

Impact of divorce in children research paper examples

[Family](#), [Divorce](#)



Abstract

Many often consider marriage as a sacred rite for any given religion, a symbol of both love and commitment that must not be violated or broken. Others even see marriage a crucial decision that must not be taken lightly given the responsibility it entails to the couple, especially to the children that will be involved in the marriage. However, it is most often reported that couples, after a few years or more in their marriage, opt to break their vows and apply for divorce. While the divorce can be seen as an escape for the couple due to the several factors that led to their decision, the impact of this one decision changes the child caught in the entire conflict. The impact divorce can have may both be positive or negative, depending how the situation would be like for the child and how the parents would act in the picture. Some would even find divorce a positive reinforcement of development, while others would argue it has a negative impact to the child throughout his life. This paper will discuss the impacts divorce has on children from the beginning of the divorce up to the child's later years.

Keywords: divorce, impact on children, adjustment variables, divorce and children

Impact of Divorce in Children

Many often consider marriage as a sacred rite for any given religion, a symbol of both love and commitment that must not be violated or broken. Others even see marriage a crucial decision that must not be taken lightly given the responsibility it entails to the couple, especially to the children that will be involved in the marriage. However, it is most often reported that

couples, after a few years or more in their marriage, opt to break their vows and apply for divorce. There are several factors on why couples tend to file for divorce - from difference in character to abuse- however, its impact to the children that are in the middle of the process tends to be neglected or unnoticed by some. While there are children who could cope up with the separation of their parents, there are those who take it negatively even until they grow older. Unless there is intervention and assistance, children with divorced parents tend to showcase high psychological turmoil and depression that often leads to a decline in their overall performance and a change in their behavior that may affect how they interact with others. According to Richardson and McCabe (2001), there are at least seven adjustment variables that must be taken into account in understanding how children would be influenced by parental divorce. Aside from their age, variables such as interparental conflict, intimacy with parents, life satisfaction, depression, anxiety, stress and self-description would determine how well a child would adjust throughout the divorce. The first variable, interparental conflict, pertains to how serious the antagonism both parents have for each other and how their children would take part in the conflict. In some cases, children themselves become involved in the conflict, adding more pressures to the ongoing strife between both parents. Some become the confidants of their parents, while others become pressured in siding their parents. With regards to the intimacy children have with their parents, this is a fundamental adjustment variable as it would show how easy the child would adjust while with one parent and how they would react to the other. The next variable entails life satisfaction of the child with their current

situation as children may find their new surroundings different from the one they have left behind. Life satisfaction would also showcase how the child sees his current situation. The depression, anxiety and stress factors cater to the various pressures the child would experience throughout the divorce period, adding to the problems they have to face throughout the adjustment period. Finally, the self-description variable pertains to the child's perception of relations with others .

With the identification of the seven adjustment variables that can determine the level of impact divorce has on children, Schroeder and Gordon (2005) stated as to how children change throughout the divorce process. In the initial period following the divorce, the family becomes disorganized due to the change in living conditions and relationships. As a result, children tend to show aggressive or oppositional behavior towards their families, some even developing depressive reactions that would stunt their development and responses. Most of these aggressive responses and developmental delay often occur with children who grew up with a stable environment. Since children would not easily be able to cope up easily with the changes in the family due to their age and level of maturity, the problems would extend to various aspects of the child's life - from their relationships to how they see themselves. Bernstein (2006) added that children would show signs of emotional instability since the strains of having a change of lifestyle, the absence of both parents and the hostility between them would result into depression and trauma.

Negative feelings would continue to develop in children with divorced parents as they are left alone most of the time by the parents to

accommodate with their new financial situation. Children would start feeling sad and guilty because they feel as if they are at fault to the divorce, at the same time, they would become angry at their parents for leaving them or separating from the other. In some instances, children often showcase the several grief stages throughout their adjustment stage. They would take two to three years to get over their anger, denial, guilt, depression and acceptance if they are not guided by their parents and relatives. Sometimes, children would feel powerless throughout the adjustment period as they could not stop the separation and now feel as if they have tons of responsibilities heaved in their shoulders to sustain the family. In terms of their performances outside the home, these children tend to show their aggressive coping behaviors like getting into trouble and even flunking from their studies. Studies have shown that children from single-parents, especially those who have not been guided properly by their families, record high rates of dropouts since the children would become overwhelmed with the situation and eventually lose their concentration. The lack of parental attention would further cause these children to sink into further depression and uncertainty .

As the years progress, Kelly and Emery (2003) stated that children face further difficulties as young adults if their parents have divorced in their youth. These children tend to have problems maintaining their relationships with their love ones, most especially with their spouses as these children may find themselves unsatisfied with their marriage. The relationship of these children to their parents would also diminish completely as these children would no longer be interested in maintaining amicable ties with

their parents. If the parents berate the other in front of the young adult, the child would further stray away from their parents. For sons whose fathers abandon them tend to even hold resentment as they would feel they are weak and incapable of acting against their situation. They would even practice vices such as drinking, drugs, and premarital sex. For young females, they tend to show early desire in sexual activities for them to receive approval from a male figure. Their depression may even result to these young women to develop eating disorders, which may be detrimental to their health. There have also been cases wherein young adults who had parents from low-conflict marriages and had divorced tend to showcase more difficulties in maintaining their relationship with others. They also show lower well-being since they do not know whether or not they can maintain relationships with low conflicts and the possibility of divorce. Some have reported that they find it difficult to maneuver their time accordingly to accommodate both parents since their parents remain at conflict with the other .

Although the negative impact of divorce on children is alarming, there are potential positive impacts divorce can bring in the child's growth. Ehrenberg, et al (2005) stated that researchers have seen that some parental divorces enables children to improve in their cognitive development as they now see opportunities on how they can develop as a person. The lessons brought by divorce would allow the child to understand the importance of relationships, as well as the importance of responsibilities they now have for the family. There are also cases wherein children from divorced families with long-standing parental conflict show more focus in bridging the gap between their

parents and interact with them harmoniously. Divorce can even aid in the child's relationship with both his parents as it would allow the parents to grow from their mistakes, especially the fathers, since the divorce would allow them to be involved with the child's growth. Nowadays, it is visible that divorced couples would even exert time and effort to be involved in their child's learning and development. Children also become open to speak up about their experiences with the proper motivation and guidance. It is advised by health professionals and experts to maintain a positive relationship between the child and the parent as this would allow children to practice and cope up with their new family situation .

Divorce in itself is a very crucial moment for children as it would change the dynamic of their family and bring their fears of being in a broken family realized. While parents may think that divorce is a means for them to stop the conflict, the impact it has on children is profound and must not be taken lightly. On the one hand, children with divorced parents may find themselves seeing new opportunities to grow individually due to the responsibilities now set upon them and have a clear goal of settling the discord in cordial terms. However, if the parents do not interpret the signs of how their children would take in the divorce, the high probability of children acting negatively throughout the process may very well change how their children see their parents, their own lives and the very essence on relationships and families. Some would feel grief for the losses, influencing their performance, while others would even feel resentment over the separation and break all ties with their parents. While divorce nowadays cannot be prevented given the various factors that may cause strife between parents, it is essential for

parents to take into consideration how they can assure their children that despite the separation, they would still be well-taken care of and help them adjust from the ordeal.

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