

Divorce and Factors Affecting Children's Post-Divorce Adjustment

Karake Musaja Vincent

Abstract— Divorce is the final termination of a marital union, cancelling the legal duties and responsibilities of marriage and dissolving the bonds of matrimony between the parties involved (A.M. Amber, *Divorce: Facts, causes and consequences*, 2009). Divorce carries the unpleasant experience that negatively affects all human relationships: parents, children, relatives, and friends. This devastating event affects parents' emotional, psychological, social and economic stability. It also impacts parents' relationship with their offspring. This article discusses the factors that affect children's adjustment after divorce has actualized in a family.

In the discussion of factors that affect the adjustment of children in the post-divorce period, relevant literature by authorities and scholars in the area of Divorce and Marriage was reviewed. Views on factors that affect both parents and their children were taken to be used and compared to results of data 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 was then interpreted, being answers from 85 respondents involved in the study.

The findings of the research carried out contained in this article showed that the following factors, namely Gender, Family characteristics, Ethno-cultural background, Situational characteristics, Time since marital disruption happened, and Conflicts when properly understood and better managed will ease and make children's adjustment process more effective and less painful. It is recommended that a parent or parents (single or parents when remarriage of a spouse has taken place) get relevant Counselling that will help them understand the factors and their impact on the children of divorce better. They, will then, be able to help the children adjust with less difficulty, less pain, and in a shorter period.

Index Terms— Adjustment, Children of divorce, Divorce, Factors.

I. INTRODUCTION

Marriage is a contract sealed by God which only God can raise if the seal should be lifted, which normally happens on the death of a spouse (D.L. Shearer. *Perspective on Sexual and Reproductive Health*, 2002). Unfortunately, there are forces that sometimes cause this union intended to last to be broken. When this happens, it comes to the realization that generally, divorce is a painful, unpleasant and regrettable occurrence. This article recognizes that there are factors that can cause divorce: Infidelity, Poor communication, Work-holism, Incompatibility, Feminist ideas, Alcoholism, and Poor financial status or poverty. And when divorce is actualized, children of divorce find themselves in a situation

where they encounter and grapple with certain kinds of problems. These problems are generated, mediated or even moderated by certain factors namely Gender, Family characteristics, Ethno-cultural background, Situational characteristics, Time since marital disruption happened, and Conflicts. It is the objective of this article to discuss these factors which affect children's post-divorce adjustment.

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT:

When divorce happens, children of divorce find themselves confronted with certain kind of problems. These problems thrive on, are generated, moderated or even mediated through such factors as Gender, Family characteristics, Ethno-cultural background, Situational characteristics, Time since marital disruption happened, and Conflicts. This research aims at understanding these factors and how they impact post-divorce adjustment of the children of divorce so that the adjustment can be better managed and be made less painful.

III. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE:

- To explore the impact the factors under consideration namely: Gender, Family characteristics, Ethno-cultural background, Situational characteristics, Time since marital disruption happened, and Conflicts have on post-divorce adjustment of the children of divorce.
- To find out how these factors can be handled so as to make the adjustment better managed and less painful to the children of divorce.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

This literature review is intended to review what other writers and authorities have said about the problems that divorce children experience and specifically, factors that moderate or mediate the problems that these children go through. 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, generally speaking, are mediated or moderated by several factors including Gender, Family characteristics, Ethno-cultural background, Situational characteristics, Time since marital disruption began, and Conflict. These factors are the discussion of this article.

A. GENDER

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, 1989; Kurdek, 1987); other research finds more negative effects for girls (Faber et al., 1983) and 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-schoolers at the time of divorce, 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 (Guidubaldi & Perry, 1985; Hetherington et al., 1979, 1989; Kurdek, 1987).

Other studies have found more detrimental effects for girls than boys. Slater, et al. (1983) found that adolescent girls from disrupted homes had lower self-esteem and more behavior problems than adolescent boys in similar home life situations. Furthermore, while female adolescents from disrupted homes reported higher levels of family conflicts than females from intact families, the opposite was true for males. 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 households reported truancy in higher proportion than their male counterparts, and, than children from intact families. They were also significantly more dissatisfied with their social network than girls from intact families (JOSEPH VEROFF, "Family Ties and the Discontinuity of Divorce in Black and White Newlywed Couples," *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 Faber 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 (1987) found minimal sex differences, although women from divorced families appear to attain lower levels of education than those from intact families

(DAVID POPENOE, *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 (1991) 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, Healey et al. (1990) argue that boys and girls show sex-role-typical pattern of distress when they are high for boys, and low self-esteem and fewer behavior problems for girls. Amato (1987) 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 the type of problems that girls have, namely, 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, Wallenstein found the initial response to divorce to be worse for younger children, but in later years they appeared better adjusted than their older counterparts (Wallenstein, 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, *On Legal and Constitutional Affairs, to Have and Hold: Strategies to Strengthen Marriage and Relationships* (Canberra, Australia: Parliament of Australia 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, "Parental Divorce and Child Mental Health Trajectories," *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.

B. FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS

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 "Explaining the Higher Incidence of Adjustment Problems Among Children of Divorce Compared with those in two- Parent Families," *Journal of Marriage and the 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. WALLERESTEIN AND JOAN BERLIN KELLY, *Surviving the Breakup: How Children and Parents Cope with Divorce* (1980; New York, NY: Basic book,1996).

C. 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 (JUDITH S. WALLERESTEIN AND JOAN BERLIN KELLY, *Surviving the Breakup: How Children and Parents Cope with Divorce* (1980; New York, NY: Basic Book,1996).

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 families¹.

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 (1991) 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.²

The issue of childrearing can encompass a number of aspects, including the effects of employment by the custodial parent on the child, childrearing skills and adjustment to the divorce by the custodial parent (MICHAEL WORKMAN AND JOHN BEER," *Aggression, Alcohol Dependency, and Self-consciousness among High School Students of Divorce and Non Divorced Parents,*" *Psychological Reports* 71(1992):279-286).

The issue of whether employment by the custodial parent 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," *Factors Associated with Early Sexual activity among Urban adolescent,*" *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 childrearing 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, JR. AND JULIEN O. TEITLER," *Reconsidering the Effect of Marital Disruption: What happens to Children of Divorce in Early Adulthood?*" *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 (1988) 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 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, Medrick (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).

D. SITUATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS 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 his 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 (CAROLYN A. SMITH," *Factors Associated with Early Sexual activity among urban adolescent,*" *Social work* 42(1997):334-34).

It has been found 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 emphasizes 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, "Risk and Resiliency Factors among Adolescents Who experience Marital Transitions," *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, *On Legal and Constitutional Affairs, to Have and Hold: Strategies to Strengthen Marriage and Relationships* (Canberra, Australia: Parliament of Australia 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 (1993) concluded that remarriage did not have a protective effect on children. Hetherington and her colleagues (Hetherington, 1993; Hetherington and Camara, 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.

E. 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)². 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.

F. 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 (TRACIE O. AFIFI, JONATHAN BOMAN, *On Legal and Constitutional Affairs, to Have and Hold: Strategies to Strengthen Marriage and Relationships* (Canberra, Australia: Parliament of Australia 1998), 35.)

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 (TRACIE O. AFIFI, JONATHAN BOMAN, *On Legal and Constitutional Affairs, to Have and Hold: Strategies to Strengthen Marriage and Relationships* (Canberra, Australia: Parliament of Australia 1998), 35.).

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 (TRACIE O. AFIFI, JONATHAN BONMAN, 1998).

Younger children had predominantly submissive distress responses and were more likely to try to control the fight than older children. Two-third 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. It seems 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.

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, it has been 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 (TRACIE O. AFIFI, 1998). 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 (TRACIE O. AFIFI, JONATHAN BONMAN, 1998).

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. 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 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 (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(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&Mnookin, 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, Kloner, Schreier and Okla(1989) found no buffered from the stresses divorce can engender and will prosper developmentally.

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This section presents the methods that the researcher used in carrying out the research; it points out the research design, study population, sample size, sampling techniques and data collection techniques. The section further presents the sources of data, administration of questionnaires, validity and reliability, ethical considerations, data analysis and interpretation.

A. RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design is a detailed outline of how an investigation took place. It typically included how data was collected, what instruments were employed, how the instruments were used and the means for analyzing data collected. It specified such things as how to collect and analyze the data (Kara, 2012). A descriptive and analytical research design was used with a purpose of describing and analyzing the views collected from respondents.

B. POPULATION

A research population is generally a large collection of individuals or objects that is the main focus of a scientific query (Creswell, 2012). It is for the benefit of the population that researches are done. However, due to the large sizes of populations, researchers often cannot test every individual in the population because it is too expensive and time-consuming. This is the reason why researchers rely on sampling techniques where the sample representing the population is used.

TABLE OF SAMPLE SIZE OF THE STUDY

CATEGORY OF PEOPLE FROM SIX PARISHES OF ADEPR	SAMPLE
KACYIRU	16
GATORE	13
NYARUBANDE	19

MUKARANGU	15
KAGOMBA	12
BYUMBA	10
TOTAL	85

C. 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-epthanalysis (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.

D. 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.

E. QUESTIONNAIRES

The researcher formulated questions that related to members of the 6 parishes of ADEPR Church. 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.

F. INTERVIEWS

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.

G. 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.

H. 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.

I. TABULATION

In order to ensure validity and reliability, the researcher carried out a pilot test by 10 questionnaire forms 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 the questionnaire. The researcher ensured that the set questions were related to the study objectives.

J. ETHICAL ISSUES ON THE RESEARCH

Data analysis is the process of developing answers to questions through the examination and interpretation of data. 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. The respondents were assured of the confidentiality of the information they gave and that it would be used for research purposes only. The respondents were free to answer or to decline to answer any questions without feeling of compulsion or coercion.

VI. 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

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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.

VII. RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that parent or parents in the new family whether single or re-married attend Counselling where they will be made aware how different factors impact the post-divorce process of children's adjustment. With concern about the children's welfare and some effort tremendous progress can be made in the way the children adjust to the new situations.

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AUTHOR'S PROFILE



Education Background

1. Wycliffe University and ATS Ph.D Studies
2. Wycliffe University and ATS Masters in Theology
3. Ndejje University
4. Kyambogo University
5. St. Henry's Secondary School Kitovu
6. Makobore High School
7. Rwamurunga Primary School

Positions Held

- 1. Rector at Fatek (Kigali Faculty of Evangelical Theology)
- 2. Vice Rector at Fatek (Kigali Faculty of Evangelical Theology)
- 3. Lecturer at Kigali Faculty of Evangelical Theology
- 4. Principal at Intensive School, Uganda
- 5. Teacher at Old Kampala Secondary School, Uganda