

STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES ON THE CONSEQUENCES OF PARENTAL DIVORCE

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Received	Revised	Accepted	Published
15 October, 2024	15 November, 2024	27 November, 2024	04 December, 2024

ABSTRACT

Parental involvement plays a vital role in the upbringing and bright future of children, as parents form the foundation of any family system. The nature of the relationship between parents significantly impacts the lives of their children. In many cases, conflicts between parents arise, often leading to temporary or permanent separation. As a result, children lose the affection of one or both parents, as they typically live with either the mother or the father. This situation disrupts their routine matters and affects their lives significantly. Keeping this in view, the present study, titled "Students' Perspectives on the Consequences of Parental Divorce," was designed to examine the impact of divorce on students' lives. District Faisalabad was selected as the study area for convenience. The study targeted secondary schools, selecting 15 public and 15 private schools. From each school, two students from divorced families were randomly chosen for data collection. The collected data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The study identified key reasons for parental divorce as reported by respondents, including abuse and disputes (65%), incompatibility (58.3%), family status differences (58.3%), and out-of-family marriages (58.3%). The findings revealed limited paternal involvement in children's education, with only 6.7% of fathers attending school meetings regularly, compared to mothers' active engagement. Emotional impacts of divorce were notable, with 36.7% of respondents feeling sad and 33.3% expressing anger toward their parents. Additionally, 15% reported strained relationships with their parents. Major effects of divorce on students included financial issues, loss of faith in marriage, frequent illnesses, and changes in living style, as reported by more than half of the respondents.

Keywords: Divorces, Effects, Academic, Social Life, Achievements

INTRODUCTION

Every year, over a million children throughout the world suffer due to parental divorce and negatively affect children's social adjustment, self-concept, behavioral disorder, and psychological development (Mussarat et al., 2021). In Islamic law, divorce is defined as the termination of marital bonds, frequently triggered by factors such as toxic relationships that may cause substantial emotional

distress (Rina et al., 2024). Divorce has been a social phenomenon since the dawn of humanity and the development of ancient civilizations, with various terms like separation, divorce, abandonment, and neglect being used to describe it. While divorce is a significant issue that disrupts family and marital life, it can sometimes serve as a necessary solution to avoid worsening conflicts that may lead to serious

consequences, such as violence, suicide, or even rape. Social, economic, political, and technological changes have greatly contributed to the breakdown of marital relationships and the rise in divorce cases, which have far-reaching negative impacts on individuals, families, and society as a whole (Aftab and Younas, 2023).

According to Survey conducted in 2022, 60% of Pakistanis believe that the divorce rate has increased. This trend can be attributed to various factors, including domestic violence. In Pakistan's patriarchal society, regardless of who initiates the divorce, women are often blamed, particularly if they are educated or hold positions of authority. Male chauvinists perceive such women as threats to traditional norms and values, wrongly associating them with a Western mindset (The Nation, 2023).

On an average, around 42% of marriages in Europe ended in divorce in 2019. The report highlighted a significant rise in divorce rates, with Luxembourg leading at 88.9%, followed by Portugal, Finland, Spain, and France. In contrast, Pakistan saw a sharp 700% increase in divorce rates in Sindh province by 2020, with 5,198 khula (judicial divorce) cases filed by women in 2019. According to female divorcees, the primary reason for this rise was husbands' failure to meet their social responsibilities and well-being obligations. Additionally, the divorce rate in Pakistan surged in 2020, largely due to COVID-19 lockdowns, which exacerbated domestic violence amid economic and social hardships (Rubab, and Alam, 2022).

The primary causes of divorce in Pakistan are linked to social, economic, cultural, psychological, political, and religious factors. Since the divorce process in Pakistan is complex, each individual who undergoes it has their own specific reasons for ending the marriage (Azhar et al., 2018). One of the key factors contributing to the rise in divorces is young age and love marriages. Younger couples often lack the emotional maturity needed to make sound decisions, which can lead to divorce. Poor communication due to daily stressors, unmet expectations, reluctance to address issues, and inflated egos further contribute to the growing divorce rate (Atif et al., 2021).

Methodology

Present study was conducted in District Faisalabad, which was chosen conveniently. The population of the study consisted of all the teachers of secondary schools. A cross-sectional research design was applied to conduct the study. For this purpose, 30 female secondary schools were selected randomly, with 15 from public schools and 15 from private schools. From each school, two students from divorced family were randomly chosen, resulting in a total sample size of 60 respondents. An interview schedule was specifically designed for the objectives of the study, and its reliability was confirmed with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.72, indicating satisfactory reliability. Validity was established through expert consultation and subsequent amendments. Data were collected by the researcher personally in the targeted schools, with the purpose of the interview schedule clearly communicated to each respondent prior to completion. After collection, the data were systematically tabulated and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Limitations

- The study was limited to district Faisalabad
- The study was limited to 60 respondents from divorced family
- Financial limitations were also there for the researcher.
- Little time to achieve the goal for completion of the research in accordance with the schedule of academic session

Results and Discussion

This section provides a detailed explanation of the study's results, presented in tabulated form. Additionally, comparisons are made between the findings of this study and those of similar studies conducted worldwide.

Reasons of Divorce

Students were asked about the reasons for their parents' separation and were encouraged to identify the major causes. The aim was to highlight these reasons to raise awareness among individuals in society, helping to prevent similar issues in the future.

Table 1. Reason behind the parental divorced reported by students

Reasons of divorced reported by students	Yes		No	
	f	%	f	%
There was the financial issues?	21	35.0	39	65.0
Incompatibility among the parents?	35	58.3	25	41.7
Family status difference?	35	58.3	25	41.7
Lack of education?	14	23.3	46	76.7
Misunderstanding?	9	15.0	51	85.0
Unrealistic expectations	21	35.0	39	65.0
Early marriage?	15	25.0	45	75.0
Out of family marriage?	35	58.3	25	41.7
Abuse and disputes?	39	65.0	21	35.0
Property issues?	17	28.3	43	71.7

Students were inquired about the reasons of their parent’s separation. There were different reasons reported by the respondents but among these were Abuse and disputes, Incompatibility among the parents, Family status difference and out of family marriage reported by 65%,58.3%, 58.3% and 58.3% of the students respectively. There are many other reasons reported as mentioned in the above table. Similar findings were reported by Kalpana et al. (2022) found that Excessive conflict, lack of commitment, infidelity, absence of emotional or physical intimacy, and domestic violence are among the leading causes of divorce. As reported by Mustapa et al. (2020) Family disharmony, often cited as a reason for divorce, is the result of unresolved family issues that spouses struggle to address effectively. But the different reasons were reported by Bindhu et al. (2015) said that In Kerala, the main causes of divorce among couples include adjustment difficulties, alcoholism, physical abuse, neglect, psychiatric disorders, and infidelity. The findings of

Syamsuhadi (2016) are also similar to table#1, according to them inharmonious relationships, domestic violence, financial difficulties, refusal to engage in sexual relations, extramarital affairs, jealousy, and the desire for a second wife are breakdown. Ludwig (2005) reported many other reasons of divorce such as encompass women's independence, early marriages, financial pressures, inadequate social skills, permissive divorce laws, sexual incompatibility, role conflicts, substance abuse, risk-taking behaviors, differences between partners, religious influences, and varying attitudes towards divorce.

Parent Teacher Meeting

Parent-teacher meetings are typically conducted in schools to inform parents about their children's performance and activities. In this study, students were asked who usually attended these meetings, whether it was their mother or father.

Table 2. Participation of parents in Parents-teacher Meeting

Participation of Mother	F	%	Participation of Father	f	%
Some time	24	40.0	Some time	9	15.0
Regularly	11	18.3	Regularly	4	6.7
Never	25	41.7	Never	47	78.3
Total	60	100	Total	60	100

According to the data, only 18.3% of the students reported that their mothers attended parent-teacher meetings at school regularly, while 40% stated that their mothers attended these meetings "sometimes." A similar percentage (41.7%) of students mentioned that their mothers never attended school meetings. When asked the same question about their fathers, the situation was notably different. Only 6.7% of students reported that their fathers attended the meetings regularly, while an overwhelming majority (78.3%) stated that their fathers never attended school meetings. From this data, it can be concluded that mothers are primarily involved in overseeing their children's education, while fathers are mostly engaged in earning income to provide financial

support and ensure a good standard of living for their families. According to Fahd et al. (2022) Parent-teacher meetings have a significant effect on students' academic performance. This indicates that when parents engage with teachers through these meetings, it positively influences students' educational outcomes. Oluwatoyin et al. (2023) stated that parents are an important part of any educational progress, and they are recognized as of key importance in children's learning. In addition, fruitful parents' participation in children's education has been reported to facilitate the development of learners' values, positive attitudes, and behavior in which their emotional balance and maturity have also been reported to be supported and boosted.

Table 3. Feeling of the children after the parent divorce

How did you feel when your parents got divorced?	Yes		No	
	f	%	f	%
Did you feel sad when your parents got divorced?	22	36.7	38	63.3
Were you angry with your parents when they decided to separate?	20	33.3	40	66.7
Did the divorce affect your relationship with your parents?	9	15.0	51	85.0
Did you feel confused or lost after your parents' divorce?	9	15.0	51	85.0

Table 4.21 indicates that Based on the responses, a significant portion of the respondents (36.7%) felt sad when their parents got divorced, indicating a potentially emotional impact of divorce on children. Additionally, 33.3% of the respondents reported feeling angry with their parents when they decided to separate, suggesting that children may experience feelings of resentment towards their parents due to the divorce. A smaller percentage of respondents (15%) reported that the divorce affected their relationship with their parents, potentially indicating lasting impacts of the divorce on the parent-child relationship. On the other hand, 15% of the respondents reported they felt confused or lost after

their parents' divorce, Fuller et al. (2011) reported that Females with divorced parents are 83% more likely to experience suicidal thoughts compared to their peers from non-divorced families. Sigal et al.(2012) stated that children observe the behavior and actions of parents that are going through the process of divorce. The environment created under these circumstances affects the children in all aspects of growth throughout childhood, and eventually may overlap into adulthood. Ham (2003), stated that children whose parents are divorced get less education, and broken family children have to face and react to a multitude of behavioral change at schools and locality.

Table 4. Effect of Divorce On Students life

Effect of Divorce On Students	Yes		No	
	f	%	f	%
Lack of concentration during study	22	36.7	38	63.3
Frequent illness	29	48.3	31	51.7
Increase in fear	24	40.0	36	60.0
Confidence lose	27	45.0	33	55.0
Raise in financial issues	38	63.3	22	36.7
Decrease in grades	22	36.7	38	63.3
Residence issues	15	25.0	45	75.0
Difficult survival in community	34	56.7	26	43.3
Lack of affection from parents	11	18.3	49	81.7
Change in living arrangement	29	48.3	31	51.7
Trust issues	11	18.3	49	81.7
Loss of Faith in Marriage	36	60.0	24	40.0
Loss of Interest in Social Activity	45	75.0	15	25.0
Change in social life	27	45.0	33	55.0

In the table 4, the effects of parental divorce on students are mentioned, these include loss of interest in social activities, with major impacts such as an increase in financial issues, loss of faith in marriage, frequent illnesses, and changes in living style. These effects were categorized as major effects as reported by more than half or about half of the respondents. Similar effects were reported by Ardianto et al. (2024), they reported that children of divorced parents often experience deep feelings of loss, uncertainty about their family's future, and confusion about the divorce's causes. They may also feel guilt, anger, sadness, and prolonged anxiety, reflecting significant emotional turmoil in their lives. Siti et al. (2024) found that children of divorced parents often experience feelings of anxiety, confusion, restlessness, shame, and sadness. The lack of love and attention from both parents significantly disrupts their psychological development, highlighting the importance of family integrity for their emotional well-being. Xinyu (2023) found that Children in divorced families may experience a range of emotions, including anxiety, anger, feelings of shrinkage, and low self-esteem. Valentina et al. (2024) Children of divorced parents often experience emotional disorders and imbalances due to the hostility between their parents. This environment can lead to problematic personality patterns, affecting their psycho-emotional balance and overall

development as they navigate adverse life events. Jurnal et al. (2023) Children may experience feelings of anxiety, distress, sadness, shame, and bewilderment following their parents' divorce. Yanyu (2023) reported that Children of divorced parents may face a higher risk of experiencing various emotional and mental challenges. They are likely to struggle with more feelings of sadness and negative thoughts compared to children from intact families. Based on the above citation and results, it can be concluded that children worldwide face similar effects following their parents' separation. Therefore, there is a need to minimize these effects, as children may develop negative habits without adequate parental attention. Every society should take steps and implement policies to ensure the proper upbringing of children from divorced families, aiming to mitigate these adverse impacts.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of the study conclude that disputes and harassment within families are significant factors leading to partner separation. Differences in social status and mismatched mentalities between partners are also major causes of divorce. To address this, families should thoroughly investigate compatibility before binding individuals in marriage, as this can help prevent future disruptions in relationships. Such disruptions often result in adverse impacts on

children, including financial difficulties, psychological problems, and challenges in social survival. There is a pressing need to educate communities about the severity of these impacts on children. Elders and community leaders should actively work to resolve disputes between partners in a constructive manner to reduce the prevalence of divorce cases and their associated consequences.

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