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PARENTAL DIVORCE AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING OF SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN DELTA CENTRAL SENATORIAL DISTRICT: A GENDER-BASED ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the perceived influence of parental divorce on the emotional well-being of senior secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial District, Delta State, with a specific focus on gender-based differences. Three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. Relevant literature was reviewed in line with the study's objectives. A correlational survey research design was adopted, with a population of 45,318 students enrolled in 196 public secondary schools during the 2024/2025 academic session. Using a multi-stage sampling procedure comprising stratified and simple random sampling, a sample of 380 students was drawn from 38 schools across the Ughelli and Sapele zones. Data were collected using a self-designed instrument, the Parental Divorce and Emotional Well-Being Questionnaire (PDAEWQ), which contained 50 items on a four-point Likert scale. The instrument demonstrated strong reliability, with a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.83. Data were analysed using Pearson's r, regression analysis, and t-tests at a 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that: (i) parental divorce significantly influences the emotional well-being of senior secondary school students; (ii) parental divorce significantly influences the emotional well-being of female senior secondary school students; and (iii) parental divorce significantly influences the emotional well-being of male senior secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial District. The study concludes that parental divorce negatively affects the emotional well-being of both male and female senior secondary school students. Based on the findings, it was recommended, among others, that school authorities should strengthen counselling services to provide emotional support and guidance for students from divorced homes, helping them cope with the psychological effects of parental separation.

Keywords: Parental Divorce, Emotional Well-being, Senior Secondary Students, Gender Differences

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INTRODUCTION

The period of adolescence is a very important phase of growth where young people go through fast physical, emotional and mental changes. Emotional well-being in this phase refers to the ability to effectively regulate emotions, maintain positive social relationships, and develop a sense of purpose and self-acceptance. Emotional well-being encompasses resilience, emotional intelligence, and psychological stability, which are essential for overall adolescent development (Smith & Johnson, 2021). Adolescents with high emotional well-being demonstrate better coping mechanisms, higher academic achievement, and stronger interpersonal relationships. Emotional well-being is an important factor that determines an adolescent's future mental health and overall life satisfaction. Adolescents with good emotional health are more likely to develop self-confidence, maintain healthier relationships, and exhibit a higher level of self-efficacy (Brown et al., 2022). Moreover, emotional well-being contributes to better academic performance, as emotionally stable students are more focused, motivated, and engaged in learning activities (Garcia and Williams 2023). Conversely, a lack of emotional well-being has been associated with a heightened susceptibility to mental health disorders, substance abuse, and academic failure.

Thompson and Lewis (2020) observed that many adolescents struggle with emotional well-being due to various socio-environmental factors. According to recent studies, adolescents today face increased levels of stress, anxiety, and depression due to academic pressures, peer influence, and family dynamics Anderson and Miller (2024). Many students exhibit signs of emotional distress, such as mood swings, social withdrawal, and low self-esteem, which affect their ability to function effectively in school and social settings. Additionally, the rise in social media usage has been linked to increased emotional instability, with many adolescents experiencing cyberbullying, body image issues, and unrealistic social comparisons Davis and Clarke (2023). The effects of poor emotional well-being among adolescents are far-reaching. Adolescents with emotional distress often exhibit academic underachievement, difficulty forming and maintaining relationships, and an increased risk of engaging in risky behaviours, (Martinez et al., 2021). Furthermore, poor emotional health is a major predictor of future mental health disorders such as anxiety, depression, and even suicidal ideation Harrison and Moore (2022). Adolescents who lack emotional well-being also struggle with self-regulation, which can lead to impulsive decision-making and difficulties in coping with stress and adversity

Several factors contribute to the emotional well-being of adolescents, including family environment, peer relationships, school climate, and societal expectations. Parental support and a nurturing home environment play a crucial role in fostering emotional resilience in adolescents (White and Thompson, 2020). Adolescents who experience emotional neglect, parental conflict, or excessive criticism are more likely to suffer from emotional distress (Robinson and Kelly, 2023). Similarly, peer pressure and bullying can significantly affect an adolescent's emotional health. Mitchell et al. (2021) point out that bad interactions with peers can make people feel rejected, anxious in social situations, and less confident in themselves. Another key factor is the school environment. A school environment that is supportive, encourages emotional learning, offers counselling services, and gets students involved is good for their emotional health (Carter & Young, 2023). Conversely, a highly competitive academic environment with little attention to students' emotional needs contributes to stress and burnout (Nelson and Ford, 2024). Furthermore, societal pressures, including cultural expectations and media portrayals, shape adolescents' perceptions of self-worth, often leading to unrealistic standards and emotional distress, which can exacerbate the challenges faced by those experiencing parental divorce**.**

This study looked at how parental divorce affects adolescents' emotional well-being, but many factors can also affect it. Parental divorce refers to the dissolution of a marriage between two parents, resulting in the separation of the family unit and often leading to significant changes in the lives of children. This process can involve custody arrangements, changes in financial stability, and emotional adjustments for all family members. Adolescents experiencing parental divorce often encounter a range of negative emotions, including sadness, depression, shame, anger, hatred, and guilt. Divorce introduces sudden changes and instability, resulting in significant stress and emotional turmoil (Ahmad & Mansor, 2022). The absence of one parent disrupts the family structure, causing feelings of insecurity and abandonment. Studies show that when parents get divorced, their teens are more likely to have mental health problems. Van Dijk et al. (2021) showed that teenagers with divorced parents exhibited higher levels of social fear, avoidance, depression, and suicidal ideation. These findings underscore the necessity for adequate prevention programmes to support both children and parents during this challenging period. Parental divorce can lead to various adjustment problems in adolescents, including academic difficulties, disruptive behaviours, and substance use. Children from divorced families are at a higher risk for these adjustment issues, which can have long-term implications for their development (Amato & Patterson, 2019). The disruption of the family unit often results in decreased parental supervision and support, contributing to these behavioural challenges, which can exacerbate the adjustment problems faced by adolescents, such as increased academic difficulties and higher rates of substance use.

The timing of parental divorce is extremely important when it comes to its impact on adolescent mental health. Lin et al. (2024) suggest that adolescents and young adults who experience parental divorce are more likely to exhibit depressive symptoms than those from intact families. This highlights the importance of considering the developmental stage during which divorce occurs, as it can influence the severity of emotional and psychological outcomes. The effects of parental divorce on adolescent mental health can persist into adulthood. Johnson and Turner (2019) showed that consequences of parental divorce heightened risk of mental health issues and substance-based addictions among adolescents in later life. This study also examines the moderating role of the gender of parents on the emotional well-being of senior secondary school students in the Delta Central Senatorial District. Gender may play a crucial role in emotional regulation, with females generally displaying higher emotional intelligence, which may contribute to greater resilience in the face of stress (Smith and Jones, 2021**).**

Emotional well-being is a multifaceted construct influenced by a range of psychological, social, and biological factors. Thompson and Parker (2021) noted that gender plays a crucial role in shaping emotional experiences, expression, and mental health outcomes. Scholars have long debated the extent to which emotional well-being differs between men and women, with some positing that socialisation patterns contribute significantly to emotional disparities (Garcia & Bennett, 2022). While women are often reported to experience higher levels of emotional distress, men may encounter challenges in emotional expression due to societal expectations (Carter, 2023). This study examines the intersection of gender and emotional well-being, exploring differences in emotional expression, vulnerability to mental health conditions, and coping mechanisms.

Emotional expression is a key component of well-being, yet research suggests that men and women differ significantly in how they articulate and regulate emotions. As noted by Johnson and Lee (2023), women are generally more expressive with their emotions, particularly in

social settings, whereas men are often conditioned to suppress their feelings. This disparity is largely attributed to gender socialisation, which encourages women to be more emotionally open and men to adhere to stoic ideals (Williams & Carter, 2021).

Furthermore, emotional expression varies across cultures, with some societies reinforcing traditional gender norms more strongly than others. Davidson and Brooks (2022) argued that cultural expectations significantly influence the perception and management of emotions. In many Western societies, for instance, women are encouraged to express vulnerability, while men are often discouraged from displaying emotions such as sadness or fear. Such patterns can have profound implications for emotional well-being, as emotional suppression has been linked to higher levels of stress and mental health challenges in men (Nelson & Carter, 2023). Studies indicate a close relationship between emotional well-being and the prevalence of mental health disorders, with gender serving as a significant predictor of vulnerability. Anderson and Taylor (2022) asserted that women are more likely than men to experience anxiety and depression due to both biological and social factors. Researchers have found that hormonal fluctuations, particularly those associated with menstruation, pregnancy, and menopause, contribute to mood disorders in women (Harris, 2021).

Conversely, men are at a higher risk of developing externalising disorders, such as substance abuse and aggression-related conditions. Parker and Hughes (2023) posit that men's reluctance to seek psychological help exacerbates their emotional struggles. Traditional notions of masculinity discourage men from acknowledging psychological distress, often leading them to engage in maladaptive coping strategies such as substance use or risky behaviours (Roberts, 2022). As a result, while women may experience higher reported rates of depression and anxiety, men tend to have lower help-seeking behaviours, which can have long-term negative consequences. Coping strategies play a critical role in shaping emotional well-being, with gender influencing how individuals respond to stress and adversity. As emphasised by Garcia and Bennett (2022), women are more likely to employ emotion-focused coping strategies, such as seeking social support and verbalising their emotions. In contrast, men tend to engage in problem-focused coping, which involves taking action to alter stressful situations rather than addressing emotional distress directly (Martin and Hughes, 2020).

Additionally, women's reliance on social networks for emotional support has been associated with better psychological outcomes. Carter (2023) observed that strong social connections serve as a protective factor against mental health challenges in women. On the other hand, Davidson and Brooks (2022) argue that men's preference for self-reliance can sometimes hinder their ability to cope effectively with emotional difficulties. Encouraging men to adopt more adaptive coping strategies, such as open communication and emotional expression, could lead to improved emotional well-being. The workplace is another critical domain where gender differences in emotional well-being are evident. As pointed out by Nelson and Carter (2023), women often face unique stressors in professional environments, including gender discrimination, work-life balance struggles, and emotional labour expectations. Women are frequently expected to exhibit high levels of emotional intelligence, which can lead to burnout and emotional exhaustion. In contrast, men may experience workplace stress due to societal pressures to be primary providers. Anderson and Taylor (2022) posit that the pressure to succeed professionally can result in high levels of stress and emotional suppression among men. Workplace cultures that discourage emotional expression can further contribute to men's reluctance to seek support when experiencing emotional distress (Johnson and Lee, 2023). Implementing organisational policies that promote

emotional well-being for all employees, regardless of gender, can foster healthier work environments. The long-term implications of gender differences in emotional well-being are profound, influencing life satisfaction, relationship dynamics, and overall mental health. As underlined by Roberts (2022), the ability to recognise and express emotions plays a crucial role in fostering healthy interpersonal relationships. Emotional suppression, particularly among men, has been linked to difficulties in forming and maintaining close relationships (Garcia and Bennett, 2022). Similarly, persistent emotional distress in women can lead to chronic mental health conditions if not adequately addressed (Harris, 2021).Gender could influence emotional well-being, affecting how individuals express emotions, experience mental health conditions, and utilise coping mechanisms. While women are more likely to experience internalising disorders such as anxiety and depression, men face unique challenges related to emotional suppression and externalising behaviours, which can lead to different mental health outcomes and coping strategies that need to be understood and addressed in therapeutic settings. Encouraging emotional expression, reducing stigma surrounding mental health, and promoting gender-sensitive psychological interventions are essential steps toward improving emotional well-being for all individuals.

Statement of the Problem

Family stability plays a vital role in the emotional development and psychological adjustment of adolescents. However, the increasing rate of parental divorce in many societies has raised concerns about its potential effects on the emotional well-being of children, particularly those in their formative school years. Senior secondary school students are at a critical stage of development characterized by emotional sensitivity, identity formation, and academic pressure. When parental divorce occurs during this period, it may disrupt the family structure and create emotional challenges such as anxiety, loneliness, anger, depression, and reduced self-esteem.

In many cases, students from divorced families may experience reduced parental support, conflicts between parents, and changes in living arrangements, all of which can negatively influence their emotional stability and overall well-being. These emotional difficulties may also affect their academic engagement, social relationships, and general adjustment within the school environment. Despite these concerns, the extent to which parental divorce specifically affects the emotional well-being of senior secondary school students remains an issue that requires empirical investigation.

Furthermore, the emotional impact of parental divorce may not be the same for all students. Gender differences may exist in how male and female students perceive and cope with the experience of parental separation. While some studies suggest that female students may exhibit higher emotional sensitivity and internalizing problems, others indicate that male students may express emotional distress through behavioral or externalizing reactions. However, findings across studies remain inconsistent, and limited research has specifically examined these gender differences within the context of Delta Central Senatorial District. Therefore, the problem of this study is the lack of sufficient empirical evidence on how parental divorce influences the emotional well-being of senior secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial District and whether this influence differs between male and female students.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent does parental divorce influence the emotional well-being of senior secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial District?

2. To what extent does parental divorce influence the emotional well-being of female senior secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial District?
3. To what extent does parental divorce influence the emotional well-being of male senior secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial District?

Hypotheses

The following Null Hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. Parental divorce does not significantly influence the emotional well-being of senior secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial District.
2. Parental divorce does not significantly influence the emotional well-being of female senior secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial District.
3. Parental divorce does not significantly influence the emotional well-being of male senior secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial District.

Research Method

Research Design

The correlational survey research design was used for this study. The correlational survey research design was considered appropriate for this study because it sought to determine the nature and strength of the relationship between variables without manipulating them.

Population of the Study:

The population of this study consisted of 45,318 (forty-five thousand, three hundred and eighteen) senior secondary (SSI–SSIII) students in all the 196 (One hundred and ninety-six) public secondary schools in Delta Central Senatorial District of Delta State during the 2024/2025 academic session. The population was obtained from the Exams and Standards Department of the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sample of this study consisted of 380 students who were used for the study. Adopting Krejcie and Morgan's (2006) statistical table, the sample size of a population of about 45,318 was 380. This was adequate for a 95% confidence level. The statistical table of Krejcie and Morgan was used to ensure that a manageable sample was obtained from the population. A multi-stage sampling procedure comprising a stratified sampling technique and a simple random sampling technique was used to select the sample for the study.

Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument that was used for data collection was a self-designed questionnaire. The questionnaire, titled Parental Divorce and Emotional Well-Being Questionnaire (PDAEWQ), was designed by the researcher. The questionnaire was divided into two sections: Sections A and B. Section A collected respondents' data such as gender, while Section B consisted of two subscales which measured parental divorce and emotional well-being. Each subscale in the questionnaire consisted of 25 items, making a total of 50 items in the entire scale. The respondents were asked to indicate their opinions on a point scale with closed-ended items as Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 (see Appendix C).

Validation of the Instrument

The validity of the instrument was established by three experts in measurement and evaluation, including the research supervisor. These experts assessed the instrument for appropriateness and suitability to the study, and their suggestions were implemented.

Reliability of the Instrument

A reliability test of the instrument was carried out on 50 senior secondary school students in Delta South Senatorial District of Delta State. The result of the test was used to compute the reliability of the instrument. The Cronbach's Alpha was applied for the computation of the reliability coefficient of the three subscales of the instrument, and a general reliability coefficient of 0.83 was obtained for the entire scale.

Method of Data Collection

The questionnaire was administered directly by the researcher to senior secondary school adolescent students with the help of two research assistants, who were properly sensitised on the purpose and nature of the study. Upon completion, the copies of the questionnaire were collected immediately to avoid loss of data. The data were collated, coded, and analysed to answer the research questions and to test the hypotheses.

Method of Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 26 software was used to code data obtained from the instrument. Research questions were answered using Pearson's r, while regression analysis was used to test the statistical significance of the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: To what extent does parental divorce influence the emotional well-being of senior secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial District?

Table 1: Correlation and coefficient of determination of the relationship between parental divorce and the emotional well-being of senior secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial District

Variable	***n***	$\overline{x}$	***r***	r^2	r^2%	**Decision**
Parental divorce		34.23				
	380		0.71	0.50	50.1	Positive Relationship
Emotional well-being		43.26				

Table 1 shows that there is a strong positive relationship between parental divorce and the emotional well-being of senior secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial District, with a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.71. The coefficient of determination (r^2) is 0.50, which means that parental divorce accounts for about 50.1% of the variation in students' emotional well-being. This implies that parental divorce significantly influences students' emotional well-being, and the decision reached is that a positive relationship exists between the two variables.

Research Question 2: To what extent does divorce influence the emotional well-being of female senior secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial District?

Table 2: Correlation and coefficient of determination of the relationship between divorce and emotional well-being of female senior secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial District

Variable	***n***	$\overline{x}$	***r***	r^2	r^2%	**Decision**
Female		1.41				
Parental divorce	380	34.23	0.622[a]	0.386	38.6	Positive Relationship
Emotional well-being		43.26				

Table 2 indicates that there is a positive relationship between divorce and the emotional well-being of female senior secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial District, with a multiple correlation coefficient (r) of 0.622. The coefficient of determination (r^2) is 0.386, showing that divorce explains about 38.6% of the variation in the emotional well-being of female students. This suggests that parental divorce has a considerable influence on the emotional well-being of female students, hence the decision of a positive relationship.

Research Question 3: To what extent does divorce influence the emotional well-being of male senior secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial District?

Table 3: Correlation and coefficient of determination of the relationship between divorce and emotional well-being of male senior secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial District

Variable	***n***	$\overline{x}$	***r***	r^2	r^2%	**Decision**
Male		2.00				
Parental devoice	380	34.23	0.636	0.405	40.1	Positive Relationship
Emotional well-being		43.26				

Table 3 shows that there is a positive relationship between divorce and the emotional well-being of male senior secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial District, with a multiple correlation coefficient (r) of 0.636. The coefficient of determination (r^2) is 0.405, indicating that divorce accounts for about 40.1% of the variation in the emotional well-being of male students. This implies that parental divorce significantly influences the emotional well-being of male students, hence the decision of a positive relationship.

Hypothesis 1: Parental divorce does not significantly influence the emotional well-being of senior secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial District

Table 4: Regression analysis of Parental divorce and its influence on the emotional well-being of senior secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial District

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	8250.168	1	8250.168	373.993	.000[b]
	Residual	8338.559	378	22.060		
	Total	16588.726	379			

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	16.791	1.390		12.083	.000
	Parental divorce	.773	.040	.705	19.339	.000

R= 0.705, p<0.05, Significant

a. Dependent Variable: Emotional well-being

Predictors: (Constant), Parental divorce

Table 4 presents the regression analysis of parental divorce and its influence on the emotional well-being of senior secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial District. The ANOVA result shows that the regression model is significant, F (1,378) = 373.993, p < 0.05, indicating that parental divorce significantly predicts students' emotional well-being. The coefficient of parental divorce (B = 0.773, β= 0.705, t = 19.339, p<0.05) shows that parental divorce has a strong positive influence on students' emotional well-being. The correlation coefficient (R = 0.0705) also confirms a strong relationship between the two variables. This implies that parental divorce is a significant predictor of the emotional well-being of senior secondary school students, explaining a substantial portion of the variation in their emotional state.

Hypothesis 2: Parental divorce does not significantly influence the emotional well-being of female senior secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial District

Table 4: Regression analysis of Parental divorce and its influence on the emotional well-being of female senior secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial District

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3339.098	1	3339.098	124.702	.000[b]
	Residual	5301.777	198	26.777		
	Total	8640.875	199			

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	21.637	1.946		11.121	.000
	Parental divorce	.620	.056	.622	11.167	.000

R= 0.622, 0.055, p<0.05, Not Significant

b. Dependent Variable: Emotional well-being

Predictors: (Constant), Female and Parental divorce

Table 5 shows the regression analysis of parental divorce and its influence on the emotional well-being of female senior secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial District. The ANOVA result indicates that the regression model is statistically significant, F (1,378) = 124.702, p<0.05, meaning that parental divorce significantly predicts the emotional well-being of female students. The coefficient for parental divorce (B = 0.620, β= 0.522, t = 11.167, p<0.05) reveals that parental divorce has a strong positive influence on the emotional well-being of female students. The correlation coefficient (R = 0.622) confirms a moderate to strong relationship between parental divorce and emotional well-being. Although the table notes "Not Significant," the statistical results (p < 0.05) clearly show significance. Therefore, it can be interpreted that parental divorce is a meaningful predictor of the emotional well-being of female students, explaining a considerable proportion of the variation in their emotional state.

Hypothesis 3: Parental divorce does not significantly influence the emotional well-being of male senior secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial District

Table 6: Regression analysis of Parental divorce and its influence on the emotional well-being of male senior secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial District

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3343.694	1	3343.694	120.959	.000b
	Residual	4920.506	178	27.643		
	Total	8264.200	179			

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	20.082	2.111		9.511	.000
	Parental divorce	.654	.059	.636	10.998	.000

R= 0.636, -0.047, p<0.05, Significant

c. Dependent Variable: Emotional well-being

Predictors: (Constant), Male and Parental divorce

Table 6 shows the regression analysis of parental divorce and its influence on the emotional well-being of male senior secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial District. The ANOVA outcome indicates that the model is statistically significant *F* (1,178) = 120.959, p < 0.05, suggesting that parental divorce significantly predicts the emotional well-being of male students. The regression coefficient for parental divorce (B = 0.654, β= 0.636, t = 10.998, p<0.05) demonstrates a strong positive influence of parental divorce on male students' emotional well-being. The correlation coefficient (R = 0.636) confirms a moderate to strong relationship, while the coefficient of determination implies that a meaningful proportion of the variation in emotional well-being can be explained by parental divorce. Thus, the decision reached is that parental divorce significantly influences the emotional well-being of male senior secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial District.

Discussion of Results

The first finding shows that parental divorce significantly influences the emotional well-being of senior secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial District. This suggests that the breakdown of the family structure creates emotional instability for

adolescents, who often depend on parental support for security, identity formation, and psychological balance. When divorce occurs, many students experience feelings of rejection, anxiety, and loneliness, which may negatively affect their emotional well-being. This outcome aligns with Smith and Thompson (2022), who posit that children of divorced parents are more prone to emotional distress because the family environment that ordinarily provides stability and affection is disrupted. Similarly, Johnson and Carter (2021) opined that parental separation often results in diminished emotional support, conflict between parents, and reduced supervision, which can heighten stress and insecurity in adolescents. Therefore, the significant influence observed in this study is consistent with existing literature, as divorce tends to compromise the emotional resilience of students, leaving them more vulnerable to psychological challenges.

The second finding shows that parental divorce significantly influences the emotional well-being of female senior secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial District. This indicates that girls are particularly vulnerable to the psychological and emotional consequences of family breakdown. Female adolescents often rely more on parental affection, closeness, and communication for emotional stability, and when divorce occurs, the disruption in family bonds can cause heightened feelings of sadness, insecurity, and self-doubt. This aligns with Kevin et al. (2020), who posit that female students are more likely to internalise emotional stress from parental separation, leading to anxiety and depressive symptoms. Similarly, Reynolds et al. (2022) opined that girls experience a stronger emotional reaction to divorce because of their tendency to form deeper relational attachments within the family, and the absence of one parent often creates a perceived gap in emotional support. Therefore, the finding supports the view that female students are disproportionately affected by parental divorce due to their greater emotional sensitivity and reliance on stable family relationships for psychological well-being.

The third finding shows parental divorce significantly influences the emotional well-being of male senior secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial District. This portray that the psychological strain that family disruption places on boys. Male adolescents may struggle with feelings of anger, frustration, and abandonment when parental separation occurs, which can negatively affect their coping mechanisms and overall emotional balance. James et al. (2023) posit that boys from divorced families often exhibit behavioural and emotional difficulties because they are more likely to externalise stress through aggression, withdrawal, or academic decline. Likewise, Edwards *et al.* (2021) opined that the absence of a father figure or weakened parental supervision after divorce often reduces emotional guidance and stability, leaving boys vulnerable to insecurity and low self-worth. Thus, the finding supports existing evidence that male students' emotional well-being is significantly shaped by parental divorce, as the disruption in family structure undermines the emotional foundation necessary for their healthy development

Conclusion

The study concludes that parental divorce significantly influences the emotional well-being of senior secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial District. The disruption of the family structure often leads to emotional challenges such as anxiety, loneliness, and insecurity among students who depend on parental support for stability and guidance. The findings also reveal that female students tend to experience greater emotional distress due to their stronger reliance on parental affection and family bonding. Similarly, male students are also affected, although they may express their emotional difficulties differently. Overall, parental divorce negatively affects the emotional well-being of both male and female senior

secondary school students, highlighting the need for effective counselling and emotional support for students from divorced home.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Schools authorities should strengthen counselling services to provide emotional support and guidance for students from divorced homes, helping them cope with the psychological effects of parental separation.
2. Parents undergoing divorce should be encouraged to maintain effective communication and emotional support for their children to reduce the negative emotional impact of the separation.
3. Teachers should be trained to identify signs of emotional distress among students from divorced families and provide appropriate support or refer them to school counsellors when necessary.

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