level of significance.

H01: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of rural and urban students on the perceived causes of divorce in Enugu Education Zone.

H02: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of rural and urban students on the perceived consequences of divorce on academic performance of students in Enugu Education Zone.

H03: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of rural and urban students on the perceived preventive

measures of divorce in Enugu Education Zone.

Method

Descriptive survey research design was adopted. According to Ashenafi and Ayenew (2021), descriptive survey research design is a type in which a group of people or items are studied by collecting and analyzing data from only a few people or items considered to be representative of the entire group. The population for the study consisted of 81 students from divorced families. There were no sampling and sampling techniques because the population was manageable. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. The instrument was validated by three experts. A reliability coefficient of 0.68 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha statistic. Copies of the instrument were administered to the respondents by the researcher with the help of five research assistants and retrieved on the spot.

Mean with standard deviation was used to answer the research questions. The null hypotheses were tested using t-test at 0.05 level of significance. Any mean score of 2.50 and above was regarded as agree and items with mean less than 2.50 were regarded as disagree. When the calculated p-value was greater than or equal to .05 level of significance, the null hypothesis of no significant difference was accepted. But when the p-value was less than .05 level of significance, the null hypothesis of no significant difference was rejected.

Results

Research Question One

What are the perceived causes of divorce among couples in Enugu education zone?

Table 1: Mean with Standard Deviation of the Respondents on the Causes of Divorce

S/N	Causes of divorce among couples include;	X	SD	Decision
1	Interference from third party	3.31	0.68	Agree
2	Lack of trust	3.69	0.59	Agree
3	Domestic violence	3.19	0.80	Agree
4	Lack of compatibility	3.06	0.96	Agree
5	Lack of preparation before marriage	3.37	0.45	Agree
6	Lack of proper communication	3.56	0.60	Agree
7	Infertility	3.37	0.69	Agree
8	Infidelity	2.88	0.85	Agree
9	Lack of intimacy	3.12	0.60	Agree
10	Intellectual mismatch	3.19	0.80	Agree
11	Broken expectations	2.81	0.88	Agree
	Grand Mean	3.23	0.72	Agree

The data analyzed in table 1 revealed the respondents were generally of the view that the aforementioned 11 items are the perceived causes of divorce among couples in Enugu education zone. This is evidenced by the cluster mean 3.23 which is above the criterion mean of 2.50. The Cluster standard deviation of 0.72 indicated that the

respondents had consensus opinion on the issue.

Hypothesis One

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of rural and urban students on the perceived causes of divorce among couples in Enugu education zone.

Table 2: t-test Between the Urban and Rural Respondents on the Perceived Causes of Divorce among Couples

S/N	Causes of divorce	Rural Students		Urban Students		t-cal	P-Value	Remarks
		\bar{X}_1	SD	\bar{X}_2	SD			
1	Interference from third party	3.37	0.71	3.25	0.65	-0.30	0.11	NS
2	Lack of trust	3.72	0.60	3.66	0.58	-1.71	0.91	NS
3	Domestic violence	3.12	0.91	3.26	0.69	0.41	0.32	NS

4	Lack of compatibility	2.85	0.88	3.27	1.04	-0.91	0.51	NS
5	Lack of preparation before marriage	3.29	0.41	3.45	0.50	-0.31	0.10	NS
6	Lack of proper communication	3.01	0.61	3.30	0.55	-1.75	0.98	NS
7	Infertility	3.40	0.57	3.63	0.63	0.36	0.31	NS
8	Infidelity	2.72	0.77	2.69	0.74	-0.92	0.56	NS
9	Lack of intimacy	3.03	0.58	3.10	0.62	-0.66	0.42	NS
10	Intellectual mismatch	3.14	0.81	3.02	0.87	0.54	0.67	NS
11	Broken expectations	2.77	0.74	2.83	0.86	-1.03	0.50	NS

No. of Rural Students = 29, No. of Urban students = 52; x_1 = mean =for rural, x_2 = Mean for urban, DF = 79, P = 0.05, S = Significant, NS = Not Significant.

The results in table 2 show that the 11 identified items on perceived causes of divorce had their p-value ranged from 0.11 to 0.98 each greater than 0.05 level of significance at 79 degree of freedom. This implies that rural and urban students had similar opinions on the causes of divorce among couples in Enugu education zone.

Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference was upheld.

Research Question Two

What are the perceived consequences of divorce on academic performance of students in Enugu education zone?

Table 3: Mean with Standard Deviation of the Respondents on the Perceived Consequences of Divorce on Academic Performance of Students

S/N	Divorce affects students in the following areas;	X	SD	Remarks
1	Inducing a state of anxiety in them that affect their academic performance.	2.94	0.96	Agree
2	Making them not to read together with their siblings.	3.13	0.78	Agree
3	It makes the affected students to be less confident.	3.19	0.63	Agree
4	It makes affected students lack self esteem.	3.25	0.91	Agree
5	It makes affected students feel depressed.	3.50	0.71	Agree
6	It makes affected students lack concentration	3.50	1.00	Agree

7	It makes the affected students to be emotionally unstable.	3.13	0.99	Agree
8	The affected students lack parental care which in turn affects their academic performance.	2.87	0.85	Agree
Grand Mean		3.13	0.86	agree

The results in Table 3 revealed that the respondents generally agreed that the aforementioned 8 items are the perceived consequences of divorce on academic performance of students in Enugu education zone. Evidence to this, is the cluster mean score of 3.13. The values of the standard deviation ranged from 0.63 to 1.00 which

indicated that the respondents had no varying opinions.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of rural and urban students on the perceived consequences of divorce on academic performance of students in Enugu education zone.

Table 4: The t-test Analysis of Mean Ratings of the Respondents on the Perceived Consequences of divorce on Academic Performance of Students

S/N	Divorce affects students in the following areas.	Rural Students		Urban Students		t-cal	P-Value	Remarks
		\bar{X}_1	SD	\bar{X}_2	SD			
1	Inducing a state of anxiety in them that affect their academic performance.	2.77	0.84	3.11	1.08	-1.34	0.11	NS
2	Making them not to read together with their siblings.	3.12	0.80	3.14	0.76	-1.83	0.37	NS
3	It makes the affected students to be less confident.	3.21	0.62	3.17	0.64	0.51	0.18	NS
4	It makes affected students lack self esteem.	3.19	0.89	3.31	0.93	-0.55	0.77	NS
5	It makes affected students feel depressed.	3.46	0.77	3.54	0.69	-1.42	0.52	NS
6	It makes affected students lack concentration	3.02	0.99	2.98	1.01	-1.73	0.09	NS
7	It makes the affected students to be emotionally unstable.	3.18	0.97	3.08	1.01	0.37	0.59	NS
8	The affected students lack parental care which in turn affects their academic performance.	2.90	0.92	2.84	0.78	-0.76	0.73	NS

Results in table 4 revealed that the identified 8 items on perceived consequences of divorce on academic performance of students had their P-value ranged from 0.09 to 0.59 which were greater than 0.05 level

of significance at 79 degree of freedom. This implies that rural and urban students did not differ significantly in their opinions on the effects of divorce on academic performance of students in Enugu education

zone. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected as postulated.

Research Question Three

What are the perceived preventive measures of divorce to be adopted by couples in Enugu education zone?

Table 5: Mean with Standard Deviation of the Respondents on the Perceived Preventative Measures of Divorce

S/N	Divorce can be prevented through the following measures	X	SD	Remarks
1	Couples should remain faithful in marriage	3.37	0.45	Agree
2	Avoid the involvement of a third party	3.06	0.96	Agree
3	compliment your spouse regularly.	3.19	0.80	Agree
4	Love your spouse in the way he/she wants to be loved	3.69	0.59	Agree
5	Couples should always spend more quality time together	3.31	0.68	Agree
6	Honour and respect your partner	2.94	0.96	Agree
7	Communicate with your spouse regularly	3.13	0.78	Agree
8	Couples should take care of their appearance	3.19	0.63	Agree
9	couples should be well prepared before going into marriage	3.50	0.71	agree
10	Going for counseling from religious leaders/marriage expects or counselors.	3.00	1.00	agree
	Grand mean	3.24	0.76	agree

Data analyzed in Table 5 revealed a cluster mean score of 3.24. This implies that the respondents were generally of the view that the aforementioned 10 items will go a long way in preventing divorce in Enugu education zone if adopted. The Cluster standard deviation of 0.76 indicated that the

respondents had consensus opinion on the issue.

Hypothesis Three

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of rural and urban students on the perceived preventive measures of divorce in Enugu education zone.

Table 6: The t-test Analysis of Mean Ratings of the Respondents on the Perceived Preventive Measured of Divorce

S/N	Preventive measures of Divorce	Rural Students		Urban Students		t-cal	P-Value	Remarks
		\bar{X}_1	SD	\bar{X}_2	SD			
1	Couples should remain faithful in marriage	3.29	0.41	3.45	0.50	-0.31	0.10	NS
2	Avoid the involvement of a third party	2.85	0.88	3.27	1.03	-0.91	0.51	NS
3	Compliment your spouse regularly.	3.12	0.91	3.26	0.69	0.41	0.33	NS
4	Love your spouse in the way he/she wants to be loved	3.72	0.60	3.66	0.58	1.60	0.88	NS
5	Couples should always spend more quality time together	3.37	0.71	3.25	0.65	0.30	0.10	NS
6	Honour and respect your partner	2,77	0.84	3.11	1.07	-1.34	0.11	NS

7	Communicate with your spouse regularly	3.12	0.80	3.14	0.76	-1.43	0.33	NS
8	Couples should take care of their appearance	3.21	0.62	3.17	0.64	0.50	0.19	NS
9	couples should be well prepared before going into marriage	3.19	0.89	3.31	0.93	0.52	0.20	NS
10	Going for counseling from religious leaders/marriage expects or counselors.	2.46	0.77	3.54	0.69	-1.40	0.24	NS

The results in Table 6 revealed that the identified 10 items on preventive measures of divorce had their p-value ranged from 0.10 to 0.88 which were greater than 0.05 level of significance at 79 degree of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference was upheld. This implies that rural and urban students had uniform opinions regarding the preventive measures of divorce.

Discussion

The results of the analysis of Table 1 revealed the perceived causes of divorce among couples in Enugu education zone. The causes of divorce include: interference from third party, lack of trust, domestic violence, lack of compatibility, lack of preparation before marriage, and lack of proper communication. The hypothesis shows that rural and urban students had similar opinions on the causes of divorce among couples in Enugu education zone. This finding corroborates with that of Wallenstein (2015) which identified domestic abuse, lack of commitment, extramarital affairs, substance abuse and infertility as the major causes of divorce among couples in Africa. The finding also agrees with Oshew (2018), that infertility seems to be the most occurring factor that causes high rate of divorce among couples in Nigeria.

The evidence from Table 3 on the perceived consequences of divorce on academic performance of students in Enugu education zone showed that divorce has negative

effects on academic performance of students in Enugu Education Zone. Also, the results of t-test analysis revealed that rural and urban students did not differ significantly in their opinions on the effects of divorce on academic performance of students. This finding confirms with what Bartholomew and Kwadwo (2015), found that children of divorced parent families are at a greater risk of not reaching their full academic potentials since they encounter many challenges in their family lives which they bring with them into the classroom. Similarly, the finding is in line with Biblarz and Gottainer (2020), which found children from broken homes being associated with anti-social behaviour and poor academic records.

The findings of the study with respect to research question three revealed the perceived preventive measures of divorce to be adopted by couples in Enugu Education Zone. The preventive measures include; avoid the involvement of a third party, remaining faithful in marriage, compliment your spouse regularly, couples should always spend quality time together and they should honour and respect each other. The null hypothesis showed that rural and urban students had uniform opinions regarding the preventive measuring of divorce. This finding is in line with Thomas, Konstantina, Vassilis and Panagiotis (2014), who reported that the major preventive measures of divorce include spending time apart, making time to connect lovingly with your spouse everyday and avoidance of infidelity.

This is supported by Ashenafi and Ayenew (2021) who reported that male and female students from divorced homes share similar views regarding divorce preventive measures.

Conclusion

Divorce is legal dissolution of marriage bond. The crude divorce rate in Nigeria has grown exponentially and this to a great extent affects academic performance of students. Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that interference from their party, lack of trust, infidelity and infertility are the major causes of divorce among couples in Enugu education zone. The study also revealed that divorce is a risk factor which has exposed the affected students to low educational aspirations, which eventually negatively influences their academic performance. The study further revealed that rural and urban students had uniform opinions on the causes, effects and preventive measures of divorce in Enugu Education Zone. Divorce has a significant influence on academic performance of secondary school students in Enugu education zone

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of the study

1. Counsellors, psychologists, social workers and teachers should identify students from divorced families and counsel them.
2. The divorced parents should also be counseled on social needs of their children so that their academic work will not suffer at school.
3. Parents, mostly those divorced, should ensure that they maintain good relationships with their children. This will help the child to continue their cognitive development.

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