

## **EFFECTS OF DIVORCE ON CHILDREN**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Recent studies indicate that there is great influence of divorce on children`s lives. The effect of divorced couples with children may cause a lifespan impact on them; especially young aged children may experience dramatic and traumatic adjustments that could lead to mental, physical and emotional disorders. The effect is not only with visible traces but also their mindsets, hearts, spiritual well-beings may get effected from low to high scales; visible to non-visible; long-term to short term periods. One of the main problems observed with divorced families was the uncertain role of the parent that would be held child`s educational needs. Also how divorce impact on those children when their parents get the divorced, do they feel secure or not, or do they miss the parents who do not live with children or do they hate them. Do those children have low academic achievement in school, or not were main concerns of the present study.

**Keywords:** Divorce, Education, Psychological, Emotional, Relationship

### **INTRODUCTION**

Three research questions will be addressed here:

1. What is the magnitude of the effects associated with parental separation?
2. Are the associations between parental separation/divorce and offspring functioning causally related to the experience of marital transitions or due to factors that both increase marital disruptions and offspring functioning?
3. To which extent are the associations causal and what are the specific environmental factors that mediate (or explain) the associations?

Divorce is one of the most painful experiences in life. It`s not only the death of a marriage, but also the death of dreams and hopes. It is considered one of the most emotional painful human experiences. Thinking about the experience of divorce within the context of attachment generates a greater sense of empathy. Divorce is not just a matter of the heart but an experience that impacts the whole person on a multitude of levels. It triggers all kinds of emotional pain and unsettling feelings.

Divorce is the most difficult phase of married couple's life. As adults, they might eventually get over the tough period, but, but children become a collateral casualty. Their minds are tender and can slip into a state of shock on seeing parents split forever. Divorce causes irreparable harm to all involved, but most especially to the children. Though it might be shown to benefit some individuals in some individual cases, over all it causes a temporary decrease in an individual's quality of life and puts some "on a downward trajectory from which they might never fully recover."

Divorce detrimentally impacts individuals and society in numerous other ways:

- Religious practice: Divorce diminishes the frequency of worship of God and recourse to Him in prayer.
- Education: Divorce diminishes children's learning capacity and educational attainment.
- The marketplace: Divorce reduces household income and deeply cuts individual earning capacity.
- Government: Divorce significantly increases crime, abuse and neglect, drug use, and the costs of compensating government services.
- Health and well-being: Divorce weakens children's health and longevity. It also increases behavioral, emotional, and psychiatric risks, including even suicide.
- Divorce often results in the loss of a parent for the children and with this loss children also lose the knowledge, skills and resources (emotional, financial, etc.) of that parent.
- Another result of divorce is that children living in single parent families are less likely to have as many economic resources as children living in intact families.
- Divorce often results in many changes in children's living situations such as changing schools, child care, homes, etc. Children often also have to make adjustments to changes in relationships with friends and extended family members.

These changes create a more stressful environment for children.

The psychological adjustment of parents is a significant factor in children's well-being. There have been many studies examining the relationship between divorced parents' psychological well-being and children's well-being. Of the 15 studies that have examined this relationship 13 found that there was a positive relationship between the mental health of parents and children's mental health. That is, children whose parents are better adjusted fare better than children whose parents are not adjusting well. There is some evidence to suggest that when the divorced parent's adjustment is taken into account that some of the differences between children from intact and divorced children disappears. Despite the general support for these conclusions, there is at least

one important caution. The causal relationship between parents and children's adjustment is not clear. It could be that having better adjusted children improves the well-being of the parents.

Child suicide is often triggered by thoughts that his divorced parents reject him or have lost interest in him. The fact that the suicide rate has risen along with the divorce rate is no coincidence. One study reported that risk of a suicide attempt was higher in divorced families, though the association was eliminated after controlling for adverse experiences. As the work of Patricia McCall, a sociology professor at North Carolina State University, shows, the strongest demographic indicator of suicide is the family structure within which a person resides: the divorced family structure has the highest suicide rate.

Women from divorced families are 1.46 times as likely to attempt suicide as women from intact families. An earlier study by the same author found that women raised in divorced families are 1.33 times as likely to attempt suicide; this finding holds true even after adjusting for various confounding factors, such as age, race, and income. This link between parental divorce and the rise in adolescent suicide has been found again and again in the literature. Cross cultural studies of Japan and the United States have clearly demonstrated the link between divorce and suicidal thought.

Numerous reports have maintained that the broken family leads to a variety of problems including crime, delinquency, mental illness and a heterogeneous mass of ills afflicting individuals and societal institutions as a whole. However, others reflect reservation about assertions that divorce is bad for children. One author states that it may be true that children from happy marriages are better adjusted than children from divorced homes. However, children from divorced parents are happier than children coming from intact unhappy homes. In our study we will be examining the effects on children coming from unhappy homes that have been divided. Goode (1956) questions the assumption that divorce leads to poor adjustment for children, although divorce does not have to be a traumatic experience, it often is. Children of divorce are often caught in the middle of an unpleasant situation. Westman et al (1971) state that children from divorced families generally indicate somewhat greater signs of maladjustment than those from intact homes. In an article by Shannon Philpot titled *The Effect of Divorce parents on a Child's Future Relationship*, she states, 'studies indicate that daughters of divorced parents have a 60- percent higher divorce rate in marriages than children of non divorced parents, and sons have a 35 percent higher divorce rate'. Warren Bowles III states in his article titled *Effects of Parental Divorce on Adult Relationships*, "children who grow up in divorced homes typically have less contact with the non-custodial parent and as time goes on the parent child relationship seems to further deteriorate. This leaves a gap in the parental model that serves as the relationship template for all future relationship in life. As these children of divorce reach

adulthood they have been shown to have problems with psychological well being and relationships.

## **CONCLUSION**

Divorce and its ensuing ramifications can have a significant and life-altering impact on the well being and subsequent development of children and adolescents.

The consequences of divorce impact almost all aspects of a child's life, including the parent-child relationship, emotions and behavior, psychological development, and coping skills.

There is a significant need for child mental health professionals, along with other child specialists, to be cognizant of the broad spectrum of possible fall-out from a divorce and then to provide sufficient support for children of divorced parents in all the necessary psychosocial aspects of the child's life.

The overall results of these studies suggest that while children from divorced families may, on the average, experience more difficulties than children in intact families, there are more similarities than differences. The most important question is not whether children from divorced families are having difficulties, but what particular factors cause these differences. Current evidence suggests that the loss of parents, economic difficulties, stress, parental adjustment and competence, and interparental conflict all contribute at least to some degree to the difficulties of children. These results provide significant implications to practitioners interested in designing interventions for children and adults in divorcing families.

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