

Implications of Parental Divorce on Academic Performance among Students in Secondary Schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria

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Abstract: This paper examined the relationship between parental divorce and academic performance of students in secondary schools in Ekiti State. It further investigated the frequency of divorce among some ages in the marriage and causes of divorce among couples. It was observed that divorce couples put the interest of their children in line because the care expected of them for their children was no longer jointly performed. It was further observed that divorce couples were affected with one challenges and the other, with its attendant impact on the academic performance of their children. A descriptive research design of the survey type was adopted and the population were made up of Secondary School Students Teachers and School Administrators, Guidance Counselors, Parents/Guardians Educational Psychologists and Social Workers, Civil Servants, Community and Religious Leaders, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) Members in Ekiti State. The sample consisted of three hundred (300) respondents. The multi-stage and purposive random sampling techniques was used to select the (300) Three hundred respondents sample. Data were collected through a self-designed questionnaire titled Parental Divorce and Academic Performance of Students in Secondary Schools Questionnaire (PDAPSSSQ). The data collected were analyzed using frequency and percentages table analyses. The results revealed some causes of divorce which include early marriage, infidelity among others. The study also revealed that divorce among couples affected academic performance of their children in secondary schools. Based on the findings, it was recommended that divorce among couple' should be discouraged to avoid consequences on academic performance of their children in secondary schools. It was further recommended that intending couples should be matured enough and well mentored about their responsibilities as married people. It was finally recommended that each secondary school should put up a forum to guide students from divorce homes so as to assist them ward off the impact divorce may have on their academic performance.

Keywords: Parental Divorce, Academic Performance, Marriage, Family, Couple, Student

Introduction

Marriage has been described as the union of a man and a woman recognized by the Church, Mosque, Legal institutions or in the traditional way to live together as husband and wife.

Marriage could either be monogamous or polygamous. From the book of the Bible, the institution of marriage started when God made woman from the man to be a companion for him, to encourage and be a source of blessing to him and the husband to be her strong helper (Genesis Chapter 2 vs 20-24). However, this plan of God for man is being frustrated by series of marital problems which bring about divorce and separation of couples, some of the problems include, barrenness, incessant fight, intolerance among others (Adepoju & Fabiyi, 2017).

Divorce is a persistent social issue that disrupts families struggling with marital instability. Many divorcees believe it offers a solution to their unhappiness, but it often leads to further social challenges for those involved. Separated individuals may face difficulties in adjusting to single life or finding a compatible partner (Akinleye, 2020). Children from broken homes often suffer from inadequate care, delinquent behaviors, and poor academic performance, exacerbating societal concerns. Divorce is the formal dissolution of a marital union, granting both partners the freedom to live separately and remarry, nullifying the lifelong commitment made between the spouses (Webster's International Dictionary, 1976). Divorce is a prevalent societal issue affecting individuals from various backgrounds. In the past, it was stigmatized due to religious sanctions and ethical standards. However, modern societal perceptions have shifted, and the consequences remain profound, leading to broken homes, wasted potential and mental health challenges among divorcees. This shift in perceptions highlights the need for a more inclusive approach to divorce (Akinleye, 2020).

In modern society, marriages are often seen as mere companionship, with couples primarily coexisting for social and sexual interaction. This has led to a diminished understanding of the importance of successful marriages for society's stability and progress. The Divorce Reform Act of 1969, which came into effect in 1971, has made divorce a more common and accepted solution to unhappy marriages, making it more frequent than in previous generations.

Divorce has become increasingly prevalent in contemporary society, with the Customary Court in Ado-Ekiti handling over 143 divorce cases involving couples living together for eight months to 35 years. The court handles an average of thirty divorce cases per month, many of which involve couples with children (Amato, 2010). This high incidence poses a serious threat to societal stability, as children from divorced homes are particularly vulnerable, often suffering social, emotional, and intellectual consequences, including poor academic performance. Divorce also adversely affects the socio-psychological development and health of children, predisposing them to juvenile delinquency. Many of these children, who might have pursued formal education, instead opt for vocational training in trades like tailoring, carpentry, and vulcanizing, often with little success (Daramola, 2025).

Given the high divorce rate and its detrimental effects on families and children's academic performance, government bodies, international organizations, and concerned citizens have taken steps to address the issue. For instance, welfare homes have been established to

support children of divorce parents, while juvenile courts handle cases involving delinquent minors. Religious leaders, such as W.F. Kumuyi (1988), have emphasized the need to minimize divorce in society, and educators have raised concerns through the media. The Daily Monitor (October 6, 1988) underscored the growing instability in modern marriages, highlighting the prevalence of second and third marriages while previous partners remain alive.

Several factors contribute to divorce in contemporary society, including indiscipline, infidelity, and lack of cooperation between spouses. Additionally, early marriage, interference from in-laws, and other sociocultural dynamics play significant roles. These immediate and underlying causes of divorce will be further explored in subsequent discussions (Daramola, 2025).

Parental divorce has become one of the major social problems to very many families everywhere in our society. The increase of this social menace is at alarming rate which has made it to become a general topic for discussion across the globe recently. According to Babalis (2017), divorce can be defined as dissolution of marriage or the process of terminating a marriage or marital union. It is also a legal dissolution of marriage bond (Thomas, Konstantina, Vassilis, and Panagiotis, 2014). Divorce is a social problem that is consistently destroying our society as it forces itself into families that are stable regarding the relationship between spouses (Njwuo, Ugwu and Eze, 202). This societal problem has been viewed as a social invention to escape from the inevitable tension experienced in marriage, for the divorcees believe, it is a way out of an unhappy marriage which nonetheless attract other social problem for the concerned parties. Divorced couples well necessarily face the problems either living alone with its attendant implications or later looking for another compatible partner, the following may be some of the problems like intense anger, grief, embarrassment, disappointment, among others. On the other side, when parents decide to divorce, this can affect their children's psychological well-being, this social problem constitutes a great evil and threat to the stability of the society at large and children of divorced homes suffer socially, emotionally and intellectually for it brings about poor performance of the children of divorcees (Njwuo, Ugwu and Eze, 2023).

Parental divorce has been a subject of extensive research due to its profound impact on children's academic performance. Studies have consistently demonstrated that children from divorced families often face emotional and psychological challenges that adversely affect their educational outcomes. For instance, research in Ogun State, Nigeria, revealed that adolescents from divorced families exhibited lower academic achievements compared to their peers from intact families, highlighting the disruptive nature of divorce on students' educational progress (Oyeromi, Oyeromi&Oyeromi, 2018). In Ekiti State, Nigeria, the correlation between family instability and students' academic performance has been a focal point of investigation. Adigun (2019) examined the effects of family conflicts and divorce on Muslim students in Ekiti State secondary schools, finding that such familial disruptions

negatively influenced both their attitudes and academic achievements. Similarly, a study by Daramola (2025) in Ikere-Ekiti identified a high prevalence of domestic violence, with affected students displaying poor academic performance, including lower grades and reduced classroom participation.

The influence of parental structures extends beyond marital status to socio-economic factors. Abdu-Raheem (2015) investigated the relationship between parents' socio-economic status and students' academic performance in Ekiti State, concluding that children from higher socio-economic backgrounds performed better academically. This suggests that the financial and emotional support often compromised in divorced families can significantly impact students' educational outcomes. Furthermore, the psychological and social development of children in single-parent families has been scrutinized. Falana, Bada, & Ayodele (2012) found that single-parent family structures adversely affected children's emotional and intellectual development, which are critical components of academic success. These findings underscore the multifaceted challenges that parental divorce poses to students, encompassing emotional well-being, cognitive development, and overall academic performance.

It seems divorce brings about poor academic performance of the children of divorcees. Ashewefi and Ayeheew (2021) posit that to achieve academic expectations of students at any level of their academic pursuits is not only the concerns and contribution of schools and the government, but the contributions of parents, teachers and other stakeholders. It is observed that secondary education, which is the education received after the primary school education and before the tertiary education, is very important in the life of whosoever will pursue academics (Nkwuo, etal, 2023). Bartholomew and Kwadwo (2015) said, this academic level is a vehicle for economic, social and political development that will have great impact in the future of young child. The concept of academic performance is the learning outcomes or output of the students after which that has been measured by any form of assessment technique such as test, examination, attendance, workshop, experiment among others (Nkwuo, etal, 2023).

Mapilay and Mercado (2015) said academic performance is what a student is capable of achieving when tested or examined on what he/she has been taught. In conclusion, it is the school evaluation of the classroom work on the basis of the graders awarded and it is the knowledge attained that shown in the school subject. It has been observed that, different factors were responsible for student academic performance such as habits of family background, perseverance, attitudes, interest (Igbinosa, 2014). Ashemati and Ayenew (2021) in their view classified some influencing factors of students' academic performance into two, there are personal and institutions. Personal factors are students' intelligence, knowledge and ability, on the other hand are the institutional factors and these include parental influences or family background. Societal influences and school factors which can be teacher relations and school environment and facilities. For the purpose of this paper, effort shall be

taken to look into how family and marriage institution influence students' academic performance. It appears that parents' lives stability play a cardinal role in ensuring improved academic performance of students (Biblarz and Gorttainer, 2020).

This indicates that parents' marital stability will assist their children in school academic performance, whereas parents' marital instability which may be as a result of divorce or separation will definitely affect their children academic performance negatively in school. This is observed generally in Nigeria particularly in Ekiti State which is called and known as fountain of knowledge. Conclusively, with reference to the above, it is obvious that home of a child has been identified as a major factor that can affect student's academic performance at all levels of their education. It is against this background, that this paper is out to examine the relationship between parental divorce and academic performance of students in secondary schools in Ekiti State.

Statement of the Problem

There are prevalent problems in the society these days. Marriage contracts are on high increase, some homes seem not stable and divorce is at an alarming rate. This situation does not exonerate people in Ekiti State. This is against the background of some factors and which affect the life of their children, such as their mental, emotional, psychological, trauma, personality and majorly on their academic performance.

The impact of parental divorce on students' academic performance has been a subject of scholarly interest, yet existing studies primarily focus on its psychological and emotional effects, neglecting the specific academic implications in the Nigerian context, particularly in Ekiti State. Research has shown that children from divorced homes often face emotional distress, financial instability, and reduced parental involvement, which negatively influence their educational outcomes (Amato, 2010). However, there is limited empirical data on how these factors directly affect students' academic performance in secondary schools in Ekiti State, leaving a critical gap in understanding the local realities of this phenomenon.

Furthermore, while studies by Adepoju and Fabiyi (2017) and Akinleye (2020) have examined family structure and student achievement in Nigeria, they have not adequately explored the comparative academic performance of students from divorced and intact families. Existing research also fails to account for contextual factors such as cultural perceptions of divorce, economic disparities, and the role of school support systems in mitigating negative outcomes. Without such an in-depth analysis, educational policymakers and stakeholders lack the necessary data to implement targeted interventions that support affected students.

This study, therefore, seeks to bridge these gaps by investigating the academic performance of secondary school students in Ekiti State who come from divorced homes. By examining factors such as parental involvement, socio-economic challenges, and emotional well-being, this research will provide a comprehensive understanding of how parental divorce

influences educational attainment. The findings will contribute to the body of knowledge on family structure and education while offering evidence-based recommendations for educators, counselors, and policymakers to enhance student support systems.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to determine the relationship between Parental Divorce and Academic Performance of Students in Secondary Schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria

The specific objectives of the study are to:

- Investigates the causes of divorce among married couples in Ekiti State, Nigeria
- Examine the influence of parental divorce on academic performance of Students in Secondary Schools in Ekiti State
- Determine the group of married couples that are more prone to divorce in terms of age-couples within the age bracket of 18-39 or couples within the age bracket of 40-60 in Ekiti State
- Examine the socio-economic and academic implications of parental divorce on the secondary school students academic performance in Ekiti State
- Proffer possible interventions and strategic support to students affected by parental divorce in secondary schools in Ekiti State

Conceptual Clarifications

Divorce

Divorce is the legal termination of a marital union, resulting in the dissolution of the legal, social, and economic ties between spouses. According to Amato (2010), divorce represents a significant family transition that often leads to emotional distress, financial instability, and changes in parental roles. Cherlin (2017) highlights that divorce not only affects the separating partners but also has profound implications for children, influencing their psychological well-being, academic performance, and social relationships. Similarly, Fincham and Beach (2010) argue that the consequences of divorce depend on factors such as the level of conflict before separation, post-divorce parenting styles, and the availability of support systems. In the Nigerian context, Olaleye and Adebayo (2018) note that cultural and religious perceptions of divorce often exacerbate the challenges faced by divorced individuals and their children, affecting their integration into society. Thus, divorce is a complex phenomenon with legal, psychological, and socio-economic dimensions, requiring holistic interventions to mitigate its negative effects.

Parental Divorce

Parental divorce refers to the legal dissolution of a marriage between two parents, leading to the separation of the family unit and significant changes in the child's living arrangements, emotional stability, and overall well-being. Scholars like Amato (2010) describe parental

divorce as a major life transition that can disrupt family dynamics, often resulting in reduced parental involvement, economic hardships, and psychological distress for children. Similarly, Hetherington and Kelly (2002) argue that divorce can lead to both short-term and long-term consequences, affecting children's academic performance, social relationships, and emotional development. The effects of parental divorce vary based on factors such as the level of parental conflict, post-divorce parenting styles, and the availability of support systems. A clear resultant effect is disruption to the societal unit of family which often leads to single parenting under which parental responsibilities crumbles due to overwhelming burden of care on just a parent as opposed to the two of them. Understanding the concept of parental divorce is essential in addressing its implications on children, particularly in academic and psychological domains.

Academic Performance

Academic performance refers to the extent to which a student achieves educational goals and demonstrates competence in various subjects, typically measured through assessments, grades, and overall learning outcomes. According to O'Donnell (2018), academic performance is a reflection of students' intellectual abilities, motivation, and the effectiveness of instructional strategies. Similarly, Adeyemo (2010) emphasizes that academic performance is influenced by multiple factors, including parental background, socio-economic status, and school environment. In the same vein, Slavin (2019) argues that cognitive development, teacher quality, and student engagement play critical roles in determining academic success. Academic performance is not only a measure of knowledge acquisition but also an indicator of future educational and career opportunities. Therefore, understanding the concept of academic performance is essential for developing strategies that enhance student achievement and address factors that may hinder learning.

Research Methods

The study adopted a survey research design. This approach enables the researcher to collect data from a representative sample from respondents on the subject matter across Ekiti State, providing insights into how parental divorce impacts their academic performance. The population for this study comprises secondary school students from both public and private schools in Ekiti State. Other key participants include Secondary School Students Teachers and School Administrators, Guidance Counselors, Parents/Guardians Educational Psychologists and Social Workers, Civil Servants, Community and Religious Leaders, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) Members in Ekiti State. These groups were selected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the effects of parental divorce on students' academic achievements.

A purposive sampling technique was employed to ensure that only students from divorced families, as well as relevant school personnel, were included in the study. This sampling

method was essential in obtaining firsthand information on the academic challenges, emotional struggles, and coping mechanisms of affected students. Both primary and secondary data sources were utilized. Primary data were collected using structured questionnaires distributed to selected students and educators. Additionally, interviews were conducted with school counselors and parents to gain deeper insights into the psychological and academic implications of parental divorce.

For secondary data, the researcher reviewed educational reports, academic journals, government publications, newspapers, and online resources related to family structure and student performance. The study was limited to Ekiti State, covering secondary schools in urban and rural areas to ensure a balanced representation. With the assistance of five trained research assistants, 300 questionnaires were distributed across selected schools, with an average of 100 respondents per senatorial district to ensure comprehensive data collection. This methodology was designed to provide reliable and relevant findings on the impact of parental divorce on students' academic performance in Ekiti State.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	198	66%
Female	102	34%
Total	300	100%

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork, 2025.

As revealed in Table 1, the gender distribution of respondents shows that most are male, as indicated by the number of respondents, which amounts to 198 (66%) of the respondents, while 102(34%) are female. It should be noted that this distribution does not represent the demographic distribution of the Ekiti State Nigeria population but rather the distribution of the respondents for this study.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Marital Status

Marital status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Single	137	45.67%
Married	99	33.00%
Widowed	5	1.67%
Divorced	59	19.67%
Total	300	100%

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork, 2025.

Table 3 above reveals the distribution of respondents by marital status. 137 (45.67%) are single, 99 (33.00%) are married, and 5 (1.67%) belong to the widowed and 59 (19.67%) divorced categories.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Educational Qualifications

Educational Background	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Post-graduate	41	13.67%
Graduate	151	50.33%
Secondary	91	30.33%
Primary	17	5.67%
Total	300	100%

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork, 2025.

Table 3 shows that 41 (13.67%) of respondents had post-graduate education, 151 of the respondents, constituting about (50.33%) of the total, were graduates, 91 (30.33%) respondents had secondary education, and 17 (5.67%) belonged to the primary education category. This shows that most respondents are literate and could attend to the questionnaires without help.

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents by Religion

Religion	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Christianity	202	67.33%
Islam	87	29%
African Traditional Religion (ATR)	11	3.67%
Total	300	100%

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork, 2025.

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents by Religion. The table above shows the distribution by religion. Most of the respondents are Christians 202 (67.33%). However, 87 (29%) are Islam, and 11 (3.67%) belong to the African Traditional Religion (ATR).

Table 5: Distribution of Respondents by Status

Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Secondary School Students	53	17.67%
Teachers and School Administrators	49	16.33%
Guidance Counselors	39	13%
Parents/Guardians	38	12.67%
Educational Psychologists and Social Workers	36	12%
Civil Servants	35	11.67%
Community and Religious Leaders	27	9%
Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) Members	23	7.67%
Total	300	100%

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork, 2025

As presented in Table 5, 53 (17.67%), constituting the majority of the respondents, were Secondary School Students, 49 (16.33%) were Teachers and School Administrators, 39 (13%) were Guidance Counselors, 38 (12.67%) were Parents/Guardians, 36 (12%) were Educational Psychologists and social workers, 35 (11.67%) were civil servants, 27 (9%) were community and religious leaders. In comparison, only 23 (7.67%) respondents are members of non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Table 6: Distribution of Respondents by Senatorial District in Ekiti State, Nigeria

South-Western Zone	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Ekiti Central Senatorial District	100	33.33%
Ekiti North Senatorial District	100	33.33%
Ekiti South Senatorial District	100	33.33%
Total	300	100%

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork, 2025

Table 6, above, shows that the three (3) senatorial districts in Ekiti State were equally represented

Findings and Discussion

Findings on Research Objective 1(The causes of divorce among married couples in Ekiti State, Nigeria)

Table 7: The Causes of Divorce among Married Couples in Ekiti State, Nigeria

Variables	Strongly Agree	Agreed	Disagree	Strongly Disagreed
Infidelity and Lack of Communication	155 (51.67%)	101 (33.67%)	24 (8%)	20 (6.67%)
Financial Problems and Domestic Violence	179 (59.67%)	99 (33%)	16 (5.33%)	6 (2%)
Parental and Family Interference	182 (60.67%)	108 (36%)	7 (2.33%)	3 (1%)
Incompatibility and Irreconcilable Differences	172 (57.33%)	98 (32.67%)	21 (7%)	9 (3.33%)
Religious and Cultural Differences	143 (47.67%)	111 (37%)	24 (8%)	22 (7.33%)

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork, 2025.

Table 7 presents a statistical analysis of the causes of divorce among married couples in Ekiti State, Nigeria, highlighting key marital challenges. The data indicates that parental and family interference is the most cited factor, with 60.67% strongly agreeing and 36% agreeing, making a total of 96.67% of respondents acknowledging its impact. This suggests that external family influences significantly contribute to marital instability, likely through excessive interference in decision-making, financial expectations, or extended family conflicts. Similarly, financial problems and domestic violence emerge as another critical cause, with 59.67% strongly agreeing and 33% agreeing, highlighting the economic strain and abusive dynamics as major threats to marital stability.

Another significant cause is infidelity and lack of communication, where 51.67% strongly agree and 33.67% agree, indicating that emotional disconnection and unfaithfulness are primary destabilizing factors in marriages. Effective communication is crucial for conflict resolution, and its absence often leads to distrust and eventual separation. Additionally, incompatibility and irreconcilable differences account for a substantial percentage, with 57.33% strongly agreeing and 32.67% agreeing, showing that fundamental personality or lifestyle differences hinder long-term cohabitation. This highlights the role of personal values and expectations in determining marital longevity.

Lastly, religious and cultural differences are also notable factors, with 47.67% strongly agreeing and 37% agreeing, collectively making up 84.67% of responses. This suggests that disparities in religious beliefs and cultural backgrounds can create persistent conflicts, especially in a diverse society like Nigeria, where traditions and faith significantly shape marital roles and expectations. The findings in Table 7 reinforce the notion that both internal (e.g., communication and compatibility) and external (e.g., family interference and cultural expectations) factors contribute to the rising cases of divorce, underscoring the need for premarital counseling, financial planning, and conflict resolution strategies to foster marital stability.

Findings on Research Objective 2 (The influence of parental divorce on academic performance of Students in Secondary Schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria)

Table 8: The influence of parental divorce on academic performance of Students in Secondary Schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria

Variables	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Decline in Academic Performance and Poor Study Habits	107 (35.67%)	143 (47.67%)	27 (9%)	23 (7.67%)
Increased School Absenteeism	78 (26%)	82 (27.33%)	64 (21.33%)	56 (18.67%)
Low Self-Esteem and Confidence Issues	132 (44%)	98 (32.67%)	36 (12%)	34 (11.33%)
Economic Hardship and Limited Educational Resources	121 (40.33%)	96 (32%)	38 (12.67%)	35 (11.67%)
Exposure to Negative Peer Influence	113 (37.67%)	87 (29%)	55 (18.33%)	45 (15%)
Difficulties in Social Relationships and Behavioral Problems in School	48 (16%)	44 (14.67%)	122 (40.67%)	86 (28.67%)

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork, 2025.

Table 8 presents a detailed analysis of the influence of parental divorce on the academic performance of secondary school students in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The findings suggest that decline in academic performance and poor study habits is not widely acknowledged as a major consequence, as 47.67% of respondents agreed and 35.67% strongly agreed, collectively making up 83.34% of the responses. This indicates that while some students may

struggle academically due to parental separation, a significant proportion are able to maintain their academic performance despite family disruptions. However, increased school absenteeism presents a more divided outcome, with 26% strongly agreeing and 27.33% agreeing, indicating that parental divorce contributes to irregular school attendance for a considerable number of students, potentially disrupting their learning process.

A more pronounced impact of parental divorce is observed in low self-esteem and confidence issues, where 44% strongly agree and 32.67% agree, totaling 76.67% of respondents acknowledging this challenge. This suggests that the emotional and psychological consequences of parental separation significantly affect students' self-worth and engagement in academic activities. Similarly, economic hardship and limited educational resources appear to be a substantial challenge, with 40.33% strongly agreeing and 37.67% agreeing, indicating that the financial strain resulting from parental divorce limits students' access to essential educational materials, thereby affecting their learning outcomes.

Another critical finding is the impact of exposure to negative peer influence, with 32% strongly agreeing and 29% agreeing, suggesting that students from divorced homes may be more susceptible to engaging in risky behaviors due to a lack of parental supervision and emotional distress. This highlights the importance of providing structured guidance and mentorship to such students to prevent social deviance. Furthermore, difficulties in social relationships and behavioral problems in school are also significant, as 40.67% strongly agree and 28.67% agree, emphasizing that children of divorced parents often struggle with social integration, leading to disruptive behaviors that may further hinder their academic progress.

Overall, the data in Table 8 indicates that while the direct impact of parental divorce on academic performance varies among students, the emotional, financial, and social consequences are significant. Issues such as low self-esteem, economic hardship, peer influence, and behavioral problems are prominent, underscoring the need for targeted interventions such as counseling programs, financial aid, and school-based support systems to help affected students cope with the challenges associated with parental separation.

Findings on Research Objective 3 (The group of married couples that are more prone to divorce in terms of age-couples within the age bracket of 18-39 or couples within the age bracket of 40-60 in Ekiti State)

Table 9: The group of married couples that are more prone to divorce in terms of age-couples within the age bracket of 18-39 or couples within the age bracket of 40-60 in Ekiti State

Variables	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Young Couples Who Married Early (18-25 years)	101 (33.67%)	119 (39.67%)	59 (19.67%)	21 (7%)
Low-Income and Financially Unstable Couples (18-39 years)	129 (43%)	91 (30.33%)	46 (15.33%)	34 (11.33%)
Couples with Educational and Career Disparities (18-39 years)	168 (56%)	108 (36%)	15 (5%)	9 (3%)
Adults or Old Couples (40-60years)	47 (15.67%)	23 (7.67%)	113 (37.67%)	117 (39%)
Couples with Unresolved Emotional and Compatibility Issues (18-60 years)	123 (41%)	96 (32%)	45 (15%)	36 (12%)
Social Media-Influenced Marriages (18-39 years)	179 (59.67%)	101 (33.67%)	14 (4.67%)	6 (2%)
Interfaith or Interethnic Couples (18-39 years)	166 (55.33%)	94 (31.33%)	21 (7%)	19 (6.33%)

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork, 2025

The data presented in Table 9 provides an insightful examination of marital instability among different groups of couples in Ekiti State, particularly in relation to age brackets. The table highlights that younger couples, particularly those who married early (18-25 years), exhibit a significant tendency toward divorce, with 73.34% of respondents either strongly agreeing or agreeing with this assertion. Similarly, low-income and financially unstable couples within the 18-39 age bracket also demonstrate high susceptibility to divorce, as 73.33% of respondents affirmed this view. This indicates that economic stability plays a crucial role in sustaining marriages, as financial hardship can exacerbate marital conflicts and increase the likelihood of separation.

Furthermore, the role of educational and career disparities in marital dissolution is evident, as 92% of respondents agreed that such differences contribute to divorce among couples aged 18-39 years. This suggests that differences in educational attainment and career aspirations may create tensions in relationships, leading to incompatibility and eventual separation. Additionally, social media-influenced marriages within the 18-39 age bracket show a substantial agreement (69%) on their vulnerability to divorce. This finding

underscores the impact of modern digital interactions on marital stability, as social media exposure can create unrealistic expectations, promote infidelity, and encourage extramarital engagements.

The data further suggests that interfaith or interethnic marriages among younger couples (18-39 years) are highly susceptible to divorce, with 71.34% of respondents concurring. This highlights the role of cultural and religious differences in marital discord, which can lead to conflicts over values, family expectations, and child-rearing practices. Interestingly, unresolved emotional and compatibility issues appear to affect a broader age range (18-60 years), with 67% of respondents affirming that such factors contribute significantly to marital breakdown. This indicates that emotional incompatibility is a persistent challenge across different age groups, reinforcing the importance of mutual understanding and effective communication in sustaining marriages.

Notably, the table does not provide specific data for adults or older couples (40-60 years) regarding their vulnerability to divorce, implying that the focus of the research was primarily on younger age groups. However, the findings collectively suggest that couples within the 18-39 age bracket are more prone to divorce due to financial instability, educational disparities, social influences, and cultural differences. These insights emphasize the need for premarital counseling, financial literacy programmes, and marital education initiatives to address the underlying causes of marital instability in Ekiti State.

Findings on Research Objective 4 (The Socio-Economic and Academic Implications of Parental Divorce on the Secondary School Students Academic Performance in Ekiti State)

Table 10: The Socio-Economic and Academic Implications of Parental Divorce on the Secondary School Students Academic Performance in Ekiti State

Variables	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Limited Access to Educational Resources	121 (40.33%)	96 (32%)	38 (12.67%)	35 (11.67%)
Financial Hardship and Increased Child Labor	119 (39.67%)	108 (36%)	39 (13%)	34 (11.33%)
Social Stigmatization, Peer Pressure, Emotional and Psychological Stress	162 (52%)	108 (36%)	21 (7%)	9 (3%)
Lack of Parental Guidance and Supervision	178 (59.33%)	99 (33%)	17 (5.67%)	6 (2%)
Low Aspirations and Reduced Interest in Education	34 (11.33%)	33 (11%)	134 (44.67%)	99 (33%)
Relocation and Housing Instability	77 (25.67%)	83 (27.67%)	63 (21%)	57 (19%)

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork, 2025.

The data presented in Table 10 highlights the socio-economic and academic implications of parental divorce on secondary school students' academic performance in Ekiti State. A significant proportion of respondents (72.33%) agree that limited access to educational resources is a major challenge for children from divorced families. This suggests that parental separation often leads to financial instability, which in turn restricts students' ability from acquire essential learning materials, such as textbooks, school supplies, and private tutoring. Additionally, financial hardship and increased child labour were identified as critical issues, with 75.67% of respondents acknowledging that children from divorced families are more likely to face economic difficulties, which may force them into labour-intensive activities, ultimately affecting their academic performance.

Social stigmatization, peer pressure, and emotional stress also emerge as significant consequences of parental divorce, with 88% of respondents affirming their impact. The psychological strain associated with divorce can hinder students' concentration, reduce self-esteem, and contribute to behavioral problems in school. Similarly, the absence of parental guidance and supervision appears to be a major concern, as 59.33% of respondents strongly agree that children from broken homes are more likely to lack the necessary parental

support in their studies. This lack of supervision may result in increased truancy, poor study habits, and engagement in delinquent activities, further diminishing academic success.

The findings also indicate that parental divorce negatively affects students' academic aspirations and interest in education, with 44.67% of respondents strongly agreeing and 33% agreeing that children from divorced homes tend to develop lower educational ambitions. This may stem from feelings of insecurity, reduced motivation, or a lack of encouragement from separated parents. Additionally, relocation and housing instability were identified as a major concern, with 60.67% of respondents acknowledging its impact. Frequent relocation disrupts students' academic continuity, leading to adaptation challenges in new schools, learning environments, and peer groups, thereby affecting their academic progression.

Overall, the data underscores the far-reaching consequences of parental divorce on students' education in Ekiti State, particularly in terms of financial strain, emotional distress, and educational instability. These findings highlight the need for policy interventions, such as school-based counseling services, financial support programs, and parental awareness campaigns to mitigate the adverse effects of divorce on students' academic performance. Addressing these challenges is crucial to ensuring that children from divorced families receive the necessary support to thrive academically despite their circumstances.

Findings on Research Objective 5 (The possible interventions and strategic support to students affected by parental divorce in secondary schools in Ekiti State)

Table 11: The possible interventions and strategic support to students affected by parental divorce in secondary schools in Ekiti State

Variables	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Schools should provide trained counselors to offer emotional and psychological support to students affected by parental divorce	181 (60.33%)	99 (33%)	13 (4.33%)	7 (2.33%)
Educators should be trained to recognize and support students experiencing emotional distress due to parental divorce	163 (54.33%)	109 (36%.33)	20 (6.67%)	8 (2.67%)
Religious institutions, NGOs, and social groups should establish community support programs to provide financial, emotional, and social assistance to affected students.	140 (46.66%)	96 (32%)	33 (11%)	31 (10.33%)
The government should create policies that ensure children from divorced homes receive adequate educational support, including legal protection against neglect.	120 (40%)	102 (34%)	56 (18.67%)	22 (7.33%)

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork, 2025.

The data presented in Table 11 highlights various interventions and strategies that could support students affected by parental divorce in secondary schools in Ekiti State. The findings indicate a strong consensus among respondents on the necessity of trained counselors in schools, with 60.33% strongly agreeing and 33% agreeing, while only a small fraction (6.66%) disagreed. This suggests that stakeholders recognize the emotional and psychological toll of parental divorce on students and emphasize the importance of specialized counseling services to help them navigate their challenges effectively.

Similarly, the majority of respondents (54.33% strongly agree, 36.33% agree) support the idea that educators should be trained to identify and assist students undergoing emotional distress due to parental divorce. The minimal opposition to this proposal (9.34% disagreed or strongly disagreed) underscores the widespread acknowledgment that teachers play a critical role in students' emotional well-being. By equipping educators with the necessary skills, schools can create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment that fosters students' resilience and academic success. Beyond school-based interventions, the table also reveals significant support for community engagement in assisting students from divorced families. Nearly 79% of respondents either strongly agree (46.66%) or agree (32%) that religious institutions, NGOs, and social groups should establish support programs to provide financial, emotional, and social assistance. However, a higher proportion of disagreement (21.33%) compared to other variables suggests potential concerns regarding the feasibility or effectiveness of community-led interventions. That nonetheless, these findings highlight the perceived importance of multi-sectoral support in addressing the complex challenges faced by affected students.

In conclusion, the role of government policy in ensuring the educational welfare of children from divorced homes also received considerable support, with 74% (40% strongly agree, 34% agree) advocating for legal and policy frameworks to protect these students. However, the 26% disagreement (18.67% disagree, 7.33% strongly disagree) suggests some reservations about the government's ability to implement such measures effectively. Overall, the data underscores the necessity for a collaborative approach integrating school-based, community, and policy-driven interventions to mitigate the adverse effects of parental divorce on secondary school students in Ekiti State.

Conclusion

This study has explored the intricate relationship between parental divorce and the academic performance of secondary school students in Ekiti State, Nigeria. It has highlighted the major causes of divorce, including financial instability, infidelity, and lack of communication, which disproportionately affect younger couples within the 18–39 age bracket. The findings indicate that parental divorce negatively influences students' academic

performance by causing emotional distress, reduced parental supervision, and financial challenges, which hinder their concentration and overall educational achievements. Additionally, the socio-economic and academic implications of divorce extend beyond individual families, affecting the broader educational system and society by increasing dropout rates and reducing student motivation.

To address these challenges, the study emphasizes the need for proactive interventions such as enhanced counseling services, economic empowerment programs, and school-based academic support for affected students. Raising awareness on the long-term effects of divorce and implementing policies that promote family stability are also crucial in mitigating its adverse impact. Ultimately, fostering a supportive environment for students from divorced homes will help them navigate academic challenges and achieve their full potential, thereby contributing to the overall development of Ekiti State's educational sector.

Recommendations

- The government and relevant stakeholders should establish and strengthen family counseling centers across Ekiti State to provide pre-marital and marital counseling. These centers should offer professional guidance to couples on conflict resolution, financial management, and emotional stability to reduce the incidence of divorce.
- Schools should implement structured support programs, including counseling services, mentorship, and academic interventions, for students from divorced families. This will help mitigate the negative effects of parental separation on students' academic performance and emotional well-being.
- Since financial instability is a significant cause of divorce, government agencies and non-governmental organizations should provide economic empowerment programs for couples, particularly those in the 18–39 age bracket, to improve financial security and marital stability.
- Public awareness campaigns should be organized through media platforms, religious institutions, and community forums to educate couples on the long-term effects of divorce on children's academic and socio-emotional development. This will encourage parents to prioritize their children's well-being in marital decision-making.
- Schools should adopt flexible learning approaches, such as after-school tutoring and scholarship opportunities, to support students from divorced homes. These interventions will help bridge academic gaps and provide necessary emotional and financial assistance.
- The Ekiti State government should formulate and enforce policies that promote family stability, including stricter marriage counseling requirements, child support

enforcement, and mediation services for divorcing couples. This will help reduce divorce rates and ensure adequate support for affected children.

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