Full Length Research Paper

Effects of parental divorce on schoolchildren's upbringing in Ekiti State in terms of social, economic, and educational factors

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The study investigated the social economic and educational implications of parental separation on upbringing of school children. The study was a descriptive research design of the survey type. The population was made up of all the adolescents within the age range of 13 – 18 years in Ado-Ekiti Local Government Area. A sample of 207 and 329 were selected using simple random sampling and multistage sampling technique. The final sample was chosen using stratified random sampling technique. A self-designed instrument titled "Divorce and Child Upbringing Scale (DCUS)" was used for collecting data. The instrument's face and content validity was ensured by relevant experts. A reliability coefficient of 0.82 was obtained through test retest reliability method. The 2 hypotheses postulated were tested using chi square (X^2). It was revealed that respondents from rich and poor homes do not differ in their upbringing due to economic status of their separate parents. Also the educational status of separated parents does not influence their children upbringing. It was recommended that separated parents should be enlightened about who and how to take care of the children so that they don't suffer emotional deprivation. Children from separated homes should be allowed to contact both parents without restriction. Separated parents should seek support and counselling that will enable them receive therapy that will reduce their transference of negative emotions to the children and relations.

Keywords: Social Economic, education, children

INTRODUCTION

The essence of parenting is to enhance upbringing in the areas of providing basic needs for the children and to enhance socialisation of the children. This can be brought about by the agents of socialisation like the parents, the school, religious organisation and significant others. The earliest contact in the life of children are the parents. The mother especially provides the earliest contact, she nurtures the child and provides physical and emotional support especially at the initial stage. The mother plays a significant role in moral and character training. The father is supposed to be a model or figure of identification and a significant agent of discipline and socialisation he is infact supposed to be in charge of rewards and punishments. It is disheartening that as

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indispensable as these agents are, many children grow up with only one of the parents or surrogate parent. Even though there may be occurrence of loss of one of the parents due to death. In most cases single parenthood do occur as a result of negligence or quarrel that leads to separation and therefore, in most cases the children betrothed to the marriage are at the receiving end. In the traditional African marriage situations unlike nowadays breakages of marriage are not as rampart as of today. The extended families processes involved in marriage, payment of bride-price and intervention of relations does not allow marriages to break even if there is conflict. Nowadays, because of civilisation, and upsurge of enculturation and unbibement of western culture, there is astronomical increase in separation and divorce as a result of negligence or failure of one or both of the parties to exercise patience or to perform their marital expectations. Some parents are involved in adultery, maltreatment and a host of others which could lead to separation. The socio economic situations in Nigeria are another bane to stability of marriage. In the traditional Nigeria or especially Yoruba society husbands are supposed to be the bread winners of the family; the engagement of women in social and job roles as a result of equal opportunity for education and job performance has destabilised the social order and hence there is competition for certain responsibilities with men thereby disenabling the men to assert their roles as husbands and this has in many cases given room for separation in most families. The issue of modernisation that does not allow them to perform marital obligations and breeds misunderstanding as reported by Babatunde (1988) has brought about separation because the kingship ties are loose to the extent that nuclear family does not enjoy the support from the extended family during crisis. Either of the couples are seen saying happily that they have separated less than 1 or 2 years or immediately after marriage. Fadipe (1990) reported that the intervention of relations made divorce a rare phenomenon in precolonial times. Divorce is justifiable in some extreme cases. In many societies, marriage tends to accord social prestige while it is looked at as being of respect, separation connotes loss of social status. The social stigma attached to divorce make incompatible couples to stay together, even when their children are already affected socially, economical and educationally. Such marriages are better terminated than to exist in view of the problems they often generate for the society. Whenever divorces occur; the child is left in the care of one of the parent or surrogate parent. The child does not enjoy or is slightly deprived of the physical, social, emotional economical, educational and psychological support of parents. In Nigeria usually the child is left in the custody of the mothers, they grow up without the father. In some patrilineal societies, the father takes charge of the child's care. In most cases the child is left

with the grandmother, grandfather, stepmother or other relations. The arrangement limits the contact between the mother and child, in some cases deprivation of education, which may even result to child-labour. Parental separation is one of the emotional stressors experienced by children. Parental separation will require that children adapt to new environmental conditions. Amato and Keith (1991), Enory (1988), Wallerstenn (1991), Zill, Morrison and Coiro, (1993) all reported that children from separated homes irrespective of the economic and academic background of their parents will express social problems such as aggression, delinquency and disobedience. The other problems children are likely to face as a result of separation include cognitive deficits. According to Brody and Noubaum (1996), the social problems are likely to be more prominent in boys than girls. In the reviews by Hetherington, Camera, Featherman (1981), children from single-parent families show deficits in (1) IQ scores ranging between 1 and 7 points (2) school achievement scores averaging less than one year in school and (3) grade attainment of three quarters of a year. Socio-Economic Status (SES) has also been related to poor school achievement and correlated with single parent status. However, when both effects of socio economic status are accounted for investigation revealed that children from separated families do more poorly on academic tasks than children from other types of separated parents, while children from separated parents appear to experience more academic difficulties than children from two-parents. Parental separation might make some mothers to be in emotional conflict with their children most especially boys according to Hetherington et al. Some mothers might become overly permissive, rigid or emotionally independent on their children. When parents lacks supportive of other spouse discipline policies might be compromised. This may increase emotional dependence between parent and child. In a study conducted by Sentse, OrmelVeenstraVirhulst and Oldehinkel (2011), on potential effect of parental separation during early adolescence on adolescent externalizing and internalising problems using a longitudinal sample of 1774 adolescents age 16 to 27, 52.3% girls. Preseparation mental health problems were controlled for. It was reported that separation may only have an effect under certain conditions. It was examined whether child temperament (effortful control and fearfulness) moderates the impact of parental separation on specific mental health domains. It was reported by Sentse et.al (2011) that parental separation led to an increase in externalising problems when interactions with child temperament were ignored. Also child temperament moderated the impact of parental separation in that it was only related to increased externalizing problems for children low on effortful control, whereas it was only related to increased

internalising problems for children high on fearfulness. These results indicate that person-environment interactions are imparted for understanding the development of mental health problems and that these interactions can be domain specific.

In a related study conducted by Sentse, Lindemberg, Omvless, Ormel and Veenstra (2010) on a sample of 1023 mean age of 13.51 and 55.5% girls. It was investigated whether acceptance in one context can buffer rejection on the other. It was found that when analysing peer and parent effects simultaneously it was reported that:

(i)   The protective effect of parental acceptance and the risk effect of peer rejection were diminished.

(ii)   The protective effect of peer acceptance and the risk effect of parental rejection remained strong.

(iii)   Peer acceptance buffered parental rejection but parental acceptance did not buffer peer rejection. It indicated that parent and peer context are interdependent.

Veenstra, Lindenberg, Oldehmkel De Winter andOrmel (2006) in a study conducted on 2230 sample on the influence of parenting on antisocial behaviour. They reported that antisocial behaviour can be exacerbated or triggered off by social experiences and individuals processing of these experiences. The study focussed on interaction between temperament, perceived parenting, socio economic status and gender in relation to anti social behaviour in a Dutch population of pre adolescents. Perceived parenting over protection, rejection, emotional warmth) was assessed by the "memories of upbringing" for children temperament (effortful control and frustration) by the parent version of the Early Adolescent Temperament Questionnaire. All parenting and temperament factors were significantly associated with antisocial behaviour. Socio Economic Status (SES) was only a related factor to antisocial behaviour among children with a low level of effortful control or a high level of frustration due to parental separation. The association of Socio Economic Status and Frustration with anti social behaviour was stronger in boys, thus the effect of Socio Economic Status (SES) depend on the temperament and gender of the child Sentse, Dijkstra, Lindenbergs and Ormel (2010) conducted a study on 1007 adolescents with mean age of 13.50 of which 50.3% are girls. This was conducted on impact of parental protection and unsupervised wandering on adolescents antisocial behaviour 2½ years later was tested on trial study gender and parental knowledge were controlled far in addition the level of biological maturation and having antisocial friends were included as possible moderators for the relation of parental protection and unsupervised wandering with adolescent antisocial behaviour as a result of parental separation. Parental separation on engagement in antisocial behaviour held only for boys and for early maturing adolescents whereas the effect of unsupervised wandering was found only for boys and for adolescents who had antisocial friends. The results point to a delicate balance between parental separation and unsupervised wandering with respect to adolescents autonomy. The research is therefore interested in finding out whether socio economic status and educational status of separated parents had impact on the upbringing of children.

Research rationale

A lot of children from separated homes appears to be deprived of love from home, they appear to manifest tantrum and poor emotions. They have problems relating to parents, peers, relations and school mates. Majority of the children from separated homes seems to have problems coping or adjusting to life situation. So many factors tend to account for the adjustment problems. One of the factors is age of the child when the separation occurred. The effect appeared to be worse for younger children. The environment in which the child dwells appears to be very crucial to the child's adjustment. The image of the absent parent seems to be distorted, the child takes to one of the parents and hates the other one the child judgmental values is distorted because the child appears to hate and quarrel with either both parents or one of the parents,.

All these problems influences the child's standard of life, cognitive development, emotional development and sex role identification. The lack of emotional support from the father, the economic stress, social isolation and household tasks leads to feeling of being harassed. Based on this the research intend to investigate whether educational and socio economic status of the separatees impacts on the coping mechanisms of children from separated home

METHODOLOGY

The researcher investigated the socio economic and educational status implications of separated parents on child upbringing in Ado Ekiti. The study was a descriptive research design of the survey type. The sample of 281 adolescents aged 13 – 18 years were randomly selected using simple purposive and stratified sampling technique. A self constructed instrument titled "Divorce and Child Upbringing" (DCU) was used for collecting data. The face and content validity of the instrument was censured by relevant experts. Using test-re-test reliability and Pearson Product Moment Correlation, a reliability co-efficient of 0.82 was obtained and found significant of 0.05 level. Copies of the instrument were personally administered on the respondents.

Table 1. Chi-square table of socio, economic status of children form separated homes.

Sex	Yes	No	df	x^2_C	x^2_E
Rich	144	156	1	2.408	3.84
Poor	163	137			

$P < 0.05$

Table 2. Chi-square educational status of separated parents and children upbringing.

Sex	Yes	No	df	x^2_C	x^2_E
Male	146	154	1	9.214	3.84
Female	183	117			

$P < 0.05$

RESULTS

Hypothesis (1): There is no significant differences between social, economic and educational implications of parents separation on the upbringing of children from rich and poor homes.

The calculated values (2.408) is less than the table value (3.84) at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is accepted, therefore there is no significant difference between children of separated parents from rich homes and those form poor homes in their upbringing.

Hypothesis (2): The educational status of separated parent will not significantly influence children upbringing.

The calculated values (9.214) is greater than the table value (3.84) at 0.05 level of significance, therefore there is a significant difference between the children from separated literate parents and separated illiterate parents in their upbringing.

DISCUSSION

It was revealed that the socio economic status of divorced parents does not influence the upbringing of children. The finding negates the report of Veenstra et al (2006) that parenting and temperament factors were significantly associated with antisocial behaviour among children with a low level of effortful control or a high level of frustration. The association of socio economic status and frustration with antisocial behaviour was stronger in boys.

Also there is relationship between the educational status of divorced parents and child upbringing. This agrees with Lizard and Tizard (1071). Finding that parental ignorance, reluctance to answer the child's questions refusal to assist the child in home work and disinterest in the child's school activities may deprive the child of his required intellectual stimulation and encourage truancy.

Significance of the Study

The study will benefit students, teachers, counsellors, curriculum planners, parents, separates and law enforcement and consequences associated with parents separation and adjust to the challenges, Teachers and Counsellors will be conversant with the challenges of students and people from separated homes and the necessary teaching and Counselling strategies to use to assist them. The curriculum planners would imbued in the school curriculum courses to be taught to discourage problems associated with separation and adjust. The law enforcement agents will know and understand the significance of certain factors that enhances separation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that where divorce occur the public should be enlightened about how and who should take care of the children so that they do not suffer emotionally, physically and psychologically. Also children from divorced home should be allowed to have regular contact with both parents to avoid a disturbed or distorted image and negative emotions towards them. Parents who are custodian of children should seek education and Counselling therapy that will reduce the transference of negative emotion to the child. Also caregiver, Counsellors should equip the children from separated homes the coping mechanisms that will enhance their adjustment. Teachers should be made to know that they are role models by showing affection, loving and maintaining healthy disciplines in schools. Counsellors should identify the children and encourage them to relate properly with the other students.

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