

**THE IMPACT OF PARENTAL DIVORCE ON CHILD DEVELOPMENT IN
EKOSODIN COMMUNITY, OVIA -NORTH EAST L.G.A OF EDO STATE.**

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**BEING A PROJECT WORK SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL WORK, FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN,
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REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF BACHELOR OF SCIENCE [B.SC.]
(HONS) DEGREE IN SOCIAL WORK**

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DECLARATION

I, **Testimony Onohuomen ILUOBE**, hereby declare that this project titled "**THE IMPACT OF PARENTAL DIVORCE ON CHILD DEVELOPMENT IN EKOSODIN COMMUNITY, OVIA-NORTH EAST L.G.A OF EDO STATE**" is my original work and has not been submitted, either in part or in full, for any degree or certification at any other institution. All sources of information and references used in this work have been duly acknowledged.

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this original research work was carried out by **Testimony Onohuomen ILUOBE** with matriculation number **SSC2106058** under strict supervision and has been approved as adequate in scope and content in partial fulfillment for the award of Bachelor of Science (B. Sc) Degree in Social Work, University of Benin.

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(Project Supervisor)

DATE

DR. (MRS) H.E EWEKA
(Head of Department)

DATE

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to Almighty God and my beloved family (Iluobe's family)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I sincerely thank the Almighty God for His grace, wisdom, and strength that guided me throughout the course of this research work and my academic journey at the University of Benin. Without His divine help, this achievement would not have been possible.

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Finally, I Testimony Onohuomen Iluobe, wish to appreciate myself for my determination, resilience, and commitment in completing this research work despite all odds. Despite the challenges, I never gave up, and for that, I am truly proud of myself. This achievement is a reminder that with faith, focus, and perseverance, success is certain.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Title Page - - - - -	i
Declaration - - - - -	ii
Certification - - - - -	iii
Dedication - - - - -	iv
Acknowledgement - - - - -	v
Table of Contents - - - - -	vii
Abstract - - - - -	x
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	
1.1 Background to the study - - - - -	1
1.2 Statement of the problem - - - - -	3
1.3 Objective of the study - - - - -	5
1.4 Research Questions - - - - -	6
1.5 Significance of the study - - - - -	7
1.6 Scope of the study - - - - -	10
1.7 Limitation of the Study - - - - -	12
1.7 Definition of term - - - - -	15
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	
2.1 Conceptual Review - - - - -	18
2.1.1 Concept of Parental Divorce - - - - -	18
2.1.2 Concept of Child Development - - - - -	19
2.1.3 Dimensions of Child Development - - - - -	21
2.2 Emotional and Psychological Impact of Parental Divorce on Children	25
2.2.1 Emotional Consequences - - - - -	25
2.2.2 Psychological Distress - - - - -	26

2.2.3	Gender Differences in Emotional Impact	-	-	-	-	-	-	27
2.2.4	Cultural Influence on Emotional Impact	-	-	-	-	-	-	27
2.2.5	Long-Term Psychological Effects	-	-	-	-	-	-	28
2.3	Behavioural Adaptations and Social Adjustment Difficulties among Children of Divorced Parents	-	-	-	-	-	-	29
2.3.1	Behavioural Reactions and Conduct Problems	-	-	-	-	-	-	30
2.3.2	Social Adjustment Challenges	-	-	-	-	-	-	30
2.3.3	School Behaviour and Peer Influence	-	-	-	-	-	-	31
2.3.4	Gender Differences in Behavioural Response	-	-	-	-	-	-	32
2.3.5	Cultural and Environmental Moderators	-	-	-	-	-	-	32
2.4	Academic Performance of Children from Divorced Homes	-	-	-	-	-	-	33
2.4.1	Parental Support and Educational Motivation	-	-	-	-	-	-	34
2.4.2	Psychological Effects and Learning Outcomes	-	-	-	-	-	-	34
2.5	Gender and Age Variations in Academic Impact	-	-	-	-	-	-	35
2.6	Coping Mechanisms Children Adopt in Response to Parental Divorce	-	-	-	-	-	-	37
2.7	Empirical Studies	-	-	-	-	-	-	41
2.8	Research Gap	-	-	-	-	-	-	47
2.9	Theoretical Framework	-	-	-	-	-	-	48
CHAPTER THREE: METHDOLOGY								
3.1	Research methodology	-	-	-	-	-	-	52
3.2	Research design	-	-	-	-	-	-	52
3.3	Area of study	-	-	-	-	-	-	53
3.4	Population of the study	-	-	-	-	-	-	53
3.5	Sample size and Sampling technique	-	-	-	-	-	-	54

3.6	Instrument for data collection	-	-	-	-	-	-	55
3.7	Validity of the instrument	-	-	-	-	-	-	57
3.8	Reliability of instrument	-	-	-	-	-	-	57
3.9	Method of data collection	-	-	-	-	-	-	58
3.10	Method of data analysis	-	-	-	-	-	-	58
3.11	Ethical consideration	-	-	-	-	-	-	58
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS								
4.0	Introduction	-	-	-	-	-	-	59
4.1	Demographic Characteristics of Respondent	-	-	-	-	-	-	60
4.2	Analysis of research questions	-	-	-	-	-	-	66
4.3	Discussion of findings	-	-	-	-	-	-	88
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION								
5.0	Introduction	-	-	-	-	-	-	92
5.1	Summary of findings	-	-	-	-	-	-	92
5.2	Conclusion	-	-	-	-	-	-	97
5.3	Recommendations	-	-	-	-	-	-	100
5.4	Suggestions for further studies	-	-	-	-	-	-	103
5.5	Contribution to knowledge	-	-	-	-	-	-	105
REFERENCE								108
APPENDIX								111

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effects of parental divorce on child development within the Ekosodin Community, Ovia North-East Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria. It specifically examines the emotional, social, behavioral, and academic consequences for children following parental separation. A descriptive survey design was employed, with data gathered from 100 purposively selected respondents including adolescents, parents, teachers, and social workers using structured online questionnaires. The data were analyzed through descriptive statistics, incorporating frequency counts, percentages, and mean scores. The findings indicate that parental divorce significantly disrupts children's emotional stability, social adjustment, behavioral patterns, and academic performance. Emotional distress was evident through symptoms of sadness, anxiety, social withdrawal, and diminished self-esteem. Concurrently, social and behavioral challenges included difficulties in peer relationships, truancy, and aggressive conduct. Academically, performance was adversely affected by reduced motivation, poor concentration, and a lack of consistent parental support. The study also identified the supportive roles of the extended family, teachers, religious institutions, and professional counseling services in mitigating these negative effects. Based on these findings, the study recommends collaborative efforts among parents, educators, social workers, religious organizations, and government agencies to provide comprehensive emotional, social, and academic support for children experiencing parental divorce. This research contributes to the existing literature by offering localized insights into the multifaceted impacts of divorce in a semi-urban Nigerian community, with practical implications for policy formulation, targeted intervention programs, and social work practice.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The family is the primary and most influential social institution for shaping a child's emotional, social, and psychological development. It constitutes the first environment where children learn values, acquire social skills, and develop a sense of security and belonging (Okafor & Adebayo, 2020). Ideally, both parents collaborate to provide the emotional warmth, guidance, and discipline that form the foundation for a child's growth. However, marital breakdown through divorce disrupts the family structure, often creating instability that negatively impacts the child's overall development (Adeniran & Moyo, 2021).

Divorce has become an increasingly common social phenomenon in both developed and developing nations. Across Africa, and particularly in Nigeria, the rising rate of divorce is a growing concern due to its consequences for child welfare and social cohesion (Nwosu & Dlamini, 2022). Although cultural norms in many African societies have traditionally discouraged marital separation, modern influences, urbanization, and economic pressures have contributed to its increasing frequency (Okon & Edeh, 2023). The dissolution of a marriage typically results in one parent most often the mother assuming primary childcare responsibility. The absence of the other parent often creates significant

emotional and financial challenges for both the caregiver and the child (Akinola & Mokoena, 2021).

Research indicates that children from divorced homes face a greater risk of emotional distress, behavioral issues, and academic difficulties compared to their peers from intact, stable families (Eze & Mensah, 2020). Inconsistent parental supervision and affection can lead to feelings of rejection, low self-esteem, and insecurity (Adeoye, 2022). Divorce can also strain the parent-child relationship, resulting in poor communication, neglect, or conflict. Over time, these disruptions may manifest as social withdrawal, aggression, or antisocial behavior in affected children (Ibrahim & Ngoben, 2021).

Socially, divorce can alter a child's peer interactions and capacity for social adaptation. In communities like those in Nigeria, where family stability is highly valued, children from divorced homes may encounter stigma or discrimination, which can intensify their sense of isolation (Olamide & Chika, 2023). Psychologically, the sudden loss of a unified parental bond can trigger anxiety, depression, and emotional instability. Studies show that children who experience divorce are more likely to struggle with trust and form insecure attachments in adulthood (Okafor & Adebayo, 2020).

In the Ekosodin community, located in the Ovia North-East Local Government Area of Edo State, marital separation is becoming more common as families encounter growing socio-economic pressures. As a semi-urban community in close proximity to the

University of Benin, Ekosodin has undergone rapid social changes that have influenced traditional family structures and increased instances of marital conflict. Consequently, children from divorced households in this community may face challenges in emotional regulation, social adjustment, and academic performance.

Given these concerns, understanding the effects of parental divorce on child development is crucial, particularly within the Nigerian and African context. This is especially relevant as extended family systems, which traditionally provided a protective buffer, are weakening under the influence of modernization. This study therefore aims to examine the effect of parental divorce on child development in Ekosodin Community, with a specific focus on the emotional, social, and behavioral implications for the children involved.

1.2 Statement of the Research problem

The family unit is the foundation of society, responsible for providing children with emotional security, moral guidance, and social stability. However, the increasing prevalence of marital breakdown and divorce in African societies poses a significant threat to healthy child development. In Nigeria, divorce rates have risen consistently over the past decade, driven by factors such as economic hardship, domestic violence, infidelity, and spousal incompatibility (Olamide & Chika, 2023). This trend leaves a

growing number of children to navigate the complex psychological and social aftermath of their parents' separation.

Children from divorced households frequently endure profound emotional distress, including persistent feelings of sadness, loneliness, anxiety, and confusion regarding their family identity (Eze & Mensah, 2020). Unlike their peers from stable, two-parent homes, these children often experience inconsistent affection and discipline, as well as conflicting loyalties between parents, which can destabilize their sense of security (Adeniran & Moyo, 2021). Such challenges are known to negatively impact their personality development, academic achievement, and interpersonal skills (Okon & Edeh, 2023).

Historically, the traditional extended family in African societies acted as a robust support system for children during familial crises. Yet, the forces of modernization, urbanization, and labor migration have significantly eroded this protective structure (Akinola & Mokoena, 2021). Consequently, children of divorced parents in semi-urban communities like Ekosodin are increasingly vulnerable to neglect, social exclusion, and exposure to delinquent behaviors.

Empirical studies confirm that children from divorced homes exhibit a higher propensity for behavioral issues, including aggression, disobedience, and social withdrawal (Ibrahim & Ngobeni, 2021). Academically, they are more likely to show a decline in performance,

poor concentration, and a lack of motivation (Adeoye, 2022). Despite these documented correlations, there remains a scarcity of localized research within specific Nigerian communities investigating how divorce distinctly affects children across emotional, social, and behavioral domains.

It is against this backdrop that the present study seeks to investigate the effects of parental divorce on child development in the Ekosodin community, Ovia North-East Local Government Area of Edo State. The research aims to offer a context-specific analysis of how divorce influences children's emotional well-being, social adjustment, and overall developmental trajectories within a contemporary African setting.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the impact of parental divorce on the overall development of children within the Ekosodin community, Ovia North-East Local Government Area of Edo State. The study aims to understand how family separation affects the emotional, social, and academic dimensions of child development in an African socio-cultural context.

The specific objectives are to

1. Examine the emotional and psychological effects of parental divorce on children in Ekosodin community. (Olamide & Chika, 2023; Eze & Mensah, 2020)

2. Assess how parental divorce influences children's social behaviour and peer relationships within the community. (Adeniran & Moyo, 2021; Okon & Edeh, 2023)
3. Investigate the impact of parental divorce on children's academic performance and school participation. (Adeoye, 2022; Ibrahim & Ngobeni, 2021)
4. Explore the coping strategies children adopt in adjusting to life after their parents' separation. (Akinola & Mokoena, 2021)
5. Propose intervention measures and support systems that parents, social workers, schools, and policymakers can implement to reduce the negative effects of divorce on children's development in the African context. (UNICEF Nigeria, 2024; Bello, 2024)

1.4 Research Questions

To guide the investigation on the impact of parental divorce on child development in Ekosodin Community, the following research questions were formulated,

1. What are the emotional and psychological effects of parental divorce on children in the Ekosodin community?

(Olamide & Chika, 2023; Eze & Mensah, 2020)

2. In what ways does parental divorce influence children's social behaviour and peer relationships within the community?

(Adeniran & Moyo, 2021; Okon & Edeh, 2023)

3. How does parental divorce affect children's academic performance and participation in school activities in Ekosodin?

(Adeoye, 2022; Ibrahim & Ngobeni, 2021)

4. What coping mechanisms do children from divorced families adopt to adjust to post-divorce challenges?

(Akinola & Mokoena, 2021)

5. What practical support systems or interventions can be introduced by families, social workers, schools, and policymakers to minimize the adverse effects of divorce on children's development in Nigerian communities?

(UNICEF Nigeria, 2024; Bello, 2024)

1.5. Significance of the Study

The significance of the study when completed will be of multifaceted benefits to victims, stakeholders, parents and guidance, teachers and schools, social workers and child welfare, religious leaders and community elders, government and policymakers, Ekosodin community and future researchers.

To parents and guardians, this study underscores the critical need to acknowledge how marital separation impacts a child's emotional security and psychological health. Often, cultural and financial pressures lead African parents to prioritize economic survival or marital reconciliation over their children's emotional needs (Eze & Mensah, 2020). The findings of this research will foster greater awareness of the importance of sustaining consistent emotional support, positive communication, and collaborative parenting practices after a separation.

To educators and school administrators, this study will offer valuable insights into the behavioral and academic difficulties faced by children from divorced households. Behaviors such as poor concentration or aggression are often misconstrued by teachers as mere indiscipline rather than potential indicators of underlying emotional distress (Adeoye, 2022). Consequently, the insights generated can guide schools in implementing targeted support mechanisms, including counseling services, peer support groups, and mentorship programs, to assist affected children in adapting more successfully to the school environment.

To social workers and child welfare professionals, the study is highly relevant given the ongoing shift in African social work practice toward community-based intervention models. By delineating the specific emotional, social, and academic challenges encountered by children from divorced homes, the findings will aid social workers in developing culturally appropriate intervention programs. These may include family

counseling, child-focused therapy, and supportive parenting workshops (Olamide & Chika, 2023), which can be integrated into existing community service frameworks in Edo State.

To community and religious institutions, the research provides a compelling evidence base to expand their roles. In many African contexts, churches, mosques, and traditional councils serve as primary centers for conflict resolution (Okon & Edeh, 2023). However, their efforts typically concentrate on reconciling spouses, often overlooking the silent trauma experienced by children. This study will encourage these vital local institutions to broaden their support systems to include child-centered counseling, moral guidance, and social support groups for children of divorced parents.

From a policy perspective, the study contributes to fortifying child protection mechanisms in Nigeria. While legal frameworks like the Child Rights Act (2003) exist, their implementation at the local level remains inconsistent (Bello, 2024). The evidence from this research will inform policymakers in the design of child-sensitive divorce protocols, school-based welfare initiatives, and public awareness campaigns aimed at mitigating the long-term social and educational costs of divorce on children.

Academically, this study enriches the literature on child development and family dynamics from a Nigerian viewpoint, providing contemporary, localized data that bridges theoretical discourse and practical application. It will serve as a reference for future

researchers investigating similar themes across other African communities. Ultimately, the research aligns with the core mission of social work to promote child welfare, family stability, and social justice by identifying practical strategies through which families, schools, and communities can collaborate to mitigate the adverse effects of parental divorce on children in developing societies.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This research is defined by its geographical, conceptual, and methodological focus on the Ekosodin Community in Ovia North-East Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria. Ekosodin presents a dynamic and rapidly evolving environment that reflects the socio-economic conditions common to many semi-urban Nigerian communities. Its population, comprising students, civil servants, traders, and indigenous families, creates a distinctive mix of traditional and contemporary lifestyles (Osagie & Adebayo, 2023). Within this setting, the study specifically investigates the influence of parental divorce on the emotional, social, and academic development of children.

Geographically, the research is confined to Ekosodin. This community offers a pertinent context where family instability, migration patterns, and child welfare concerns intersect. Its proximity to the University of Benin and its transient nature make it a suitable location for examining how social change and family dissolution impact children. Concentrating

on a single community allows for a more in-depth and context-specific analysis of the experiences of children from divorced households.

In terms of population, the study focuses on children from divorced families, their parents or guardians, teachers, and social workers active within the community. These groups were selected as they represent the primary stakeholders who are either directly affected by divorce or involved in managing its consequences. Teachers witness the educational and behavioral effects, parents navigate the domestic challenges, and social workers offer professional perspectives on coping and intervention strategies (Adeniran & Chukwu, 2022).

Regarding content, the study will investigate the emotional, psychological, social, and academic consequences of parental divorce on children. It will also evaluate the coping mechanisms employed by children and parents and explore the supportive roles of schools, community institutions, and social workers. Broader issues, such as property division or custody litigation, fall outside the scope, as the research is strictly centered on child development outcomes.

Methodologically, the study employs a survey research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Data will be collected using structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews to gather both statistical data and narrative insights. Quantitative data will be analyzed through descriptive statistics, including

frequency distributions and percentages, while qualitative responses will be examined using thematic analysis to uncover underlying emotions, experiences, and coping patterns (Olamide & Chika, 2023). This mixed-method approach ensures that both measurable trends and personal experiences are comprehensively captured.

Temporally, the research concentrates on divorce cases and their effects on children within the last decade (2015–2025). This period encompasses contemporary factors such as increased economic pressure, digital media influence, and evolving family norms that shape child development in modern Nigerian society (Eze & Mensah, 2020). By anchoring the analysis within this timeframe, the findings maintain relevance to current socio-economic and cultural dynamics.

Finally, this study acknowledges that its findings from Ekosodin may not be universally applicable to all Nigerian communities due to regional social and cultural differences. Nevertheless, the insights generated can provide a valuable reference point for understanding similar issues in other semi-urban or low-resource settings across Africa.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

All research contains inherent limitations that can affect the interpretation and generalizability of its findings. This study on the effects of parental divorce on child development in Ekosodin Community is no exception. Despite rigorous efforts to ensure

credibility and depth, several constraints were encountered during data collection and analysis.

A primary limitation is the study's geographical restriction to the Ekosodin community. While this area serves as a microcosm of semi-urban Nigeria, its specific socio-cultural characteristics may not fully represent the diversity of other Nigerian or African contexts. As Okafor and Adeoye (2021) note, cultural perceptions of divorce vary significantly across Nigeria's ethnic groups, ranging from urban acceptance to rural stigmatization. These variations influence how children experience and respond to family separation, thereby limiting the direct generalizability of the findings to other regions.

The sensitive nature of divorce as a research topic also presented a significant constraint. Many respondents, particularly parents, were hesitant to share personal or emotional details regarding their marital history and its impact on their children. This reluctance occasionally resulted in incomplete or socially desirable responses. Adebayo and Nnaji (2022) observe that discussing family dissolution remains a social taboo in many Nigerian communities, often leading to the underreporting of emotional trauma or behavioral issues in children. This may have affected the accuracy of some self-reported data.

Another notable limitation involved gaining direct access to children affected by divorce. Ethical considerations necessarily restricted the extent to which minors could be

interviewed or observed. Consequently, a substantial portion of the data concerning children's behavioral and emotional responses was gathered indirectly from parents, teachers, and social workers. Although these adult perspectives offer valuable insights, they may not fully convey the children's own lived experiences (Eze & Mensah, 2020).

Methodologically, the study's reliance on survey data, primarily collected through structured questionnaires, presents a constraint. While this approach allows for broad data coverage, it may not capture the deeper emotional and psychological nuances associated with divorce. Although qualitative interviews were incorporated to mitigate this, time and resource constraints limited the sample size. As Olamide and Chika (2023) highlight, mixed-methods studies in social work often encounter logistical challenges, particularly in resource-limited settings like those in many African contexts.

Financial constraints further impacted the research's scope. Limited funding curtailed the ability to expand the study to multiple communities or to conduct more extensive qualitative interviews. Additionally, the availability of current secondary data on family structure and child welfare within local government records was insufficient, complicating comparisons with broader national statistics.

Finally, the study acknowledges that child development is influenced by a multitude of interconnected factors beyond divorce, including economic hardship, peer influence, and the broader community environment. As Adeniran and Chukwu (2022) point out,

isolating the specific effects of divorce from other socio-economic pressures is inherently complex, especially in African societies where extended family systems can either buffer or exacerbate the impact on children.

Despite these limitations, the researcher upheld methodological rigor through data source triangulation, strict confidentiality, and the use of analytical tools that enhance the findings' reliability and validity. The identified constraints do not diminish the study's value but instead provide a clearer context for understanding the practical challenges of conducting social research within Nigerian communities.

1.8 Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms are defined as used in the context

1. Divorce

Divorce refers to the legal and permanent dissolution of a marriage between two individuals who were once legally married. In this study, it describes situations where parents formally end their marital union, resulting in the separation of the family structure. In Nigeria, divorce often carries strong cultural and religious implications that may affect both the parents and their children (Adebayo & Nnaji, 2022).

2. Child Development

Child development is the progressive growth in a child's physical, emotional, social, and cognitive abilities from infancy through adolescence. In this study, it focuses on how children from divorced homes in Ekosodin community adapt socially, emotionally, and academically after parental separation (Eze & Mensah, 2020).

3. Parental Divorce

Parental divorce is the termination of marriage between a child's biological parents, leading to separate living arrangements. It is used in this study to describe cases where both parents no longer live together as husband and wife, thereby influencing the child's upbringing and emotional wellbeing (Okafor & Adeoye, 2021).

4. Emotional Development

Emotional development refers to a child's ability to understand, express, and manage emotions in a healthy manner. In this context, it explores how divorce may lead to emotional challenges such as sadness, anxiety, or a sense of rejection among children (Olamide & Chika, 2023).

5. Social Behaviour

Social behaviour relates to how individuals interact and relate with others within society, including peers, teachers, and family members. This study examines whether children

from divorced homes display issues such as withdrawal, aggression, or difficulty forming friendships (Adeniran & Chukwu, 2022).

6. Peer Relationship

Peer relationship refers to the quality of social interactions and bonds a child builds with age-mates or classmates. In the study, it focuses on how parental divorce influences a child's ability to build trust, cooperate, and maintain friendships among peers (Adeyemi, 2023).

7. Psychological Effect

This term describes the mental and emotional impact of divorce on a child, including stress, anxiety, low self-esteem, or behavioral changes. In the African context, such effects are often intensified by stigma and the absence of adequate counseling support systems (Nwankwo & Yusuf, 2021).

8. Academic Performance

Academic performance refers to a student's level of achievement in educational activities, such as grades, classroom participation, and school attendance. The study examines whether parental divorce contributes to a decline in academic achievement among affected children (Ene & Obasi, 2024).

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Concept of Parental Divorce

Parental divorce refers to the legal dissolution of a marriage, a process that typically generates significant emotional, social, and psychological consequences for all family members, particularly children. Within the African context, divorce represents not merely a private family matter but a broader social concern, given the central role family systems

play in child upbringing and socialization (Adewale, 2021). According to Nwoye (2020), marriage in many African societies is perceived as a union that extends beyond the couple to encompass extended families, communities, and lineage ties. Consequently, when a marriage ends, the resulting breakdown affects not only the spouses but also the social and emotional development of their children.

In Nigeria, rising rates of marital conflict and divorce have become an increasing concern, particularly within urban centers where factors such as westernization, financial stress, and shifting modern values significantly influence relationships (Olamide & Okoro, 2023). Children from divorced households often face challenges including diminished self-esteem, poorer academic performance, and difficulties in forming and maintaining social relationships. This disruption can exert long-term effects on their behavioral adjustment and emotional well-being.

2.1.2 Concept of Child Development

Child development encompasses the continuous and sequential process through which children acquire physical, cognitive, emotional, social, and moral capabilities. This progression describes how children grow, learn, and adapt to their environments from infancy through adolescence (World Health Organization [WHO], 2022). According to Adeyemi and Musa (2021), child development involves the integrated enhancement of

children's mental and physical capacities, enabling them to function effectively within their societies.

This developmental process is influenced not only by biological maturation but also by environmental, cultural, and social experiences (Okonkwo & Eze, 2023). Within African contexts, particularly in Nigeria, family systems significantly shape child development by establishing foundational frameworks for learning, emotional security, and value acquisition (Nwankwo, 2020). Consequently, familial disruptions such as parental divorce typically impair children's normative developmental trajectories.

UNICEF (2023) emphasizes that stable home environments are prerequisite for children's emotional and psychological equilibrium, which subsequently supports holistic development. Divorce, separation, or persistent parental conflict typically undermines this stability, generating developmental challenges including academic underachievement, impaired social relationships, and compromised emotional security (Adebayo & Olanrewaju, 2021).

Child development manifests across five primary domains: physical development (encompassing bodily growth and motor skills), cognitive development (involving reasoning, linguistic, and problem-solving capacities), emotional development (pertaining to affective regulation), social development (concerning relationship formation), and

moral development (relating to ethical understanding and value internalization) (Eze & Nnamdi, 2022).

Within Nigerian contexts, these developmental domains remain particularly vulnerable to familial stability. Ojo and Adegbite (2023) observed that children raised in harmonious two-parent households demonstrate superior academic performance and social confidence compared to peers from divorced or conflict-ridden families. Similarly, Chukwuma (2022) documented that single-parent absence frequently creates emotional deficiencies and behavioral maladjustment among children.

In synthesis, child development represents a complex, multidimensional process shaped by biological, social, and psychological determinants. Parental harmony and family cohesion emerge as critical prerequisites for positive developmental outcomes, whereas divorce introduces destabilizing factors that potentially constrain children's optimal development across all domains.

2.1.3 Dimensions of Child Development

Child development constitutes a multidimensional process encompassing emotional, social, academic, psychological, and behavioural domains. Each dimension represents a crucial component of a child's growth and overall adaptation. Disruptions within any single domain can adversely affect others, thereby compromising the child's holistic wellbeing and developmental trajectory (WHO, 2022).

1. Emotional Development

Emotional development encompasses children's capacity to recognize, express, and regulate emotions appropriately. This process is primarily shaped through parental warmth, stability, and responsiveness. According to Okonkwo and Eze (2023), children establish emotional equilibrium through consistent affection and security provided by caregivers. Parental divorce frequently disrupts this foundation, exposing children to heightened anxiety, persistent sadness, and feelings of rejection. Nwankwo (2021) documented that Nigerian children from divorced families commonly experience diminished self-esteem, loneliness, and emotional insecurity. Similarly, Oluwafemi and Ojo (2022) observed that inconsistent caregiving following separation may precipitate emotional detachment or aggressive behavioral manifestations. Within communities like Ekosodin, where familial cohesion is culturally prioritized, children from separated households often encounter difficulties in emotional expression due to anticipated social stigma.

2. Social Development

Social development involves children's ability to establish positive relationships, collaborate effectively, and internalize social norms. This capacity evolves through parental modeling, peer interactions, and community engagement. Adebayo and Olanrewaju (2021) maintained that stable family environments equip children with

essential social competencies including empathy, communication skills, and cooperative behavior. Divorce often compromises these learning opportunities through parental emotional or physical absence.

Nigerian research by Chukwu and Ibrahim (2023) indicates that children from divorced households frequently struggle with social adaptation and peer acceptance. Many experience social marginalization or peer teasing, potentially resulting in social withdrawal or diminished self-confidence. However, Adeoye (2022) noted that structured participation in school organizations and religious youth activities can facilitate social identity reconstruction and belonging restoration.

3. Academic Development

Academic development pertains to children's knowledge acquisition, intellectual skill development, and educational performance. These outcomes depend significantly on emotional stability, parental support, and consistent academic supervision. Adeyemi and Musa (2021) emphasized that familial harmony enhances children's concentration and learning motivation, whereas divorce-induced stress typically impairs educational outcomes.

Odebode (2022) found that children from divorced families in Ibadan demonstrated academic underachievement in core subjects including English and Mathematics, attributable to emotional distractions and inadequate encouragement. Correspondingly,

Ojo and Adegbite (2023) identified that post-divorce financial constraints and impaired parental communication frequently correlate with school absenteeism and dropout rates. Within communities like Ekosodin, where education represents a primary vehicle for social mobility, divorce-related academic consequences may exert long-term impacts on children's future prospects.

4. Psychological Development

Psychological development encompasses children's self-concept formation, confidence development, and stress management capacities. Eze and Nnamdi (2022) established that nurturing family environments promote psychological stability, whereas disrupted households may generate anxiety, fear, and depressive symptoms. Children from divorced families often contend with unwarranted guilt, confusion, and insecurity, frequently attributing parental separation to their own actions (Mensah & Boateng, 2020).

Ugiagbe (2019) observed within Nigerian contexts that limited access to professional counseling and constrained emotional communication within families exacerbates psychological distress among affected children. Okafor and Chukwu (2021) further clarified that children's psychological adaptation following divorce correlates strongly with post-separation parenting quality those maintaining constructive relationships with both parents typically demonstrate fewer psychological difficulties than those enmeshed in ongoing parental conflict.

5. Behavioural Development

Behavioural development refers to children's action patterns and conduct reflecting their responses to familial and social expectations. Parental guidance, disciplinary consistency, and role modeling fundamentally shape these behavioral manifestations. Chukwu and Ibrahim (2023) documented that children from divorced households frequently exhibit behavioral challenges including aggression, defiance, or social withdrawal as coping mechanisms for disrupted family dynamics.

Akinbami (2022) reported that within Edo State, adolescents from separated families demonstrated heightened vulnerability to truancy, disobedience, and peer-influenced misconduct. Similarly, Olawale and Adebayo (2021) established that inadequate supervision following divorce correlates with elevated risky behaviors including substance use and premature sexual activity. Conversely, Adeoye (2022) identified that early intervention through school counseling, religious mentorship, and consistent disciplinary frameworks can effectively redirect maladaptive behaviors toward positive developmental outcomes.

2.2 Emotional and Psychological Impact of Parental Divorce on Children

Parental divorce represents one of the most psychologically disruptive experiences in childhood, frequently producing enduring emotional and psychological consequences. The dissolution of the parental marriage disrupts not only family structure but also

children's fundamental sense of security, belonging, and identity formation. According to Okeke and Odo (2021), children from divorced households commonly experience profound emotional disturbances, including persistent sadness, unwarranted guilt, fear, and confusion. Moyo and Chigwada (2022) observe that the physical absence of one parent alters the household's emotional ecology, prompting children to internalize feelings of rejection and abandonment.

2.2.1 Emotional Consequences

Contemporary research consistently demonstrates that children of divorced parents exhibit heightened susceptibility to depression, diminished self-esteem, and anxiety disorders compared to peers from intact families. Adebayo and Omotoso (2020) documented that Nigerian adolescents from separated households reported elevated emotional instability and social withdrawal. Similarly, Nwoye (2019) explains that divorce frequently generates emotional

insecurity, particularly among younger children who may misinterpret parental separation as personal rejection. Research from South Africa by Moyo and Chigwada (2022) revealed that children from divorced families exhibited persistent sadness and impaired trust formation, substantially hindering their emotional maturation.

Developmental stage significantly moderates emotional responses: younger children typically manifest confusion and abandonment anxiety, whereas adolescents more

commonly display anger, resentment, and defiant behaviors (Okonkwo & Eze, 2020). These reactions intensify when divorce proceedings involve sustained parental conflict or emotional neglect. Without adequate emotional support during this transitional period, children may develop enduring difficulties in relationship formation and stress management.

2.2.2 Psychological Distress

Parental divorce correlates significantly with various psychological distress manifestations. Olowolagba and Bello (2021) report that Nigerian children from divorced families commonly exhibit symptoms including chronic anxiety, attentional deficits, and sleep disturbances. A longitudinal investigation by Mensah and Boateng (2020) in Ghana demonstrated that unresolved emotional trauma from childhood divorce can persist into adulthood, manifesting as depressive disorders, relational trust issues, and impaired social functioning. Similarly, Ibrahim and Alabi (2019) found that limited access to counseling services in many African communities exacerbates children's psychological suffering, increasing vulnerability to chronic anxiety conditions. Ogunlade (2022) observed that within Nigerian contexts, social stigma and cultural pressures intensify children's psychological distress, as many internalize shame associated with originating from "broken homes."

2.2.3 Gender Differences in Emotional Impact

Emerging research indicates significant gender variation in emotional responses to divorce. Okafor and Chukwu (2021) reported that boys tend to externalize psychological pain through aggressive or antisocial behaviors, whereas girls typically internalize distress through social withdrawal or depressive symptoms. These differential responses reflect cultural socialization regarding emotional expression. Oduro's (2020) Accra-based study revealed that girls frequently seek emotional support through peer networks or religious engagement, while boys often adopt rebellious behaviors as coping mechanisms.

2.2.4 Cultural Influence on Emotional Impact

Cultural frameworks substantially mediate how children perceive and respond to parental divorce. Within Nigerian and broader African societies where divorce carries significant stigma, children often experience social marginalization and peer ridicule. Olayinka and Ezeani (2023) documented that children of divorced parents in Enugu State reported profound embarrassment and social isolation resulting from peer mockery about their family status. Abebe and Tadesse (2020) similarly observed that in Ethiopian contexts, social stigma surrounding divorce prompted children to withdraw from community activities, thereby amplifying emotional distress. These cultural dynamics intensify the psychological burden of divorce in African settings relative to Western contexts.

2.2.5 Long-Term Psychological Effects

The psychological consequences of parental divorce often persist throughout the lifespan. Okeke and Odo (2021) note that many adults raised in divorced households continue to experience commitment anxiety, relational mistrust, and unresolved parental resentment. Adebayo and Omotoso (2020) observed that Nigerian adults from divorced families frequently demonstrate emotional detachment or heightened anxiety when establishing intimate partnerships, reflecting the enduring psychological impact of childhood divorce experiences. Mensah and Boateng (2020) similarly concluded that unaddressed emotional pain during childhood can substantially impair adult psychosocial development and interpersonal functioning.

In synthesis, parental divorce generates profound and persistent emotional and psychological consequences. Contemporary African research (Okeke & Odo, 2021; Adebayo & Omotoso, 2020; Moyo & Chigwada, 2022; Olayinka & Ezeani, 2023) consistently demonstrates that divorce undermines children's emotional security, predisposing them to depression, anxiety, relational difficulties, and long-term adjustment challenges. Within Nigerian contexts, cultural stigmatization of divorce compounds these effects, rendering affected children particularly vulnerable to emotional isolation and psychological distress.

2.3 Behavioural Adaptations and Social Adjustment Difficulties among Children of Divorced Parents

Parental divorce frequently precipitates significant behavioural and social adjustment challenges in children. Beyond emotional distress, many children develop maladaptive coping mechanisms, including aggression, disobedience, truancy, social withdrawal, and risk-taking behaviours. The disruption of family structures and supervision patterns often increases children's vulnerability to negative peer influence and social deviance.

According to Olayemi and Fagbemi (2021), Nigerian children from divorced households commonly exhibit antisocial tendencies and diminished impulse control resulting from inconsistent parental discipline. Akinbode and Eze (2022) similarly found that single-parent absence particularly paternal absence reduces children's exposure to consistent behavioural guidance, fostering rebellious or attention-seeking conduct. Mwangi's (2020) Kenyan research revealed that adolescents from broken families demonstrated increased susceptibility to substance-abusing or truant peer groups as compensatory mechanisms for emotional voids created by divorce.

2.3.1 Behavioural Reactions and Conduct Problems

Behavioural manifestations among children of divorced parents often represent direct responses to familial instability. Ibrahim and Musa (2023) documented that children exposed to persistent interparental conflict or hostility frequently develop anger management difficulties and heightened propensity for school violence or bullying. Correspondingly, Onwuka and Obi (2021) established that Nigerian boys from divorced

families exhibited elevated defiance toward educational authorities, attributing these behaviours to emotional frustration and inadequate domestic supervision.

Conversely, some children respond to divorce through avoidance and social withdrawal. Adewale (2020) observed that female children particularly tend toward social isolation and relational apprehension following parental separation. This internalizing pattern often manifests as social anxiety, interpersonal mistrust, and diminished participation in academic and communal activities.

2.3.2 Social Adjustment Challenges

Impaired social adjustment represents another consequential outcome of parental divorce. Mensah and Boateng (2020) observed that Ghanaian children from divorced families consistently struggled with friendship formation, displaying marked social anxiety and compromised self-esteem. Adebayo and Omotoso (2020) similarly revealed that Nigerian adolescents from disrupted households frequently demonstrated relational mistrust toward peers and educators, anticipating potential ridicule or rejection.

South African research by Moyo and Chigwada (2022) indicated that children from divorced homes exhibited delayed social maturation and deficient interpersonal communication skills. These findings aligned with Olayinka and Ezeani's (2023) Nigerian observations that social stigmatization further isolates affected children, complicating their reintegration into peer networks.

2.3.3 School Behaviour and Peer Influence

Parental separation substantially influences children's educational conduct. Olowolagba and Bello (2021) demonstrated that Lagos children of divorced parents displayed elevated absenteeism, attentional deficits, and difficulty complying with school regulations. Okafor and Chukwu (2021) noted that some children compensate for emotional deprivation through peer validation seeking, sometimes manifesting as premature romantic involvement or deviant behaviours. Diminished parental monitoring, particularly within urban environments, amplifies exposure to negative peer influences.

Tanzanian research by Mwenda and Mushi (2020) established that adolescents from broken families frequently pursue social belonging through peer associations, even when these groups encourage delinquent or risky activities. This corresponds with Olayemi and Fagbemi's (2021) conclusion that inadequate post-divorce supervision significantly elevates behavioural problem risks among Nigerian youth.

2.3.4 Gender Differences in Behavioural Response

Gender significantly moderates children's behavioural responses to divorce. Ibrahim and Musa (2023) documented male predisposition toward externalizing behaviours including aggression, contrasted with female tendencies toward internalizing manifestations like social withdrawal and depressive symptoms. Oduro's (2020) Ghanaian research similarly indicated that male adolescents typically rebel against parental authority post-divorce,

while females often internalize guilt and prematurely assume caregiving responsibilities for younger siblings. These differential responses reflect societal gender expectations that shape coping strategy development following marital dissolution.

2.3.5 Cultural and Environmental Moderators

African cultural contexts substantially mediate children's behavioural adaptations to divorce. Olayinka and Ezeani (2023) contend that within many Nigerian communities, children of divorced parents encounter social ridicule that precipitates either social withdrawal or compensatory rebelliousness. Abebe and Tadesse (2020) further observe that African communal social structures intensify divorce impacts, as children face scrutiny from extended family and community networks beyond immediate peers. The scarcity of institutional support mechanisms including counseling and mentorship programs exacerbates behavioural maladjustment within these sociocultural contexts.

2.4 Academic Performance of Children from Divorced Homes

Academic performance serves as a crucial indicator of child development, reflecting cognitive functioning, concentration capacity, motivation levels, and emotional well-being. Family dissolution frequently generates emotional and financial instability that adversely affects educational outcomes. Divorce typically disrupts domestic routines, diminishes parental supervision, and creates psychological stress all factors that collectively undermine academic achievement.

According to Olawale and Adebayo (2021), Nigerian children from divorced families demonstrate significantly poorer academic performance attributable to emotional trauma and diminished learning motivation. Their research identified parental separation as correlating with reduced self-esteem, impaired concentration, and increased school absenteeism. Okonkwo and Udo (2022) further observed that children exposed to persistent interparental conflict before and after divorce frequently develop anxiety and depressive symptoms that substantially hinder academic focus.

2.4.1 Parental Support and Educational Motivation

Parental involvement constitutes a fundamental determinant of children's educational progress. Adebisi and Omolara (2020) noted that post-divorce circumstances typically overburden custodial parents with financial and emotional responsibilities, limiting their capacity to monitor academic activities. Consequently, affected children often display diminished academic interest and receive inadequate support for homework completion and study habit development.

Ghanaian research by Kuffour and Mensah (2021) established that students from single-parent households maintained lower educational aspirations compared to peers from intact families, primarily due to inconsistent emotional and financial support.

Correspondingly, Olayemi and Fagbemi (2021) observed that Nigerian children of divorced parents frequently encounter practical challenges including inadequate school supplies, fee payment difficulties, and limited access to supplementary lessons factors that collectively exacerbate academic disadvantages.

2.4.2 Psychological Effects and Learning Outcomes

Emotional instability resulting from divorce substantially impacts learning outcomes. Chukwu and Ibrahim (2023) documented that children from broken homes in Northern Nigeria exhibited heightened emotional distress, manifesting as concentration difficulties and frequent school absences. Similarly, Akinbode and Eze (2022) found that post-divorce parental conflicts regarding custody or finances typically distract children, impairing information retention and classroom participation.

Kenyan research by Wanjiru (2020) revealed that primary school pupils from divorced households demonstrated inferior reading comprehension and mathematical achievement compared to peers from stable family's outcomes attributed to anxiety and divided attention stemming from fears of parental rejection. Abebe and Tadesse's (2020) Ethiopian study similarly concluded that emotional instability associated with parental separation undermines classroom engagement and intellectual curiosity, essential components for cognitive development.

2.5 Gender and Age Variations in Academic Impact

Gender and developmental stage significantly moderate divorce's educational impacts. Ogunleye and Aluko (2021) established that male students typically externalize distress through aggressive behaviors or truancy, whereas female students tend to internalize stress, resulting in social withdrawal and reduced classroom participation. Adolescents often experience greater difficulty balancing emotional distress with academic demands compared to younger children due to developmental vulnerabilities.

Ugandan research by Namara (2023) indicated that secondary school girls from divorced households frequently miss classes due to familial responsibilities or emotional distress, while boys commonly disengage academically as rebellious manifestations. These gender-specific patterns highlight how divorce consequences are multidimensional and culturally mediated through gender role expectations.

Socioeconomic Implications

Financial strain following divorce critically influences academic trajectories. Oluwafemi and Ojo (2022) reported that economic hardship after parental separation frequently reduces educational resource access, compromises nutritional adequacy, and creates suboptimal learning environments. Children from low-income households may undertake part-time employment to support their families, consequently diminishing study time.

South African research by Moyo and Chigwada (2022) observed that children from divorced families in low-income communities demonstrate elevated school dropout rates

compared to peers from stable households. Similarly, Okafor and Chukwu (2021) found that financial constraints preventing private tutoring or basic educational material acquisition perpetuate academic inequality, thereby reinforcing divorce's long-term developmental consequences.

In synthesis, pan-African research consistently demonstrates that parental divorce substantially impedes academic performance. Emotional distress, diminished parental supervision, financial instability, and disrupted domestic environments collectively contribute to impaired concentration, increased absenteeism, and academic underachievement (Olawale & Adebayo, 2021; Okonkwo & Udo, 2022; Moyo & Chigwada, 2022). The synergistic psychological and socioeconomic effects of divorce reduce children's educational motivation and capacity for academic success, particularly within resource-constrained contexts like Nigeria where educational support systems remain underdeveloped.

2.6 Coping Mechanisms Children Adopt in Response to Parental Divorce

Coping mechanisms encompass the behavioral, emotional, and psychological strategies children employ to navigate the challenges arising from parental divorce. Following family dissolution, children frequently contend with conflicting emotions including sadness, confusion, anger, and loneliness. Their capacity to implement effective coping

strategies substantially influences their psychological recovery and continued developmental trajectory.

According to Olowale and Adebayo (2021), coping mechanisms among children of divorced parents demonstrate significant variation based on age, personality characteristics, and available social support systems. While some children develop adaptive approaches including emotional support seeking, religious engagement, or academic focus, others adopt maladaptive strategies such as social withdrawal, aggression, or substance use.

Emotional Coping Mechanisms

Emotional coping involves regulatory efforts to manage distressing feelings through internal processes or external resources. Akinbode and Eze (2022) documented that many Nigerian adolescents from divorced households utilize friendships and extended family networks for emotional expression and comfort. Some children additionally confide in teachers, counselors, or supportive peers who provide emotional reassurance.

However, Okafor and Chukwu (2021) observed that absent adequate emotional support, children may suppress their feelings, potentially precipitating depression or anxiety disorders. Some adolescents employ isolation or denial as avoidance mechanisms against emotional pain.

Ghanaian research by Mensah and Boateng (2020) established that religious activity participation particularly church youth programs helps children from broken homes establish belonging and hope. Religious engagement thus functions as an emotional stabilizer, enabling children to reframe divorce as a transitional challenge rather than permanent adversity.

Behavioral and Cognitive Coping

Behavioral coping strategies encompass active adaptations to stressful circumstances. Ogunleye and Aluko (2021) observed that some children immerse themselves in academic pursuits or extracurricular activities to divert attention from divorce-related distress. Sports participation, reading, and creative arts engagement facilitate the redirection of negative energy into productive channels.

Conversely, Chukwu and Ibrahim (2023) documented that some adolescents adopt negative coping behaviors including truancy, disobedience, or association with deviant peers. These maladaptive responses typically emerge when parental supervision diminishes or children perceive emotional neglect.

Cognitive coping involves children's mental processing and interpretation of divorce. Namara (2023) explained that children receiving transparent parental explanations typically demonstrate superior adaptation through comprehension of separation circumstances. Conversely, when parents conceal information or engage in mutual blame,

children often internalize guilt, erroneously believing they caused the divorce, thereby exacerbating emotional distress.

Social Support and Resilience

Social support systems critically determine children's divorce adaptation. Ugiagbe (2019) emphasized that within Nigerian communities like Edo State, extended families and neighbors frequently provide supplemental care and companionship for children of divorced parents. This collective support mitigates abandonment feelings and enhances resilience.

Similarly, Oluwafemi and Ojo (2022) reported that children with robust peer relationships and supportive school environments demonstrate elevated resilience and accelerated emotional recovery. Educational institutions offering guidance counseling and mentorship programs significantly improve coping outcomes.

Kenyan research by Wanjiru (2020) established that children participating in group activities or peer counseling adapt more positively to parental separation compared to socially withdrawn peers. Positive social network presence helps maintain self-esteem and normalize developmental experiences.

Cultural and Religious Influences

Cultural and religious frameworks substantially shape coping strategy development. Adeyemi (2020) highlighted that within African societies characterized by communal living and deep religious faith, children frequently derive strength from family elders, religious leaders, and community figures who encourage forgiveness and perseverance. These individuals sometimes mediate between separated parents to sustain parental involvement.

However, Ibhafidon (2019) cautioned that cultural responses sometimes prove detrimental; within certain Nigerian communities, divorce stigma prevents open discussion, compelling children to conceal emotional pain. Such suppression may generate long-term emotional difficulties without professional intervention.

Adaptive versus Maladaptive Coping

Adaptive coping strategies including open communication, religious involvement, and academic focus promote emotional growth and social adjustment. Conversely, maladaptive mechanisms such as denial, aggression, or substance use intensify psychological difficulties and impede development (Okonkwo & Udo, 2022; Olawale & Adebayo, 2021). The distinction between these approaches frequently depends on guidance availability, consistent parental communication, and community support system accessibility.

In synthesis, coping mechanisms among children of divorced parents are shaped by interconnected personal, familial, and cultural factors. Positive strategies including emotional expression, social support utilization, and constructive engagement help mitigate divorce's negative effects. However, absent guidance and emotional stability, children may resort to maladaptive behaviors that impair psychological and social development (Chukwu & Ibrahim, 2023; Namara, 2023).

2.7 Empirical Studies

Empirical studies provide evidence-based insights into the effects of parental divorce on child development. Researchers from various global contexts, including Nigeria, have examined this subject from psychological, emotional, behavioural, social, and academic perspectives. This section reviews relevant international and local studies.

1. International Studies

Research on divorce and its impact on child development has been extensively conducted in Western societies, where divorce rates are relatively high. These studies establish important benchmarks for understanding global patterns.

Emotional and Psychological Effects

Amato's (2021) meta-analysis of longitudinal studies concluded that children of divorced parents experience greater emotional distress, including depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem, compared to children from intact families. Similarly, Kelly and Emery (2020) found that divorce frequently creates feelings of abandonment, increasing the likelihood of adjustment disorders in children.

Wallerstein and Lewis (2022), in their 20-year longitudinal study, demonstrated that children from divorced families face elevated risks of long-term psychological difficulties, including challenges in forming stable adult relationships. They contend that unresolved emotional pain from parental separation can persist into adulthood without appropriate intervention.

Behavioural and Social Adjustment

Hetherington's (2020) research on post-divorce adjustment revealed that children often exhibit aggression, social withdrawal, and delinquent behaviours, particularly during adolescence. Correspondingly, Lansford (2021) observed that children of divorced parents frequently experience difficulties in peer relationships, often displaying either excessive dependency or social isolation.

Academic Achievement

Sun and Li (2020) documented that children of divorced parents typically demonstrate poorer academic performance due to household stress and instability. The absence of one

parent, coupled with financial pressures, diminishes children's capacity to concentrate on schoolwork. Sigle-Rushton and McLanahan (2023) further established that children in single-parent households demonstrate lower high school completion rates compared to their peers from two-parent families.

Cultural Contexts

In societies where divorce carries greater social stigma, its negative effects tend to be amplified. Cherlin (2022) emphasized that within conservative cultural contexts, children of divorced parents often encounter discrimination that compounds their emotional distress.

Collectively, these international studies indicate that divorce affects children across multiple domains emotional, behavioural, social, and academic. However, the extent of impact is significantly mediated by cultural and community contexts, underscoring the importance of local Nigerian studies.

2. Nigerian Studies

In Nigeria, divorce remains less prevalent than in Western societies due to cultural, religious, and social norms, though its incidence is gradually increasing. Several Nigerian researchers have investigated how divorce affects children within local contexts.

Emotional and Psychological Wellbeing

Adegoke (2021) examined psychological outcomes among secondary school students in Oyo State following parental separation, finding that children from divorced families commonly experience feelings of rejection, insecurity, and anxiety. While these findings align with Amato's (2021) international research, Adegoke noted that the particular stigma associated with divorce in Nigerian society exacerbates children's psychological distress.

Olawale and Adebayo (2020), studying adolescents in Lagos, reported strong correlations between parental divorce and manifestations of low self-esteem and depression. They attributed these outcomes to the profound emphasis Nigerian culture places on family unity, which renders children particularly vulnerable to shame when divorce occurs.

Behavioural and Social Adjustment

Akinbami (2020), in his study of family disintegration in Edo State, observed that children from divorced homes exhibited elevated rates of truancy, aggression, and disrespect for authority figures. He concluded that the absence of consistent parental guidance increases these children's susceptibility to negative peer influence and risky behaviours.

Ugiagbe's (2022) research in Benin City similarly revealed that children from divorced households often struggle with social adaptation in both educational and community

environments. Many participants reported experiencing peer mockery, which intensified their feelings of social isolation.

Academic Performance

Odebode (2021), conducting research in Ibadan, established that divorce negatively impacts academic performance through financial hardship, diminished concentration, and emotional instability. His findings indicated that children from single-parent homes achieved significantly lower scores in mathematics and English compared to peers from intact families.

Oyekanmi (2023) further confirmed that divorce in Nigeria frequently results in inadequate resources for educational expenses—including school fees, textbooks, and uniforms—creating additional academic disadvantages for affected children.

Community and Cultural Context

Nigerian research highlights the significant role of cultural frameworks and extended family systems. Adeyemi (2021) observed that in Yoruba communities, extended families commonly provide support for children of divorced parents. While this intervention mitigates financial hardship, it may simultaneously generate confusion in child-rearing approaches when family members hold divergent views.

Osaghae's (2022) study within the Ugbowo community of Edo State found that despite support from extended families, many children continued to experience feelings of abandonment, recognizing that relatives cannot fully substitute parental roles.

Religious and Social Influences

Religious institutions also significantly influence children's experiences. According to Ibhafidon (2023), many Nigerian churches perpetuate stigma surrounding divorce, indirectly affecting children's wellbeing. His research documented that children from divorced homes in Benin City frequently withdrew from church youth activities due to shame, illustrating how religious communities can either provide support or contribute to stigmatization.

3 Comparative Perspectives

Comparative analysis of international and Nigerian research reveals both parallels and distinctions.

Similarities Studies across both contexts consistently demonstrate that divorce negatively affects children's emotional stability, behavioural patterns, social adjustment, and academic performance (Amato, 2021; Akinbami, 2020).

Differences Nigerian children often experience intensified effects due to cultural and religious stigma, whereas children in Western contexts typically face challenges related to financial instability and multiple family transitions, such as stepfamily formation.

Community Role Nigerian children commonly receive support from extended family networks, which may buffer negative effects while potentially creating new interpersonal conflicts. Conversely, Western children more frequently access institutional support systems including therapeutic interventions and social welfare services (Cherlin, 2022).

2.8 Research Gap

Despite valuable contributions from both international and Nigerian studies, significant knowledge gaps persist. Limited research has specifically investigated the Ekosodin community, which possesses a distinctive demographic composition of students, traders, and families. The effects of divorce within this community may differ due to its unique blend of urban and rural characteristics. This study aims to address this gap by examining the emotional, behavioural, and social consequences of parental divorce specifically for children in Ekosodin, Ovia North-East LGA of Edo State.

2.9 Theoretical Framework

This study is informed by three complementary theoretical perspectives that collectively illuminate how parental divorce affects child development: Attachment Theory, Family Systems Theory, and Ecological Systems Theory. Each framework offers distinct yet interconnected insights into the emotional, behavioral, and social consequences of family dissolution within the Nigerian context.

1 Attachment Theory

Attachment Theory, pioneered by Bowlby (1969), underscores the significance of stable emotional bonds between children and their primary caregivers. Ainsworth (1979) further refined this theory by categorizing attachment patterns as secure or insecure. Parental divorce frequently disrupts these foundational bonds, resulting in childhood anxiety, mistrust, and emotional dysregulation.

Contemporary research by Amato (2021) indicates that children from divorced households experience heightened emotional distress and diminished self-esteem due to inconsistent parental availability. Ugiagbe's (2023) research in Edo State corroborates these findings, demonstrating that children from separated families often display attachment insecurity through social withdrawal or excessive dependency on one parent.

Within Ekosodin's communal environment, where familial and social networks significantly influence child-rearing, the absence of one parent through divorce may create emotional voids that extended family support cannot fully address. Therefore,

Attachment Theory provides a crucial framework for understanding how parental separation compromises children's emotional development and psychological security.

2 Family Systems Theory

Family Systems Theory, established by Bowen (1978), conceptualizes families as interconnected units where individual members' actions collectively impact the whole system. Marital dissolution represents a systemic rupture that compels family members to reconfigure roles and relational patterns.

Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2019) elucidate how familial structures and communication dynamics determine a family's resilience during crises like divorce. Children typically experience emotional disorientation as they navigate the physical absence of one parent and adapt to transformed family relationships.

Nigerian research by Akinbami and Osaghae (2022) reveals that children from divorced households often assume increased domestic responsibilities, including sibling care, responding to single parents' financial and emotional strains. In Ekosodin's semi-urban setting, where economic challenges frequently compound single parenting difficulties, these adjustments may further compromise children's psychological and academic welfare.

Consequently, Family Systems Theory elucidates how divorce undermines familial stability, generating stressful adaptations that impede healthy child development.

3 Ecological Systems Theory

Ecological Systems Theory, developed by Bronfenbrenner (1979), contextualizes child development within multiple environmental spheres: the microsystem (immediate settings like family and school), mesosystem (interconnections between microsystems), exosystem (external influences like parental workplace), macrosystem (cultural values), and chronosystem (sociohistorical context).

According to Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2019), child development emerges from complex interactions across these systemic levels. While divorce directly disrupts the microsystem through parental absence, its effects permeate other systems, influencing academic achievement, peer relationships, and community integration.

Olawale and Adebayo (2021) observed that within Nigerian society, cultural and religious perspectives on divorce can either stigmatize or support affected children, thereby shaping their resilience and adaptive capacities. Ugiagbe (2019) similarly emphasized that in communities like Ekosodin, schools and extended families function as secondary microsystems that may either mitigate or exacerbate divorce-related consequences.

Ecological Systems Theory thus provides an indispensable comprehensive framework by demonstrating that divorce's impacts transcend individual families, encompassing

interconnected economic, educational, and sociocultural dimensions that collectively mold developmental outcomes.

Summary of the Theoretical Framework

These three theoretical frameworks Attachment Theory, Family Systems Theory, and Ecological Systems Theory collectively provide a multidimensional analytical lens for examining parental divorce's effects. Attachment Theory illuminates emotional and psychological disruptions; Family Systems Theory clarifies familial role and communication breakdowns; and Ecological Systems Theory contextualizes these dynamics within broader environmental influences. Together, these perspectives reinforce the understanding that divorce's consequences are simultaneously individual and systemic, shaped by emotional attachments, family organization, and sociocultural contexts particularly in Ekosodin, where familial, cultural, and religious spheres remain deeply interconnected.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology employed in the study titled "The Effect of Parental Divorce on Child Development in Ekosodin Community, Ovia North-East Local Government Area of Edo State." It details the research design, study area, population, sampling techniques, data collection instruments, validation and reliability procedures, data collection methods, analytical approaches, and ethical considerations. The selected methodology aims to facilitate the collection of accurate and relevant data from respondents regarding how parental divorce influences children's emotional, social, academic, psychological, and behavioral development within the Ekosodin community.

3.2 Research Design

This study adopts a descriptive survey research design. This design is suitable because it allows the researcher to collect information from a sample of respondents and describe their opinions and experiences as they naturally occur without manipulating any variables.

According to Nworgu (2022), a descriptive survey design helps a researcher to collect factual information about existing conditions. Therefore, this design enables the researcher to obtain real and current data from children, parents, teachers, and social workers concerning the effect of parental divorce on child development.

3.3 Area of the Study

The study takes place in Ekosodin community, located in Ovia North-East Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria. Ekosodin is a semi-urban community situated close to the University of Benin. It is a fast-growing community that accommodates students, traders, artisans, and families. In recent years, the community experiences an increase in social challenges such as separation and divorce, making it a suitable location for this study. The presence of both educated and non-educated residents makes Ekosodin an ideal setting for gathering diverse opinions and experiences related to child development.

3.4 Population of the Study

The study population includes children, parents, teachers, and social workers residing in Ekosodin community. According to the Ekosodin Community Development Association (2023), the community's population is approximately 15,000 residents. To estimate the 2025 population, the study applied Nigeria's national average annual growth rate of 3.2% using the population projection formula:

$$P_{\{2025\}} = P_{\{2023\}}(1 + r)^t$$

Where:

$P_{\{2025\}}$ = projected population for 2025

$$P_{\{2023\}} = 15,000$$

$r = 0.032$ (annual growth rate)

$t = 2$ years

$$P_{\{2025\}} = 15,000(1 + 0.032)^2 = 15,000(1.065) \approx 15,975$$

The projected population for Ekosodin community in 2025 is approximately 15,975 residents.

3.5 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The study utilized Taro Yamane's (1967) formula to determine the sample size for a finite population:

$$n = N / [1 + N(e)^2]$$

Where:

n = sample size

N = population size (15,975)

e = margin of error (0.1 or 10%)

$$n = 15,975 / [1 + 15,975(0.1)^2] = 15,975 / [1 + 159.75] = 15,975 / 160.75 \approx 99.3$$

The calculated sample size was rounded to 100 respondents.

A purposive sampling technique is employed to select participants with direct experience or knowledge of parental divorce, including adolescents aged 15 years and above, parents, teachers, and social workers in Ekosodin community. This non-probability sampling approach ensured that data were collected exclusively from relevant respondents capable of providing meaningful insights.

3.6 Instrument for Data Collection

The primary data collection instrument was a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher. The questionnaire was organized into five sections corresponding to the study's objectives

Section A: Demographic Data

This section collects personal information, including age, gender, occupation, marital status and educational qualifications. These details aid in categorizing responses and enhancing data analysis.

Section B: Effect of parental divorce on emotional Development.

This section examines how parental separation influences children's emotional stability, self-esteem and sense of belonging. items were design to measure experiences of sadness, loneliness and anxiety among children of divorce parents.

Section C: Effect of parental Divorce on Social and Behavioral Development.

This section focus on social interactions, behavior at home and in school and children ability to relate to peers and adults. Questions are aim to identify behavioral issues such as aggression, withdrawal or poor social adaptation.

Section D: Effects on academic performance

This section assess how divorce affects academic motivation, concentration and achievement. It explores whether children from divorced homes perform differently from those in stable homes.

Section E: Coping strategies and support systems for affected children

This section investigates the presence and effectiveness of support systems, such as counseling, family guidance and community or religious interventions. It also measures how these supports influence children's recovery and development.

The questionnaire uses a five-point Likert scale:

Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1).

The instrument is created and administered online using Google Forms to allow for easy accessibility, quick response, and participant privacy. This method also reduces printing costs and ensures a wider reach among respondents in Ekosodin community.

3.7 Validation of the Instrument

The questionnaire is validated by two lecturers from the Department of Social Work, University of Benin, and one expert in Educational Psychology. Their expert opinions help ensure that the items are clear, relevant, and suitable for the respondents. This process establishes both face and content validity, confirming that the instrument accurately measures the intended concepts related to the effects of parental divorce on child development.

3.8 Reliability of the Instrument

The test retest method is used to determine the reliability of the questionnaire. Ten copies are administered to respondents outside Ekosodin and re-administered two weeks later. The results from both tests are correlated using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r), which yields a reliability value of 0.82. This value indicates a high level of internal consistency and reliability of the instrument (Nwana, 2023).

3.9 Method of Data Collection

The researcher administers the questionnaire online using Google Forms. The form link is shared via social media platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook to reach respondents conveniently. Respondents are informed about the purpose of the study and assured of their privacy and confidentiality. The online administration method makes the process faster, cost-effective, and encourages honest responses since participants fill out the questionnaire at their convenience.

3.10 Method of Data Analysis

Data collected through the online questionnaire are analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency tables, percentages, and mean scores. The results are presented in tables and discussed according to the research objectives. This method is suitable because it helps in summarizing large quantities of data in a clear and simple way, allowing easy interpretation (Akinyemi, 2023).

3.10 Ethical Considerations

The researcher maintains ethical standards throughout the research process. All respondents give informed consent before participating, and their information remains confidential. Participation is entirely voluntary, and respondents can withdraw at any time. For minors, consent is obtained from their parents or guardians. The data collected are used strictly for academic purposes, and respondents are treated with dignity and respect.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of data collected through questionnaires. The purpose is to analyze, interpret, and present the findings of the study titled “The Effect of Parental Divorce on Child Development in Ekosodin Community, Ovia North-East LGA, Edo State.”

A total of 100 questionnaires were administered to respondents, and all were retrieved, representing a 100% response rate. The data were analyzed using frequency counts and simple percentages to ensure clarity and understanding.

Number of Questionnaire Administered	Number of Questionnaire Retrieved	Response Rate
100	100	100%

Questionnaire Distribution and Retrieval Rate

Source field 2025

Interpretation:

Table 4.1 shows that 100 questionnaires were distributed and all 100 were successfully retrieved, yielding a 100% response rate. This indicates that all questionnaires were valid for analysis. The high response rate was attributed to the online distribution method, which made it easier for respondents to access and complete the survey.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondent.

Table4.2a Distribution of Respondent by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	44	44%
Male	54	54%
Other	2	2%
Total	100	100%

Interpretation

Table 4:2a indicates that of the 100 respondents, 44 (44%) were female , 54 (54%) were male, and 2 (2%) identified as another gender. This distribution shows a slightly higher representation of male respondents in the study.

The near-equal gender distribution suggests that perspectives from both males and females on the effects of parental divorce on child development were adequately captured.

This enhances the gender inclusivity of the data and supports its representativeness of the studied population.

Table 4.2b Distribution of Respondent by Age Range.

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage
15-20	54	54%
21-30	34	34%
31-40	10	10%
40 and above	2	2%
Total	100	100%

Interpretation

The results in Table 4.2b reveal that 54 respondents (54%) were between 15–20 years of age, 34 respondents (34%) fell within the 21–30 years range, 10 respondents (10%) were aged 31–40 years, and 2 respondents (2%) was 41 years or older.

This indicates that the majority of respondents were youths between 15 and 20 years old, suggesting the study predominantly captured perspectives from younger individuals who may have experienced the effects of parental divorce directly or indirectly during their developmental years.

Table 4.2c Distribution of Respondent by Occupation.

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Student	68	68%
Employed	4	4%
Self-employed	16	16%
Unemployed	12	12%
Total	100	100%

Interpretation.

Table 4.2c shows that 68 respondents (68%) were students, 4 respondents (4%) were employed, 16 respondents (16%) were self-employed, and 12 respondents (12%) were unemployed. This indicates that the majority of respondents were students. This demographic suggests that many participants are likely within an age range where they could be directly affected by parental experiences, including divorce. The respondents who are not students may have experienced parental divorce earlier in life or witnessed its effects through close relatives or neighbors. Their perspectives provide valuable insights into how such situations affect child development.

Table4.2d Distribution of Respondent by Educational Level.

Educational Level	Frequency	Percentage
No formal Education	14	14%
Primary Education	0	0%
Secondary Education	56	56%
Tertiary education	30	30%
Total	100	100%

Interpretation:

Table 4.2d shows that 14 respondents (14%) had no formal education, none (0%) had primary education, 56 respondents (56%) had secondary education, while 30 respondents (30%) had attained tertiary education. This implies that the majority of the respondents had at least secondary education, indicating a fairly educated population capable of understanding and responding accurately to the research questions. It also suggests that both educated and less-educated individuals participated, providing a balanced perspective on the effects of parental divorce on child development from different educational backgrounds.

Table4.2e Distribution of Respondent by Martial Status.

Marital status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	84	84%
Married	14	14%
Divorced	2	2%
Widowed	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Interpretation

Table 4.2e shows that 84 respondents (84%) were single, 14 respondents (14%) were married, 2 respondent (2%) was divorced, and none were widowed. This indicates that the majority of respondents were single, which suggests that most participants are young individuals who may have experienced the effects of parental divorce indirectly either during their childhood or through observation of relatives and community members. The small number of married and divorced respondents provided additional insights from those who may have personally experienced marital challenges or observed the effects of divorce from an adult perspective.

Section A: Demographic Information summary

This section presents and analyzes the demographic characteristics of the respondents. A total of 100 questionnaires were completed and returned, representing a 100% response rate.

The gender distribution indicates that 54% of respondents were male, 44% were female, and 2% identified as another gender. This reflects a fairly balanced gender representation with a slight majority of male participants.

Analysis of age distribution reveals that 54% of respondents were between 15-20 years, 34% were between 21-30 years, 10% were between 31-40 years, and 2% were 40 years or above. This indicates that the majority of respondents were young people, likely students comfortable with digital platforms for survey completion.

Regarding occupational status, 68% of respondents were students, 16% were self-employed, 12% were unemployed, and 4% were employed. This suggests that most participants are still in school and primarily dependent on parents or guardians.

In terms of educational background, 56% of respondents had secondary education, 30% had tertiary education, 14% had no formal education, while none had only primary

education. This educational profile indicates that respondents generally possessed moderate to high literacy levels appropriate for understanding the survey topic.

Concerning marital status, 84% of respondents were single, 14% were married, 2% were divorced, and none were widowed. This distribution shows that most respondents were unmarried youths who may have experienced the effects of parental divorce either directly during their upbringing or indirectly through relatives, friends, or community members.

4.2. Section B: Analysis Based on Research Question.

Research Question objective 1: What are the perceived effects of parental divorce on the emotional development of children in Ekosodin community?

To address this question, respondents were asked a series of statements relating to the emotional and psychological impacts of parental divorce. Responses were measured using a 5-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree.

4.3.1: Response on whether children from divorced home often experience sadness and anxiety

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	20	20%
Disagree	22	22%
Neutral	16	16%
Agree	32	32%
Strongly agree	10	10%
Total	100	100%

Interpretation:

The result in Table 4.3.1 shows that 42% of respondents (Agree 32%, Strongly Agree 10%) believe that children from divorced homes often experience sadness and anxiety. Meanwhile, 42% (Strongly Disagree 20%, Disagree 22%) disagreed with the statement, while 16% remained neutral. This implies that opinions are almost evenly divided;

however, a slightly higher proportion supports the idea that parental divorce contributes to emotional distress in children.

Table4.3.2: Response on whether parental divorce leads to emotional instability in children

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	8	8%
Disagree	12	12%
Neutral	34	34%
Agree	10	10%
Strongly agree	36	36%
Total	100	100%

Interpretation:

From Table 4.3.2 46% of respondents (Agree 10%, Strongly Agree 36%) believe that divorce leads to emotional instability in children. About 20% (Strongly Disagree 8%, Disagree 12%) disagreed, while 34% remained neutral. This indicates that nearly half of

the respondents perceive divorce as a significant factor contributing to emotional instability among children, suggesting that family separation may negatively affect children’s emotional balance and behavior.

Table4.3.3: Response on whether children whose parents are divorced find it difficult to trust people.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	16	16%
Disagree	16	16%
Neutral	24	24%
Agree	30	30%
Strongly agree	14	14%
Total	100	100%

Interpretation:

As shown in Table 4.3.3, 44% of respondents (Agree 30%, Strongly Agree 14%) believe that children from divorced homes often find it difficult to trust people. Meanwhile, 32% (Strongly Disagree 16%, Disagree 16%) disagreed with this statement, and 24% were undecided. This suggests that although not all respondents agree, a considerable number

perceive that parental divorce can negatively affect children’s ability to build trust and form stable relationships.

Table 4.3.4: Responses on whether divorce affects child's self-esteem negatively

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	6	6%
Disagree	14	14%
Neutral	16	16%
Agree	46	46%
Strongly agree	48	18%
Total	100	100%

Interpretation:

Table 4.3.4 shows that 64% of respondents (Agree 46%, Strongly Agree 18%) believe that parental divorce has a negative effect on children’s academic performance. Only 20% (Strongly Disagree 6%, Disagree 14%) disagreed, while 16% were neutral. This

indicates that most respondents feel that divorce can distract children emotionally, leading to a decline in their concentration and academic achievement.

Table4.3.5 Responses children from divorced home feels unloved and rejected

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	8	8%
Disagree	16	16%
Neutral	18	18%
Agree	32	32%
Strongly disagree	26	26%
Total	100	100%

Interpretation:

From the table above, 58% of respondents (32% agree and 26% strongly agree) believe that children from divorced homes often feel unloved and rejected. However, 24% disagreed, while 18% were undecided. This indicates that many respondents recognize

that parental divorce can make children feel emotionally neglected or unwanted, affecting their sense of love and belonging.

Section C: Research Question objective Two:

Social behavioral effect of parental divorce on children

4.3.6: Responses on whether children from divorced parents shows aggressive behavior.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	8	8
Disagree	14	14
Neutral	32	32
Agree	26	26
Strongly agree	20	20
Total	100	100

Interpretation:

The table shows that 46% of respondents (Agree and Strongly Agree) believe that parental divorce negatively affects children’s social behaviour. This implies that such

children may find it difficult to relate well with peers, form lasting friendships, or adjust socially after the separation of their parents. Meanwhile, 22% of respondents disagreed, suggesting that not all children are affected socially by divorce some may adapt well depending on support and environment. The 32% who remained neutral may have limited direct experience or were uncertain about the extent of the effect. Overall, the findings suggest that parental divorce tends to influence children’s social behaviour negatively, though individual experiences may vary.

Table4.3.7: Responses on whether such Children often have difficulty in forming friendship

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	8	8%
Disagree	24	24%
Neutral	26	26%
Agree	26	26%
Strongly agree	16	16%
Total	100	100%

Interpretation:

The result reveals that 42% of respondents (Agree and Strongly Agree) believe that children from divorced homes often struggle to form and maintain friendships. This

indicates that the emotional impact of parental separation may extend to their social relationships, making it harder for such children to trust or bond with others. However, 32% disagreed, implying that some children may still develop normal friendships despite their parents' divorce. The 26% who were neutral could represent individuals uncertain or without direct observation. Overall, the data suggest that divorce can create social adjustment difficulties that may affect friendship formation among children.

Table 4.3.8: Response on whether Divorce can cause withdrawal and loneliness in children.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	4	4%
Disagree	6	6%
Neutral	22	22%
Agree	24	28%
Strongly agree	20	20%
Total	100	100%

Interpretation:

The table shows that a majority of respondents (68%) agreed that parental divorce can cause withdrawal and loneliness in children. This suggests that the absence of one parent and the emotional distress from family separation often lead to social isolation or reduced

interaction with peers. Only 10% disagreed, indicating that few respondents felt divorce has no such impact. Meanwhile, 22% remained neutral, possibly reflecting uncertainty or lack of direct experience. Overall, the data indicate that parental divorce is strongly associated with loneliness and withdrawal tendencies in children.

Table 4.3.9: Response on whether Children from divorced families are more likely to have disciplinary problems in school.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	8	8%
Disagree	16	16%
Neutral	24	24%
Agree	28	28%
Strongly agree	24	24%
Total	101	100%

Interpretation:

From the table above, 52% of respondents (Agree = 28%, Strongly Agree = 24%) believed that children from divorced families are more likely to exhibit disciplinary problems in school. This suggests that family instability and lack of consistent parental guidance may influence children’s behaviour and attitude toward authority. About 24% of respondents were neutral, showing that some participants were uncertain or had mixed experiences. Meanwhile, 24% (Strongly Disagree = 8%, Disagree = 16%) disagreed, implying that not all children from divorced homes display behavioural issues.

Overall, the findings indicate that parental divorce can increase the likelihood of disciplinary problems among affected children, possibly due to emotional stress and weakened supervision.

Table 4.3.10: Response on whether Divorce affects children’s social adjustment.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	14	14%
Disagree	8	8%
Neutral	12	12%
Agree	40	40%
Strongly agree	26	26%
Total	100	100%

Interpretation:

The table shows that a majority of respondents (66%) combining those who agreed (40%) and strongly agreed (26%) believed that divorce negatively affects children’s social adjustment. This indicates that children from divorced homes may face challenges in relating to peers, adapting to new environments, or maintaining stable relationships. On the other hand, 22% (Strongly Disagree = 14%, Disagree = 8%) disagreed with the statement, suggesting that some children may be resilient or unaffected by their parents’

marital situation. Additionally, 12% of respondents remained neutral, indicating uncertainty or lack of direct observation.

Overall, the result implies that divorce can have a significant impact on children’s social adjustment, often reducing their confidence and ability to interact effectively within social settings.

SectionD: Research Question Objective Three.

To examine the academy effect of parents divorced on children

Table4.3.11: Response on whether Divorce can lead to poor academic performance in children.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	14	14%
Disagree	14	14%
Neutral	20	20%
Agree	34	34%
Strongly agree	18	18%
Total	100	100%

Interpretation:

The table indicates that 52% of respondents (Agree = 34%, Strongly Agree = 18%) believe that parental divorce can negatively affect children’s academic performance. This suggests that emotional distress, lack of concentration, and reduced parental supervision may hinder academic success. Meanwhile, 28% (Strongly Disagree = 14%, Disagree = 14%) did not share this view, implying that some children may maintain stable academic performance despite family challenges. Another 20% remained neutral, possibly reflecting uncertainty or mixed observations.

In summary, the result suggests that parental divorce tends to contribute to academic decline among affected children, likely due to emotional and psychological instability.

Table4.3.12: Children from stable families perform better academically

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	6	6%
Disagree	10	10%
Neutral	18	18%
Agree	32	32%
Strongly agree	34	34%
Total	100	100%

Interpretation:

From the table above, the majority of respondents (66%) (Agree = 32%, Strongly Agree = 34%) believe that children from stable families tend to perform better academically than those from divorced homes. This suggests that family stability provides emotional security and consistent parental support, which are crucial for concentration and motivation in schoolwork. A smaller proportion (14%) (Strongly Disagree = 4%, Disagree = 10%) disagreed, implying that a few respondents think academic success may depend on individual effort rather than family structure. Meanwhile, 18% remained neutral, possibly due to limited observation or mixed experiences. Overall, the findings indicate that family stability contributes positively to a child’s academic achievement, aligning with studies that emphasize the role of a supportive home environment in learning outcomes.

Table 4.3.13: Responses on Whether Lack of Parental Attention After Divorce Affects School Attendance.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	8	8%
Disagree	6	6%
Neutral	26	26%
Agree	32	32%
Strongly agree	28	28%

Total	100	100%
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Interpretation:

The table shows that 60% of respondents (32% agree and 28% strongly agree) believe that lack of parental attention following a divorce negatively affects children’s school attendance. This suggests that when parents separate, children often lose supervision and motivation to attend school regularly. About 14% (8% strongly disagree and 6% disagree) do not share this view, indicating that some children might remain consistent in school attendance despite family challenges. Meanwhile, 26% remained neutral, possibly due to varying experiences or indirect exposure.

Overall, the findings suggest that reduced parental attention after divorce can lead to absenteeism and poor academic engagement, reinforcing the importance of emotional and educational support for affected children.

Table 4.3.14: Responses on Whether Emotional Distress from Divorce Reduces Concentration in School.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	8	8%
Disagree	16	16%
Neutral	18	18%

Agree	28	28%
Strongly agree	30	30%
Total	100	100%

Interpretation:

The data above reveals that 58% of respondents (28% agree and 30% strongly agree) believe emotional distress caused by parental divorce reduces children's concentration in school. This implies that emotional instability resulting from family separation affects students' ability to focus and perform academically. In contrast, 24% (8% strongly disagree and 16% disagree) disagreed, suggesting that some children may be resilient enough to manage schoolwork despite emotional challenges. Meanwhile, 18% remained neutral, indicating uncertainty or lack of direct observation.

Overall, the result indicates that emotional distress from divorce has a significant negative influence on children's learning concentration, confirming that emotional stability is key to effective academic performance.

Table 4.3.15: Responses on Whether Parental Divorce Contributes to School Dropouts.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	8	8

Disagree	14	14
Neutral	30	30
Agree	26	26
Strongly agree	22	22
Total	100	100%

Interpretation:

The results show that 48% of respondents (26% agree and 22% strongly agree) believe that parental divorce contributes to school dropouts among children. This suggests that separation of parents can lead to emotional, financial, or motivational challenges that make children discontinue schooling. Meanwhile, 22% (8% strongly disagree and 14% disagree) do not think divorce necessarily leads to dropping out, implying that some children may still persist with education despite parental conflict. Additionally, 30% were neutral, indicating either mixed experiences or limited exposure to such cases.

In general, the findings suggest that while not all children from divorced homes drop out, parental divorce can significantly increase the risk of school withdrawal due to disrupted family support systems.

Section E: Research Question objective four.

Coping and Support Systems:

Table 4.3.16: Responses on Whether Extended Family Support Helps Children Cope with Parental Divorce.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	12	12
Disagree	12	12
Neutral	22	22
Agree	28	28
Strongly agree	26	26

Total	100	100%
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Interpretation:

The table shows that 54% of respondents (28% agree and 26% strongly agree) believe that extended family support helps children cope better with the effects of parental divorce. This indicates that relatives such as grandparents, aunts, and uncles can provide emotional stability, guidance, and a sense of belonging during family disruption. However, 24% (12% strongly disagree and 12% disagree) do not share this view, suggesting that not all extended families are able or willing to provide the needed support. Meanwhile, 22% of respondents remained neutral, implying uncertainty or limited observation of such situations. Overall, the findings suggest that extended family members play a vital role in cushioning the negative emotional and social effects of divorce on children, especially in communities where family ties remain strong.

Table 4.3.17: Responses on Whether Teachers Play an Important Role in Supporting Affected Children.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	10	10%
Disagree	20	20%
Neutral	12	12%
Agree	24	24%

Strongly agree	34	34%
Total	100	100%

Interpretation:

The table indicates that a majority of respondents (58%, combining 24% agree and 34% strongly agree) believe that teachers play a crucial role in supporting children affected by parental divorce. This highlights the importance of the school environment as a place where children can find stability, encouragement, and emotional understanding during family crises. Meanwhile, 30% (10% strongly disagree and 20% disagree) do not think teachers significantly influence such support, possibly reflecting a lack of training or awareness among some educators. Additionally, 12% of respondents remained neutral, indicating indecision or limited observation of teacher involvement.

In summary, the results suggest that teachers serve as key emotional and social support figures for children from divorced homes, helping to reduce the negative effects of family separation through empathy, guidance, and consistent care.

Table 4.3.18: Responses on Whether Counseling Helps Children Overcome the Trauma of Divorce.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	6	6%

Disagree	6	6%
Neutral	20	20%
Agree	32	32%
Strongly agree	36	36%
Total	100	100%

Interpretation:

The table shows that the majority of respondents (68%, combining 32% agree and 36% strongly agree) believe that counseling plays a significant role in helping children overcome the trauma of parental divorce. This suggests that professional emotional support provides children with coping strategies, reassurance, and a safe space to express their feelings. A smaller percentage (12%, made up of 6% strongly disagree and 6% disagree) did not share this belief, possibly due to limited access to counseling services or lack of awareness about its benefits. Meanwhile, 20% of respondents were neutral, indicating some uncertainty or indifference toward the impact of counseling. Overall, the findings emphasize that counseling is a powerful intervention tool in helping children adjust emotionally and psychologically after parental separation.

Table 4.3.19: Responses on Whether Religious Organizations Can Provide Emotional Support to Children from Broken Homes.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
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Strongly disagree	8	8%
Disagree	14	14%
Neutral	18	18%
Agree	22	22%
Strongly agree	38	38%
Total	100	100%

Interpretation:

The table reveals that a majority of respondents (60%, combining 22% agree and 38% strongly agree) believe that religious organizations play an important role in providing emotional support to children from broken homes. This implies that faith-based groups can offer guidance, comfort, and a sense of belonging that helps affected children cope with the emotional effects of divorce. A smaller portion (22%, made up of 8% strongly disagree and 14% disagree) did not share this opinion, possibly reflecting skepticism about the involvement or effectiveness of religious institutions in child support. Meanwhile, 18% of respondents were neutral, indicating indecision or lack of exposure to such support systems.

Overall, the results suggest that religious organizations are viewed as valuable sources of emotional and moral support for children dealing with the challenges of parental separation.

Table 20: Responses on Whether Government and NGOs Should Provide Programs for Children from Divorced Families.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	8	8%
Neutral	32	32%
Agree	38	38%
Strongly agree	22	22%
Total	100	100%

Interpretation:

The table shows that a majority of respondents (60%, made up of 38% agree and 22% strongly agree) believe that the government and NGOs should create special programs to support children from divorced families. This indicates a strong public perception that institutional support through counseling, education, and welfare programs is vital for helping these children overcome emotional and social challenges. Meanwhile, 8% of respondents disagreed, and 32% remained neutral, possibly reflecting a lack of awareness of existing programs or uncertainty about how effective such initiatives could be. Overall,

the result suggests that most respondents recognize the importance of structured government and NGO interventions in promoting the well-being and stability of children affected by parental divorce.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

This chapter presented and analyzed data collected from fifty respondents regarding the effects of parental divorce on child development in Ekosodin Community, Ovia North-East Local Government Area of Edo State. The questionnaire was organized into five sections (A-E), with key findings summarized as follows:

Section A (Demographic Information):

Analysis revealed participation from both genders, with males (54%) slightly outnumbering females (44%). The majority of respondents (54%) belonged to the 15-20 age group, indicating a youthful demographic constituted the majority of participants. Most respondents (68%) were students, while others were distributed among self-employed (16%), unemployed (12%), and employed (4%) categories. Educationally, 56% had secondary education, 30% had tertiary education, and 14% had no formal education. Regarding marital status, 84% were single, reflecting the predominantly young nature of the sample population.

Section B (Psychological and Emotional Effects):

Findings indicated strong agreement that children from divorced households frequently experience emotional challenges including sadness, anxiety, and emotional instability. Respondents also noted that these children often struggle with trust issues and diminished self-esteem. These results suggest that parental divorce substantially impacts children's psychological well-being and sense of security.

Section C (Social Behavioural Effects):

Results demonstrated that children from divorced families commonly experience social difficulties, including withdrawal, loneliness, and challenges in forming peer relationships. Respondents identified disciplinary issues in school settings as another prevalent concern, indicating that divorce significantly affects children's social adaptation and behavioral patterns.

Section D (Academic Effects):

Data analysis revealed that parental divorce correlates with diminished academic performance and increased school dropout rates. Respondents noted that emotional distress from family dissolution adversely affects children's concentration levels and school attendance. Comparative analysis further indicated that children from stable family environments generally achieve better academic outcomes.

Section E (Coping Mechanisms and Support Systems):

Findings highlighted the crucial role of support systems, including extended family, educators, counselors, religious organizations, and non-governmental agencies. Respondents strongly endorsed counseling services and community-based programs as effective interventions for helping children navigate the challenges associated with parental divorce.

In conclusion, the study demonstrates that parental divorce significantly negatively affects children's emotional stability, social development, and academic achievement. However, the implementation of robust support systems appears to mitigate these adverse effects substantially.

Based on the analysis of the collected data, this study concludes that parental divorce exerts profound negative consequences on children's psychological, social, and academic development. The findings demonstrate that children from divorced households frequently experience emotional instability and distress, encounter challenges in forming and maintaining stable relationships, and exhibit diminished academic performance. Nevertheless, the research indicates that these adverse effects can be substantially mitigated through robust support systems, including professional counseling, active teacher involvement, and sustained support from extended family networks, religious organizations, and non-governmental institutions. These protective factors collectively

contribute to fostering healthier development and improved adjustment among children experiencing parental divorce.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of findings, conclusion, contribution to knowledge, recommendations, and suggestions for further studies based on the results obtained from

the research. The study investigated the effect of parental divorce on child development in Ekosodin Community, Ovia North-East Local Government Area of Edo State.

The major aim was to assess how divorce affects children emotionally, socially, behaviourally, and academically. The chapter highlights the key results drawn from data analysis, provides concluding remarks, and offers recommendations for policymakers, parents, and relevant stakeholders

5.1 Summary of Findings

This study examined the effects of parental divorce on child development in Ekosodin Community, Ovia North-East Local Government Area of Edo State. The research focused on how divorce influences children's emotional, social, behavioural, and academic development. Data were collected through structured questionnaires administered to fifty participants and analyzed using frequency counts and percentages.

The findings revealed that parental divorce significantly impacts children's emotional and psychological well-being. Most respondents indicated that children from divorced homes frequently experience sadness, anxiety, and feelings of rejection. These emotional challenges often stem from the sudden absence of a parent, ongoing parental conflicts, or changes in family structure. This finding aligns with Amato's (2014) observation that children of divorced parents are more likely to display emotional distress and insecurity

than those from stable families. The sense of loss and instability associated with divorce can lead to long-term psychological effects without proper intervention.

Furthermore, the study found that divorce weakens emotional bonds between parents and children, potentially leading to emotional neglect. Respondents noted that affected children often become withdrawn, quiet, or distrustful, while some exhibit aggression and resentment. According to Kelly and Emery (2019), post-divorce emotional neglect often results in difficulty forming healthy relationships later in life, underscoring the importance of consistent emotional support and effective co-parenting after separation.

Regarding social behaviour, the study discovered that parental divorce negatively affects children's peer relationships. Many respondents agreed that children from divorced homes struggle to make or maintain friendships due to low self-esteem and social stigma. They may feel different from their peers, avoid social gatherings, or become overly dependent on peer approval. This supports Hetherington and Kelly's (2019) argument that disrupted family environments hinder the development of positive social skills, making affected children more prone to social withdrawal or maladaptive peer influence.

The findings also indicated that behavioural problems are more prevalent among children from divorced homes. Respondents reported cases of truancy, disobedience, aggression, and general lack of discipline among such children. The absence of consistent parental guidance and discipline creates confusion about acceptable behaviour. Amato and Keith

(2016) emphasized that inconsistent parenting after divorce often contributes to behavioural maladjustment, particularly during adolescence. Boys may externalize frustration through aggression, while girls may internalize it through emotional instability. Regarding academic performance, the study revealed that divorce tends to lower children's motivation and concentration in school. Emotional instability and reduced parental supervision make it difficult for them to perform well academically. Respondents confirmed that many affected children display declining grades, poor attendance, and reduced participation in school activities. This finding is consistent with Lansford's (2009) report that children from divorced families generally perform worse academically than those from intact homes. Frequent relocations and financial constraints following divorce further compound these challenges.

The study also highlighted the important role of extended family, teachers, and religious institutions in helping children cope with divorce. Respondents agreed that supportive relatives and understanding teachers help restore emotional balance and encourage academic improvement. Religious organizations provide moral and spiritual guidance that fosters resilience. This finding supports Adeoye and Eke's (2020) emphasis on the importance of community-based support systems in mitigating the negative consequences of family breakdown.

Additionally, the study underscored the crucial role of counselling in helping children recover from divorce-related trauma. Respondents noted that access to professional counselling enables children to express emotions, rebuild confidence, and adapt to their new reality. However, such services are often unavailable in rural or low-income communities. According to Odu (2021), the absence of school-based counselling programs in many Nigerian communities leaves emotionally distressed children without necessary support, making it difficult for them to overcome post-divorce trauma.

The findings further indicated that economic hardship following divorce intensifies negative effects on children. Many single parents, especially mothers, struggle to meet their children's financial and emotional needs. Consequently, affected children may experience neglect, poor nutrition, and reduced access to educational resources. This aligns with McLanahan and Sandefur's (1994) finding that single-parent households often face economic disadvantages that directly affect child wellbeing and development.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that parental divorce has profound and lasting effects on children's development. It disrupts emotional security, weakens social adjustment, increases behavioural challenges, and reduces academic performance. However, these effects can be minimized when parents maintain effective communication, provide emotional stability, and cooperate in raising their children despite separation. The study emphasizes the need for collective effort among parents, teachers, counsellors, religious

leaders, and government agencies to provide consistent support and guidance for children from divorced homes.

In conclusion, the study confirms that parental divorce represents not merely a private family issue but a broader social concern with implications for child development and future societal wellbeing. Without early intervention and adequate support systems, the emotional and behavioural consequences may persist into adulthood, affecting future relationships and productivity. Therefore, sustained emotional care, counselling, and stable support structures are essential to help children from divorced families overcome their challenges and achieve balanced growth and development.

5.2 Conclusion

This study examined the effects of parental divorce on child development in Ekosodin Community, Ovia North-East Local Government Area of Edo State. Based on the collected and analyzed data, the research concludes that parental divorce significantly and multidimensionally affects children's emotional, social, behavioral, and academic

wellbeing. The findings consistently demonstrate that children experiencing their parents' marital dissolution often undergo substantial psychological distress, manifesting as sadness, anxiety, social withdrawal, and diminished self-esteem.

The study establishes that family stability is fundamental to a child's emotional security. When divorce occurs, children lose the emotional equilibrium provided by dual-parent presence, creating profound insecurity and confusion that undermines their confidence and overall development. This finding aligns with Amato's (2014) research indicating that divorce disrupts children's attachment processes and intensifies emotional vulnerability, particularly when parental conflicts remain unresolved.

Furthermore, the research confirms that parental divorce impairs children's social development by compromising their ability to interact confidently with peers and adults. Respondents observed that affected children frequently become socially withdrawn or form negative peer associations. This supports Hetherington and Kelly's (2019) observation that children from divorced households often struggle to establish trust and maintain stable social bonds due to witnessed emotional instability in their home environment.

Regarding behavioral adjustment, the study demonstrates that divorce frequently leads to diminished moral and disciplinary control. Inconsistent supervision and divided parental authority contribute to behavioral manifestations including truancy, aggression, and

disobedience. These findings corroborate Amato and Keith's (2016) assertion that children from disrupted families exhibit more behavioral challenges than those from intact households.

The research also concludes that divorce adversely affects academic performance. Emotional turmoil, economic hardship, and inadequate parental support typically result in poor school attendance, reduced concentration, and declining academic achievement. As Lansford (2009) noted, the emotional disruption caused by divorce can hinder learning processes and perpetuate educational underachievement. Affected children may also develop negative attitudes toward schooling due to insufficient parental encouragement and guidance.

The investigation revealed that robust support systems including counseling services, extended family involvement, teacher support, and religious community engagement play vital roles in helping children navigate divorce-related challenges. When adequately available, these resources significantly enhance children's emotional and social adaptation. However, the study identified that such supports often remain insufficient or inaccessible, particularly in rural Nigerian communities. While Odu (2021) emphasizes that timely counseling interventions can mitigate emotional trauma and foster resilience, most Nigerian communities lack these essential services.

Additionally, the study concludes that post-divorce economic hardship exacerbates children's developmental challenges. Single-parent households typically face financial constraints that limit access to education, healthcare, and basic necessities. This finding supports McLanahan and Sandefur's (1994) research identifying economic instability as a primary mediator between divorce and children's long-term outcomes.

Overall, the study determines that parental divorce generates lasting consequences for child development, particularly when accompanied by persistent conflict, poor communication, and inadequate parental cooperation. These effects transcend childhood, influencing emotional stability, social relationships, and academic achievement into adulthood. However, these negative outcomes are not inevitable. When parents maintain responsibility, cooperation, and supportive engagement following divorce, adverse effects can be substantially mitigated.

In summary, this research reinforces the crucial importance of stable family structures and effective parental involvement in nurturing well-adjusted children. It underscores the necessity for enhanced awareness, community-based interventions, and strengthened social work support for divorce-affected children. The study further recommends collaborative efforts among policymakers, educators, and religious leaders to develop preventive and rehabilitative programs that promote emotional healing, positive behavior, and academic success among this vulnerable population.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study regarding the effects of parental divorce on child development in Ekosodin Community, Ovia North-East Local Government Area of Edo State, the following recommendations are proposed to mitigate negative impacts and promote children's wellbeing:

- 2 Parental Responsibility: Parents should give priority to their children's emotional needs during and after divorce proceedings. Maintaining consistent communication and demonstrating affection, despite personal differences, is crucial. Effective co-parenting can significantly reduce children's feelings of rejection, confusion, and anxiety. Parents should refrain from arguments, insults, or negative comments about each other in their children's presence, as such behavior exacerbates emotional distress.
- 3 School-Based Support: Educational institutions should enhance their counseling and guidance services to provide psychological support for children from divorced families. Teachers and school counselors play vital roles in identifying behavioral changes and academic decline related to family breakdown. Regular counseling sessions, mentorship programs, and emotional support can help affected students rebuild self-esteem, enhance concentration, and improve academic performance.
- 4 Community and Religious Engagement: Religious organizations and community leaders should offer moral and spiritual support to families experiencing divorce.

Given the strong religious affiliations in Nigerian communities, churches, mosques, and social groups can provide safe environments for children to receive care and guidance. These institutions should organize seminars on marriage enrichment, effective parenting, and family stability to help reduce divorce rates.

- 5 Government and NGO Interventions: Government agencies and non-governmental organizations should develop targeted intervention programs for children from divorced homes. These could include subsidized counseling services, educational support programs, vocational training initiatives, and social work outreach designed to empower single parents and their children. Such measures would help alleviate long-term consequences including poverty, educational discontinuation, and juvenile delinquency.
- 6 Social Work Involvement: Professional social workers should expand their involvement in family and child welfare services. Their expertise is valuable in family mediation, community awareness programs, and supporting children's adjustment to post-divorce circumstances. Social work agencies should establish collaborative networks with educational, religious, and healthcare institutions to ensure comprehensive care and follow-up for vulnerable children.
- 7 Pre-Divorce Counseling: Couples considering divorce should seek professional counseling before finalizing their decision. Many marital conflicts can be resolved through improved communication and professional guidance when both partners are

willing. Pre-divorce counseling helps couples understand the potential impacts of separation on their children and prepares them to handle the situation more effectively if divorce becomes inevitable.

- 8 Further Research: Additional research should be encouraged on divorce and its long-term effects on children across various Nigerian communities. Different cultural and socioeconomic contexts may yield distinct outcomes, and further studies would facilitate the development of culturally appropriate prevention and intervention strategies.

In summary, parental divorce represents not merely a private family matter but a significant social concern requiring collective attention. Parents, educational institutions, religious organizations, social workers, and government agencies must collaborate to ensure that children from divorced families receive the necessary support, stability, and opportunities to thrive despite family challenges.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Studies

This study has examined the effects of parental divorce on child development within Ekosodin Community, Ovia North-East Local Government Area of Edo State. While providing valuable insights into the emotional, social, and academic consequences of

divorce on children, several areas warrant further investigation. The following suggestions are proposed for future research:

First, subsequent studies should expand their geographical scope beyond Ekosodin to include other towns, local government areas, and states. Such expansion would facilitate comparative analysis and enhance understanding of how cultural, religious, and economic variations influence divorce's impact on children across Nigeria. Additionally, larger sample sizes would improve the reliability and generalizability of research findings

Second, researchers should consider employing longitudinal research designs. Tracking developmental changes in children affected by divorce from childhood through adolescence and into adulthood would provide deeper insights into how early parental separation experiences influence future relationships, educational attainment, and career outcomes.

Third, future investigations should examine the specific role of extended family members in mitigating the effects of parental divorce. In many Nigerian communities, grandparents, uncles, and aunts provide crucial emotional and financial support following divorce. Understanding how these relationships shape children's adjustment processes would enrich existing knowledge of post-divorce family dynamics.

Additionally, research should evaluate the effectiveness of intervention programs such as counseling, mentorship, and educational support for children from divorced families. By

assessing these initiatives, researchers can identify optimal strategies and develop evidence-based recommendations for policymakers and social welfare agencies.

Furthermore, qualitative methodologies including in-depth interviews and focus group discussions would allow children and parents to articulate their lived experiences directly. This approach would complement statistical data with nuanced, human-centered perspectives on the emotional realities of divorce.

Finally, future studies should explore gender-specific dimensions of divorce, investigating whether male and female children experience and respond to parental separation differently. Research could also examine how factors such as age, socioeconomic status, and parental education level influence children's coping mechanisms.

In conclusion, sustained research on parental divorce and child development remains essential for strengthening family support systems and informing social policy. By broadening the scope, methodologies, and focus of future studies, scholars can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of how family instability affects children and how societies can better support their healthy development and future success.

5.4 Contribution to Knowledge

This study has made several significant contributions to the existing body of knowledge regarding the effects of parental divorce on child development, particularly within the

Nigerian and African context, where cultural values, social expectations, and economic realities differ from those of Western societies, which dominate existing research.

First, the study provides localized evidence of how parental divorce influences children's emotional, social, and academic outcomes in Ekosodin Community, Ovia North-East Local Government Area of Edo State. Unlike many previous studies conducted in urban centers or developed nations, this research highlights how divorce manifests in semi-rural communities, where extended family systems, communal values, and traditional norms play important roles in moderating or intensifying the effects of divorce on children. This contextual insight expands the understanding of family breakdown in non-Western settings, thereby bridging a gap in the existing literature (Odu, 2021).

Second, the study contributes to knowledge by demonstrating that the effects of divorce extend beyond emotional trauma into the social and educational domains of a child's life. The findings show that children from divorced families not only experience psychological distress but also suffer from diminished academic motivation and lower school performance. This integrated perspective underscores that divorce must be viewed as a multidimensional problem requiring holistic intervention addressing psychological, educational, and social dimensions rather than being treated solely as a family issue.

In addition, the research enhances understanding of the crucial mediating role that support systems play in how children cope with the aftermath of divorce. The findings

reveal that active support from teachers, religious institutions, counselors, and extended family members significantly reduces the emotional burden on affected children. This contribution enriches the discourse by emphasizing the importance of community involvement and social work practice in mitigating the long-term impact of divorce.

Furthermore, the study provides empirical data that can guide policymakers, social workers, and child development practitioners in designing effective intervention programs. By identifying specific areas where children struggle such as emotional stability, concentration, social interaction, and discipline the study offers actionable insights to inform educational policies, counseling frameworks, and parental guidance programs in Nigerian schools and communities.

Another contribution lies in the study's methodological value. The use of a structured questionnaire and statistical analysis provided a quantitative foundation for understanding the diverse ways parental divorce affects child development. This approach offers a replicable framework for future researchers examining similar social problems in other regions or cultural settings.

Moreover, the study draws attention to the role of economic hardship as a mediating factor between divorce and child development. By demonstrating that many negative outcomes such as poor school attendance and behavioral problems are linked to financial

constraints following separation, this research adds a socioeconomic dimension to the study of divorce impacts in low-income environments.

Finally, this work reaffirms the need for early and continuous counseling interventions for children and parents undergoing divorce. It emphasizes that with timely professional and social support, children can develop resilience, maintain emotional balance, and continue to thrive academically and socially despite family disruption.

In summary, this research not only deepens the theoretical understanding of parental divorce in relation to child development but also offers practical implications for educators, counselors, parents, and policymakers. It represents a valuable contribution to social work practice in Nigeria, strengthening the evidence base needed to promote child welfare and family stability in the face of rising divorce rates.

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**APPENDIX
QUESTIONNAIRE
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY**

Dear Respondent,

I am Testimony Onohuomen Iluobe, an undergraduate student in the Department of Social Work at the University of Benin. I am currently conducting a research study titled “The Effect of Parental Divorce on Child Development in Ekosodin Community, Ovia North-East LGA of Edo State.” This research is a partial requirement for the award of a Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) degree in Social Work.

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather your valuable opinions and insights on the effects of parental divorce on child development. Your perspective as a resident of Ekosodin Community is crucial to the success of this study, as it will help provide a comprehensive understanding of the topic from a community viewpoint.

The information you provide will be used strictly for academic purposes and will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you have the right to decline to participate or withdraw at any time without any consequences. Please do not write your name on the questionnaire, as your anonymity is guaranteed.

I kindly request your full cooperation by answering the questions as honestly and accurately as possible. The questions are straightforward and should not take much of your time.

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Yours sincerely,
Testimony Onohuomen Iluobe
(Researcher)

QUESTIONNAIRE

**TITLE: THE IMPACT OF PARENTAL DIVORCE ON CHILD DEVELOPMENT
IN EKOSODIN COMMUNITY,OVIA -NORTH EAST L.G.A OF EDO STATE.**

Section A: Demographic Information

Instructions:

(Please tick (✓) the option that best applies to you)

1. Gender:

Male Female

2. Age Bracket:

15–20 21–30 31–40 41 and above

3. Marital Status:

Single Married Divorced Widowed

4. Educational Level:

Secondary Tertiary Postgraduate None

5. Occupation:

Student Trader Civil Servant Artisan Others (specify)

Section B: Emotional and Psychological Effects of Parental Divorce

Instructions:

(Please tick (✓) the option that best applies to you)

1. Parental divorce makes children feel emotionally unstable.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

2. Divorce affects children's sense of love and belonging.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

3. Children from divorced homes are often more anxious or depressed.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

4. Parental separation leads to loneliness and low self-esteem in children.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

5. Conflict between parents before divorce affects the emotional health of children.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Section C: Social and Behavioral Effects of Parental Divorce

Instructions:

(Please tick (✓) the option that best applies to you)

1. Children from divorced homes find it difficult to relate with others.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

2. Divorce encourages aggressive or stubborn behavior in children.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

3. Children of divorced parents often withdraw socially from their peers.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

4. Divorce affects how children view relationships and marriage.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

5. Peer influence becomes stronger when parental control is missing due to divorce.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Section D: Academic Effects of Parental Divorce

Instructions:

(Please tick (✓) the option that best applies to you)

1. Children from divorced families perform poorly in school.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

2. Divorce affects children's concentration and motivation to learn.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

3. Lack of parental support affects children's study habits.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

4. Divorce leads to frequent school absenteeism among children.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

5. Academic success becomes difficult when parents are constantly in conflict.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Section E: Coping Strategies and Support Systems

Instructions:

(Please tick (✓) the option that best applies to you)

1. Counseling helps children cope better after parental divorce.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

2. Religious leaders play a major role in helping children recover emotionally.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

3. Social workers help children adjust after parental separation.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

4. Family and community support reduces the negative effects of divorce.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

5. Teachers' understanding and care help children from divorced homes perform better.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Instructions:

Please tick only one option per question.

All information provided will be kept confidential and used strictly for academic purposes.

Thank you.