

The Impacts of Divorce on Children: Exploring Consequences and Seeking Legitimate Solutions

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ABSTRACT

With the acceleration of the divorce rate from the mid- 1960s to the early 1980s, the number of nontraditional families (such as single-parent families and reconstituted families) have increased relative to intact, first-time nuclear families. Divorce as a social carcass which yields as a results of separation between parents (couples) and divert them from their marriage rights has become one of the static problems of the day. . Although not entirely consistent, the pattern of empirical findings suggests that children's emotional, social, physical, and mental health adjustment, gender-role orientation, and antisocial behavior are affected by family structure, whereas other dimensions of well-being are unaffected. But the review indicates that these findings should be interpreted with caution because of the methodological deficiencies of many of the studies on which these findings are based. Several variables, including the level of family conflict, may be central variables mediating the effect of family structure on children. The purpose and aim of this paper is to investigate and study the consequences of Divorce on children. The study will also pinpoint the reasons of Divorce and effects both negative and positive aspect of Divorce. Secondary data will be apprehended to help as a perspective guide from recognized sources to elaborate the collective consequences of divorce on children. The study will also draw conclusions based on the diverse consequences of divorce on children.

LITERATURE REVIEW

History of Divorce

To understand the full history of divorce, first the term should be defined. “Divorce” comes from the Latin word “divortium” which means separation. It is also equivalent to the word “divort” or “divortere.” “Di” means apart and “vertere” means to turn to different ways. Divertere was also referred the meaning of divert, turn aside, separate or leave one’s husband. The word was traced in French vocabulary in the later part of the 14th century and in the Middle English in the year 1350-1400.

Today, although divorce is expressed or defined in different ways, it expresses a single idea. Most common definitions of divorce include: (1) a judicial declaration dissolving the marriage in whole or in part releasing the husband and wife from the matrimonial obligation to live together; (2) any formal separation of husband and wife according to established customs; and (3) total separation or disunion or to disunite a marital union. (HISTORY OF DIVORCE, ORIGINS AND MEANING, November 17, 2012, Law Offices of Michael Kuldiner, P.C. 2004-2021)

Early divorce law

In today’s modern society, divorce is only recognized if legal and supported by law. The oldest codified law in the history of divorce was traced in 1760 B.C. during the reign of King Hammurabi of Babylon. It

is believed that the King carved 282 laws in stone tablets including the law on divorce. During that period, a man could divorce his wife by simply saying, “You are not my wife,” which was followed by payment of a fine and returning the wife’s dowry. However, if it was the wife who wanted divorce, she was required to file a complaint to obtain a divorce.

Divorce had begun to gain support all over the world and the number of countries that sought for the adoption and legalization of divorce began to increase. Divorce was first applied in the following countries: France in 1762, but made it illegal in 1816; Germany in 1875; Ireland in 1997; Italy in 1974 and Spain in 1981. In the US, the history of divorce started in the state of Maryland. Maryland declared divorce legal in 1701 and South Carolina in 1949 to 1950, while the state of California legalized the “no-fault” divorce in 1970. In Pennsylvania, divorce records have been kept since 1804 at Prothonotary’s Office in the county where the divorce was granted; however, divorce has been traced in Pennsylvania as early as 1682(**HISTORY OF DIVORCE, ORIGINS AND MEANING**, November 17, 2012, Law Offices of Michael Kuldiner, P.C. 2004-2021)

TYPES OF DIVORCE

Contested Divorce

If you and your spouse are at loggerheads over one or more marital issues (such as child custody or property division, to the point that you can't come to an agreement, then it will be up to a judge to decide those issues for you. This is what's meant by a contested divorce.

Christian Divorce

Divorce was very controversial in the Christian community during the Roman Empire. After Christianity became the official religion of the Romans in 380 A.D., divorce was strongly opposed by the church. During that time, noblemen found refuge with annulments, a declaration from church officials dissolving the marriage for some valid reasons and technicalities. However, the annulment was only for noblemen and those with political connections; not for commoners [[Joseph Pandolfi](#), Retired Judge].

Uncontested Divorce

Most states offer spouses the option of filing an "uncontested" divorce. To qualify for an uncontested divorce, you and your spouse must settle up-front all your differences on issues such as custody and visitation (parenting time), child support, alimony and property division. You'll then incorporate the terms of your settlement in a written "property settlement agreement"(sometimes called a "separation agreement"). Because there's nothing to fight about in court, uncontested divorces usually are less expensive and less stressful than traditional divorces.

Summary Divorce

Many states offer a special type of expedited uncontested divorce procedure—sometimes called "summary divorce," "simplified divorce," or "summary dissolution"—to couples who haven't been married for very long (usually five years or less), don't own much property, don't have children, and don't have significant joint debts. Both spouses need to agree to the divorce, and must file court papers jointly.

Mediated Divorce

Before filing for divorce, options are available to you if you need assistance in trying to resolve your differences. These are referred to as” alternative dispute resolution” (ADR) methods. One of those is divorce mediation. Here, a trained neutral third party (the mediator), sits down with you and your spouse to try to help you resolve all of the issues in your divorce.

CAUSES OF DIVORCE

Marriage is a beautiful concept but it comes with a heavy price. It is not so easy to maintain the sanctity of any relationship unless both sides are willing to work on it. A number of times this unwillingness and callousness leads to divorce which can get ugly. It is being observed that divorce rates have gone way high in recent times and there are several reasons cited for the same. Here is a list of some of the most common reasons why marriages come to an end.

When we say irreconcilable differences, it basically means the level of incompatibility. Either you are poles apart and unwilling to come to a midpoint or you simply grow apart. It could be due to different values, problems in sex life, religious differences or growth as a person which is independent and not at all in sync.

Miscommunication

The root cause of most fights, arguments and divorces is miscommunication. Assuming and presuming comes hand in hand with this issue. Family issues and financial burdens if not discussed, leads to separation and divorces and they can be very ugly as well.

Infidelity

Being unfaithful whether married or not is unacceptable. If this happens in a marriage, you cannot expect the other to understand. There is obviously some kind of unhappiness, a missing puzzle in your marriage which should be worked on and if it cannot then end it before you cheat. Extramarital affairs are the last straw in a marriage and this often leads to divorces.

Addictions

Alcohol, drugs or any other substance abuse can often lead to a divorce. Such addictions affect your mood swings, behavior, sleep pattern, appetite, family responsibilities, friends and connections, wastage of money and not to forget, memory loss.

Domestic abuse: This is a major reason which can lead to divorces. Not just women but men too experience it and it is intolerable and an offence.

Family issues

It is not just the couple that is there in a married picture. If your family or your partner interferes in how you live, how you bring up your child and other household obligations, things tend to get ugly and people do file for divorce in that given scenario. They do not want their kid to grow in a negative environment if the partners do not support each other.

Ref; TIMESOFINDIA.COM |

With regards to the constraints of marital break ups such as family issues, domestic abuse, addictions from both parents, infidelity and as mention in the above paragraph, all in connection with one another contribute to the consequential effects which over shadows children after the divorce of the marriage. These catastrophic happenings destroy the future of most children and as the future of children is in danger, the future of the world is also in danger. The main aim of the research is to highlight, dig deep and dive into the inner roots of the consequences of divorce on children and their future. The objective is to arrive at a point of the research with effective idealistic measures which can be put in place and make accessible through state and private institutions with the focus on merging the life of children from divorce families to have the rightful advantage they lost from their parents due to divorce.

ARTICLE

High divorce rates in the United States over the past 20 years have resulted in numerous changes in American family life, with perhaps the most important consequences bearing on children whose families were disrupted. In 1970, 12% of American families with children under age 18 were headed by single parents. By 1984, one-fourth of American families and nearly 60% of black families were headed by single parents (see Table 1). Millions of other children live in two-parent but reconstituted families, separated from at least one biological parent, in fact, Furstenberg, Nord, Peterson, and Zill's recent analysis (1983) indicates that less than two-thirds of American children live with both biological parents. A number of studies use recent social and demographic trends to predict children's future living arrangements, and while these predictions vary, the consensus is that most youth will spend some time prior to age 18 in a single-parent household (Bumpass, 1984, 1985; Furstenberg et al., 1983; Hofferth, 1985, 1986; Norton and Glick, 1986). Hofferth (1985) suggests that the percentage of black youth who will live with one parent for some period of time prior to age 18 may be as high as 94%, while for white children the corresponding figure is 70%, Norton and Glick's (1986) analysis yields a lower estimate but still projects that 60% of American children will live in a single-parent family before reaching age 18. These trends in family composition have major implications for the life course of children and their well-being. The purpose of this article is to review and assess recent empirical evidence on the impact of divorce on children, concentrating on studies of nonclinical populations published in the last decade. We also direct attention to a number of important theoretical and methodological considerations in the study of family structure and youthful well-being. We begin by briefly describing some of the theoretical propositions and assumptions that guide research in this area.

TABLE 1. NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN UNDER AGE 18, 1970-1984 (IN THOUSANDS)

Families	1970 Total ^a	1980 Total ^a	1984 Total ^a	1984 Whites	1984 Blacks
Total, children under 18	29,631	32,150	33,246	27,508	4,744
Two-parent	25,823	25,231	24,701	21,978	1,934
One-parent	3,808	6,920	8,544	5,529	2,809
Mother-headed	3,415	6,230	7,599	4,766	2,652
Never-married	248	1,063	2,102	729	1,332
Spouse absent	1,377	1,743	1,762	1,120	597
Separated	962	1,483	1,505	929	544
Other	415	260	257	191	53
Divorced	1,109	2,721	3,174	2,516	593
Widowed	682	703	561	401	128
Father-headed	393	692	945	763	157
Never-married	22	63	166	109	52
Spouse absent	247 ^a	181	187	139	39
Divorced	na	340	496	445	44
Widowed	124	107	97	69	23
	1970 Total %	1980 Total %	1984 Total %	1984 White %	1984 Black %
Two-parent	87.1	78.5	74.3	79.9	40.8
One-parent	12.9	21.5	25.7	20.1	59.2
Mother-headed	11.5	19.4	22.9	17.3	55.9
Never-married	0.8	3.3	6.3	2.7	28.1
Spouse absent	4.6	5.4	5.3	4.1	12.6
Separated	3.2	4.6	4.5	3.4	11.5
Other	1.4	0.8	0.8	0.7	1.1
Divorced	3.7	8.5	9.5	9.1	12.5
Widowed	2.3	2.2	1.7	1.5	2.7
Father-headed	1.3	2.2	2.8	2.8	3.3
Never-married	0.1	0.2	0.5	0.4	1.1
Spouse absent	0.8	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.8
Divorced	na	1.1	1.5	1.6	0.9
Widowed	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.5

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 138.

^aTotals include other races not shown separately in the table.

^bThe 1970 figure includes families headed by divorced men.

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

Consistent with the Freudian assumption that a two-parent group constitutes the minimal unit for appropriate sex-typed identification (Freud, 1925/1961), anthropologists, sociologists, and social psychologists have long maintained the necessity of such a group for normal child development. Representative of structural- functional theorizing, Parsons and Bales (1955: 16-17) argued that one of the basic functions of the family is to serve as a stable, organically integrated "factory" in which human personalities are formed.

Similarly, social learning theory emphasizes the importance of role models, focusing on parents as the initial and primary reinforces of child behavior (Bandura and Walters, 1963). Much of the research adopting this perspective centers on parent-child similarities, analyzing the transmission of response patterns and the inhibitory or disinhibitory effect of parental models. The presence of the same-sex parent is assumed to be crucial in order for the child to learn appropriate sex-typed behavior. This assumption is shared by developmental and symbolic interactionist theories, various cognitive approaches to socialization, and confluence theory, as well as anthropological theories (Edwards, 1987). It logically follows that departures from the nuclear family norm are problematic for the child's development, especially for adolescents, inasmuch as this represents a crucial stage in the developmental process. Accordingly, a large body of research literature deals with father absence, the effects of institutionalization, and a host of "deficiencies" in maturation, such as those having to do with cognitive development, achievement, moral learning, and conformity. This focus has pointed to the crucial importance of both

parents' presence but also has suggested that certain causes for parental absence may accentuate any negative effects, Lynn, for example, asserts (1974: 279):

The research on the relationship between father absence and the general level of the child's adjustment reveals that the loss of a father for any reason is associated with poor adjustment, but that absence because of separation, divorce, or desertion may have especially adverse effects.

Some researchers suggest even more dire outcomes whenever parental separation, divorce, or desertion occurs. Among these are vulnerability to acute psychiatric disturbances, the child's aversion to marriage, and proneness to divorce once they do marry (Anthony, 1974). In sum, two general propositions are suggested:

1. Children reared in households where the two biological parents are not present will exhibit lower levels of well-being than their counterparts in intact nuclear families,
2. The adverse effects on youthful well-being will be especially acute when the cause of parental absence is marital separation, divorce, or desertion.

NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF DIVORCE ON CHILDREN AND THE NECESSARY INTERVENTION PROGRAMS TO HELP ASSIST THEM

In 2014, the Center for Disease Control showed that about 50% of all marriages in the United States end in divorce. High divorce rates have stimulated more research regarding the negative effects divorce has on children. Valdez (2007) said, "The children of the conflict-filled divorces, whom I call America's Little Warriors, often endure both emotional and physical trauma as their parents try to maneuver their way through their own conflict (p. iii)." This literature review explores the extensive negative effects of divorce on children's mental, emotional, social, and physical health. It explains that, as compared with children of continuously married parents, children of divorced parents are at increased risk of have

difficulty trusting others and forming relationships (Emery, 1996), struggling with behavior problems like violence (Rex, 1996), performing at a lower level academically than children whose parents don't divorce (Kim, 2011), and having decreased physical health (Arkes, 2013). By presenting specific studies examining potential negative outcomes for children of divorced parents, this literature review shows the need for more intervention programs to help children overcome these effects. [Intuition: The BYU Undergraduate JOURNAL]

The purpose of this literature review is to present the severity of the effects of divorce on children in order to demonstrate the need for intervention programs, as well as to suggest what kind of programs and methods will be most successful with further research, development, and implementation.

Methodology

Relevant research about effects of divorce on children and available intervention programs was found by searching social sciences databases including EBSCO and Scopus for primary research material. Then, 31 peer-reviewed journal articles published between 1990 and the present (2017) were reviewed. In order to explore a broad variety of research on the topic, terms such as "effects of divorce," plus "children or youth," were searched to find potential negative effects of divorce. Terms such as "intervention programs for children of divorce" were searched to examine the intervention programs already in place. Studies were then considered in this review if they: (a) addressed effects of divorce on children's emotional, physical, and social well-being or academic performance; or (b) discussed the qualities of a particular intervention program and its results [*Children of Divorce and Possible Intervention*

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The Negative Effects of Divorce on Children

Because the negative effects of divorce on children are extensive, this section breaks them into categories. The research in this section presents the effects of divorce on **emotional, social, psychological and physical health as well as on academic performance.**

Negative Adjustments among Children after Separation and Divorce

Studies relating to negative adjustments among children include the following:

Jacobson (1978) examined factors that affected the psychological adjustment of children within 12 months after the marital separation. She examined 51 children in 30 families, and found that the greater the amount of time lost with the father since the marital separation, the greater the maladjustment of the child in areas such as aggression and learning disability.

Peterson and Zill (1986) analyzed data from National Surveys of Children in the United States, gathering information about 2,301 children. These authors concluded that children were least depressed and withdrawn when they lived with both parents rather than only with the biological mother. The depressed/withdrawn score for children living with a single mother was especially high, especially for boys, and anti-social behaviour was higher among those living with mothers than those in intact families. However, girls living with single mothers were no worse-off than those living with intact, low conflict families. A child living with a parent of the opposite sex was especially prone to problem behaviour, according to Peterson and Zill.

Stolberg, Camplair, Currier and Wells (1987) examined individual, familial and environmental determinants of children's post-divorce adjustment and maladjustment. Environmental influences included physical changes in the neighborhood (such as moving to a new neighborhood), social skills required to meet new friends, and communication skills needed to express the increased anger that unwanted changes brought. Familial influences included marital hostility and poor child management skills that may lead to aggression in children. Comparing 87 divorced mothers and 47 intact families, the authors concluded that a child's life change events, such as moving to a new house or changing schools, are the most significant determinants of a child's post-divorce maladjustment, followed by marital hostility and parent adjustment.

Kelly and Wallerstein (1977) examined, in 60 divorcing families, the visiting patterns of children with their non-custodial parent. In general, younger children between the ages of two and eight saw their non-custodial parent more frequently than did older children. Half of the older children aged nine to ten experienced erratic or infrequent visiting or no visiting at all. The response of the older children to the divorce was anger. The authors concluded that infrequent visiting correlated with a destructive visiting pattern. Judith Wallerstein is one of the foremost experts on the effects of divorce on children. She was involved in a 25-year longitudinal study of the responses of children and adolescents to parental separation and divorce. It was based on interviews with 130 children and both parents. After 25 years, the individuals who were children in these situations spoke sadly of their lost childhood, their sadness and anger, and their yearning for someone to take care of them. This diminished nurturing and protection during their growing-up years was the legacy divorce left them. Half the young people in the sample were involved as adolescents in serious drug and alcohol abuse. Over half ended up with lower educational degrees than their parents had obtained. At adulthood, incompatibility feared that their own adult relationships would fail as their parents' relationship did (Wallerstein and Lewis, 1998). In a more recent book, Wallerstein concluded that the children of divorce suffer most in adulthood:

The impact of divorce hits them most cruelly as they go in search of love, sexual intimacy and commitment. Their lack of inner images of a man and a woman in a stable relationship and their memories of their parents' failure to sustain the marriage badly hobbles their search, leading them to heartbreak and even despair (Wallerstein et al., 2000).

Amato and Keith (1991a) examined 92 studies that compared children living in divorced single-parent families with children living in continuously intact families, according to measures of well-being. Many studies found that children of divorced families experienced lower levels of well-being regardless of scholastic achievement, conduct, psychological development, self-esteem, social competence, and relationships with other children. The authors examined these studies from three possible explanatory perspectives: that children of divorce often experience a decrease in parental attention, help and supervision; that divorce typically leads to a decline in the standard of living of mother-headed families, often falling below poverty level; and that conflict between parents before and during separation causes severe stress among children. The results of the meta-analysis suggested that children of divorce are handicapped by the absence of a parent and somewhat less strongly supported the belief that economic decline accounts for some of the negative consequences of divorce. The hypothesis best supported by the evidence was that family conflict is associated with a low level of well-being. In another meta-analysis on parental divorce and adult well-being, Amato and Keith (1991b) concluded, based on data from 37 studies, that outcomes associated with parental divorce include effects on psychological well-being (depression, low life satisfaction), family well-being (low marital quality, divorce), socioeconomic well-

being (low educational attainment, low income, and low occupational prestige) and physical health. However, there were several qualifications to this finding, in particular that the extent of effect in the literature is weak. In another meta-analysis of divorce studies, Amato (1994) concluded that children of divorced families exhibit more behavioural difficulties, more symptoms of psychological maladjustment, lower academic achievement, more social difficulties, and poorer self-concepts than children in intact families.

Rodgers and Pryor, in a review of more than 200 British research studies on the impact of separation and divorce on children, concluded that long-term disadvantages for children of divorced parents include growing up in households with lower income, leaving school with fewer educational qualifications, withdrawn behaviour, aggression and delinquency, health problems, leaving home when young, early sexual activity, depression and substance abuse. However, these problems are found only in a minority of persons whose parents have separated. They also emphasized that these poor outcomes are far from inevitable, and that there is no direct link between parental separation and the way children adjust. Although these outcomes are clear, it cannot be simply assumed that parental separation is their underlying cause (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 1998).

Other studies have indicated that wives who have divorced bear a greater economic burden. In general, they are worse off economically than their former husbands are (Espenshade, 1979). Well-being decreases following divorce and increases following remarriage (Espenshade, 1979; Beuhler et al., 1985/86).

Positive Adjustments among Children after Separation and Divorce

These studies include the following:

In a 1980 article, Kurdek and Siesky evaluated the results of questionnaires given to 71 divorced single custodial parents and their 130 children. Generally, the parents' questionnaire focused on: the parents' report of the amount of conflict preceding the separation; the parents' description of how the children were informed about the divorce; the parents' description of how they reacted to news of the divorce; the parents' perceptions of their children's present attitudes towards the divorce; and parents' views on possible strengths their children had acquired over the course of the divorce. The children's questionnaire, explored: the children's responses to definitions of "divorce"; the reasons for and acceptance of the parents' divorce; the children's descriptions of both parents; the perceived influence of the divorce on peer relations; the children's interactions with the custodial parent; and the children's attitudes towards marriage.

There were ten statistical tables in the article, some of which gave the children's descriptions of their parents. For example, Table Five assessed the relationship between the child's sense of blame for the divorce and the child's description of the custodial and non-custodial parent under the headings "positive", "negative", "positive and negative" and "neutral". Children who appeared to blame themselves for the divorce perceived their parents in a rather negative light. Tables Nine and Ten examined the relationship between the strengths acquired by the children as a result of their parents' divorce, and the children's descriptions of the custodial and noncustodial parents under the headings "positive", "negative", "positive and negative" and "neutral". In Table Nine, children who were seen as having acquired strengths as a result of the divorce also held more "positive" views of both of their parents. Table Ten examined the relationship between specific child strengths i.e. "independence", "concern for parent", "discuss feelings" and "patience/compassion", and the children's descriptions of

their custodial and noncustodial parent under the headings previously given. Nearly all the specific strengths mentioned were for children who expressed "positive" views of both their parents. The authors found favorable reactions and adjustments in children who defined divorce in terms of "psychological separation" rather than in terms of "marriage dissolution" or "physical separation", shared news of divorce with friends, had relatively positive evaluations of both parents, and saw themselves as having acquired strengths and responsibilities as a result of the divorce (Kurdek and Siesky, 1980b).

Steinman, Zimmelman and Knoblauch (1985), in a study of 51 families with a joint physical custody arrangement, identified a list of factors leading to a successful arrangement. These factors were respect and appreciation for the bond between the children and the former spouse; an ability to remain objective about the children's needs during the period of divorce; an ability to empathize with the point of view of the child and the other parent; an ability to shift emotional expectations from the role of mate to that of co-parent; and an ability to establish new role boundaries and show high self-esteem and flexibility.

EMOTIONAL HEALTH

Divorce and the conflict leading up to it can be detrimental for the emotional health of the children involved and can lead to too much stress and anxiety. Children whose parents are constantly arguing are more likely to have a hard time learning to trust and connect to them (Emery, 1996). Similarly, frequent family conflict creates stress and threatens a child's environment and sense of security (Emery, 1996). Jekiel (1998) demonstrated this phenomenon in a study conducted over a four-year period with 241 families in the United States that experienced divorce and found that children in divorced homes had higher levels of depression and other emotional problems than children in the families that stayed intact. Amato (2005), in reflection of his 67 studies in the 1990s, agreed that although the difference is small, the emotional well-being of children with divorced parents is lower than that of children with intact families. He speculates that some of the emotional problems seem to result from the fact that children with divorced parents often have a lower standard of living than other children. Along with this, they are not as likely to receive the same quality parenting or to continue creating important emotional bonds with their parents as other children who live with both biological parents (Amato, 2005). During a family's process of divorce, the children are more likely to have internal conflicts, depression, and lower self-esteem (Kim, 2011). These emotional problems often linger for a few years. This data demonstrates that children of divorce may have decreased emotional well-being due to the stress in their lives.

[\[https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/intuition/vol13/iss1/4\]](https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/intuition/vol13/iss1/4)

The effects of divorce on children's emotional health have been extensively studied by researchers, and there is a consensus that divorce can have both short-term and long-term impacts on children's emotional well-being. Here are some key findings from research scholars in this area:

Emotional Distress: Numerous studies have shown that children of divorced parents are more likely to experience emotional distress, including feelings of anxiety, depression, and loneliness. Research by Amato and Keith (1991) found that children of divorce are at an increased risk for psychological problems compared to children from intact families.

Behavioral Problems: Children of divorced parents may exhibit behavioral problems such as aggression, delinquency, and conduct disorders. This is attributed to the disruption in their family structure and the stress associated with the divorce process. Research by Hetherington and Kelly (2002) highlighted the link between divorce and behavior issues in children.

Academic Performance: Divorce can negatively impact children's academic performance. The stress and emotional turmoil caused by the divorce can affect their concentration, motivation, and overall cognitive development. Research by Kelly (2000) emphasized the connection between divorce and academic difficulties.

Relationship Issues: Children of divorce might struggle with forming and maintaining healthy relationships later in life. Witnessing the breakdown of their parents' marriage can affect their perception of trust, commitment, and communication within relationships. Wallerstein and Blakeslee (1989) conducted a longitudinal study highlighting these relationship challenges.

Low Self-Esteem: Divorce can contribute to low self-esteem in children. The disruption of their family structure and potential feelings of blame or guilt for the divorce can impact their self-worth. Research by Kelly (2007) discussed the impact of divorce on children's self-esteem and self-concept.

Long-Term Effects: Some studies suggest that the emotional effects of divorce can extend into adulthood. Adult children of divorced parents may continue to experience emotional and relational challenges as they navigate their own marriages and families. Research by Wallerstein, Lewis, and Blakeslee (2000) highlighted the long-term effects of divorce on adult children.

Resilience and Coping: It's important to note that not all children of divorce experience negative emotional outcomes. Some children demonstrate resilience and adapt well to the new family dynamics. Factors such as a supportive environment, positive parenting, and access to counseling services can influence how children cope with divorce-related stressors. Masten and Coatsworth (1998) discussed the concept of resilience in the context of divorce.

In summary, the research suggests that divorce can have a significant impact on children's emotional health. However, it's important to recognize that each child's response to divorce is unique, and outcomes can vary based on individual characteristics, family support, and external resources. Providing children with emotional support, maintaining consistent routines, and seeking professional help when needed can play a crucial role in mitigating the negative effects of divorce on their emotional well-being

SOCIAL HEALTH

Not only does divorce affect the emotional health of children, but, according to Emery and Rex (1996), it also affects their social health by causing behavioral problems such as increased aggression and lower communication skills. Children learn by the example of their parents, and by witnessing their parents' ineffective problem-solving strategies on a regular basis, they adopt these unproductive, and sometimes violent, approaches. Moreover, parents often become stricter and harsher with their punishments during times of greater marital conflicts, especially before and during the divorce process. Such intensified punishment has shown a positive correlation with behavioral problems in children including increased violence, anger, and bullying (Emery, 1996).

Children of divorce have also shown difficulty in having healthy relationships later as adults. Fergusson, McLeod, and Horwood (2013) report such phenomena in the Christchurch Health and Development Study, which followed 1,265 people from birth until age 30. They found a positive correlation between people who experienced the divorce of their parents as children and later had an increased amount of poor, violent, and dysfunctional relationships. Kim (2011) found similar results when he studied children from kindergarten through eighth grade. His results indicated that during and after the divorce of their parents, children had a harder time making and keeping friendships. They also had a hard time talking

about their feelings and communicating with others. [\[\[https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/intuition/vol13/iss1/4\]\]](https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/intuition/vol13/iss1/4)

Research on the effects of divorce on children's social and health outcomes has been a significant area of study. While there is a considerable body of literature on this topic, it's important to note that individual experiences can vary widely based on factors such as the child's age, gender, temperament, the quality of the parental relationship before and after the divorce, socioeconomic status, and the presence of other supportive factors. Here are some general findings from research studies up to my last knowledge update in September 2021:

Social Effects

Emotional Well-being: Many children of divorced parents experience emotional distress, anxiety, and depression. However, not all children are affected in the same way. Some children show resilience and adaptive coping strategies.

Relationships with Peers: Divorce might impact a child's ability to form and maintain friendships. Children may struggle with feelings of isolation, insecurity, and difficulty trusting others.

Behavioral Issues: Research has shown a correlation between divorce and an increased likelihood of behavioral problems, such as aggression, defiance, and conduct disorders. However, these issues are not universal and can depend on other factors.

Academic Performance: Divorce can have an impact on a child's academic performance. Some children might experience difficulties concentrating or have lower motivation to excel in school.

Long-Term Social Outcomes: Some studies suggest that children of divorce might face higher risks of having difficulties in forming stable and successful romantic relationships in adulthood.

Health Effects

Physical Health: Divorce can potentially lead to changes in children's physical health due to stress-related factors. These might include disrupted sleep patterns, changes in appetite, and even susceptibility to illnesses.

Mental Health: As mentioned earlier, divorce can contribute to increased rates of depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues in children. These effects can extend into adolescence and adulthood.

Stress: Divorce can be a significant source of stress for children. Chronic stress can lead to various health problems, both in the short term and in the long term.

Immune Function: Prolonged exposure to stress related to parental divorce may impact a child's immune system, potentially making them more susceptible to illness.

PHYSICAL HEALTH

Physical health is another aspect of well-being affected by divorce. Britt, Haack, Muth, and Scisco (2010) found that children of divorced parents were more likely to have higher blood pressure and heart rate when they were exposed to public displays of affection (PDA). Research conducted by Arkes (2013) reveals the physical health problems caused by divorce may include increased likelihood of their partaking in harmful substances such as alcohol, cigarettes, and marijuana. Arkes (2013) also indicates that this increase in substance abuse often begins before the actual divorce as a result of the conflict and stress in the home and may worsen during and immediately after divorce. Alcohol, drugs, and tobacco are associated with decreasing physical health. This is especially harmful to youth who are still developing because these substances can stunt their learning (Brown, 2001). Thus, divorce indirectly

influences the physical health and addictions of the children involved. [Intuition: The BYU Undergraduate Journal]

Divorce can have various effects on children's physical health, often stemming from the emotional and psychological stressors associated with the process. Here are some potential impacts:

Stress-Related Health Issues: Divorce can lead to increased stress levels for children due to changes in their living situation, family dynamics, and potential conflicts between parents. Chronic stress can contribute to physical health problems such as headaches, stomachaches, and other psychosomatic symptoms.

Sleep Disturbances: Children going through a divorce may experience sleep disturbances, such as difficulties falling asleep or staying asleep. Sleep is essential for physical health and well-being, and disruptions in sleep patterns can lead to a range of health issues.

Weakened Immune System: Prolonged stress associated with divorce can weaken a child's immune system, making them more susceptible to illnesses. Research suggests that chronic stress can negatively impact the body's ability to fight off infections.

Weight Changes: Some children may experience changes in their eating habits and weight due to emotional distress. Some may overeat as a way to cope with their emotions, leading to weight gain, while others may lose their appetite and experience weight loss.

Physical Development Delays: Divorce-related stress can potentially interfere with normal physical development in children. This could manifest as delays in growth, slower weight gain, and other developmental issues.

Increased Risk of Chronic Conditions: While the connection is complex, certain studies have suggested a link between childhood adversity, including parental divorce, and an increased risk of developing chronic health conditions in adulthood, such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and obesity.

Impact on Health-Related Behaviors: Children from divorced families might engage in more risky behaviors such as smoking, substance abuse, or risky sexual behaviors as a result of the emotional turmoil they experience. These behaviors can have long-term implications for their physical health.

It's important to note that the impact of divorce on children's physical health can vary widely based on individual factors, including the child's age, temperament, family support, and the level of conflict between parents. Additionally, some children are resilient and can cope effectively with the challenges posed by divorce, while others may be more vulnerable to its negative effects.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Kim (2011) demonstrates that divorce causes a decline in the academic performance of children, as shown in lower reported test scores than children from intact families. Kim's interpretations of the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study Kindergarten Class, which observed children from kindergarten until they ended eighth grade, also reveal that children with divorced parents or with parents in the divorce process received lower math test scores on average than the other students. Recently, Arkes (2013) performed research that further supports Kim's ideas. He studied over 4,000 children (ages seven to 14) over a four-year period—half of them experienced a divorce of their parents. His findings illustrate that not only are children affected academically after a divorce, but also before, due to tensions and stress in the home. They have lower math and reading scores than children whose parents do not eventually get divorced. His studies also demonstrate that for about two years after the divorce of their parents, children score significantly lower on reading tests than other students. While most academic habits returned to

normal over time, reading comprehension scores stayed significantly low over the years (Arkes, 2016). This research shows that there may be a correlation between children of divorce and lower academic performance compared to children of intact families. This, along with the other research presented about negative effects of divorce, supports the need for more intervention

[Intuition: The BYU Undergraduate Journal]

Numerous studies have examined the impact of divorce on children's academic performance, and the findings are complex and nuanced. It's important to note that the effects can vary depending on various factors, including the child's age, gender, temperament, family dynamics, socioeconomic status, and the degree of conflict surrounding the divorce. Here are some general patterns that have emerged from research:

Initial Decline in Academic Performance: Many children experience a temporary dip in academic performance in the aftermath of their parents' divorce. The emotional and psychological stress that accompanies divorce can affect a child's ability to concentrate, complete homework, and engage in school activities.

Long-Term Implications: Some studies suggest that the negative effects of divorce on academic performance can persist over time, particularly if the family environment remains strained or if there are ongoing conflicts between parents.

Age Matters: The age of the child at the time of divorce can play a significant role. Younger children might struggle with separation anxiety and disruptions to routine, which can impact their school performance. Older children and adolescents might experience emotional distress that affects their focus and motivation.

Gender Differences: Research has shown that the effects of divorce on academic performance can differ between genders. Some studies suggest that boys might be more susceptible to negative academic outcomes, while girls might exhibit more internalizing behaviors.

Socioeconomic Factors: Divorce can sometimes lead to a decline in the family's socioeconomic status, which in turn can impact a child's access to resources such as tutoring, extracurricular activities, and educational materials. This can have implications for their academic success.

Parental Involvement: The level of parental involvement post-divorce can significantly influence a child's academic performance. Children who maintain a close and supportive relationship with both parents tend to fare better academically.

Coping Mechanisms: Some children develop coping strategies to deal with the emotional stress of divorce, which can influence their academic performance. Some may become overachievers, using academic success as a way to cope with the changes in their family life.

School Support: Teachers and school counselors can play a vital role in helping children navigate the challenges associated with divorce. A supportive school environment can mitigate some of the negative effects on academic performance.

It's worth noting that while divorce can introduce challenges; many children from divorced families still excel academically and go on to lead successful lives. The key factors that can mitigate the negative effects include maintaining a stable and supportive environment, open communication between parents and children, access to resources, and emotional support.

PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

Given the downward mobility, loss of old friends, role changes, and Task overload of divorced children, it is not surprising that they often Have psychological problems. Many experience anger and anxiety, depression And loneliness.⁴² Divorce creates emotional turmoil and Sometimes even mental illness.⁴³ One consistent finding across different studies, including studies Of large samples followed prospectively from before the divorce and Studies conducted in different countries, is that, on average, divorced Children are more distressed and depressed than non- divorce children. Divorced children in one large, national British sample, for example, were almost 200 percent more likely to be depressed than non-divorce children. In another study, one-quarter of the divorced Children who had been divorced, on average, for fourteen years, had a Clinically significant problem with depression.⁴⁶ other studies have also documented higher levels of psychiatric symptoms in divorced children compared with non-divorce Suicide and suicide attempt Rates are higher among divorced children in countries around the world For example, in a study in Australia, separated children were six times more likely to commit suicide than non-separated children.

On the contrary, One-fifth of the women in a study in the United States thought about Suicide after their marriages broke up.⁵⁰ Divorced women in Sweden Were found to be at increased risk for violence, traffic injuries, and Other accidents.⁵¹ Divorced people also drink more alcohol and develop More addictions.⁵² in one study in the United Kingdom, heavy Drinking declined between the ages of twenty-three and thirty-three for the general population, but it increased among people who divorced during that age period. Systematical and empirical facts and evidence shows that, children most parents also goes through these stress, emotions and instability as at the time of divorce.

Divorce can have a significant impact on children's psychological well-being, leading to various related problems. Research scholars have extensively studied the effects of divorce on children, and numerous studies have highlighted the potential psychological challenges that children may experience as a result of their parents' divorce. Here are some key findings from research with references to notable scholars:

Emotional Distress and Adjustment Issues: Children of divorced parents often experience emotional distress and struggle to adjust to the new family dynamics. A study by Amato and Keith (1991) found that children of divorce are more likely to experience higher levels of depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem compared to those from intact families.

Reference: Amato, P. R., & Keith, B. (1991). Parental divorce and the well-being of children: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, 110(1), 26-46.

Behavioral Problems: Divorce can contribute to behavioral problems in children, such as conduct disorders, delinquency, and aggression. A study by Lansford et al. (2006) indicated that children from divorced families are at a higher risk for developing externalizing behaviors.

Reference: Lansford, J. E., Malone, P. S., Castellino, D. R., Dodge, K. A., Pettit, G. S., & Bates, J. E. (2006). Trajectories of internalizing, externalizing, and grades for children who have and have not experienced their parents' divorce or separation. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 20(2), 292-301.

Academic Struggles: Divorce can also impact children's academic performance. Studies have shown that children from divorced families may have lower educational attainment and poorer school performance. This can be attributed to the stress and disruptions caused by divorce.

Reference: Sun, Y., & Li, Y. (2015). Family structure instability and children's educational attainment: A longitudinal analysis. *Social Science Research*, 54, 193-210.

Long-term Psychological Effects: Some research suggests that the negative effects of divorce on children can extend into adulthood. A longitudinal study by Hetherington et al. (1992) found that individuals who experienced their parents' divorce during childhood had a higher risk of psychological problems in adulthood, such as difficulties with intimate relationships and self-esteem.

Reference: Hetherington, E. M., Bridges, M., & Insabella, G. M. (1992). What matters? What does not? Five perspectives on the association between marital transitions and children's adjustment. *American Psychologist*, 48(6), 312-326.

Resilience and Protective Factors: While many children of divorce may experience negative outcomes, it's important to note that not all children are equally affected. Resilience factors, such as strong social support, positive coping strategies, and a stable post-divorce environment, can mitigate the impact of divorce on children's psychological well-being.

Reference: Masten, A. S., & Tellegen, A. (2012). Resilience in developmental psychopathology: Contributions of the Project Competence Longitudinal Study. *Development and Psychopathology*, 24(2), 345-361.

Lastly, research conducted by scholars in the field consistently suggests that divorce can lead to various psychological challenges for children, including emotional distress, behavioral problems, academic struggles, and potential long-term effects. However, it's important to recognize that individual experiences vary and that supportive environments and interventions can play a crucial role in helping children navigate the challenges associated with divorce.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research comprehensively examined the multifaceted effects of divorce on various dimensions of children's well-being, including psychological health, physical health, emotional health, social health, and academic performance. The findings of this study underscore the intricate interplay between familial dynamics and children's development, highlighting both short-term and long-term repercussions of parental divorce.

Psychologically, the impact of divorce on children is evident in increased levels of stress, anxiety, and depression. The dissolution of the familial unit often leads to feelings of insecurity, identity confusion, and reduced self-esteem. Moreover, the disruption of the family structure can trigger behavioral issues and emotional challenges, which may persist into adulthood.

Physically, divorce can contribute to heightened health risks for children. The elevated stress levels associated with divorce can lead to compromised immune systems, sleep disturbances, and somatic complaints. Additionally, changes in household routines and living arrangements may impact nutrition and physical activity, potentially predisposing children to unhealthy habits and long-term health problems.

Emotionally, the turmoil caused by divorce can result in emotional instability and difficulty in forming trusting relationships. Children often grapple with conflicting loyalties towards their parents, which can further strain their emotional well-being. The absence of a stable support system at home can hinder the development of effective coping mechanisms, potentially leading to maladaptive behaviors.

Socially, divorce can disrupt children's peer relationships and social interactions. Feelings of isolation and stigmatization may arise due to non-traditional family structures. Moreover, the shifting dynamics between parents can affect the quality of parent-child relationships, impacting the child's ability to forge healthy attachments in the future.

Academic performance can also suffer in the wake of divorce. The emotional upheaval and instability caused by divorce can impede concentration, engagement, and overall academic achievement. Changes in living arrangements and custody agreements may lead to frequent school changes, contributing to disruptions in learning continuity.

To mitigate these adverse effects, it is imperative for parents, caregivers, educators, and mental health professionals to collaborate in providing appropriate support systems. Interventions such as counseling, therapy, and structured co-parenting arrangements can help buffer the negative consequences of divorce on children's well-being. Strengthening communication between parents and ensuring consistency in routines can contribute to a more stable and nurturing environment for children to thrive.

In conclusion, this research illuminates the intricate web of challenges that divorce poses to children's psychological, physical, emotional, social, and academic well-being. By recognizing the nuanced nature of these effects and implementing proactive measures, society can work towards minimizing the impact of divorce and promoting the holistic development of children in the face of this significant life transition.

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