

Assessment of Parental Divorce on the Secondary School Students in Bida, Niger State

JIYA John Babako & YISA, Rebecca Woye

Corresponding Author: johnbabako2014@gmail.com

*Department of Christian Religious Studies, School of Arts and Social Science,
Dr. Umaru Sanda Ahmadu Colleges of Education Minna, Niger State.*

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Abstract

Divorce is a detrimental social circumstance that hinders society's ability to function properly. It impedes both the advancement of society as a whole and the education of children. Many students have been denied the chance to achieve academic success as a result of divorce. Even though a number of experts have proposed explanations for the sharp rise in divorce rates, it is still necessary to assess the impact and harm it has had on their educational system. The study looked into how divorce affected the Nigerian Government Secondary School in Bida, Niger State. Students' answers were also compared by class, school category, and sex. The Effects of Divorce on Students' Performance Questionnaire (EDSPQ) was used to gather data from 400 chosen students. Frequency counts, percentages, and a t-test were used to assess the data, and hypotheses were made at the 0.05 level of significance. The critical value is 1.96 according to the t-test findings examining sex, which reveal the computed value of 20.98. As a result, the crucial value is 1.96, and the computed value is 3.09 when compared to day and boarding students. The findings showed that the students' education was adversely impacted. It also revealed that notable variations were noted based on school category and sex. Based on classes, however, no discernible difference was discovered. Establishing marital counseling is advised to support unstable marriages and to lower the divorce rate. Additionally, counseling and guidance should be offered to assist those emotional and psychologically impacted in managing school-related circumstances.

Keywords: Divorce, effects, counseling, impact, and education

Introduction

Nigerian students are faced with many problems, many students suffer abuse in various forms such as neglect, abandonment and starvation. Some are also victim of broken homes and poor laden families as a result of which many of them are brought up under unfavorable condition. Some are brought up by a single parent or by guardians in deplorable condition. The so called parents have with little or no time for the welfare of their ward or children. The growing concern in the society seems to be the effect of this marital instability on the behavioral and learning problems of the children.

According to Oghenekome (2025) and Ojen (2025) divorce may result in a Student being entrusted to other people that are different from parent. The authors added that a child raised under surrogated parent often suffers dissemination and some psychological deprivation and taking down notes, such children usually have little or no interest in the learning. The authors found that students from divorced families are most likely to perform poorly in academic work than those from intact families. The quality of parental relationship has been found to be significant to the social and academic development of the child. This was why Wadi and Olawale (2025) suggested that marital instability is associated with anti-social behaviors and other emotional disturbances in students. Christian (2025) also noted that children from unstable families are deprived of parental attention, which may cultivate into negative effects such as delinquency, truancy and school dropout. He further explained that they are unhappy and helpless victim of divorce on which they have little or no control over such destinies.

Divorce is the formal legal process of dissolving a manage or mental union making it the official end of the legal relationship between two spouses. It involves the cancelation of the marriage contract and often requires court action to be finalized. Musa and Decumun (2022) noted that divorce often live parent angry with each other and that children from such homes suffers ability to perform well in academic works and exhibit truant behavior in school. According to Barnard (2025) Divorce is the act by which a valid marriage is dissolved usually freeing the parties to remarry, the Arabic word for divorce is Talaq which means “freeing or undoing the knot”. Talaq signifies the dissolution of marriage or the annulment of its legality by the pronouncement of certain words.

According to Jus corpus journal (2021) in primitive society, marriage was considered bondage and it can never be broken down. It holds that with the changing times and dynamic society, the word divorce came into the picture which put an end to a marriage. Therefore outlines five theories that could leads to a divorce situation. He is not alone in the propagation of these theories as Mohanty and Ayarzagoitia (2020) opines that these theories can help in determine the dissolution of marriages deemed fit for divorce. The theories are:

Fault theory: here marriage can only be dissolved where either party had committed a matrimonial offence. There must be a quilty and an innocent party in the marriage for the innocent party to seek divorce. However, instances where both parties are at fault, there is no remedy available

No fault/Mutual consent theory: this theory holds that since the two parties could marry their freewill, they should also be allowed the privilege to decide to go their separate ways by their freewill.

Irretrievable breakdown of marriage theory: this theory holds that, if a marriage had broken down irretrievably, it should be dissolved without taking cognizance to the fault of either party. This has to do where marriage is been broken down beyond repairs, divorce should be granted (Barnard, 2025).

The frustration theory: this theory holds that if a party in a wedlock seen to be living in frustration in the marriage even though the other party is not quilty of any marital offence, where the other party is proven to be suffering from mental unsoundness or changed religion, or has disappeared for a very long period. The frustrated party decides to seek release from such a frustrated marriage.

Indissolubility of marriage theory: this theory postulated that marriage between a husband and wife is indissoluble. it is believed that marriage is a union of bone with bone and flesh with flesh and as such, there should be no ground for divorce. Marriage in this theory is eternal or till death do you part. This is the teachings of the Bible that the Christians and the church upholds (Oghenekome et al 2025).

Samuel (2025) enumerated four other reasons why marriages are failing which went thus:

- (i) Denial of sexual intercourse and satisfaction
- (ii) Poverty
- (iii) Lack of honesty among the couples

- (iv) Marital unfaithfulness
- (v) Unkind treatment of each other
- (vi) Physically unattractiveness and dirty mate
- (vii) Incompatibility
- (viii) Childlessness

Goode (1999) concluded in his book young starts who come from different social background are more pro to divorce than when they come from the same social background. He said further that it creates a venue for disagreement which may lead to breakdown of such family. In her discussion of family type contend that marriage that was originally based on love and the love fade in more likely end in divorce. Ogundana (1989) in his view sees that money Africa. He said the system of paying bride wealth in Africa has brought much divorce in Africa family which is not so in foreign countries and also believe that employment amongst married women makes women to be proud to their husbands which also helping to destabilize African family. However, divorce as a negative social condition works against the proper functioning of society. It hampers the general progress of the society (Ojen, 2025).

Marital instability, divorce and the likes have not been contributing any good toward the betterment of the society. No society rallies marital instability because of their evil effect in most cases. This is why each society makes prevision for legal separation in Nigeria statistical data on marital instability are not usually made available but it's commonly reported in the daily newspapers that marital instability is on the increase in the society. Solution to Marital inability should be open for regular communication, commitment to the relationship, individual personal growth, mutual forgiveness, pre-marital and marital counselling and festering a strong foundation through shared activities like date right. Addressing financial expectations, respecting each other's need for space and seeking help from counsellors or mediators are also effective strategies to strengthen the marriage and avoid separation (Dorothy et al., 2025).

Taking about your needs, if one of both of the couples have problems; communicating with one another is the best solution, sometimes, couples end up resenting each other simply because they feel like their needs are being ignored, or they are going to be unmet. Just because you and your

spouse share the same house doesn't mean that you can read one another minds. It is good in spending more quality time together, there are lot of couples who are not happy in their marriage simply because they don't feel like they relate to one another anymore. Accept that your spouse is human, just like you, humans are flawed and they make mistakes. But the more you accept that is a reality, the more open you'll be to not being upset with your spouse when they disappoint you. Acceptance of their humanity can make you more willing to give them what you want in return when you fall short of patience, forgiveness, understanding, encouragement and love. Yes, the more willing you are to give what you want in your marriage, the more chance you have in finding solutions to divorce and also avoiding divorce (Oladapo, 2000).

Objectives of the Study

The purpose of the study is to investigate on the effects of parental divorce on government School Students in Bida Town. The study also sought to investigate if: -

1. To determine the effect of parental divorce on Students' academic performance
2. To assess the emotional and psychological effects of parental divorce on students.

Research Questions

In view of the problem of the study, the following research questions were raised.

1. What are the effect of parental divorce on the academic performance of Government Secondary School students in Bida Town?
2. How does parental divorce affect the emotional and psychological well-being of secondary school students in Bida town?

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference relationship between parental divorce and the academic performance of Government Secondary School Students by Sex in Bida Town.
2. Parental divorce has no significant effect on the emotional and psychological well-being of Government Secondary School Students in Bida town.

Methodology

Descriptive survey research method is adopted for the study. The population of the study was all Government Secondary School Students in Bida town. Which according to Bida Educational Zone in Niger State as of a 2025/2026 section is approximately 24,176 students composed of 17,088 female and 7,088 male. The sample for the study were obtained or selected through a random sampling technique. Bida Town was divided into four (4) areas such as the North, South, West and East from these areas, two (2) schools were selected to have eight (8) schools participants. This also include one Boarding School and one Day School. They are Federal Girls Government College Bida (FGGCB), Government College Bida (GCB), Police Secondary School Bida (PSSB), Government Technical College Eyagi Bida (GTCEB), Government Girls Day Secondary School, Bida (GGDSSB), Army Day Secondary School Bida (ADSSB), Government Model Secondary School Bida (GMSSB), Ndayako Day Secondary School Bida (NDSSB). Fifty students were randomly selected from selected schools in Senior Secondary School arm of the selected schools. Specially, simple random sampling technique was used to select the students in a dip hand method. That is, yes or no cards were written and put in an empty pack. Students who chose yes participated in the study, while those that selected 'No' cards were excluded. The total numbers of participants are four hundred (400).

The instrument used for the collection of data was a self-developed questionnaire titled, effects of Divorce on Students Performance Questionnaire (EDSPQ). It was developed from an extensive coverage of the related literature. The instrument has 20 items meant to seek respondents' opinion on effects of Divorce on their schooling.

The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section one elicits background information on sex, Boarding, Day location of the school and the class level. Section two seeks respondents' opinion on their parental and marital relations and their schooling. Students' promotional examination in English and Mathematics were obtained as academic performance. The respondents' responses and scoring were of 4 Likert type format

The questionnaire forms were administered to the respondents in their various schools by the researcher. This was to enable the researcher to relate with the respondents and to ensure that none of the participants influenced each other's responses. All questionnaire forms were collected for

analysis. The data collected were subjected to frequency count and percentage. They were analyzed using t-test statistical procedure to test the formulated hypotheses.

The results are presented below. Table 1 Distribution of Respondents by Sex

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Sex

Sex	Number	Percentage
Male	230	57.5
Female	170	42.5
Total	400	100.0

The data in table 1 shows that there were 230 or 57.5% male and 170 or 42.5% of them were female respondents.

Table 2: Sex Respondents from Distribution

Schools	Sex (M/F)	Distribution	Responses	Percentage
FGGCB	M -	-	-	
	F -	50	49	12.25%
GCB	M	50	50	
	F	-	-	12.5%
PSSB	M	50	50	
	F	-	-	12.5%
GTCEB	M	25	25	
	F	25	25	12.5%
GGDSB	M	-	-	
	F	50	49	12.25%
ADSSB	M	40	39	
	F	10	10	12.25%
GMSSB	M	40	38	
	F	10	10	12%
NDSSB	M	25	25	
	F	25	25	12.25
		400	395	98.75%

Looking at table 2, it shows the respondents of students by sex. A total of 400 was distributed but 395 was retrieved which is 98.75%. This percentage is therefore equal to the sampled distribution.

Table 3: Distribution by the school category

Category	Number	Percentage
Day	200	50%
Boarding	200	50%
Total	400	100%

The results in the table shows that 200 or 50% of the participant were Day and 200 or 50% of them were from boarding schools.

Table 4: Category of schools and their responses

Schools	Category	Distribution	Responses	Total	Percentage
FGGC	Boarding	50	50		
GCB	Boarding	50	50		
PSSB	Boarding	50	50		
GTCEB	Boarding	50	50		
TOTAL				200	50%
GGDSB	Day	50	48		
ADSSB	Day	50	49		
GMSSB	Day	50	48		
NDSSB	Day	50	50		
TOTAL				195	48.75%

Table 4 shows the category of schools and their participants, the boarding schools responded with 200 (50%) while the day schools with 195 (48.75%). If the two percentages is combine together raise to (98.75%) which is equal to the total number of distribution.

Results

The study examined the effects of divorce on academic performance of government secondary school students in Bida Town. Data were collected from 400 randomly selected students of different Secondary Schools and analysed by frequency counts, percentage and t-test.

Research Questions

Research Question one: What are the effect of parental divorce on the academic performance of Government Secondary School students in Bida Town?

Table five: Does parental divorce affect your academic performances?

Responses	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Agree	250	63.29%
Strongly Agree	120	30.37%
Disagree	20	5.07%
Strongly Disagree	5	1.27%
Total	395	100%

The table above shows that 250(63.29%) agreed and 120(30.29%) strongly agreed that they have being affected by parental divorce on their academics. Also 20(5.07%) disagreed and 5(1.27%) strongly disagreed of not being affected of parental divorce. This mean very few are not affected by divorce.

Research Question Two: How does parental divorce affect the emotional and psychological well-being of secondary school students in Bida town?

Table six: Does parental divorce affects your emotional and psychological well-being in school?

Response	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Agree	140	35.44%
Strongly agree	215	54.43%
Disagree	32	8.10%
Strongly disagree	8	2.03%
Total	395	100%

The result in table six above indicates that, 140(35.44%) agreed that parental divorce affects their emotional and psychological well-being in school. 23(20%) strongly agreed with it. While 32(8.10%) disagreed and 8(2.03%) strongly disagreed that they are not being affected by parental divorce. This could be as a result of having relatives of the family around them.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between parental divorce and the academic performance of government secondary school students by Sex in Bida Town.

Table 5: t-test analysis comparing responses by Sex

Sex	N	Mean	SD	DF	Calculated t-value	Critical t-value
Male	230	53.36	7.4	198	20.98	1.96
Female	170	55.00	5.9			

Table 7 presents t-test analysis on male and female students. The table shows that the calculated t-value of 20.98 is more than the table value of 1.96 at 0.05 is significant level is more than table value of 1.96 at 0.05 is significant level based on this results, the hypothesis which stated that, there is no any significant difference in the effects of divorce on academic performance of male and female students is rejected.

Hypothesis Two: Parental divorce has no significant effect on the emotional and psychological well-being of government Secondary school students either by Day or Boarding in Bida Town. Table 6 t-test analysis comparing responses by Day and Boarding students.

Table 8: t-test analysis comparing responses on emotional and psychological effects by Day and Boarding students.

School Type	N	Mean	SD	DF	Calculated t-value	Critical t-value
Day	214	55.22	5.1	198	3.09	1.96
Boarding	186	52.71	6.4			

Table 8 shows that the calculated t-value is 3.1 and the table of critical value is 1.96. The calculated t-value is more than the table of critical value at 0.05 alpha level. The null hypothesis which expected no significant different in the effects of divorce on Day and Boarding is, therefore, rejected.

Research Findings

The results of the findings revealed that most of the students expressed being affected by divorce. This is evident from the high mean scores realized from the items on the sex, that the calculated t-value of 20.98 is more than the table value of 1.96 at 0.05. Also that on the differences between Day and Boarding schools the calculated t-value is 3.1 and the table of critical value is 1.96. Again the results further showed that most of the students' academic performance was very low. This supported the student's expression on the effects of divorce. Research hypothesis one which compared male and female students' expressions, was rejected based on the findings. This means that students were affected irrespective of their sex. This supported Garuba (2000) which found no significant difference in the effects of marital disruption on students' academic performance. The reason for this finding might be because as a result of divorce, parents who could have encourage then and provided things needed for their schooling to help them in their academics are not there for them.

Conclusion

The study investigated the effect of divorce on the academic performance of students in Bida town. The results showed that marital instability and divorce significantly affect students' academic performances. The results also indicated that significant differences were not found in the effects of marital instability on the emotional and psychological well-being of male and female students and between Day and Boarding Students. Based on the outcome of the study, it is concluded that: Students in secondary school in Bida town were significantly affected by divorce. The academic performance was found to be very low. Therefore, divorce should be discouraged in the society.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made as a result of the findings:

1. There is need to increase awareness and education on the implementation of guidance and counselling as a subject to teach in the secondary schools for our young students. Marital counselling should be introduced into the community to assist couples for resolving their marital problems. This will reduce burdens that such problems impose on the children in school.

2. Teachers of secondary schools should know that divorce affect students emotional and psychological well-being of students, therefore should be their counselor even in the class.
3. Curriculum planners should endeavor to design a curriculum that would involve education programme on marriage and family life in secondary schools.
4. More importantly, as fast as the rate of marital instability is rising, authors and Book publishers should be encourage to write more books on marital stability, causes and solutions to marriage instability thus, the books be recommended for students and parents.
5. Seminars, talks, and workshops on marriage and good family life should be organized by Christians and Muslims Religion. Also Non-Governmental organization (NGO), should be involved in organizing and encouraging marriage seminars on good home.

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