

Divorce And Children's Adjustment in the Post-Divorce Period

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Abstract— Divorce is a traumatic, heart-breaking experience that affects the lives of parents, children, families, relatives and friends. This devastating event affects spouse's emotional, psychological, and economic stability. It also impacts spouse's relationship with children, families, relatives, and friends. The objective of this study was to find what the root causes and solutions of conflicts that result to early divorce in Christian families are, the ensuing consequences, and children's adjustment in the post-divorce period. This article specifically focuses on children's adjustment in the post-divorce period.

To find the causes and solutions to the problem and what the post-divorce period portends for the children, views on effects of how various conflicts cause or help bring about divorce were taken and compared to results of data from respondents' answers, critically and synthetically analyzed and interpreted.

In the process to collect data, Qualitative Descriptive research design was used where questionnaire, study guide, and interviews were used to collect data. Basing on the research objectives, the data collected was coded, analyzed and tabulated. The data, being answers from the 85 respondents involved in the study, was then interpreted.

The findings showed that among the major causes of divorce are: infidelity, sexuality difficulties among couples, drug abuse, incompatibility, economic status of the family, poor communication, and work-holism. Counselling, it was found out, had the effect of reducing slowly, the effects of the causes that brought divorce and in some cases to stop divorce. Counselling was found too to reduce the pain and the problems that children of divorce went through whether under single parent or where the custodial parent was remarried. The couple should always remember that forgiveness and respect to each other, even without professional Counselling, will go a long way towards fighting the spirit of divorce. It is recommended that the couple always work towards establishing and maintaining good marital relationship. Lastly, the couple should be aware of the help that God will render to them, being strengthened to forgive and to practise the teachings got through Counselling.

Index Terms— Adjustment, Divorce, Post-Divorce Period.

I. INTRODUCTION

Generally, divorce is a traumatic experience that is not good for the family and it should by all means be avoided because its consequences are bad to be lived with both to the people involved in divorce, their children, their families, their friends, the society they live in and the country at large. In this article, we are going to see what the church, the family, the civil society and the government can do in order to counsel, correct and finally stop conflicts that eventually lead to family breakdown and children's adjustment in the Post-Divorce

Period. Some key causes of divorce including Infidelity, Poor communication, Work-holism, Incompatibility, Feminist ideas, Poor financial status or poverty, and Alcoholism will be examined. In addition, the article will look at how children of divorce can be helped to make positive adjustment mostly in behavior in their new environment with the custodial parent whether single or re-married. The areas the children need to make adjustment include socialization, low self-esteem, high temper, and truancy and low academic grades among others.

• **Problem Statement:**

Divorce is a common phenomenon, which has attracted global attention. Government and non-governmental organizations have played vital roles in the elimination of this menace because of the psychological and social problems that go with it. Divorce has devastating effects on all aspects of life, socially, psychologically, financially, and spiritually and interrupts the –would-be family progress and development. An aspect of this interruption is the discomfort, pain or challenge that children of divorce go through and it is the focus of this article how to help these children to adjust to the post-divorce situation they find themselves in.

• **Research Objectives:**

To find out root causes of conflicts that result into divorce and how to help the children of divorce adjust to the post-divorce period.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

• **Introduction**

This literature review is important in bringing forward recent research findings on the causes and solutions of conflicts that result to early divorce in Christian families. It is relevant in presenting information in regard to how the children will be impacted in the after-divorce period. Further, it is important in showing current research findings on the effects of divorce on children in the after-divorce period.

• **Factors affecting children's post-divorce adjustment**

• **Introduction**

Although the research suggests that children of divorce may experience a variety of problems ranging from psychological disturbances to diminished social relationships, the type, severity and persistence of these problems may have been mediated (or moderated) by a number of factors. Some of the factors researchers have identified include: child characteristic, such as gender and age at a time of divorce; family characteristic, such as socio-economic status of the custodial household, race and childrearing skills; and, situational characteristic, such as parental absence, length of time since marital dissolution, conflicts, system, divorce

proceedings custody arrangement, remarriage, and environmental changes. These factors are discussed below.

• Child characteristics

The findings on gender differences in children response to divorce have been contradictory. Some research points to more adjustment problems for boys in divorcing families than girls (Guidubaldi & Perry, 1985; Hetherington et al, 1979, 1089; Kurdek, 1987); other research finds more negative effects for girls (Faber et al., 1983; Frost & Pakiz, differences in the effects of the divorce on boys and girls).

Immediately following divorce, Kaye (1989) found that boys and girls showed poor performances on achievement tests compared to children from intact families. However, by the fifth year following divorce boys' grades and achievement tests were adversely affected, while girls' were not. Similarly, Hetherington et al (1979) found that, immediately following the divorce, boys and girls experienced some disrupted in play situation however the effects appeared to be more sustained in boys. Wallenstein (1985) in a ten-year follow-up of children who were pre- scholars at the time of divorce made important observations. Eighteen months following the divorce, many of the girls appeared recovered, but boys were significantly more troubled at school, in the playground and at home. Five years after the divorce, these sex differences had again disappeared. Guidubaldi and Perry (1985) found that boys in divorced households exhibited more adverse effects than girls, in terms of inappropriate behavior, work effects, and happiness. Girls with divorced parents, on the other hand, scored higher in locus of control than their counterparts (Slater et al. 1983).

Other studies have found more detrimental effects for girls than boys. Slater et al. (1983) found that adolescent girls from homes with disruption had lower self-esteem and more behavior problems than adolescent boys in similar home life situations. Furthermore, while female adolescent from disruption homes reported higher levels of family conflicts than females from intact families, the opposite was true for male. Wallenstein and Kelly (1975) found that, one year following divorce, 63 percent of the girls were in worse psychological condition compared to 27 percent of the boys. Frost and Pakiz (1990) found that girls from recently disrupted household reported truancy in higher proportion than their male counterpart, and, than children from intact families. They were also significantly more dissatisfied with their social network than girls from intact families (JOSEPH VEROFF, *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 62 [2000]:349-361).

Finally, some studies have found no difference on various effects of divorce between girls and boys (Kinard & Reinherz, 1984; Mechanic & Hansell, 1989; Rosen, 1979). Frost and Pakiz (1990) found no gender difference for self-reported antisocial behavior among adolescents from divorced families, although they found gender difference in other areas (such as truancy and social networks).

There have been fewer studies examining differences among adult children of divorce. In a study by Farber et al. (1983), Clinical directors of college mental health counseling centers said that female adolescents had more difficulty than males in adapting to divorce. However, in a review of the

literature, Amato (in press) found minimal sex differences, although women from divorced families appear to attain lower levels of education than those from intact families (DAVID POPENO, *Life Without Father* [New York, NY: Free Press, 1996], 62). In a meta-analysis of 37 studies which examined the long-term consequence of parental divorce for adult well-being, Amato and Keith (1991a) found no support for the contention that parental divorce has more detrimental consequences for males than females. Finally, in a longitudinal study, Zill et al. (1993) found no evidence to support the hypothesis that young adult males were more likely than girls to be vulnerable to the effects of marital disruption.

A possible reason for the contradictory findings related to gender could be that boys and girls maybe affected by divorce in different ways. For instance, Kalter (1987) suggests that disruptions in the father-son relationship are linked to a multitude of development interference in boys. For girls, on the other hand, the emotional loss of father is seen as rejection. Similarly, Healy et al. (1990) argue that boys and girls show sex-role-typical pattern of distress when they for boys, and low self-esteem and fewer behavior problems for girls. Amato (in press) suggests that the negative effects on social adjustment maybe stronger for boys than girls, but in other areas there are no major differences. Other research suggests that girls may be more affected psychologically (e.g., depression) (Peterson & Zill, 1986). Also, it is possible that behavior problems commonly seen in boys are more readily observed behavior than type of problems that girls have (self-esteem).

Many studies point to relevance of age at the time of separation for children's divorce adjustment. Although early findings suggested that separation from a parent at an early age had more negative effects for children than for older youth, this factor has proven to be more complex than was initially believed. In a ten-year follow-up of pre-school children from divorced families, Wallestein found the initial response to divorce to be worse for younger children, but in later years they appeared better adjusted than their older counterparts (Wallerstein, 1984). She concluded that those who are very young at marital breakup may be less burdened in the years to come than those who are older. Similarly, Amato (1987) found that the majority of children who were very young at the time of divorce reported that they were not strongly affected by the break up (TRACIE O. AFIFI, JONATHAN BOMAN, *Strategies to Strengthen Marriage* [1998], 35). The current thinking appears to be that children at every age are affected by divorce, but in differing ways. For example, Krantz (1988) suggests that early separations may be associated with deficits in social and emotional functioning, but not in intellectual functioning. From an examination of numerous studies, Demo and Acock (1988) argue that young children encounter problems with personal adjustment and peer relations, while adolescents encounter problems with sexual relations and anti-social behavior. Similarly, Zill et al. (1993) found that youth who experienced a family disruption prior to 6 years of age showed poorer relationships with their fathers than those who experienced disruption later in childhood. Landerkin and Clarke (1990)

describe how children's level of development affects their reactions to divorce, although they acknowledge that there may be an overlap.

The primary reaction among infants may be regression in developmental attainments (e.g., sleeping, eating, language, independence). For pre-schoolers, difficulties may appear in social relationships and separation anxiety. School age children may react with sadness, somatic complaints (e.g., headaches, stomach-aches) and intense anger towards parents. Adolescents may encounter problems establishing an adult identity (LISA STROHSCHNEIN, *Journal of Marriage and Family* 67[2005], 1296) demonstrate anger towards self or others, and experience somatic complaints. Finally, Kalter and Rembar (1981) found marital dissolution which occurred very early in a child's life (2 ½ years of age or less) was associated with separation-related difficulties; separation during the oedipal phase (2 ½ -6) caused the greatest effects overall on the children; and, for those 6 years of age or older, the results were inconsistent.

New family characteristics

(a) Socio-economic status

Often one of the first impacts that divorce has on a child is a dramatic decline in the standard of living in the custodial household (Bean, Berg & VanHook, 1995; Duncan, 1994; Ross, 1995). Krantz (1988) suggests that children belonging to lower socio-economic groups after divorce experience greater hardships. Do these hardships, however, translate into adjustment problems?

Some researchers argue that this decline in socio-economic status is directly linked to a variety of problems experienced by the child, such as psychological maladjustment and behavioral difficulties in school. For instance, Nelson (1990) found that family income, rather than marital status, was associated with mothers' life strains and children's self-esteem. In addition, Kalter, Kloner, Schreier and Okla (1989) found a negative relation between socio-economic status and children's adjustment in post-divorce households. However, they suggest that economic deprivation, along with a number of other factors (e.g., inter-parental hostilities, burden of single parenting) take their toll on custodial mothers, which results in poorer adjustment among children (FREDERICK O. LORENZ, *Journal of Marriage and Family* 61[1999]: 1030).

With a sample of children entering kindergarten, Guidubaldi and Perry (1984) attempted to examine the relation between single-parent status and children's development, controlling for socio-economic status. They found an association between socio-economic status of parents and intellectual, and academic and personal-social development of children. However, even when socio-economic status was controlled, children from divorced families entered school with significantly less social and academic competence than those from intact families. This indicates that single parent status may predict poor academic and social competence in addition to, and independent of, socio-economic status. They argue that socio-economic status has a generalized association with both intellectual and

non-intellectual measures, while single-parent status is associated with only non-intellectual variables (Judith S. Wallerstein and Joan B. Kelly [1999]).

(b) Ethno-cultural background

Very little research has examined ethno-cultural differences among children of divorce. Although there appear to be vast perceptual differences towards kinship, marriage, and divorce cross-culturally, the majority of studies continue to concentrate on Caucasian, and for the most part middle-class, respondents. The results are then interpreted as an indication of the effects of divorce on all children (WALLERSTEIN and KELLY, 1999).

However, some research has addressed how various ethno-cultural groups may respond differently to divorce. For instance, in their 1995 study Durndell, Cameron, Knox and Haag (1995) noted radical differences in attitudes towards divorce between native citizens of Rumania, Chinese American, Korean American, and Anglo-Americans.

Some studies have found Hispanic groups to be more affected by family conflict than non-Hispanic whites, while Asians were more affected by a recent divorce (Bean, 1995; Mechanic & Hansell, 1989; Wong, 1995). As part of a national survey which examined the relation between adult depression and childhood separation from a parent (due to death, divorce, out of wedlock, etc.), Amato (1991) found that, although white and African American adults who experienced parental absence scored higher on depression than those raised in intact families, these differences, did not appear for Hispanics. He hypothesized that Hispanics may not experience the same negative effects of parental absence because they receive necessary support from their extended families.

Amato (1991) also found that a great deal of a parental absence was mediated by lowered educational attainment and current marital status for whites and African American females, although not for African American males. Furthermore, in a meta-analysis of 37 studies of adults, Amato and Keith (1991) found that white adults were affected more negatively by parental divorce than African Americans. Lawson and Thompson (1994, 1996) note that African Americans males are more likely to turn to family and friends, as well as church and other social activities as coping mechanisms following divorce. Each of these studies hypothesized that this was the case because divorce may only marginally lower the quality of life for African Americans, due to the disadvantages they already have.

Following a review of the research, Amato (in press) concludes that there is too little information to reach any conclusions regarding race/ethnicity for children. For adults, he concludes that African Americans appear to be affected less by parental divorce than whites.'

The issue of child-rearing can encompass a number of aspects, including the effects of employment by the custodial parent on the child, child-rearing skills and adjustment to the divorce by the custodial parent (Amato).

The issue of whether employment by the custodial parent has negative effects on children has not been examined in depth. Although it is having been suggested that there may be negative effects on the child due to the sole-custody parent

(usually the mother) working, a study conducted by Kinard and Reinherz (1984) did not substantiate this claim. Rather, they found that any negative consequences for children of divorce stem from having unemployed rather than employed mothers. However, other researchers have argued that a change in the employment status of the custodial parent may affect the child. For instance, Medrick, Baker, Reznick and Hocevar (1990) found that instability in the maternal employment was associated with negative effects on children (CAROLYN A. SMITH, 'Social work' 42[1997]:334-346).

In review of literature, Grych and Fincham (1992) found that parenting styles and discipline practices are linked to the development of behavior problems in children. This is often the case because, after divorce, parenting is disrupted and discipline frequently becomes inconsistent, both within and between parents. Health and MacKinnon (1988) argue that child-rearing factors are important predictors of children's social competence in single-parent households. They found that parental acceptance of children was positively related to children's social competence, while psychological control was negatively related. Further, although they found that social competence related to firm control for males, but moderate control for females, the results indicated that mothers tended to use more lax control for sons than daughters (FRANK F. FURSTENBERG, *Journal of Family Issues* 15[1994] 179). They suggest that this may provide an explanation for findings which show boys to be worse off than girls in divorces. Health and MacKinnon found that mother's unwillingness to exercise firm control over their sons to be a more important determinant of the child's social competence than father's absence. However, Buchanan et al. 1992 found that children living with their fathers had poorer adjustment as a result of poorer monitoring.

The psychological adjustment of the custodial parent after divorce is emerging as a central factor in determining children's post-divorce adjustment (Cohen, 1995; Kelly, 1993), although the role of maternal adjustment after divorce has been more often examined than the impact of paternal adjustment on children and no studies have looked at the relative contribution of maternal versus paternal adjustment on children. Nor have there been any studies examining the effect and interaction between both parents' adjustment, conflict, time, with both parents, and residence. Weiss (1979) notes that single parents tend to face the following problems which make effective parenting difficult: they often lack adequate support systems; they may feel overburdened by the demands and responsibilities of making all of the daily household decisions alone; they frequently face task overload; and they may experience emotional overload because of the need to cope with both their own emotional reactions and those of the children (RANDY M. PAGE, *Adolescent Loneliness: A priority for School Health Education Quarterly* 15[1988]:20-30). Therefore, it may be particularly difficult for them to discipline consistently and be responsive to their children's needs. The better the custodial parent adapts to the adversity of the divorce, the more effective he/she can be at providing care, guidance and support for the children and the more positively adjusted they will be (Kalter et al, 1989). For instance, Nelson (1990) found children's self-esteem to be

directly related to their mother's life strains. Further, Mednick (1990) found that lower adolescent academic proficiency was related to mother's adjustment following the divorce. They suggest that the mother's adaptation to her own personal situation may have a positive influence on the long-term adaptation on children. Kelly and Wallenstein (1977) suggest that parents should identify the aspects of their behavior which produce stress on the child and change them to help reduce the negative effects of divorce. Whatever the initial reaction post-divorce, it is important to note that the psychological functioning of parents after separation and divorce improves significantly over time in both men and women (Kelly, 1990).

• Situational characteristics

(a) Parental absence/remarriage

Until recently, a common assumption in the divorce literature was that both parents living in the same household as the child would be a better environment for children's development than a single-parent family. According to this view, the absence of one parent from the household is problematic for children's socialization. Although there is some support for this view, it does not appear to be the only factor involved in the children's wellbeing following divorce (Kelly and Wallenstein (1977).

It has been found out that, following divorce, many children experience a decrease in the quantity and quality of contact with the noncustodial parent (Amato, 1987; Schlesinger, 1982). Stolba and Amato (1993), however, argue that adolescents' well-being is not solely associated with the loss of the noncustodial parent. Instead, they conclude that alternative family forms can be suitable for raising adolescents, if they provide support, control and supervision. However, they suggest that extended single-parent households may be less beneficial for younger children.

There are conflicting views as to whether or not remarriage of the custodial parent is beneficial for the children. Researchers who emphasize the importance of the of economics or parent absence argue that the marriage of the custodial parent should be beneficial for the children because it normally increases the family income and provides more parental supervision and support for the children. On the other hand, it has been argued that the entrance of a new, and possibly unwelcome, adult into the family can be a source of stress and rivalry for the children (Hetherington & Camara, 1988). Simons (1980) suggests that children may become resentful of the time they lose with the custodial parent as a result of the new partner (A. Rose, "Journal of Marriage and Family 64[2002]:1028-1029").

Furthermore, dating and remarriage may destroy children's belief that their parents will remarry. Finally, remarriage is often confusing for children because they must learn to adapt and accept yet another new family structure. It is interesting to note, however, that children living with step fathers are much more likely to say that their step father is a family member (TRACIE O. AFIFI, JONATHAN BOMAN, "Strategies to Strengthen Marriage and Relationships [1998], 35)."

Although the financial advantages that step-children enjoy

over those in single-parent families are evident, research to date has failed to show a beneficial effect of remarriage on children's achievement or behavior. In a national longitudinal study of children (aged 12-16), Peterson and Zill (1986) found more behavior problems among girls living with a remarried mother, as compared to boys. In a follow-up study with these children at ages 18-22, Zill et al. (1993) concluded that remarriage did not have a protective effect on children. Hetherington and her colleagues (Hetherington, 1993; Hetherington et al., 1985) found remarriage to be associated with more negative effects. For instance, remarriage of the custodial mother had more adverse effects on girls than boys, while the divorce itself had more adverse, long-term effects on boys. Over time, though, children adjust to remarriage and then there is an improvement.

(b) Time since marital disruption

A number of researchers have argued that, although there are often negative effects on children immediately following the divorce, children adjust to divorce over time, for instance, Amato (1987) found that the length of the time since marital disruption was related to children's well-being. That is, when interviewed years after the divorce, most children said that they had accepted the situation and had adjusted reasonably well to the divorce. Further, Walsh and Stolberg (1989) found that the amount of time that had passed since the separation was significantly correlated with child adjustment (i.e., beliefs about divorce, parent-reported behavioral adjustment, child-report emotional labeling) (Walsh and Stolberg, 1989). They found that inter spousal hostility was associated with increased child-reported anger for recent separations, but with lower anger for distant separations. In addition, they found that for recent separations, high levels of "bad" events were associated with fewer misconceptions about divorce; no relation at mid-length; but, more misconceptions for distant separations.

(c) Conflict

The impact of parental conflict on children's post-divorce adjustment has received considerable attention in the literature. Most theorists agree that parental conflict, at very least, provides some negative influences for children's adjustment to divorce. For instance, it has been found that conflict can affect children's self-esteem, ability to adjust and cope; social competence and behavior (see Grych & Fincham, 1992 for review of the literature) (BETHOLD BERG and LAWRENCE A. KURDEK, "Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology" 55[1987]:716.

Johnson et al. (1985) conducted an in-depth examination of the nature of parental disputes with 39 families who were disputing custody or access arrangements. It should be noted that this sample is biased in that their rate of verbal and physical aggression is considerably higher than that of a normal divorcing sample (BETHOLD BERG and LAWRENCE A. KURDEK, 1987). However, it provides us with an indication of the devastating effects conflict can have on children. According to these parents, children witness a great deal of verbally and physically abusive incidents, but much less of the verbal reasoning attached to such incidents. It was found that the parents involve children in conflicts as by standers, passive weapons, communication channels, or as

active participants to collect evidence, spy or communicate threats and insults. Only 5 percent of the parents reported that they protected their children consistently from arguments or the behavior following an argument (i.e., depression). Children's reactions to these conflicts differed depending on age (BETHOLD BERG and LAWRENCE A. KURDEK, 1987).

Younger children had predominantly submissive distress responses and were more likely to try to control the fight than older children. Two-thirds of all the children tried to avoid the dispute and one quarter showed aggressive distress responses. Again, it should be noted that these children appear more distressed and more likely to become angry than children from non-disputing families, but both groups attempt to control, ignore and avoid the dispute. According to Johnson et al., children's emotional and behavioral problems can be predicted by the amount of disagreement between parents, and the duration of the dispute over the child (RANDY M. PAGE, "Adolescent Loneliness: A priority for School Health Education Quarterly" 15[1988]:20-30).

There are some studies that go a step further, demonstrating that conflict, rather than divorce per se, is the major determinant of children's adjustment. For instance, Bishop and Ingersoll (1989) found that marital conflict had a greater impact on adolescents' self-concept than family structure. Similarly, Mechanic and Hansell (1989) found that family conflict had more direct effects on long term changes in well-being (i.e., depression, anxiety, physical symptoms, self-esteem) than divorce, current separation from parents, or parental death. Furthermore, they found that adolescents in intact families with high levels of conflict had poorer well-being than those experiencing divorce with low levels of conflicts (Mechanic and Hansell, 1989). A recent survey of 9,816 secondary schools students in the Netherlands indicates that the level of wellbeing of children living in single mothers' families is higher than that of students living in two parent families with much parental conflict, the wellbeing of children living in single mother families with no parental conflict and with a great deal of contact with the departed father is lower than that of children living with two parent families without parental conflict and finally, the degree of parental conflict after divorce is more important for the wellbeing of the children than the degree of contact with the departed father.

Using data from the United States National longitudinal surveys of youth, Jekielek (1996) found that both parental conflict and marital disruption were associated with decreases in the children's wellbeing but children who remain in the high conflict environments do worse than children who experienced high conflict but whose parents had divorced at least two years previously. The results suggest that parental divorce following high conflict may actually improve the wellbeing of children relative to a high conflict status. Using a 12-year longitudinal study, Amato, Loomis & Booth (1995) also found that the consequences of parental divorce depend on the degree of parental conflict prior to divorce. In high conflict families, children had higher levels of wellbeing as young adults if their parents divorced than if they stayed together than if they divorced. In marriages that did not end in

divorce, parental conflict was negatively associated with the wellbeing of the children (Amato, Loomis and Booth, 1995).

On the other hand, some researcher has argued that while conflict is an important factor the relationship between conflict and children's post-divorce adjustment is neither universal, simple nor straightforward. For instance, Cockett and Tripp (1994) found that, although marital conflict was associated with poor outcomes for children (in terms of health, behavior, school, friendship and self-esteem), family reorganization appeared to be the main adverse factor. Further, Buehler and Trotter (1990) found co-operation to be the main factor. Although Hess and Camara (1979) found parental harmony to be a better predictor of child behavior than family status, they also found that the parent-child relationship appeared to be the most powerful influence on the child's social and school adjustment, stronger than parental harmony. Kelly (1993) argues that the effects of conflict are indirect, they are either mediated through other behaviors of the parents or dependent on their conflicts directly with and through the children. In both married and divorced families, children were less aggressive and had less behavioral problems when parents had higher co-operation scores as opposed to when used negative, attacking dispute resolution styles (Camara and Resnick, 1989). Furthermore, some researchers (e.g., Cohen, 1995; Health & MacKinnon, 1988; Hoffman, 1995) have found parental co-operation to be highly correlated with the child-father relationship and predictive of child's social competence, indicating the importance of co-operative family interactions following divorce.

Kelly (1993) states that children can escape the negative consequences of parental conflict when they are not caught in it by their parents, when their parents avoid direct, aggressive expressions of their conflict in front of them or when they use compromise styles of conflict resolution. Buchanan et al. (1991) found that with adolescents who were living part of the time with each parent, the effects of discord between parents is stronger and they tended to feel caught in the middle. Children who were involved in their parent's disagreements and who felt they had to manage their parent's relationship to make things run smoothly were the most likely to feel depressed and exhibit deviant behavior (Buchanan, 1991). Therefore, conflict per se is not necessarily the best predictor of adjustment and should perhaps not be used by itself as a sole determinant making decisions about custody and access. Another major difficulty with using conflict as a determinant in custody and access decisions is that conflict almost invariably diminishes over time (Kelly, 1990; Maccoby, Depner & Mackinnon, 1990) and couples can move in and out of conflict both before and after separation and divorce (Neale & Smart, 1997).

In an examination of a number of common hypotheses relating to the effects of divorce on children, Kalter et al. (1989) found no support for the inter-parental hostility hypothesis. Instead, they suggest that when a number of stressors (i.e., economic deprivation, inter-parental hostilities, and the burden of single parenting) take their toll on custodial mothers, children fare less well. However, when parents are psychologically able to provide a loving relationship,

children will be buffered from the stresses divorce can engender and will prosper developmentally (Cohen, 1995) (REBECCA A.COLMAN AND CATHY SPATZ WINDOM, "Child Abuse and Neglect"28[2004]:1133-1151).

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- **The Sample size of the study**

Category	Total
Kacyiri	16
Gatore	13
Nyarubande	19
Mukarangi	15
Kagomba	12
Byumba	10
TOTAL	85

- **Sampling frame**

A set of information used to identify a sample population for statistical treatment. A sampling frame includes a numerical identifier for each individual, plus other identifying information about characteristics of individuals, to aid in analysis and allow for division into further frames for in-depth analysis (Kara, 2012). The sample must be representative of the population from which it was drawn and it must have good size to warrant statistical analysis. The main function of sample is to allow the researchers to conduct the study to individuals from the population so that the results of their study can be used to derive conclusions that applied to the entire population.

- **Instruments**

This included the methods that the researcher used to collect data from various sources and they included questionnaires, interviews and documentary review. The researcher ensured that the research instruments used are reliable, consistent and free from any bias. Questionnaires and interview guide contained clear and accurate questions.

- **Questionnaire**

The researcher formulated questions related to determinants of employee commitment on organizational performance. The questions were both closed and open-ended so as to provide respondents with opportunity to freely give their views. Questionnaires had questions covering all study objectives.

- **Coding**

An interview is a conversation between two or more people where questions are asked by the interviewer to elicit facts or statements from the interviewee (Creswell, 2012). The researcher used interview guide to respondents according to their preference and time availability. Interviews were held with church members and pastors from six selected parishes of ADEPR church.

- **Documentation**

This included the methods that the researcher used to collect data from various sources and they included questionnaires, interviews and documentary review. The researcher ensured that the research instruments used are reliable, consistent and free from any bias. Questionnaires and interview guide contained clear and accurate questions.

The researcher also reviewed written documents related to

the adjustment of children in the post-divorce period.

• **Data collection procedure**

Data collection instruments were administered by the researcher who approached respondents at their time of convenience. The researcher introduced himself to respondents and told them the exact purpose of the research before requesting them to express their views on issues raised in the questionnaire.

• **Tabulation**

In order to ensure validity and reliability, the researcher carried out a pilot test by 10 questionnaire forms which were given to respondents to express their views on the questions raised. The respondents were part of the population but may not necessarily have been part of the sample size. This was done to verify clarity of questionnaire. The researcher ensured that the set questions are related to the study objectives.

• **Ethical issues on the research**

Data analysis is the process of developing answers to questions through the examination and interpretation of data. At the outset, the respondents were assured of personal protection in that they had the right to accept or refuse to be interviewed. Further, the respondents were assured of confidentiality of information they gave and that the findings would be used for research/academic purposes only.

The basic steps in the analytical process consist of identifying issues, determining the availability of suitable data, deciding on which methods are appropriate for answering the questions of interest, applying the methods and evaluating, summarizing and communicating the results.

The collected data was presented using tables and figures while interpretation and analysis was done based on percentages and frequencies of respondents' views. Percentages and frequencies were ascertained using statistical methods. Coding of respondent's views was done.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Views on Divorce

Does the Bible condemn divorce?	Yes	5	45	50	59%
	No	17	8	25	29%
	Neutral	5	5	10	12%
Are there conflicts that result in divorce of families in your church?	Yes	35	40	75	88%
	No	2	3	5	6%
	Neutral	3	2	5	6%
Must all conflicts end up in family divorce?	Yes	5	4	9	11%
	No	40	30	70	82%
	Neutral	2	4	6	7%
Does infidelity result in family divorce?	Yes	42	36	78	92%
	No	2	5	7	8%
	Neutral	-	-	0	0%
Does poor communication among couples play a big role in family divorce?	Yes	50	8	58	68%
	Non	5	15	20	24%
	Neutral	1	6	7	8%
Is work holism a source of family divorce?	Yes	5	65	70	82%
	Non	10	2	12	14%
	Neutral	2	1	3	4%
Does incompatibility of families lead to family divorce?	Yes	63	7	70	82%
	Non	2	5	7	8%
	Neutral	-	-	0	0%
Does spouse abuse play a role in family divorce?	Yes	15	60	75	88%
	Non	8	2	10	12%
	Neutral	-	-	0	0%
Of the two people involved in conflict, does a wife ask for a divorce first?	Yes	60	12	72	85%
	Non	5	8	13	15%
	Neutral	-	-	0	0%
Does a feminist movement teaching play a role in family divorce?	Yes	55	5	60	71%
	Non	2	20	22	26%
	Neutral	1	2	3	4%
Does a family's financial status lead to divorce?	Yes	50	20	70	82%
	Non	2	12	14	17%
	Neutral	1	-	1	1%

Major causes of divorce are infidelity, sexuality difficulties among couples, drug abuse, incompatibility, economic status

of the family, poor communication and work-holism. The children of divorce will experience a variety of problems

ranging from psychological disturbances to social relationships. The level of discomfort, pain or suffering is dependent and can be moderated by child characteristics such as age at the time of divorce, sex of the child; custodial family socio-economic status and child-rearing skills of the custodial family. As far as infants are concerned these will be affected in the areas of sleeping, eating, language and independence (becoming less and less reliant on the care-taker or other children around the infants). Counselling is important and has the effect of reducing the pain and bad experiences as the children of divorce grapple with adjustment.

V. CONCLUSION

Divorce whose devastating effects are bad can be avoided if the couple follow Counselling advice. While researchers agree that child and family characteristics have effect on the level of pain and suffering in the process of adjustment of the children in the post-divorce environment, there is disagreement as to what extent the characteristics will make the adjustment easier or more difficult. There is consensus by researchers that divorce will almost always lead to low standard of living of the custodial family which will in turn lead to greater hardships in the family which will translate into greater adjustment problems by the children of divorce. Conflict in the custodial family influence the children negatively where children are involved in conflict as bystanders, passive observers or communication channels. Children in such homes are more distressed and are more likely to become angrier than children from non-disputing families. Fathers being poor in monitoring will make children living with fathers in custodial homes poor in adjustment. Likewise, mothers said not to have firm control on boys but are lax, who are well prepared to lead children in post-divorce period, will produce boys who are worse than girls. On the contrary, the parents who are prepared to lead children in the adversity of post-divorce era, are more effective in giving guidance and the children will adjust better.

VI. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the couple always work towards establishing good marital relationship to avoid divorce. The couple should pray God for the strength to fight the spirit of divorce. It is also recommended that Counselling be taken seriously as implementing its advice will help children of divorce adjust more comfortably in the post-divorce period.

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