



Impact of Parental Separation on the Education of Girl Child in Emohua Local Government Area (LGA) of Rivers State

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Abstract:

Parental separation impacts the young people's behaviour in the school environment, peer group and even in the society at large. The study ascertains the impact of parental separation on the education of girl child in Emohua Local Government Area (LGA) of Rivers State. Four research objectives and two hypotheses were developed. Primary and secondary data were used in the production of this research work. Questionnaire was the instrument for data collection while the multi-stage cluster sampling was used in this study. Descriptive statistics such as percentages, the frequency tables was used in describing the respondents while chi-square (χ^2), was used to test all hypotheses. The study revealed that there is a statistically significant relationship ($P < .000$) between respondents' educational status and their perceived notion that girl child from separated homes are likely to drop out of school. It also revealed that there is a statistically significant relationship ($P < .000$) between age and perception of children from separated homes. It was recommended that seminars and conferences should be organized to sensitize parents on the need for adequate education. Government and NGOs should organize enlightenment campaign on dangers of parental separation among others.

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Introduction

1.1 Background to the study

The girl-child is a biological female offspring from birth to 18 years of age. During this period, the young girl is totally under the care of the adult who may be parents, guardians or elder siblings. It is also a period when the girl-child is malleable, builds and develops her personality and character. She is very dependent on others on whom she models her behaviour through observation, repetition and imitation. Her physical, mental, social, spiritual and emotional developments start and progress to get to the peak at the young adult stage (Sutherland, 2001).

The development of any society would be grossly lopsided if the girl child is not given quality education. Education in any normal society is accepted as an instrument to power, prestige, survival, greatness and advancement for men and women. The United Nations General Assembly (2001) adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which stipulates that everyone has the right to education which shall be free at least in elementary and primary stages. Similarly, the National Policy on Education emphasizes among other things that there will be equal opportunities for all citizens. However, Osinulu (1994) lamented that the girl child is discriminated against in terms of education and given out to marriage early thereby denying the girl-child the required competences for community development.

According to Kobani (2014), education is the process of providing information to an inexperienced person to help the individual develop physically, mentally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, politically and economically. Education is the process through which individuals are made functional members of their society (Ocho, 2005). It is a process through which the young acquires knowledge and realizes her potentials and uses them for self-actualization. Education enables a girlchild to be useful to herself and others.

According to Adedeji (2014), children's educational achievement is negatively affected by parental separation. This comes down to the fact that the loss of one parent from the family, which can be interpreted as a decrease in the amount of family's financial, cultural, and social resources leads to a deterioration of children's educational achievement. It is also argued that there might be unobserved heterogeneity between parents who separate and parents who do not separate, which partly explains the negative effect on educational performance of the involved children, (Frisco, Muller and Frank, 2007). Furthermore, parental separation affects protection against early pregnancy and marriages, personal effects like pads, less housework to enable them have ample time for school homework, prompt school fees payment, clothing and nutrition, positive motivation to change attitude, good accommodation at home and above all be role model in all actions and talks that parents portray (GCN, 2004). In the light of the above, it is the main challenge of this study to ascertain impact of parental separation on the education of girl child using Emohua Local Government Area (LGA) of Rivers State as the study area.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In our society, children are sometimes exposed at an early age to all sort of dangers arising from malnutrition, diseases and various temptation of surviving due to absence of one or both of their parents. According to Olorunfemi-Olabisi (2014), children's life in broken homes is observed to be associated with emotional stress that can impair intellectual development, thereby giving way for such

children to grow up without being trained properly. However, absence of one or both parents deprives children of the stable love, care, security and total support they have been accustomed to and tend to make children different in the eyes of the peer group (Adebowale, 2006). If children are asked where the missing parent is or why they have a new parent to replace the missing parents, they become embarrassed and ashamed. They may also feel guilty and unwanted by the society, such stressful situation leads to psychological, emotional and intellectual imbalance in growing children. According to Olusola (2008), these subsequently result to quitting from school or poor academic achievement as children education requires proper family support to be able to perform excellently.

Parental separation, impacts the young people's behaviour in the school environment, peer group and even in the society at large. The family structure is altered and thus affected. Girl-child facing problems of parental separation seem to have more difficult time with academic and social expectations at schools (Bowling, 2005). The girl child most often is burdened with the household chores and look after the younger ones. Consequently, girl-child may become truant, way-ward, unruly, or take to sexual misconduct as a way of searching for affection which is lacking. According to Wiseman (2003), ultimately this affects the girl child academic performances. Parental interaction has a better effect on adolescents than the separation. Hence it becomes necessary to ascertain impact of parental separation on the education of girl child using Emohua Local Government Area (LGA) of Rivers State as the study area

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study is to ascertain the impact of parental separation on the education of girl child in Emohua Local Government Area (LGA) of Rivers. The specific objectives of the study include:

1. To ascertain whether parents' level of educational attainment affects girlchild education from separated home in Emohua LGA
2. To determine the effect of parental income on girlchild education from separated home in Emohua LGA?
3. To determine the effect of prompt school fees payment on girlchild education from separated home in Emohua LGA?
4. To proffer effective strategies that can be adopted in order to avoid or reduce parental separation tendencies.

1.4 Hypotheses

1. Respondents with higher education are more likely to perceive that girl child from separated homes are more likely to drop out from school.
2. Respondents who are older are more likely to perceive that children from separated homes experience grade repetition than younger respondents

1.5 Significance of the Study

Theoretical Significance

Theoretically, the study shall contribute to the existing knowledge as it shall provide empirical information that relates to public perception of parental separation and its impact on education of girl child, which shall enable researchers, marriage counselors, therapists and social workers to have a better understanding and conceptualization of parental separation and its impact on education of girl

child. It shall proffer solutions to the relationship between parental separation and education of girl child.

Practical Significance

Practically, the study shall be relevant to guidance and counselors as it shall enable them understand the extent emotional stress influence education of children and adopt suitable strategies. In addition, guidance and counselors shall benefit from this study as it shall also enable them know the extent truant behavior can influence education of children. Parents shall find this study useful because it shall enable them know the extent unstable parental love and care influence education of children. Practically, government and educational authorities shall find this study useful because strategies developed from this study shall enable them to make policies that shall reduce the tendency to family separation among spouse and improve education of children.

1.6 Definition of Terms

Separation: This is the termination of a marriage or marital union, the canceling and/or reorganizing of the legal duties and responsibilities of marriage, thus dissolving the bonds of matrimony between a married couple under the rule of law of the particular country and/or state.

Education: *Education* is the process of facilitating learning, or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits.

Family: This is a group of people affiliated either by consanguinity (by recognized birth), affinity or co-residence.

Perception: The way in which something is regarded, understood, or interpreted.

Separation: Being apart from each other or disjointed.

Literature Review

2.1.1 Concept of Parental Separation

Separation is a legal agreement by which husband and wife choose not to live together. Falana and Bada (2013) described it as a process that entails psychological risks as well as opportunity for the development of the stakeholders. They further stated that the process unfolds in distinct stages that are characterized by qualitative differences of themes and of degree of coping. Separation is associated with heart rending emotions, unspeakable sadness, depression, anxiety and much more. According to Goode (1998), in Eze, (2006) parental separation is the breakdown of family unit, the dissolution or fracture of social role, when one or more members fail to perform adequately their roles or obligations. Since marriage is a continuous process, family instability will continue to be on the increase if not checked. According to Obiadi (2001), parental separation is a problem that leads married people to satisfy their sexual urges outside their matrimonial homes therefore, having the high propensity of contracting venereal diseases that will require huge amount of money to cure or that could even end their lives. Therefore, parental separation is the inability of the parents to perform its function as sanctioned by the society. Once the parents are separated, children of that union become the “scapegoat” to the tension and hostility of the unsolved conflict between parents.

2.1.2 Factors influencing Parental Separation

Influence of industrialization and urbanization

In Nigeria today, the influence of industrialization and urbanization has affected the social system of the country, a part of which is the marriage system. As new cultural patterns, new aspirations and behavioural norms have emerged and as the traditional social ties undergo changes, social control becomes weakened. According to Ajila and Olutola (2007), the family is a sensitive institution and it monitors all these changes and reacts to them by experiencing disorganization. Since the traditional family structure has been so seriously littered, the functions have equally been affected, and many of its important roles are now known to be associated with many forms of instability (Tinuola, 2006). Marital instability according to Filani (2004) is a breakdown in communication among couples resulting in constant arguments, verbal and physical aggression, psychological ill health, emotional and physical separation and sometimes separation. Filani further noted that marital instability can result from death of spouse, desertion of the spouses, mutual separation of spouses and legal separation of spouses. Andersson, (2002), posits that of all these factors of marital instability, parental separation seems to be the most popular and most copiously documented.

Gender

Compared with men, women tend to monitor their relationships more closely, become aware of relationship problems sooner, and are more likely to initiate discussions of relationship problems with their partners (Thompson & Walker, 1991). Men, in contrast, are more likely than women to withdraw from discussions of relationship problems (Gottman, 1994). Perhaps for these reasons, wives are more likely than husbands to initiate separation (Kitson, 2002). Given that marital discord and separation are gendered experiences, it is not surprising that researchers have documented differences between men's and women's accounts of separation. For example, several studies have shown that former wives provide longer and more complex explanations for their separations than do former husbands (Levinger, 2006). With respect to perceived causes of separation, women appear to be more likely than men to refer to relational or emotional issues, such as basic unhappiness and incompatibility (Cleck & Pearson, 1985), former spouses' personalities (Kitson, 2002), and a general lack of love (Levinger, 2006).

Former wives also are more likely than former husbands to refer to a cluster of negative partner behaviors, including physical abuse, emotional abuse, substance use, going out with "the boys," and neglect of home and children (Kitson, 2002; Levinger, 2006). In contrast, men, more often than women, blame the separation on external factors, such as work or problems with in-laws (Kitson, 1992; Levinger, 1966). Former husbands also are more likely to report that they do not know what caused the separation (Kitson, 2002).

Socioeconomic Status (SES) of Parents

Socioeconomic Status (SES), usually measured by education and income, has been a focus of separation research. Prior studies indicate that education and income facilitate marital success (Voydanoff, 1991). Education promotes more effective communication between couples, thus helping them to resolve differences. In contrast, the stress generated by economic hardship increases disagreements over finances, makes spouses irritable, and decreases expressions of emotional support (Conger, 1990). Partly for these reasons, SES is inversely associated with the risk of separation (White, 1991). Nevertheless, well-educated individuals may hold especially high standards for

marriage and expect a substantial level of emotional support, companionship, and personal fulfillment from their spouses. Because of these high standards, relationship problems may trigger thoughts of separation relatively quickly among well-educated individuals. Several studies suggest that SES is correlated with people's reasons for separation. Kitson (2002) found that high-SES individuals, following separation, were more likely to complain about lack of communication, changes in interests or values, incompatibility, and their ex-spouses' self-centeredness.

In contrast, low-SES individuals were more likely to complain about physical abuse, going out with the boys/girls, neglect of household duties, gambling, criminal activities, financial problems, and employment problems. Similarly, Levinger (2006) found that low-SES separation individuals complained about financial problems, physical abuse, and drinking, whereas high-SES separated individuals complained about lack of love and excessive demands from their spouses. Goode (1956) found that high status divorcees tended to report personality problems and conflict over values as reasons for separation, whereas low status divorcees tend to report lack of economic support from their former husbands. These results suggest that as SES increases, individuals are less likely to report instrumental reasons and more likely to report expressive and relationship-centered reasons.

Children Related Problems

These include lack of children (lack of a girl means no wealth while lack of a boy means no future); replacing spouse with children (giving too much attention to the children at the expense of your partner); number of children to have (in-laws may insist on having a child named after them and this may mean getting more children than what one initially expected); birth control methods (some couples may detest all family planning methods and thus they continue getting more children than they can raise).

Communication Breakdown

A couple needs to take and have a common understanding about children and money among others. When communication is poor or misunderstood, there are problems. Causes of poor or wrong communication include different cultures and where one has been brought up (rural or urban setting). Some communication killers include explosion (being angry and complaining) and silence (refusing to point out when one wrongs you). According to Sasse (1997), conflict can be divided into two. That is, constructive conflict or destructive conflict. Constructive conflict occurs when people work together to solve a problem and they come to a better understanding of each other. After the conflict, they feel better about each other. Destructive conflict occurs when people attack each other instead of trying to solve the conflict. This leads to weakening of relationships. For example, a wife may complain that the husband doesn't eat her food and the husband could become rough and impatient and yet all these are just masking the main issue which is lack of fulfillment as far as sexual needs are concerned. Lack of sexual harmony can cause frustrations in the family.

Life Course Variables

The life course variable (Elder, 1994), with its emphasis on the timing and duration of events, incorporates factors such as age at marriage, duration of marriage, and the presence of children. With respect to age at marriage, individuals who marry at younger ages tend to report more marital problems and experience a greater risk of separation than individuals who marry at older ages (Bumpass et al., 1991). The negative consequences of marrying at an early age may be due to

psychological immaturity, unstable employment, and a truncated spousal-search process. With respect to duration of marriage, separation occurs more often in the early rather than the later years of marriage (White, 1991). Becker (2001) argued that people generally have imperfect information about their partners during courtship but learn substantially more about their spouses after marriage.

Consequently, early parental separation is disproportionately due to the discovery of basic incompatibility, conflict in values, and personality clashes. Nevertheless, couples in marriages of long duration face challenges (such as raising children, boredom with the relationship, and gradually diverging interests and attitudes) that differ from those of individuals in marriages of short duration. Indeed, studies have shown that marital duration is associated with long-term declines in marital happiness (Johnson, Amoloza, & Booth, 2002). According to Kitson (2002), individuals who married at a young age were more likely to report difficulties in “settling down,” such as going out with the boys/girls and infidelity. In addition, Kitson (2002) noted that people married for a longer time were more likely to mention changes in interests or having “no sense of family,” whereas people married for a shorter time were more likely to mention in-laws or sexual problems. Goode’s (1956) research on extramarital affair and divorce revealed that complaints of infidelity, drinking, and the general quality of home life increased with duration of marriage, whereas complaints about personality and value conflict decreased.

Unrealistic Expectations

These include men expecting their wives to be like their mothers or better than their mothers; men expecting their wives to be angels; women expecting their husbands to be like their fathers (if they were good) or a man who is always at home and is soft. According to Wanjiku (2010), some of the couples get into marriage with the view of changing some of their spouses’ traits. They fail to understand that it is virtually impossible to change a grown up. Instead, compromise and tolerance should be exercised.

2.1.3 Consequences of Parental Separation on Children’s Academic Performance

Truancy

Truancy is a term used to describe any intentional or unauthorized absence from school. The term truancy, typically refers to absence caused by students of their own free will, and usually does not refer to legitimate excused absence, such as ones related to a medicated conditions. Truancy is the term referring to an absence that is associated with the most brazen student’s irresponsibility and results in the greatest consequences (Dronkers, 2010). It also refers to students who attend schools but do not attend classes. Atkinson, Hasley, Wilkin and Kindler (2000) pointed to differences in the extent of absence, from avoidance of single lesson to absence of several weeks. The definition is designed to cover the long term absence of a child kept at home by a parent to help care for siblings, and the child taken out of school for an out-of- season family holiday, and many other variations on this theme. A recent report from OFSTED (Office for Standard in Education) noted that some of the plausible or at least practically irreputable explanations which schools received for absence, which they then classify as authorised are questionable (OFSTED 2001). The Audit Commission (1999) noted that at least 40,000 out of the 400,000(10%) children absent from school each day are being kept off schools by their parents without permission.

Separating these two categories of absence statistically is clearly impossible, both for schools and for researchers, unless detailed study of each case is undertaken. According to Bryant (2006), truancy

occurs when a student between the age 6 and 17, missed a certain number of days from school within a specific period and time, as defined by the statute of the state that the students reside in. Truancy usually apply to those students that are minors, because in most states, the age of an adult is deemed 18, however, there can be exceptions based on the state statute.

Truancy is an issue that affects many people, because truancy has been associated with various criminal behaviours such as vandalism, burglary and drug use. Also, truancy can be the symptoms for other emotional/mental, economic and family situations (Park 2008). Therefore, the problem of defining truancy lies in the concept at which each researcher believes in, and this affects the definition of each researcher, some say, truancy depends on the school's criteria used in categorising truancy, while some say it differs from school to school's handbook for defining truancy. Some authors also say, it depends on the total number of lessons or classes missed (Park 2008). Therefore, all these concepts and beliefs, enable people to classify anyhow absence from school or class to be truancy. Since in many, though not all cases, the decision to truant is taken by children themselves, it seems appropriate to begin with their views on the causes of truancy. Kindler, Wakefield and Wilkin (1996) reported some interviews with 160 children aged 7 and above, that the main causes of truancy and disruptions are classified and described (in rank order) as: The influence of friends and peers who are seen encouraging truancy as a status-seeking activity or as a way of joining in or blending in, and sometimes teasing or goading the child into truancy.

Diminished Capacity to Learn

Separation frequently diminishes the child's capacity to learn. In the Impact of Separation Project of Ohio's Kent State University, a national sample study of 699 elementary school children from homes where parents are separated performed more poorly in reading, spelling, and math, and repeated a grade more frequently than do children in intact two parent families (Mary and Parcel 1997). The absence of the father lowers cognitive test scores for young children in general, but especially girls' math scores (David 2003). On the other hand, a girl's verbal capacity increases when the father is present and especially when he reads aloud to her when she is young. By age thirteen there is an average difference of half a year in reading abilities between children of separated parents and those from intact families. Even the most effective preventative work on reading and math skills does not eliminate the drop in performance at school.

Moving home is likely a big problem accounting for the poorer performance of these children, for such moves tend to decrease school performance for most children, regardless of family background. According to Frances, Goldschneider and Goldscheider (2005), children of intact families when compared to children of broken families move much more frequently. Such moves tend to increase behavioral, emotional and academic problems for all adolescents regardless of family structure. When very young children leave their original family home for another, because of their parents' separation, the move is even more traumatic because they tend to become even more attached to their family home during the breakup of their parents. (Ruth, Stirtzinger and Cholvat 2007)

Poor School Graduation for Children

Separation affects the grade level that children attain. Among children who have completed high school, there is a 33 percent lower separation rate among their parents compared to girls who drop out of high school (Larry, Butler and Hall 2006). Step family life does not wipe out educational losses:

Schools may expel as many as one in four step-children, though this ratio can fall to one in ten when step-parents are highly involved with their children's school. Children raised in intact families complete more total years of education and have higher earnings than children from other family structures (Jerold 1996).

2.2 Theoretical framework

2.2.1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a theory proposed by Abraham Maslow in 1943. The hierarchy of needs is portrayed in the shape of a pyramid with the largest, most fundamental level of needs at the bottom and the need for self-actualization at the top. Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory has five layers of the pyramid, when these needs are not met in marriage, separation sets in. Maslow's theory suggests that the most basic needs must be met before the individual will strongly desire the higher level needs. Maslow used terms such as physiological, safety, belongingness, love, esteem, and self-actualization needs to describe the patterns that human needs generally move through.

Physiological needs are the basic needs for human survival, if not met; human body cannot function properly and will ultimately fail. They are food, water, sleep and sex among others. In other words, when the basic needs are lacking in the family, it cannot function properly.

Safety needs- In the family, safety and security has to be taken care of. This involves elimination of factors that threaten the body or life such as personal security, financial security, health and well-being and safety net against accident, illness and their adverse impact. When these safety and security needs are not reached, there is bound to be extra marital behaviours and family instability. After physiological safety needs are fulfilled; the third level of human needs is interpersonal and involves feeling of belongingness. In this, married people should have feelings for themselves and their children for smooth running of the family.

Esteem- All humans have a need to feel respected and recognized, so when married people respect each other, it creates a feeling of contribution or value. If not done, the one concerned will move outside where he or she will be respected.

Self-actualization- This level of need refers to what a person's full potential is and the realization of that potential. Maslow describes this level as the desire to accomplish everything that one can be. In other words, married people should work hard so as to see that all the full potentials expected in their marriage will be realized.

In all, Maslow's theory of hierarchy of need is related in this study since the marriage structure is built on needs. It will help the married people to know the basic and other needs of human beings (physiological, safety, love or belonging, esteem, and self-actualization) and work towards satisfying them to avoid extra marital behaviour and family instability.

2.2.2 Parental Attachment Theory

Parental attachment theory was proposed by Bowlby (1980). The theory states that the child forms a strong emotional bond with another person (caregiver) during childhood with lifelong consequences. According to the theorist, sensitive and emotionally available parenting helps the child to form a secure attachment style which fosters a child's socio-emotional development and well being. Less sensitive and emotionally available parenting or neglect of the child's needs may result in insecure forms of attachment style, which is a risk factor for many mental health problems. The theory is relevant to this

study in view of the fact that the proponent provides clues in emotional development of children. He also made reasonable suggestions for parents and guardians. Parents and guardians can now see the necessity of forming secure attachment bond with their children. Such bonds will enable the children to end up with secure attachment and secure state of mind later in life. Parents will learn to understand the biological and psychological needs of the children, and to avoid unrealistic expectations of the child behaviour. In this way, parents may seek to avoid separation that occurs when they expect things beyond the child's capability.

Research Methodology

3.1 Method of Data Collection

The researcher, with the help of three other assistants will administer and collect the questionnaire from the respondents. They will be trained on the objectives and methods of the study. These three persons must be literate with at least a minimum of tertiary education, either in process or completed. They must also be conversant with both languages of the people (Igbo language and English language) as well as the terrain of Emohua town. This is to ensure speed and accuracy.

3.2 Collection of primary data

The main source of primary data was the information obtained through oral interviews and personal contact with some of the adults residing within Emohua town.

3.3 Questionnaire

Questionnaire was the instrument for data collection in this study. The questionnaire is divided into two sections. Section "A" examined personal or demographic issues such as age, sex marital status, level of education, etc while section "B" focused on the main issues of the study.

3.4 Interview

Oral interviews and personal contact with some of the adults residing within Emohua town was conducted by the researcher

3.5 Observation

Observation is a systematic data collection approach. Researchers use all of their senses to examine people in natural settings or naturally occurring situations. The researcher was involved in participant observation in Emohua town.

3.5 Secondary sources of data

The main sources of secondary data were survey report, both published and unpublished materials from the journals, monographs, newspaper reports and other corporate bodies in various locations.

3.6 Sample and sampling techniques

The multi-stage cluster sampling was used in this study and this entails successive selection of community clusters, villages, housing units and respondents, will be employed. First, the communities will be grouped into two clusters A (Amapa, Ngbereka, Omohia, Mgbu Ika) and B (Ehio, Umudioga, Rumuekpe, and Omuabali). Stage two, five (5) communities will be selected from each community cluster using a simple random method as to allow communities in each cluster an equal probability of been chosen. Four (4) communities will be selected from each of the five chosen communities using

purposive method. This will make it twenty (20) communities in all. In each chosen community a sample of 5 villages will be selected using the purposive sampling technique.

Stage three involves selection of respondents in each village. In each selected village four (4) respondents will be selected using availability sampling method. This means anybody available that falls within the age range needed will then be selected and this makes the total number of respondents to be four hundred (400) respondents.

Method of data analysis

Data collected using the questionnaire will be carefully edited to ensure completeness, consistency and accuracy. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) will be used for the analysis. Specifically, descriptive statistics such as percentages, the frequency tables was used in describing the respondents while chi-square (χ^2), was be used to test all hypotheses.

Data reliability

The researcher carried out a pilot test on 25 adult residents in Obio-Akpor local government area of Rivers State as it has similar characteristics with the study area in terms of historical and socio-cultural backgrounds.

Limitations of the study

The study focused on impact of parental separation on the education of girl child in Emohua Local Government Area (LGA) of Rivers State. This covers parents' level of education, parental income, prompt school fees payment as well as effective strategies can be adopted in order to avoid or reduce parental separation tendencies.

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

This section deals with the presentation and analysis of data collected from the field. It is made up of three different sections. Section one analyzed the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Section two dealt with the discussion of specific/main issues of the study and test of hypotheses. The analysis was based on 120 questionnaires that were completely filled by the respondents consisting of 96.7% questionnaires completed by students.

4.2 Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by sex

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Male	18	15.0
Female	102	85.0
Total	120	100.0

Source: field survey 2017

Table 1 above shows distribution of respondents by sex. It shows that about 15.0% of the respondents were males while 85.0% were females. In summary, it can be seen that there were more females respondents (85.0%) than male's respondents.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by age group

Age group	Frequency	Percent
15-19	12	10.0
20-24	28	23.3
25-29	38	31.7
30-34	20	16.7
35-39	22	18.3
Total	120	100.0

Source: field survey 2017

Table 2 above shows distribution of respondents by age group. It shows that 10.0% of the respondents were between the age group of 15-19, 23.3% of the respondents were between 20-24 years, 31.7% were between 25 -29, 16.7% were between 30-34 and 18.3% were between 35-39 years. This shows that majority of the respondents (31.7%) were between the age group of 25-29 years.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents by age group

Age groups	Frequency	Percent
Younger	40	30.0
Older	80	70.0
Total	120	100.0

Source: field survey 2017

Table 3 above shows distribution of respondents by age group as recorded. Respondents whose age fall between 15-24 years were recorded as younger while those whose age fall within 25 -35 years and above were recorded as older. It shows that 30.0% of the respondents were younger and 70.0% were older. This shows that majority of the respondents (70.0%) were older.

Table 4: Distribution of respondents by age marital status

Marital status	Frequency	Percent
Single	16	13.3
Married	56	46.6
Divorced	31	26.0
Separated	7	14.1

Source: fieldwork 2017

Table 3 above shows distribution of respondents by marital status. It shows that 13.3% of the respondents were single, 46.7% of the respondents were married, 26.0% were of the respondents were divorced, 14.1% of the respondents were separated and 8.3% were widowed. This shows that majority of the respondents (46.6%) were married.

Table 5: Distribution of respondents by age marital status

Response	Frequency	Percent
Married	56	46.7
Unmarried	64	45.0

Total	120	100.0
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Source: fieldwork 2017

For the purpose of this study, marital status is recorded as follows: those who are single, divorced, separated and widowed were recorded as unmarried and other respondents were recorded as married. From the table above 46.7% were married while 45.0% were unmarried. This shows that majority of the respondents (46.7%) were married.

Table 6: Distribution of respondents by educational Qualification

Educational qualification	Frequency	Percent
No formal education	13	10.8
FSLC	21	17.5
SSCE	43	35.8
B.Sc	26	21.7
M.Sc	11	9.2
Ph.D	6	5.0
Total	120	100.0

Source: field survey 2017

Table 6 above shows distribution of respondents by educational qualification. It shows that about 10.8% of the respondents have no formal education, 17.5% have FSLC, 35.8% of the respondents have SSCE, 21.7% of the respondents have B.Sc, 9.2% of the respondents have M.Sc and 5.0% of the respondents have Ph.D. This shows that majority of the respondents (35.8%) have SSCE as their highest educational qualification.

Table 7: Distribution of respondents by educational Qualification

Educational qualification	Frequency	Percent
No formal education	13	10.8
Less educated	43	35.8
More educated	64	53.4
Total	120	100.0

Source: field survey 2017

For the purpose of this study, educational qualification is recoded as follows: respondents who have no formal education as no formal education and those with FSLC and SSCE were recorded as less educated and respondents who have B.Sc, M.Sc and Ph.D were recorded as more educated. From the table above, 10.8% has no formal education, 35.8% were less educated while 53.4% were more educated. This shows that majority of the respondents were more educated.

Table 8: Distribution of respondents by occupation

Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Unemployed	17	14.2
Farming	45	37.5
Trading	34	28.3
Student	15	12.5
Artisan	9	7.5
Total	120	100.0

Source: field survey 2017

Table 8 above shows distribution of respondents by occupation. It shows that 14.2% of the respondents were unemployed, 37.5% were farmers, 28.3% of the respondents were traders, 12.5% of the respondents were students and 7.5% were artisans. This shows that majority of the respondents (37.5%) were farmers.

Table 9: Distribution of respondents by religious affiliation

Religious affiliation	Frequency	Percent
Catholic	66	55.0
Anglican	32	26.7
Islam	9	7.5
African Traditional Religion	13	10.8
Total	120	100.0

Source: fieldwork 2017

Table 9 above shows distribution of respondents by religious affiliation. It shows that 55.0% of the respondents were Catholics, 26.7% were Anglicans, 7.5% of the respondents were Moslems while 10.8% of the respondents were adherents of African traditional religion. This shows that majority of the respondents (55.0%) were Catholics.

Table 10: Distribution of respondents on whether they have heard of parental separation

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	102	85.0
No	11	9.2
Cant say	7	5.8
Total	120	100.0

Source: fieldwork 2017

On whether they have heard of parental separation, Table 10 above shows that 85.0% of the respondents indicated that yes they have heard of parental separation while 9.2% of the respondents indicated no that they have not heard of parental separation and 5.8% indicated that they cannot say whether they have heard of parental separation or not. This shows that majority of the respondents (85.0%) indicated that they have heard of parental separation.

Table 11: Distribution of respondents on where they hear parental separation from

Source of information	Frequency	Percent
Couples	9	7.5
Friends	36	30.0
Newspapers	19	15.8
church/mosque	56	46.7
Total	120	100.0

Source: field survey 2017

On where they hear parental separation from, Table 11 above shows that 7.5% of the respondents indicated that they heard it from couples, 30.0% indicated friends, 15.8% of the respondents indicated that they heard it from newspapers, while 46.7% indicated that church/mosques. This shows that majority of the respondents (30.0%) indicated that they heard of parental separation from their churches/mosques.

Table 12: Distribution of respondents on how they perceive parental separation

Perception	Frequency	Percent
Really bad	9	7.5
Disastrous for child upbringing	22	18.3
Detrimental to the psychological well being of the couples	71	59.2
Detrimental to physical wellbeing of the couples involved	18	15.0
Total	120	100.0

Source: field survey 2017

On how they perceive parental separation, Table 12 above shows that 7.5% of the respondents perceive it as really bad, 18.3% of the respondents perceived it as disastrous for child upbringing, 59.2% perceived it as detrimental to the psychological well being of the couples, 15.0% perceived it as detrimental to physical wellbeing of the couples involved. This shows that majority of the respondents (59.2%) perceived it as detrimental to the psychological well being of the couples.

Table 13: Distribution of respondents on causes parental separation

Causes	Frequency	Percent
Interference from in-laws	8	6.7
Sexual unfaithfulness	9	7.5
Inability to meet family needs	18	15.0
Gender	16	13.3
Influence of Industrialization and urbanization	53	44.2
Communication Breakdown	16	13.3
Total	120	100.0

Source: field survey 2017

On causes of parental separation, Table 13 above shows that 6.7% of the respondents indicated interference from in-laws, 7.5% of the respondents indicated sexual unfaithfulness, 15.0% indicated inability to meet family needs, 13.3% indicated gender, 44.2% indicated influence of industrialization and urbanization and 13.3% indicated communication breakdown. This shows that majority of the respondents (44.2%) indicated industrialization and urbanization.

Table 14: Distribution of respondents on consequences parental separation do have on education of the girl child

Consequences	Frequency	Percent
Truancy	15	12.5
Diminished capacity to learn	9	7.5
Poor School Graduation for children	6	5.0

Class repetition	14	11.7
School drop out	76	63.3
Total	120	100.0

Source: field survey 2017

On consequences parental separation do have on education of the girl child, Table 14 above shows that 12.5% of the respondents indicated truancy, 7.5% of the respondents indicated diminished capacity to learn, 5.0% indicated poor school graduation for children, equally 11.7% of the respondents indicated class repetition and 63.3% indicated school drop out. This shows that majority of the respondents 63.3% indicated that consequences parental separation do have on education of the girl child is school dropout.

Table 15: Distribution of respondents on whether they have experienced marital separation

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	56	46.7
No	64	53.3
Total	120	100.0

Source: field survey 2017

On whether they have experienced marital separation, Table 15 above shows that 46.7% of the respondents indicated yes that they have experienced marital separation, 53.3% of the respondents indicated no they have not experienced marital separation. These shows that majority of the respondents 53.3% indicated that they have not experienced marital separation.

Table 16: Distribution of respondents on whether parents' level of education affects girlchild education from separated home

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	56	46.7
No	64	53.3
Cant say	-	-
Total	120	100.0

Source: field survey 2017

Table 16 above shows that 46.7% of the respondents indicated that yes they think that parents level of education affects girlchild education from separated home while 53.3% of the respondents indicated no that parents level of education does not affect girlchild education from separated home and 0.0% of the respondents indicated whether parents level of education affects girlchild education from separated home. This shows that majority of the respondents (53.3%) indicated that parents' level of education does not affects girlchild education from separated home

Table 17: Distribution of respondents on whether parental income affect girlchild education from separated home in Emohua LGA?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	95	79.2
No	14	11.7

Can't say	11	9.2
Total	120	100.0

Source: field survey 2017

On whether parental income has affected girlchild education from separated home in Emohua LGA, Table 17 above shows that 79.2% of the respondents indicated that yes that parental income has affected girlchild education from separated home while 11.7% of the respondents indicated no that parental income does not affect girlchild education from separated home in and 9.2% of the respondents indicated that they cannot say whether parental income has affect girlchild education from separated home. This shows that majority of the respondents (79.2%) indicated that parental income affect girlchild education from separated home in Emohua LGA.

Table 18: Distribution of respondents on whether girl child whose parents are separated more likely to drop out of school

Reasons	Frequency	Percent
Inability of single parent to meet with family needs	37	30.8
Inability of single parent to meet with financial needs of the family	18	15.0
Psychological trauma	15	12.5
Inability of single parent to cope with children school responsibilities	31	25.8
Poor attention to children education	12	10.0
Kind-hearted relatives can still enroll her in a school	7	5.8
Total	120	100.0

Source: field survey 2017

Respondents were asked to state their reasons why girl child whose parents are separated more or less likely to drop out of school, 30.8% of the respondents mentioned inability of single parent to meet with family needs, 15.0% mentioned inability of single parent to meet with financial needs of the family, 8.5% mentioned psychological trauma, 12.5% mentioned inability of a single parent to cope with children school responsibilities while 25.8% mentioned poor attention to children education 10.0% and 5.8% mentioned that philanthropic relatives can still enroll her in a school. Therefore, from the table above, majority of the respondents (30.8%) mentioned that inability of single parent to meet with family needs.

Table 19: Distribution of respondents on whether prompt school fees payment affect girlchild education from separated home in Emohua LGA

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	91	75.8
No	29	24.2
Cant say	-	-
Total	120	100.0

Source: field survey 2017

Table 19 above shows that 75.8% of the respondents indicated yes that prompt school fees payment affect girlchild education from separated home in Emohua LGA while 24.2% of the respondents indicated 'no' that prompt school fees payment does not affect girlchild education from separated

home in Emohua LGA and 10.3% of the respondents indicated that they cannot say whether prompt school fees payment affect girlchild education from separated home in Emohua LGA. This shows that majority of the respondents (75.8%) indicated that prompt school fees payment affect girlchild education from separated home in Emohua LGA.

Table 20: Distribution of respondents on whether girl child whose parents are separated are more likely to be involved in anti social behaviour

Reasons	Frequency	Percent
Environment to which the child is exposed to	15	12.5
Lifestyle to which the child is exposed to	22	18.3
Lack of parental care	16	13.3
Poor socialization	17	14.2
Inadequate parental counselling	50	41.7
Total	120	100.0

Source: field survey 2017

On whether girl child whose parents are separated are more likely to be involved in anti social behaviour, Table 20 shows that 12.5% of the respondents mentioned environment to which the child is exposed to, 18.3% mentioned lifestyle to which the child is exposed to, 13.3% mentioned lack of parental care, 14.2% poor socialization and 41.7% mentioned inadequate parental counseling. Therefore, from the table above majority of the respondents (41.7%) mentioned inadequate parental counseling.

Table 21: Distribution of respondents on what they think can be done to curb parental separation

Measures	Frequency	Percent
Seminars on marital fidelity	19	15.8
Legislation against parental separation	17	14.2
Encouraging regular communication	16	13.3
Provision of material needs of the couples	67	55.8
Encouraging sexual compatibility of the couples	1	.8
Total	120	100.0

Source: field survey 2017

On what they think can be done to curb parental separation, 15.8% of the respondents mentioned seminars on marital fidelity, 14.2% mentioned legislation against parental separation, 13.3% mentioned encouraging regular communication, 55.8% indicated provision of material needs of the couples and 0.8% of the respondents mentioned encouraging sexual compatibility of the couples. From the Table above, majority of the respondents mentioned provision of material needs of the couples as a way to curb parental separation.

4.2.1 Evaluation of Hypothesis one

Substantive hypothesis: Respondents with higher education are more likely to perceive that girl child from separated homes are more likely to drop out from school.

Significant Level: A significance level (α) of 0.05 was used in testing this hypothesis.

Decision Rule: The decision rule states that if $p \leq .05$ reject the null hypothesis (H_0), but if $p > .05$, accept the null hypothesis.

Table 22: Cross-tabulation of respondents' educational status and perceived notion of girl child likelihood to drop out of school

Respondents educational status	Dropping out of school		Total
	Yes	No	
No formal education	13(100.0%)	0(0.0%)	13(100.0%)
Less educated	39(60.9%)	25(39.1%)	64(100.0%)
More educated	43(100.0%)	0(0.0%)	43(100.0%)
Total	95(79.2%)	25(20.8%)	120(100.0%)

$$\chi^2 = (N=120), 27.632; df=2, p<.000, \text{critical value}=5.991$$

Source: field survey 2017

Table 22 presents data on which hypothesis one is tested. To test the hypothesis, educational status of respondents (question 4) was cross-tabulated with respondent perception on girl child dropping out of school (question 15). Educational qualification of the respondents as presented in section A of the questionnaire was re-coded as follows; all those who have no formal education were recorded as no formal education, "FSLC" and "SSCE" were re-coded as "uneducated respondents" while all those who have "B.Sc", "M.Sc" and "Ph.D" were re-coded as "educated respondents". Also respondents who said "can't say" were also recorded as "no". Respondents were grouped into three, respondents with no formal education, uneducated respondents and educated respondents.

The result shows that those respondents who had no formal education (100.0%) and those who are more educated (100.0%) affirmed that girl child from separated homes are more likely to drop out of school. On the other hand, of all those who are less educated (60.9%) affirmed that girl child separated homes are more likely to drop out of school while 39.1% did not agree that girl child from separated homes are more likely to drop out from school.

However, with the computed $\chi^2 = 27.632$; $df=2$, and critical χ^2 value of 5.991, the test shows that there is a statistically significant relationship ($P<.000$) between educational status of respondents and their perceived notion that girl child from separated homes are likely to drop out of school. Therefore, the substantive hypothesis which states that respondents with higher education are more likely to perceive that girl children from separated homes are more likely to drop out of school is hereby upheld. As a result, the null hypothesis which states that respondents with higher education are less likely to perceive that girl children from separated homes are less likely to drop out of school than those from intact homes is hereby rejected.

4.2.1 Evaluation of Hypothesis two

Substantive hypothesis: Respondents who are older are more likely to perceive that children from separated homes experience grade repetition than younger respondents

Significant Level: A significance level (α) of 0.05 was used in testing this hypothesis.

Decision Rule: The decision rule states that if $p \leq .05$ reject the null hypothesis (H_0), but if $p > .05$, accept the null hypothesis.

Table 23: Crosstabulation of age and perception of girl child likelihood to drop out of school

Age	Perception		Total
	Yes	No	
Younger	2(5.0%)	38(95.0%)	40(100.0%)
Older	54(67.5%)	26(32.5%)	80(100.0%)
Total	56(46.7%)	64(53.3%)	120(100.0%)

$$\chi^2 = (N=120), 41.853; df=1, p<.000, \text{critical value}=3.841$$

Source: field survey 2017

Table 23 presents data on which hypothesis two is tested. To test the hypothesis, age of respondents as presented in section A of the questionnaire was cross tabulated with perception of children from separated homes experience grade repetition as presented also in section B of the questionnaire. The result shows that of all those who are younger 5.0% perceive that children from separated homes experience grade repetition than older respondents, 95.0% perceive that children from separated homes do not experience grade repetition than older respondents. On the other hand, of all those who are older 67.5% perceive that children from separated homes experience grade repetition while 32.5% do not perceive that children from separated homes experience grade repetition.

However, with the computed $\chi^2 = 41.853$; $df=1$, and critical χ^2 value of 3.841, the test shows that there is a statistically significant relationship ($P<.000$) between age and perception of children from separated homes, experience grade repetition. Therefore, the substantive hypothesis which states that respondents who are older are more likely to perceive that children from separated homes experience grade repetition than younger respondents is hereby upheld. As a result, the null hypothesis which states that respondents who are older are less likely to perceive that children from separated homes experience grade repetition than younger respondents is hereby rejected.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

This study sought to ascertain impact of parental separation on the education of girl child using Emohua Local Government Area (LGA) of Rivers State as the study area. Parental separation, impacts the young people's behaviour in the school environment, peer group and even in the society at large. The family structure is altered and thus affected. Girl-child facing problems of parental separation seem to have more difficult time with academic and social expectations at schools (Bowling, 2005). The girl child most often is burdened with the household chores and look after the younger ones.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings the following recommendations were made:

1. Parents should show adequate parental care to their children.
2. Parents should ensure that students school fees should be promptly paid.
3. Seminars and conferences should be organized to sensitize parents on the need for adequate education.
4. Government and NGOs should organized enlightenment campaign on dangers of parental separation.

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