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PERCEIVED EFFECTS OF PARENTAL DIVORCE ON EMOTIONAL HEALTH OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ILORIN WEST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF KWARA STATE

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Abstract

Every human institution is faced with one problem or another, the problem facing the family unit today is mostly divorce. The study examined the perceived effects of parental divorce on emotional health of secondary school students in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State. Specifically, this study investigated if (i) stress (ii) anxiety and (iii) fear are effects of parental divorce on emotional health of secondary school students in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State. The population comprised of all government secondary schools in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State. Ilorin West Local Government had a total number of forty-two (42) schools. A multi stage sampling technique consisting of stratified, proportionate and accidental sampling techniques was used to select 381 respondents for the study. A validated and reliable questionnaire was used for data collection. A correlation coefficient of 0.76r was obtained through split-half method using Cronbach Alpha. The demographic data of respondents was analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency count and percentage, percentile was used for answering the research questions while inferential statistics of chi-square (x^2) was used to analyse the postulated null hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level.The findings revealed that;Stress is a perceived effect of divorce on emotional health with the cal. x^2 value of 796.40 > the critical value of 16.92 at df 9 @ 0.05 alpha level; Anxiety is a perceived effect of divorce on emotional health with the cal. x^2 value of 630.80 > the critical value of 16.92 at df 9 @ 0.05 alpha level and Fear is a perceived effect of divorce on emotional health with the cal. x^2 value of 595.36 > the critical value of 16.92 at df 9 @ 0.05 alpha level. The study concluded that stress, anxiety and fear are perceived effects of divorce on emotional health of secondary school students in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State. It is therefore, recommended that School counsellors should organize a counselling session with parents, a marital education can reduce anxiety for their children and class teacher could also reduce the effect of divorce on school students.

Keywords: Effect, Parents, Divorce, Emotional Health and Student

Introduction

Every human institution is faced with one problem or another, the problem facing the family unit today is mostly divorce. It is a social problem which has become a threat to the existence of marriage institution. Divorce as a matter of facts breaks through bonds which once united couple and their family suffers the consequences (Nicholas 2005). Amato (2012) defined divorce as the final termination of marital union, cancelation of the legal duties and responsibilities of marriage and dissolving the bonds of matrimony between couples.

Divorce therefore, is widely viewed as a personal misfortune for either of the spouse in any society but it is a universal escape for the inevitable tension of marriage however, divorce can be seen as the dissolution of marriage contract between a man and a woman by the judgment of a court of competent jurisdiction, or by an act of legislature (Bourque, 2009). As a result of divorce on broken home, children

fail to develop ties to one or few important persons in the family and when these ties are disrupted, children are taught to be impaired in developing close relationship in adulthood (Bala 2006).

Sanders (2008) further affirmed that those children from divorced family feel bitter and carry tension and anxiety to school. As a result, they cannot think clearly or critically as a happy person and at the same time cannot concentrate on anything taught at school, when a mother is out of home, leaving the children under the charity, tutelage and mercy of step mother, these children are made to face many problems, like emotional disturbance (fear and insecurity), not inspired to study malnutrition, sickness and disease, negligence, as such they are not likely to perform up to expectation at school. Boyan (2011) opined that psychological effect of divorce on children can cause them to develop anxiety disorders where they experience overwhelming fear of being abandoned.

Marriage is an ageless contract desired and designed by God for the purpose of unity of man and woman for procreation. This divine institution is losing its glory. The marital instability can be attributed to various factors such as lack of trust, abuse, and lack of communication and parental or friends influence. Which all leads to divorce, this problem does not border only on Ilorin metropolis of Kwara State but a universal problem. Divorce is a very disastrous situation for everyone concerned. It has a negative effect on the married couple, their children, friends, relatives and the general public, but the children are the mostly affected. Children of divorced parents usually exhibit insecurity, irritability and endless desire for attention. The children's skill and perception became dampened and may lead to poor overall emotional health status in both home and school. In fact, the effects are numerous. These problems have therefore prompted the researcher to carry out his study on the effects of divorce on emotional health of secondary school students, in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara state.

Hawthorne (2012) asserted that divorce is a terrible thing for everybody concerned, it has a negative effect on married couple, their children, their friends and relative but it is more devastating for the growing children as they are confronted in their home by situations and experience that may be frustrating, unpleasant, and capable of arousing anxiety from time to time in their lives, some of these negative experiences arouse fear, pain and stress. Barett and Russell (2015) opined that emotions involve different components, such as subjective experience, cognitive processes, expressive behaviour, psychophysiological changes, and instrumental behaviour, the different components of emotion are categorized somewhat differently depending on the academic discipline. Emotions can be defined as a positive or negative experience that is associated with a particular pattern of physiological activity, emotions produce different physiological, behavioural and cognitive changes, the original role of emotions was to motivate adaptive behaviours that in the past would have contributed to the survival of humans. Emotions are responses to significant internal and external events (Schacter, Gilbert, Wegner, & Hood, 2011).

Dixon (2013) stated that emotional health is a state of positive psychological functioning. It can be thought of as an extension of mental health; it's the "optimal functioning" end of the thoughts, feelings, and behaviours that make up both our inner and outer worlds. It includes an overall experience of wellness in what we think, feel, and do through both the highs and lows of life. Achieving emotional health and wellbeing is an active process that involves not only identifying emotions but also shaping how we think about them and how we act (or refrain from acting) on them. Marriage is one of the oldest socially recognized institution and essential for the procreation of children and satisfaction of our sexual urges, in different societies there are different methods of marriage. Some of the societies allow a male to marry only a single female whereas in other societies a husband is allowed to have more than one wife (Rahim, 2011).

Demo and Acock (2008) noted that adolescents living in single-parent families can "acquire certain strengths, notably a sense of responsibility, as a consequence of altered family routines". It is likely, however, that such benefits will accrue only where the altered routines are structured and predictable. Changes that involve the emergence of more chaotic patterns of family life are unlikely to be beneficial for children, even if some strive to furnish a sense of order where their parents fail to do so. Butler (2005) note that the children in their study demonstrated "an active role helping their parents cope with divorce, even in circumstances where parents did not seem able to contain their more negative emotions and impulses". Children also benefit where a parental separation provides release from an aversive family situation; for example, where the parental relationship is highly conflicted and the children are drawn into the conflict (Booth and Amato 2010, Carbone 2008) or where the child's relationship with a parent figures is of poor quality (Brown & Carole, 2012).

Similarly, some societies will not allow a woman to have more than one husband whereas other societies will not mind a woman having more than one husband. In some cases, the parent arranges the marriage whereas in others the men and women arrange their marriage. Marriage is a term for social relationships of husband and wife or of plural mates, also used for the ceremony of uniting marital partners (Rahim, 2011). Mcintosh and Long (2006) stated that divorce also known as dissolution of marriage, is the termination of a marriage or marital union, the cancelling or reorganizing of the legal duties and responsibilities of marriage, thus dissolving the bonds of matrimony between a married couple under the rule of law of the particular country or state.

Emotional well-being is a term that has been used increasingly in recent decades. The implications of decreased emotional well-being are related to mental health concerns such as stress, depression, and anxiety. These in turn can contribute to physical ill-health such as digestive disorders, sleep disturbances, and general lack of energy, according to (Harvard medical school 2010). Emotional well-being is also one of two aspects of personal well-being that can be measured in quantitative quality of life assessments, the other being 'life evaluation', the evaluation of one's life in general against a scale (Kahneman, Daniel and Angus, 2010). Miller (2013) stated that some of the effects associated with divorce include academic, emotional and psychological problems, although this may not always be true, studies suggest that children from divorced families are likely to exhibit such behavioural issues among which are anxiety, fear stress than those from non-divorced families. Arbuthnot and Gordon (2007) posited that parental separation has been reported in the literature as being associated with a wide range of adverse effects on children's wellbeing such as fear and anxiety both as a short-term consequence of the transition and in the form of more enduring effects that persist into adulthood, effects reported include adverse impacts on cognitive capacity.

Educational background means the same thing as "education." Therefore, education can be defined as the process or art of imparting knowledge, skill and judgment, adding the word "background" may sound more impressive, but the meaning is the same (Mulholland, Watt, Philpott & Sarlin 2009). Hetherington (2009) opines that, there are bound to be conflict when one partner tries to claim educational superiority over the other. When there are no similarities in educational background they tend to view things or issues differently which pose problems to their marital status. It is therefore a vital importance that the difference in their educational background should be such that permits intelligent exchange of viewpoints and most important of all at social discussion. The man or woman should at least partake in homely of formal discussions. No partner is happy if his or her partner is unable to keep pace with discussion or debates. The reverse is the case when the educational differences are such that militates against one being unable to discuss in social gathering (Hetherington, 2009).

It is however, imperative to note that the purpose of these study is aimed at examining the effect of stress as a result of parental divorce on emotional of health of secondary school students, also intended at assessing the effect of anxiety as a result of parental divorce on emotional of health of secondary school students and lastly, the purpose of these study is targeted at evaluating the effect of fear as a result of parental divorce on emotional of health of secondary school students in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following questions were raised to guide this study:

1. Will stress be a perceived effect of divorce on emotional health of secondary school students in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State?
2. Will anxiety be a perceived effect of divorce on emotional health of secondary school students in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State?
3. Will fear be a perceived effect of divorce on emotional health of secondary school students in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State?

Research Hypotheses

The following null research hypotheses were tested:

$H0_{1;}$ Stress will not significantly be a perceived effect of divorce on emotional health of secondary school students in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State.

$H0_{2;}$ Anxiety will not significantly be a perceived effect of divorce on emotional health of secondary school students in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State.

$H0_{3;}$ Fear will not significantly be a perceived effect of divorce on emotional health of secondary school students in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State.

Methodology

The research design that was used for this study is descriptive research design of survey type because it is suitable for gathering data from relatively large number of cases at a particular time. Colorado State University (CSU, 2014) described survey research as a chosen method of data collection among educationists. CSU (2014) contends that the popularity of survey research and its consistency is due to its efficiency and versatility.

The population of the study comprises of all government secondary schools in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State, Nigeria. According to the information obtained from the Federal Ministry of Education (FME, 2018), a total number of forty- two (42) schools were recorded in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State as at the time this research was carried out. A multi-stage sampling technique was used for the study.

There were forty-two (42) government secondary schools in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State. The first stage involved the use of systematic techniques which was used to select twenty-two percent (22%) of the total number of schools in the Local Government which amounted to nine (9) schools, this was done balloting system. The nine (9) secondary schools selected were: Mount Carmel Secondary School, Ansarul-Islam Senior Secondary School, Barakat Community Secondary School and Government Girls Day Secondary School, Ilorin Grammar School, Baboko Community Secondary

School, College of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Queen Elizabeth School and Government High School, Ilorin The second stage involved the use of proportionate sampling method to select ten percent (10%) of secondary school students in each of the nine (9) secondary schools selected. This amounted to a total number of three hundred and eighty-one (381) respondents. The third stage involved the use of accidental sampling technique to select respondents from each of the senior classes in participating schools. Therefore, students will be allowed to participate voluntarily. In all, a total of 381 respondents formed the sample for the study. This sample size is deemed adequate based on research Advisory (2006) asserted that for a population that runs in ten thousand, a sample size that is adequate enough for this study is between 380 and 383.

Table I: shows the data of the respondents

S/N	Name of Schools	Total Number of Students	10% of Population in Each Schools Selected	Sample Selected
1.	Mount Carmel	280	28.0	28
2.	Ansarul-Islam	327	32.7	32
3.	Barakat	813	81.3	81
4.	Government Girls	312	31.2	31
5.	Ilorin Grammar	318	31.8	31
6.	Baboko	366	36.6	36
7.	CAIS	421	42.1	42
8.	Queen	381	38.1	38
9	Government High School	623	62.3	62
	Total:	3, 841	384.1	381

The research instrument that was used in gathering and collecting data for this study was a researcher's developed structured questionnaire was designed by the researcher after a careful study of related literature. The questionnaire comprises of two sections. Section A acquires demographic information of the respondents while Section B collects information on the level of awareness of divorce effect on emotional health of secondary school students. The questionnaire was patterned after the four-point Likert type rating scale format of Strongly Agree (SA) = 4 points, Agree (A) = 3 points, Disagree (D) = 2 points and Strongly Disagree = 1 point was used. Ogunbiyi (2003) noted that Likert scale technique would enable the respondent to indicate the degree of their beliefs in a given statement and encourages them to express their thoughts freely.

To ascertain the content validity of the instrument, copies of the questionnaire carefully constructed by the researcher were examined by three (3) other experts in the Department of Health Promotion and Environmental Health Education, University of Ilorin. In line with the recommendation of the supervisor, corrections and suggestions were incorporated into the final draft of the instrument for this study. To determine the reliability of the instrument, the researcher adopted a split-half method. The instrument was administered to twenty (20) respondents outside the study area (Secondary Schools at Ilorin South Local Government Area of Kwara State) once. The questionnaires were collected after two weeks interval and was analysed and correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) to determine the constituency of the instrument. A coefficient of 0.76r was obtained which shows that the instrument is reliable for this study. The rights and dignity of participants and privacy were considered.

The administration of the instrument (questionnaire) was carried out personally by the researcher with the help of two research assistants who were trained prior to the time of administration. The researcher was obligated to maintain professional integrity, unbiased and subjective quest for facts and knowledge. Data and information gathered from respondents were kept highly confidential and prompt retrieval of completely filled questionnaires was ensured to avoid loss. The data that was obtained during administration was sorted, coded and subjected to appropriate statistical analysis. Section A which contains the demographic data of respondents was analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency count and percentage, percentile analysis was used to answer the research questions while inferential statistics of chi-square (x^2) was used to analyze the postulated null hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level, using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0.

Results and Discussion

Hypotheses Testing

Three null hypotheses were postulated and tested for this study.

Hypothesis One: Stress will not significantly be a perceived effect of divorce on emotional health of secondary school students in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State.

Table 2: Chi-square analysis showing the characteristics of perceived effect of stress on emotional health of secondary school students.

SN	Statement	SA F/%	A F/%	D F/%	SD F/%	Row Total	Cal X^2	df	Crit. Value	Decision
1	students from divorced parent often experience stress	112 (29.4)	224 (58.8)	28 (7.3)	17 (4.5)	381 (100)				
2	students from divorced parents often experience headaches as a result of stress at home	117 (30.7)	242 (63.5)	14 (3.7)	8 (2.1)	381 (100)	796.40	9	16.92	H_0 Rejected
3	student from divorced parents can experience tension as a result of stress	161 (42.3)	206 (54.1)	10 (2.6)	4 (1.0)	381 (100)				
4	student from broken homes often have poor rapport with people as a result of stress	106 (27.8)	257 (67.5)	13 (3.4)	5 (1.3)	381 (100)				
	Column Total	**496**	**929**	**65**	**34**	**1524**				

P<0.05 alpha level

Table 2 revealed that the calculated chi-square value of 796.40 was greater than the critical value of 16.92 with 9 degree of freedom at 0.05 alpha level of significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected which mean that stress will be a perceived effect of divorce on emotional health of secondary school students in Ilorin-West local Government Area of Kwara state.

Hypothesis Two: Anxiety will not significantly be a perceived effect of divorce on emotional health of secondary school students in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State.

Table 3: Chi-square analysis showing the characteristics of perceived effect of anxiety on emotional health of secondary school students.

SN	Statement	SA F/%	A F/%	D F/%	SD F/%	Row Total	Cal X^2	df	Crit. Value	Decision
1	anxiety as a result of parent divorce may expose children to suicidal attempt	176 (46.2)	199 (52.2)	6 (1.6)	0 (0)	381 (100)				
2	anxiety as a result of parent divorce may expose children to extensive thinking which leads to heart failure	153 (40.2)	182 (47.7)	26 (6.8)	20 (5.3)	381 (100)	630.80	9	16.92	H_0 Rejected
3	student from divorced parents may become anxious over marriage	129 (33.9)	173 (45.4)	52 (13.6)	27 (7.1)	381 (100)				
4	students from divorced parent may have anxiety over their failure	196 (51.4)	163 (42.8)	19 (4.9)	3 (0.9)	381 (100%)				
	Column Total	**654**	**717**	**103**	**50**	**1524**				

P<0.05 alpha level

Table 3 revealed that the calculated chi-square value of 630.80 was greater than the critical value of 16.92 with 9 degree of freedom at 0.05 alpha level of significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected which mean that anxiety will significantly be a perceived effect of divorce on emotional health of secondary school students in Ilorin-West local Government Area of Kwara state.

Hypothesis Three: Fear will not significantly be a perceived effect of divorce on emotional health of secondary school students in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State.

Table 4: Chi-square analysis showing the characteristics of perceived effect of fear on emotional health of secondary school students.

SN	Statement	SA F/%	A F/%	D F/%	SD F/%	Row Total	Cal X^2	Df	Crit. Value	Decision
1	children from broken homes may experience persistence fear (unreasonable fear)	164 (43.1)	177 (46.5)	13 (3.4)	27 (7.1)	381 (100)				
2	children from broken homes may experience low self-esteem	116 (30.5)	196 (51.4)	24 (6.3)	45 (11.8)	381 (100)	595.36	9	16.92	H_0 Rejected
3	children from broken home may experience slurred speech	160 (42)	184 (48.3)	29 (7.6)	8 (2.1)	381 (100)				
4	children from broken homes may often experience irregular heart beat	163 (42.8)	188 (49.3)	17 (4.5)	13 (3.4)	381 (100)				
	Column Total	**603**	**695**	**83**	**93**	**1524**				

P<0.05 alpha level

Table 4 showed that the calculated chi-square value of 595.36 was greater than the critical value of 16.92 with 9 degree of freedom at 0.05 alpha level of significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected which mean that fear will significantly be a perceived effect of divorce on emotional health of secondary school students in Ilorin-West local Government Area of Kwara state.

Discussion of Findings

In research question one, majority of the respondents were of the view that stress is a significant effect of parental divorce on emotional health as perceived by secondary school students in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State, Nigeria. Consequently, hypothesis one was rejected, implying that stress is a perceived effect of divorce on emotional health of secondary school students in Ilorin-West local Government Area of Kwara state, Nigeria. The result was in line with the findings of Hawthorne (2012) asserted that divorce is a terrible thing for everybody concerned, it has a negative effect on married couple, their children, their friends and relative but it is more devastating for the growing children as they are confronted in their home by situations and experience that may be frustrating, unpleasant, and capable of arousing anxiety from time to time in their lives, some of these negative experiences arouse fear, pain and stress.

Also, in research two, majority of the respondents were of the opinion that anxiety is a significant effect of parental divorce on emotional health as perceived by secondary school students in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State, Nigeria. Conformingly, hypothesis two was rejected, denoting that

anxiety is a perceived effect of divorce on emotional health of secondary school students in Ilorin-West local Government Area of Kwara state, Nigeria. The study ropes the findings of Miller (2013) stated that some of the effects associated with divorce include academic, emotional and psychological problems, although this may not always be true, studies suggest that children from divorced families are likely to exhibit such behavioural issues among which are anxiety, fear stress than those from non-divorced families and Boyan (2011) opined that psychological effect of divorce on children can cause them to develop anxiety disorders where they experience overwhelming fear of being abandoned and Sanders (2008) further affirmed that those children from divorced family feel bitter and carry tension and anxiety to school. As a result, they cannot think clearly or critically as a happy person and at the same time cannot concentrate on anything taught at school

In research three, majority of the respondents were of the opinion that fear is a significant effect of parental divorce on emotional health as perceived by secondary school students in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State, Nigeria. Similarly, hypothesis three was rejected inferring that fear is a perceived perceived effect of divorce on emotional health of secondary school students in Ilorin-West local Government Area of Kwara state, Nigeria. The findings corroborate with Arbuthnot and Gordon (2007) posited that parental separation has been reported in the literature as being associated with a wide range of adverse effects on children's wellbeing such as fear and anxiety both as a short-term consequence of the transition and in the form of more enduring effects that persist into adulthood, effects reported include adverse impacts on cognitive capacity.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusion was drawn that;

1. Stress is a significant effect of divorce on emotional health as perceived by secondary school students in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State, Nigeria.
2. Anxiety is a significant effect of divorce on emotional health as perceived by secondary school students in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State, Nigeria.
3. Fear is a significant effect of divorce on emotional health as perceived by secondary school students in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State, Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended among others that;

1. School counsellors should organize a parent meeting to explain some positive techniques to help smooth the transition after divorce for their children. The school counsellor can also meet with the students and parents to organize an easy-to-read calendar that identifies what days the child goes where and what transportation will be used, this might help the child keep up with day-to-day transitions between homes. Duplicate copies of grades, behavior contracts, and updates are also encouraged as that way both parents feel involved and included in parenting the child through school activities.
2. An emerging body of evidence suggests that marital education, family counselling, and related service can improve middle-class couples' communication and problem-solving skills, resulting initially in greater marital satisfaction and, in some cases, reduced anxiety.
3. Class teacher could also play a vital role in reducing the effect and burden of divorce on school students; he/she should be approachable, give regards to individual differences and lastly listen patiently to students, which may trigger the student to share what he/she might be passing through with the teacher.

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