

“Running Head”: AFFECTS OF DIVORCE ON THE CHILD

The Price of Divorce

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## Table of Contents

Abstract .....	3
Chapter I: Introduction.....	4
Problem Statement.....	4
Elements of the Problem.....	4
Purpose of the Study.....	5
Definition of Terms.....	5
Research Question.....	5
Chapter II: Literature Review.....	6
Chapter III: Methodology.....	13
Chapter IV: Results of Data Analysis.....	17
Data Analysis.....	17
Chapter V: Summary, Conclusions & Recommendations.....	33
References.....	36
Appendix A Human Subject Approval Letter.....	38
Appendix B Informed Consent Form.....	39
Appendix C Acknowledgement and	40

Consent.....	
Appendix D Survey.....	41

### Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of divorce on student's academic achievement. Whitehead (1997) states, at the beginning of the twentieth century, there were only three divorces for every 1,000 marriages. Through the years, the divorce rate in America has rapidly increased which has affected adults and children. The Statistical Abstract of the United States (1999) and (1990) report, in 1996, the divorce rate among married women was 19.5, which is more than double the divorce rate of 9.2 in 1960. Also, the Statistical Abstract of the United State (1998) and (1985) state, in 1990, over one million children were involved in divorce, which is more than double the number in 1960. In addition, the National Marriage Project (1999) reported, over half of all marriages are likely to end in divorce, based upon projections of current divorce rates. Furthermore, this researcher identified how children of this matter are affected in schools. The researcher examined to what extent teachers agreed or disagreed with the review of literature. A review of the literature addressed the effect divorce has on children both academically and socially concentrating on the areas of economics, emotions and academics. The respondents in the study agreed with the literature that divorce affects student's academic achievement in the area of economics, emotions and academics. However, the results showed that teachers' did agree in with all of the data. In order to provide

assistance in the classroom, it is imperative that educators recognize patterns of changing behavior and pay close attention to academic performance. Although the vast majority accepts divorce, it has been reported that divorce has a negative affect on children's academic achievement.

## Chapter I: Introduction

### Problem Statement

The relationship between divorce and students' academic achievement is a growing phenomenon for researchers and educators. Divorce is becoming a common trend in marriages, therefore, it is necessary that ongoing investigations be conducted to examine the impact divorce has on students' academic achievement. Divorce is a complicated process affecting adults and children. The work of Wallerstein and Kelly (1980) suggests that children, at every age, are affected by divorce, although their reactions differ. The researchers assert that, on average, children of divorce experience more behavior problems and more symptoms of psychological maladjustment. Furthermore, these researchers claim that children of divorce exhibit lower academic achievement; more social difficulties; poorer self-concepts; and more problematic relationships with both mothers and fathers, compared with children who come from two-parent families. Consequently, it is important to address the various factors, to which divorce attributes, and to examine the effects divorce has on students' academic achievement.

## Elements of the Problem

In today's society, divorce is becoming more and more common and is continuing to create a negative impact on adults and children. Cherlin et al. (1991) and Shaw (1991) state, according to local trends, it is likely that 40% of marriages will end in divorce. Runyon and Jackson, (1988) assert, each year, more than one million American youngsters are entangled in parental divorce. According to Cherline, Moreland, & Schwebel, (1983); Shaw conservative estimates indicated that two out of five divorces will involve children. Kurtz & Derevensky (1993) state that as much as 70% of marital ruptures will encompass young ones. Children can attempt to cope with the changes in their lives; however, their lives will forever be disrupted. Thus, teachers must pay close attention to the students' changes in behavior, emotions or academics. This researcher investigated and described the effect divorce has on students' academic achievement. This research drew on the literature and data that will be presented as supportive evidence the impact divorce has on students' academic achievement. Also, these constructs and sub-constructs were measured to determine how they may contribute to academic achievement. The constructs were the following:

1. Economics: decreased funds, less food, socialization, and decreased self-motivation
2. Emotions: aggression, anger, fear, depression loneliness, sadness.
3. Academics: lower grades, relocation, increased absences, increased drop out

## Purpose of Study

This researcher's purpose for conducting this quantitative research was to determine to what extent the teachers agreed or disagreed with the findings that are presented in the review of literature. Therefore, this researcher extended on previous research to explain the impact divorce has on student's academic achievement.

## Definition of Terms

In the spirit of all concerned, in this study, the use of all terms is consistent with denotative and connotative meaning.

### Research Question

Based on the study of previous research, there are sets of interrelated *variables* of *constructs* that indicate that divorce affects students' academic achievement. Therefore, this researcher's primary research question was: "To what extent do the teachers agree or disagree with the findings that are presented in the review of literature?" Due to the research question, this researcher does not have to include a hypothesis.

## Chapter II: Review of Literature

### Literature Review

This researcher reviewed the literature of several previous researchers who have studied the effect divorce can have on academic achievement of adolescent students. Furthermore, the researchers have provided useful information regarding the implications divorce has on children.

### Economics

#### *Decrease Funds*

Divorce is a stressful event and affects many different aspects of living such as socioeconomic status. The standard of living after a divorce often changes bringing about a loss of income. Rodgers & Pryor (1998) state, children of separated families tend to grow up in households with lower incomes, poorer housing and greater financial hardship than intact families (especially those headed by lone mothers). Featherman & Hauser, (1978), Ferri, (1976), Guidubaldi, Perry, & Cleminshaw, (1984), Lambert & Hart, (1976), Zill, (1978) state that

socioeconomic status is related to poor school achievement and correlated with single-parent status. However, when the effects of social class are taken into account, though academic differences are less, children from single-parent families still show significantly poorer academic functioning than children from two-parent families.

Mclanahan and Sandefer (1994) states, that family disruptions also affect a child's school performance due to the, loss of certain resources, with the most significant resource being the loss of income. Parents with limited incomes experience fewer options concerning where they can send their children to school, and rarely can afford extra lessons or any extracurricular activities.

Fuller (1989) agrees that the differences in academic achievement or lower grades between children from two-parent homes and children from divorce could result from a lack of funds rather than lack of a second parent.

#### *Less Food and Socializing*

Smith states, that children's nutrition and health may be affected if their custodial parent cannot provide the proper food and medical treatment. Academically, the parent will probably not be able to provide books, educational toys and private lessons or tutoring that the child may need. The child is ultimately missing out on hanging out with friends and item that some people take for granted. Hughes (2002) states, although family income is often associated with the children's studies have not found that improving income directly improves the children's welfare. Furthermore, Smith found in a study of 2400 women, couples who stay married through six-year period increased their income by 21.7 percent, while women who divorced experienced a 29.3 percent drop in income and men a 19.2 percent drop. This is an enormous loss for women of divorce to suffer.

### *Self-Motivation*

Along with academic achievement, McLanahan and Sandefur (1994) stressed that a child's self motivation can be affected due to the loss of economic and social resources. Children who do not expect to go onto college will be less motivated to excel in school.

Cherian (1989) also agreed that divorce could affect the child's ability and motivation to succeed in school. He states that, "with the absence of either parent, the child could be deprived of parental help, encouragement, and guidance conducive to schoolwork" (p.358).

### *Socializing Practice*

Emery (1988) and Haurin (1992) assert that the loss of income disrupts children's coping resources. Changes such as moving, changing schools, losing contact with friends, spending more time in childcare settings while mother is working, and dealing with the parent's concerns over financial pressures affect the interactions children have with their custodial parents. MacKinnon, Brody, & Stoneman, (1982) state that divorced, working mothers provide less cognitive and social stimulation to their children than both married nonworking and married working mothers. They state that children might be affected psychologically by the loss of income at two levels. The first level is indirectly through poorer parenting, as residential parents have less time and energy to give to their children because of the increased demands necessitated by the loss of income. The second is directly through the changes in environmental circumstances such as lower quality schools and neighborhoods, and the loss of friends. The loss of income and resources due to divorce may decrease a child's motivation which will affect the child's academic achievement.



### Emotions

Mkee (1992) states that children of divorce exhibit a host of emotional difficulties, which are far worse than children of intact families.

### *Aggression*

Robert Hughes, (1999) asserts that children from divorce are more likely to be aggressive and get in trouble with school authorities or the police. Through his research he found that boys are more likely to be aggressive and have problems getting along with their peers and teachers. These problems could affect the amount of time the child spends in school or on their schoolwork.

### *Depression*

Robert Hughes, (1999) points out that aggressiveness and anti-social behavior is common among children. He also said that these children are more likely to have low self-esteem and feel depressed. Robert Hughes, (1999) asserts that girls, on the other hand, are more likely to experience depression, which may interfere with their ability to concentrate on schoolwork or to put as much effort into their work. School success has long-term implications for children's success in life, and so it is important to find ways to support children from divorced families.

### *Sadness*

Nadia Garnefski and Rene F. W. Diekstra (1997) state, Immediately upon the breakup of their families through divorce, children experience reactions ranging from anger, fear, and sadness to yearning, worry, rejection, conflicting loyalties, anger, lowered self-confidence, heightened anxiety and loneliness, more depressed moods, more suicidal thoughts, and even more attempts to commit suicide (p.201-208).

Over the years, Garnefski and Diekstra (1997) found that these feelings do not disappear. Wallerstein and Kelley (1980) also agree that emotions such as pervasive sense of loss, anxiety, feeling rejected, lonely, being angry, and conflicting loyalties continue through the years.

Benedeck (1998) confirms these beliefs that children whose parents are divorced experience higher feelings of guilt, loneliness, sadness, fear, and anger than children of intact families.

In contrast, Wallerstein, et. al. (1988) believe that children retaining bad memories from divorce may be more consciously troubled. These emotional problems can ultimately escalate into behavior problems.

Paul R. Amato (2001) asserts that children who experience parental divorce, compared with children who live with both parents, exhibit more conduct problems, more symptoms of psychological maladjustment, lower academic achievement, more social difficulties, and poorer self-concepts.

#### Academics

##### *Lower Grades*

Call, Beer and Beer (1994) and Cherian (1989) found that children of divorced parents obtained a lower grade point average than children of non-divorced parents.

Cherian (1989) confirmed these findings regardless of the socio-economic status.

Molhalland, Watt, Philpot, Sarlin (1991) assert, data that children from divorced parent ranging from 10-14, displayed significant performance deficits in academic achievement which was a reflection of grade point averages and scholastic motivation. There is an agreement that children raised in single-parent families perform more poorly than children from two-parent

families in a number of academic areas, although the magnitude of these differences tends to be small.

In reviews by Hetherington, Camera, Featherman (1981) and Shinn (1978), children from single-parent families show deficits in IQ scores, ranging between 1 and 7 points, school achievement scores averaging less than one year in school and grade attainment of three-quarters of a year. However, not all of these families attained single-parent status via divorce.

Oppawsky, (1991) found that 86% of children of divorce experienced a fall in academic achievement.

In the "Impact of Divorce Project," a survey of 699 elementary students nationwide conducted by Kent State University in Ohio, Patrick Fagan & Robert Rector (2000) assert that children from divorced homes performed more poorly in reading, spelling, and math and repeated a grade more frequently than did children from intact two-parent families. Fagan & Rector (2000) found that in general, cognitive test scores for young children are lower when they experience the absence of the father, especially the mathematics scores of daughters. In comparison, verbal capacities in girls increase, especially when the father reads aloud starting at a young age. "By age 13, there is an average difference of half a year in reading abilities between children of divorced parents and those who have intact families. Even the most effective preventive work on reading and math skills does not eliminate the drop in performance at school among children of divorce".

### *Relocation*

Likewise, Fagan & Robert (1998) assert that frequent relocation, due to divorce, affects a child's school performance, regardless of family background. The moving tends to increase the incidence of behavioral, emotional, and academic problems for all adolescents, regardless of

family structure. Specifically they stated that, “Very young children are especially susceptible, since they are usually more attached to their home than older children are. Leaving their family home for another after their parents' divorce becomes even more traumatic because they tend to become more attached to their home during the breakup of their parents”.

#### *Increased Absences*

Long and Forehand (1987) assert that children from single-parent homes demonstrate higher rates of absenteeism and truancy, have lower achievement scores, and higher dropout rates than those from two-parent families.

Hetherington (1989) also noted that children of divorce are more apt to be absent from school and tardy than children from two-parent homes.

#### *Increased Drop Out*

Paul R. Amato (2001) asserts that children from divorce are more likely to drop out of high school, are less likely to attend college, are more likely to be unemployed, and enter adulthood with fewer financial resources than children of two-parent households.

Cherlin, et. al (1991) confirm these findings, stating that children of divorced parents experience more emotional and behavioral problems and far worse in school than children of intact families.

Runyone and Jackson (1988) assert that divorce may affect a child's ability to freely participate in the learning process, as evidence by a decline in academic achievement, less time on task, and inability to concentrate, and increased distractibility. Furthermore, children of divorce have a variety of problems, both internal and external, which affect ultimately, affect their academic achievement.

### Chapter III: Methodology

#### Research Design

For the purpose of this quantitative research design, this researcher conducted a comprehensive review of the literature for the proposed study. The primary purpose of this research was to describe and explain to what extent teachers agree or disagree with educational researchers' findings on divorce and the effect it has on students' academic achievement. This researcher represented the work produced by various investigators on the topic of divorce and its affect on student's academic achievement. Constructs and sub constructs identified in the data analysis were related to specific examples of data sources from which they were obtained. This researcher surveyed elementary teachers in various elementary schools all within the same school district. The racial makeup included Caucasian, African American, Hispanic, and Asian. The survey was used as a guide that helped clarify how teachers from different subgroups varied

in terms of various constructs and other background variables that best predict students' academic achievement. After the survey was conducted, this researcher gathered the data and compiled it into a Likert-style survey. This allowed the researcher to present a set of attitude statements from the 20 teachers to display whether they agreed or disagreed with the findings of the review of literature.

### Theoretical Framework

The research design of this study calls to determine to what extent teachers agree or disagree with the review of literature? Therefore, this researcher did not need to apply a theory. In addition, in the spirit of verifying for the reading that the present researcher did possess a working understanding of the need for and application of a theoretical framework, the present paragraph is included for consideration.

### Sampling

In conducting this study, this researcher used simple random sampling. In simple random sampling, all the individuals in the defined population had an equal and independent chance of being selected as a member of the sample. This researcher randomly selected a total of 20 teachers in Birmingham, Michigan. Due to random sampling, this study had limitations. The teachers only represented a small percentage of elementary teachers in the district. Therefore, findings cannot be used to project other teachers' findings outside of the district. Each participant reviewed the list of questions and then completed an Informed Consent Form (Appendix B), an Acknowledgement and Consent Form (Appendix C), and a Survey (Appendix D).

### Variables

This researcher discussed what the affects of divorce are on the child. The constructs were the following:

1. Economics: decreased funds, less food and socialization, and decreased self-motivation
2. Emotions: aggression, anger, fear, depression, loneliness, sadness
3. Academics: lower grades, relocation, increased absences, increased drop out

The impact divorce has on children was examined to determine to what extent these constructs influence students' academic achievement.

#### Methods of Data Collection

This researcher generated the data by compiling the data survey into a four point Likert scale, which used a scale of 1) strongly agree, 2) agree, 3) disagree, and 4) strongly disagree.

This researcher assigned numerical values to each category.

#### Data Analysis Procedures

Once the data was generated, this researcher compiled the data using an interpretational analysis. Then, the researcher designed an Excel spreadsheet and used tally marks to keep track of the teacher's responses. Finally, this researcher conferred with a Multiple Regression Analysis to interpret the results. This researcher focused on identifying constructs and sub constructs relating to problems and problem-resolution processes, plus alignment procedures and products.

#### Ethics & Human Relations

All teacher participants were informed that within any study risks are involved. However, to ensure the protection of the teachers, this researcher took and followed all precautions. All rights of the participants' were protected in the following ways: their names and responses were kept private in the report; the teachers were informed that they can stop anytime

during this study; and all of the teachers were notified that their responses would be kept classified. For the protection of Human Rights for all participants, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Marygrove College obtained permission and all necessary precautions were taken. In order to participate in the study, teachers were required to complete an informed consent form prior to the study.

### Timeline

In November, this researcher conducted the proposed study utilizing a Likert-style survey. This researcher sent out an overview of the study and secured the support of the teachers in November 2007. When the study was completed in November 2007, this researcher entered the data into an excel sheet and compiled the results.

### Summary

Based on the review of literature, this researcher determined to what extent teachers agreed or disagreed with the findings that were presented in the review of literature. In today's society, divorce is becoming more and more common, and is continuing to create a negative impact on adults and children. Divorce is a problem that disrupts the lives and development of children. Common indicators of parental divorce include a decline in academic achievement, behavior problems, aggression, increased absenteeism, and depression and lose valuable time with parents. Due to divorce, children can experience emotional problems and their school performance and motivation may decrease. Children can try to cope with the changes in their lives, however their lives will forever be disrupted. This research has uncovered that teachers agree that divorce affects children. As an educator, it is our job to help students cope with divorce. If the student begins to demonstrate change, we should be ready to assist the child as best we can. Teachers need to pay close attention to the students' changes in behavior, emotions



or academics. We must create a positive learning environment. We need to guide and support students to assure that get all of the love and support they need. Hopefully, this proposed research will open the eyes of educators to the scary and sorrowful world of divorce. As the researcher advanced through her study, she gained knowledge and understanding of the negative effect divorce has on children's academic achievement.

#### Chapter IV: Presentation of Data

##### Introduction

This researcher's purpose for conducting this quantitative research was to determine to what extent the teachers agreed or disagreed with the findings that are presented in the review of literature. Therefore, this researcher extended on previous research to explain the impact divorce has on student's academic achievement. The effect divorce has on student's academic achievement was studied. This research draws on literature and data as supportive evidence of this relationship furthermore the relationship of these variables were studied from a survey (see Appendix E), completed by 20 Public School Elementary Teachers within the same school district. The surveys were randomly distributed and the teachers were asked to answer each of the fifteen questions with one of the following answers, strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree. The researcher collected a total of twenty completed surveys.

##### Data Analysis

The twenty Birmingham public school Elementary teachers were asked to respond,

“strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree” to each one of the fifteen questions in the survey. The data presented in Tables 1-15 summarizes the responses to the surveys. Table 1. was utilized to test the degree to which Elementary teachers agreed or disagreed with, “Children of separated families tend to grow up in households with lower incomes, poorer housing and greater financial hardship than intact families (especially those headed by lone mothers)”

Table 1: Separated Families Greater Financial Hardships than Intact Families

<i>Response</i>	<i>Response Rate</i>	<i>Number</i>
<i>Strongly Agree</i>	10 %	N=2
<i>Agree</i>	25%	N=5
<i>Disagree</i>	55%	N=11
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	10 %	N=2

The preceding are the results of the data collected regarding teachers’ perceptions of children who grow up in separated families grow up in households with lower incomes. 10 percent (10%) of the teachers surveyed responded strongly agree, 25% of the teachers surveyed responded agree, 55% of the teachers surveyed responded disagree, and 10% of the teachers surveyed responded strongly disagree. This indicates that 65% of the teachers surveyed responded they do not feel hat children of separated families grow up in households with lower incomes and greater financial hardships than intact families.

Table 2. was utilized to test the degree to which Elementary teachers agreed or disagreed with, “Family disruptions affect a child’s school performance due to the, loss of certain resources, with the most significant resource being the loss of income. Parents with limited incomes experience fewer options concerning where they can send their children to school, and

rarely can afford extra lessons or any extracurricular activities.”

Table 2: Family Disruptions

<i>Response</i>	<i>Response Rate</i>	<i>Number</i>
<i>Strongly Agree</i>	35 %	N=7
<i>Agree</i>	40%	N=8
<i>Disagree</i>	25%	N=5
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	0 %	N=0

The preceding are the results of the data collected regarding teachers’ perceptions of children who grow up in separated families grow up in households with lower incomes. 35 percent (35%) of the teachers surveyed responded strongly agree, 40% of the teachers surveyed responded agree, 25% of the teachers surveyed responded disagree, and none of the teachers surveyed responded strongly disagree. This indicates that 75% of the teachers surveyed agree that family disruptions affect a child’s school performance.

Table 3. was utilized to test the degree to which Elementary teachers agreed or disagreed with, “Children’s nutrition and health may be affected if their custodial parent cannot provide the proper food and medical treatment. Academically, the parent will probably not be able to provide books, educational toys and private lessons or tutoring that the child may need.”

Table 3: Parent Not being Able to provide Proper food, Medical Treatment, Books

<i>Response</i>	<i>Response Rate</i>	<i>Number</i>
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<i>Strongly Agree</i>	20 %	N=4
<i>Agree</i>	75%	N=15
<i>Disagree</i>	0.5%	N=1
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	0 %	N=0

The preceding are the results of the data collected regarding teachers' perceptions of children who grow up in separated families grow up in households with lower incomes. 20 percent (20%) of the teachers surveyed responded strongly agree, 75% of the teachers surveyed responded agree, 0.5% of the teachers surveyed responded disagree, and none of the teachers surveyed responded strongly disagree. This indicates that 95% of the teachers surveyed agree that children's nutrition and health may be affected if their custodial parent cannot provide the proper food and medical treatment.

Table 4. was utilized to test the degree to which Elementary teachers agreed or disagreed with, "The loss of income disrupts children's coping resources. Changes such as moving, changing schools, losing contact with friends, spending more time in childcare settings while mother is working, and dealing with the parent's concerns over financial pressures affect the interactions children have with their custodial parents."

Table 4: The Loss of Income

<i>Response</i>	<i>Response Rate</i>	<i>Number</i>
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<i>Strongly Agree</i>	15 %	N=3
<i>Agree</i>	85%	N=17
<i>Disagree</i>	0%	N=0
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	0 %	N=0

The preceding are the results of the data collected regarding teachers' perceptions of the lost of income disrupts children's coping resources. 15 percent (15%) of the teachers surveyed responded strongly agree, 85% of the teachers surveyed responded agree, 0.5% of the teachers surveyed responded disagree, and none of the teachers surveyed responded strongly disagree. This indicates that 100% of the teachers surveyed agree that the loss of income disrupts children's coping resources.

Table 5. was utilized to test the degree to which Elementary teachers agreed or disagreed with, "A child's self-motivation can be affected due to the loss of economic and social resources. Children who do not expect to go onto college will be less motivated to excel in school."

Table 5: Self-Motivation

<i>Response</i>	<i>Response Rate</i>	<i>Number</i>
<i>Strongly Agree</i>	20%	N=4
<i>Agree</i>	65%	N=13
<i>Disagree</i>	15%	N=3
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	0 %	N=0

The preceding are the results of the data collected regarding teachers' perceptions of the

lost of income disrupts children’s coping resources. 20 percent (20%) of the teachers surveyed responded strongly agree, 65% of the teachers surveyed responded agree, 15% of the teachers surveyed responded disagree, and none of the teachers surveyed responded strongly disagree. This indicates that 85% of the teachers surveyed agree that a child’s self-motivation can be affected due to the loss of economic and social resources.

Table 6. was utilized to test the degree to which Elementary teachers agreed or disagreed with, “Children of divorce exhibit a host of emotional difficulties, which are far worse than children of intact families.”

Table 6: Emotional Difficulty

<i>Response</i>	<i>Response Rate</i>	<i>Number</i>
<i>Strongly Agree</i>	35 %	N=7
<i>Agree</i>	35%	N=7
<i>Disagree</i>	30%	N=6
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	0 %	N=0

The preceding are the results of the data collected regarding teachers’ perceptions of the lost of income disrupts children’s coping resources. 35 percent (35%) of the teachers surveyed responded strongly agree, 35% of the teachers surveyed responded agree, 30% of the teachers surveyed responded disagree, and none of the teachers surveyed responded strongly disagree. This indicates that 70% of the teachers surveyed agree that children of divorce exhibit a host of emotional difficulties, which are far worse than children of intact families.

Table 7 was utilized to test the degree to which Elementary teachers agreed or disagreed with, “Children from divorce are more likely to be aggressive and get in trouble with school

authorities or the police. Boys are more likely to be aggressive and have problems getting along with their peers and teachers. These problems could affect the amount of time the child spends in school or on their schoolwork.”

Table 7: Aggressive Behavior

<i>Response</i>	<i>Response Rate</i>	<i>Number</i>
<i>Strongly Agree</i>	25 %	N=5
<i>Agree</i>	35%	N=7
<i>Disagree</i>	20%	N=5
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	15 %	N=3

The preceding are the results of the data collected regarding teachers’ perceptions of the lost of income disrupts children’s coping resources. 25 percent (25%) of the teachers surveyed responded strongly agree, 35% of the teachers surveyed responded agree, 20% of the teachers surveyed responded disagree, and none of the teachers surveyed responded strongly disagree. This indicates that 60% of the teachers surveyed agree that children of divorce are more likely to be aggressive and get in trouble with school authorities or the police.

Table 8. was utilized to test the degree to which Elementary teachers agreed or disagreed with, “Aggressiveness and anti-social behavior are common among children. Also, these children are more likely to have low self-esteem and feel depressed.”

Table 8: Anti Social Behavior

<i>Response</i>	<i>Response Rate</i>	<i>Number</i>
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<i>Strongly Agree</i>	20 %	N=4
<i>Agree</i>	60%	N=12
<i>Disagree</i>	0%	N=0
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	20 %	N=4

The preceding are the results of the data collected regarding teachers' perceptions of the lost of income disrupts children's coping resources. 20 percent (22%) of the teachers surveyed responded strongly agree, 60% of the teachers surveyed responded agree, 0% of the teachers surveyed responded disagree, and 20% of the teachers surveyed responded strongly disagree. This indicates that 80% of the teachers surveyed agree that aggressiveness and anti-social behavior are common among children. Also, they agree that these children are more likely to have low self-esteem and feel depressed.

Table 9. was utilized to test the degree to which Elementary teachers agreed or disagreed with, "Girls, on the other hand, are more likely to experience depression, which may interfere with their ability to concentrate on schoolwork or to put as much effort into their work. School success has long-term implications for children's success in life, and so it is important to find ways to support children from divorced families."

Table 9: Girl's Behavior

<i>Response</i>	<i>Response Rate</i>	<i>Number</i>
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<i>Strongly Agree</i>	10 %	N=2
<i>Agree</i>	55%	N=11
<i>Disagree</i>	30%	N=6
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	0.05 %	N=1

The preceding are the results of the data collected regarding teachers' perceptions of the lost of income disrupts children's coping resources. 10 percent (10%) of the teachers surveyed responded strongly agree, 55% of the teachers surveyed responded agree, 30% of the teachers surveyed responded disagree, and 0.05% of the teachers surveyed responded strongly disagree. This indicates that 65% of the teachers surveyed agree that girls are more likely to experience depression, which may interfere with their ability to concentrate on schoolwork or to put as much effort into their work.

Table 10. was utilized to test the degree to which Elementary teachers agreed or disagreed with, "Immediately upon the breakup of their families through divorce, children experience reactions ranging from anger, fear, and sadness to yearning, worry, rejection, conflicting loyalties, anger, lowered self-confidence, heightened anxiety and loneliness, more depressed moods, more suicidal thoughts, and even more attempts to commit suicide. Also, emotions such as pervasive sense of loss, anxiety, feeling rejected, lonely, being angry, and conflicting loyalties continue through the years."

Table 10: Range of Emotions

<i>Response</i>	<i>Response Rate</i>	<i>Number</i>
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<i>Strongly Agree</i>	35 %	N=7
<i>Agree</i>	45%	N=9
<i>Disagree</i>	20%	N=4
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	0 %	N=0

The preceding are the results of the data collected regarding teachers' perceptions of the lost of income disrupts children's coping resources. 35percent (35%) of the teachers surveyed responded strongly agree, 45% of the teachers surveyed responded agree, 20% of the teachers surveyed responded disagree, and 0% of the teachers surveyed responded strongly disagree. This indicates that 80% of the teachers surveyed agree that immediately upon the breakup of their families through divorce, children experience reactions ranging from anger, fear, and sadness to yearning, worry, rejection, conflicting loyalties, anger, lowered self-confidence, heightened anxiety and loneliness, more depressed moods, more suicidal thoughts, and even more attempts to commit suicide.

Table 11. was utilized to test the degree to which Elementary teachers agreed or disagreed with, "Children of divorced parents obtained a lower grade point average than children of non-divorced parents."

Table 11: Lower Grade Point

<i>Response</i>	<i>Response Rate</i>	<i>Number</i>
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<i>Strongly Agree</i>	0 %	N=0
<i>Agree</i>	20%	N=4
<i>Disagree</i>	60%	N=12
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	20 %	N=4

The preceding are the results of the data collected regarding teachers' perceptions of the lost of income disrupts children's coping resources. 0 percent (0%) of the teachers surveyed responded strongly agree, 20% of the teachers surveyed responded agree, 60% of the teachers surveyed responded disagree, and 20% of the teachers surveyed responded strongly disagree. This indicates that 80% of the teachers surveyed do not agree that children of divorce parents obtain a lower grade point average than children of non-divorced parent's.

Table 12. was utilized to test the degree to which Elementary teachers agreed or disagreed with, "Children from single-parent homes demonstrate higher rates of absenteeism and truancy, have lower achievement scores, and higher dropout rates than those from two-parent families. Children of divorce are more apt to be absent from school and tardy than children from two-parent homes."

Table 12: Absenteeism and Truancy

<i>Response</i>	<i>Response Rate</i>	<i>Number</i>
<i>Strongly Agree</i>	10 %	N=1
<i>Agree</i>	20%	N=4
<i>Disagree</i>	55%	N=11
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	15 %	N=3

The preceding are the results of the data collected regarding teachers' perceptions of the lost of income disrupts children's coping resources. 10 percent (10%) of the teachers surveyed responded strongly agree, 20% of the teachers surveyed responded agree, 55% of the teachers surveyed responded disagree, and 15% of the teachers surveyed responded strongly disagree. This indicates that 70% of the teachers surveyed do not agree that children of single-parent homes demonstrate higher rates of absenteeism and truancy have lower achievement scores, and higher dropout rates than those from two-parent families.

Table 13. was utilized to test the degree to which Elementary teachers agreed or disagreed with, "Children from divorce are more likely to drop out of high school, are less likely to attend college, are more likely to be unemployed, and enter adulthood with fewer financial resourced than children of two-parent households."

Table 13: Drop out, Do not Attend College, Unemployed

<i>Response</i>	<i>Response Rate</i>	<i>Number</i>
<i>Strongly Agree</i>	0 %	N=0
<i>Agree</i>	15%	N=3
<i>Disagree</i>	70%	N=14
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	15 %	N=3

The preceding are the results of the data collected regarding teachers' perceptions of the lost of income disrupts children's coping resources. 0 percent (0%) of the teachers surveyed responded strongly agree, 20% of the teachers surveyed responded agree, 70% of the teachers surveyed responded disagree, and 15% of the teachers surveyed responded strongly disagree. This indicates that 85% of the teachers surveyed do not agree that children of single-parent

homes demonstrate higher rates of absenteeism and truancy have lower achievement scores, and higher dropout rates than those from two-parent families.

Table 14. was utilized to test the degree to which Elementary teachers agreed or disagreed with, “Frequent relocation, due to divorce, affects a child’s school performance, regardless of family background. The moving tends to increase the incidence of behavioral, emotional, and academic problems for all adolescents, regardless of family structure.”

Table 14: Frequent Relocation

<i>Response</i>	<i>Response Rate</i>	<i>Number</i>
<i>Strongly Agree</i>	30 %	N=6
<i>Agree</i>	50%	N=10
<i>Disagree</i>	15%	N=0
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	10 %	N=2

The preceding are the results of the data collected regarding teachers’ perceptions of frequent location, due to divorce, affects a child’s school performance, regardless of family background. 30 percent (30%) of the teachers surveyed responded strongly agree, 50% of the teachers surveyed responded agree, 0% of the teachers surveyed responded disagree, and 0.5% of the teachers surveyed responded strongly disagree. This indicates that 80% of the teachers surveyed agree that frequent location affects a child’s school performance.

Table 15. was utilized to test the degree to which Elementary teachers agreed or disagreed with, “Divorce may affect a child’s ability to freely participate in the learning process, as evidence by a decline in academic achievement, less time on task, and inability to concentrate, and increased distractibility.”

Table 15: Decline in Academic Achievement

<i>Response</i>	<i>Response Rate</i>	<i>Number</i>
<i>Strongly Agree</i>	20 %	N=4
<i>Agree</i>	55%	N=11
<i>Disagree</i>	20%	N=4
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	0.05 %	N=1

The preceding are the results of the data collected regarding teachers' perceptions that divorce may affect a child's ability to freely participate in the learning process. 20 percent (20%) of the teachers surveyed responded strongly agree, 55% of the teachers surveyed responded agree, 20% of the teachers surveyed responded disagree, and 0.05% of the teachers surveyed responded strongly disagree. This indicates that 75% of the teachers surveyed agree that divorce affects a child's ability to freely participate in the learning process.

#### Summary of Statistics

Previous research revealed that divorce has an effect on children's academic achievement. The research questions were designed to investigate to what extent teachers agree or disagree that divorce affects the children's academic achievement. The surveys were answered by twenty Birmingham Elementary public school teachers. The data collected indicated a common belief among Suburban public school Elementary teachers surveyed that they agree with the literature that economics impact student's academic achievement. Seventy-five percent of the teachers surveyed agree that family disruptions affect a child's school performance due to the loss of certain resources, with the most significant resources, with the most significant resource being the loss of income. Ninety-five percent of the teachers surveyed

agree that children's nutrition and health may be affected if their custodial parent cannot provide the proper food and medical treatment. Academically, the parent will probably not be able to provide books, educational toys and private lessons or tutoring that the child may need. All of the teachers surveyed agree that the loss of income disrupts children's coping resources. Changes such as moving, changing schools, losing contact with friends, spending more time in childcare settings while mother is working, and dealing with the parent's concerns over financial pressures affect the interactions children have with their custodial parents. Eighty five percent of the teachers surveyed agree that a child's self-motivation can be affected due to the loss of economic and social resources.

However, sixty-five percent of the teachers did not and do agree that children of separated families tend to grow up in households with lower incomes, poorer housing and greater financial hardship than intact families (especially those headed by lone mothers). The data collected from the survey indicates a common belief among Birmingham Elementary public school teachers surveyed that they all agree that emotions impact student's academic achievement. Seventy percent of the teachers surveyed agree that children of divorce exhibit a host of emotional difficulties, which are far worse than children of intact families. Sixty percent of the teachers surveyed agree that children of divorce are more likely to be aggressive and get in trouble with school authorities or the police. Boys are more likely to be aggressive and have problems getting along with their peers and teachers. These problems could affect the amount of time the child spends in school or on their schoolwork. Eighty percent of the teachers surveyed agree that aggressiveness and anti-social behavior are common among children. Also, they agree that these children are more likely to have low self-esteem and feel depressed. Sixty-five percent of the teachers surveyed agree that girls are more likely to experience depression, which

may interfere with their ability to concentrate on schoolwork or to put as much effort into their work. Eighty percent of the teachers surveyed agree that immediately upon the breakup of their families through divorce, children experience reactions ranging from anger, fear, and sadness to yearning, worry, rejection, conflicting loyalties, anger, lowered self-confidence, heightened anxiety and loneliness, more depressed moods, more suicidal thoughts, and even more attempts to commit suicide.

The data collected from the survey indicated a common belief among Birmingham Elementary public school teachers surveyed that they agree that academics impact student's academic achievement. Eighty percent of the teachers surveyed agree that frequent location affects a child's school performance, regardless of family background. The moving tends to increase incidence of behavior, emotional, and academic problems for all adolescents, regardless of family structure. Seventy-five percent of the teachers surveyed agree that divorce affects a child's ability to freely participate in the learning process, as evidence by a decline in academic achievement, less time on task, and inability to concentrate, and increased distractibility.

However, eighty percent of the teachers surveyed do not agree that children of divorce parents obtain a lower grade point average than children of non-divorced parent's. Seventy percent of the teachers surveyed do not agree that children of single-parent homes demonstrate higher rates of absenteeism and truancy have lower achievement scores, and higher dropout rates than those from two-parent families. Eighty-five percent of the teachers surveyed do not agree that children of single-parent homes demonstrate higher rates of absenteeism and truancy have lower achievement scores, and higher dropout rates than those from two-parent families.



## Chapter V: Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

### Summary

Based on the review of literature, this researcher determined to what extent teachers agreed or disagreed with the findings that were presented in the review of literature. In today's society, divorce has become more and more common, and has continued to create a negative impact on adults and children. To carry out this quantitative study surveys were answered by twenty Birmingham Elementary public school teachers. The data collected indicated a common belief among the Elementary public school teachers that divorce does have a negative impact on student's academic achievement. The following fifteen statements are provided to the respondents. Each of the teachers was asked to respond, "strongly disagree, disagree, agree or strongly agree. An extensive review of literature was completed including journal articles, targeted educational magazines, ERIC database, master thesis, and doctoral level dissertations. The survey was provided to twenty Birmingham Elementary public school teachers on November 12, 2007 via their school mailboxes or delivered by student office aides. The survey was completed and returned by twenty Birmingham Elementary public school teachers and returned to this researcher on November 26, 2007. The data gathered, were analyzed to reveal the extent to which the sample of Elementary public school teachers perceived to what extent the teachers agreed or disagreed with the findings that were presented in the review of literature. 75% of the teachers surveyed agree that divorce affects a child's ability to freely participate in the learning process.

### Limitations of the study

This quantitative study had several limitations. Limitations of this study involved the number of participants in the study; therefore possibly limiting in its generality. Another limitation is the sample. The participating teachers teach in the Birmingham public school district, which makes this a poor representative sample of the general population. Furthermore, the data is based on the perceptions of the participants. The bias of those completing the surveys will have to be taken into consideration in drawing conclusions, because competency levels were self reported and no outside measurement was considered in this area.

The timing of the study may also have affected the teachers who were willing to participate. The surveys were due the week after parent-teacher conferences and the same week of Thanksgiving Break. Many of the teachers were preparing for an early vacation prior to the break. The students were also excited about Thanksgiving break which caused some behavior problems which could have influenced the teacher's responses or those who were willing to participate. The teachers who were willing to participate in the study may have differed from those who declined to participate. There were also limitations in the teachers knowing which of their students had divorced parents. This was some of the students first year and some parents are very private with their home life. Therefore, some of the teachers may not have known all of their student's family backgrounds. Also, some of the teachers may not of had any students in their class whose parents were divorced. Future studies may provide a survey sheet for the teachers with questions about their students and parents of divorce and intact families.

Conclusion

Furthermore, this researcher examined to what extent teachers agreed or disagreed with the review of literature. A review of the literature addressed the effect divorce had on children both academically and socially concentrating on the areas of economics, emotions and academics. The data indicated that the majority of teachers surveyed agreed that divorce affects children in the areas of economics, emotions and academics. This researcher concluded that consistent with the literature, the data indicates that teachers agree that divorce impacts a student's academic achievement. The research also indicates that as an educator, it is our job to help students cope with divorce. If the student begins to demonstrate change, we should be ready to assist the child as best we can. Teachers need to pay close attention to the students' changes in behavior, emotions or academics. We must create a positive learning environment. We need to guide and support students to assure that get all of the love and support they need. Hopefully, this proposed research will open the eyes of educators to the scary and sorrowful world of divorce. As the researcher advanced through her study, she gained knowledge and understanding of the negative effect divorce has on children's academic achievement.

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## Appendix A

**From:** Rivard, James **Sent:** Tue 11/6/2007 2:16 PM  
**To:** Raynish, Annie (Student Acct)  
**Cc:** Rivard, James; Shaw, Eugene  
**Subject:** RE: IRB Application  
**Attachments:**

Annie,  
Your application has been approved by the IRB.

---

**From:** Raynish, Annie (Student Acct)  
**Sent:** Saturday, October 27, 2007 10:19 AM  
**To:** Rivard, James; Shaw, Eugene  
**Subject:** IRB Application

Hi Professor Rivard,

I am submitting my Approval Request Form for EDL 665. Please note that I have proposed a start date of November 6.

Please let me know if there is anything else I need to do

Thank you,

Annie Raynish

## Appendix B

**Affects of Divorce on the Child**Informed Consent Form

To: \_\_\_\_\_

My name is Annie Raynish and I am a graduate student in the Sage Program in the College of Education at Marygrove College in Detroit, MI. I have asked you to agree to be a volunteer in a research project I plan to conduct. Before I can accept your consent, I want to inform about my project.

The purpose of this study is to determine to what extent the teachers agree or disagree with the findings that are presented in the review of literature. This investigation will be conducted to explain the impact divorce has on student's academic achievement. There will be approximately 20-25 participants in the study. Each participant will complete a survey to show if they agree or disagree with the literature review.

There will be no attendant discomforts and risks reasonably to be expected. This study is expected to benefit you by providing information to increase student's achievement. The study and its procedures have been approved by the Institutional Review Board at Marygrove College.

The study procedures will involve no foreseeable risks or harm to you or your family. I have considered all aspects of the proposed project and determined that the procedures indicated above are the best procedures to use in achieving the research goal intended. The procedure includes completing a survey. I hereby offer to answer questions you might wish to ask concerning the procedures used in this research project. You may call Annie Raynish at (248) 202-1018 (cell) if you have any questions regarding your rights as a volunteer research subject.

Your participation in this study will be voluntary. You will be under no obligation to participate; you will be free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time without prejudice to you. You should also understand that the investigator has the right to withdraw you from the study at any time if you do not meet the criteria to participate. All participants must be at least 18 years old to participate. Your identity will not be revealed while the study is being conducted or when the study is reported or published.

The confidentiality of the records will be maintained unless disclosure is required by law. Confidentiality of records will be maintained by Ms. Raynish and stored in a secured place, and not shared with any other person without your permission.

If any significant new findings arise during the course of this research that may relate to your willingness to continue to participate, such new findings will be provided to you.

## Appendix C

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND CONSENT

I, \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_  
 Full Name Street Address

\_\_\_\_\_ hereby state:

1. I have read all of the statements above pertaining to the study entitled, "Affects of Divorce on the Child" and I understand them.
2. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions I wish concerning this study, and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.
3. I have been given a full copy, with signatures, of this document.
4. I hereby consent to be a participant in this study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Full Signature of Prospective Participant Date

**WITNESS:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Full Signature of Witness Date

As the investigator in this study entitled "Affects of Divorce on the Child," I hereby state to the best of my knowledge and belief all of the statements made in the above consent form are true and that in consenting the prospective participant exercised free power of choice without undue inducement or any element of element of fraud, deceit, duress, or any other form of constraint or coercion. In addition to participation being voluntary, the participant has been advised that he/she may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which the participant may be entitled

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Full Signature of Investigator Date



Appendix D

**Survey Questionnaire**

Please read each question and circle your response accordingly. The responses should reflect how you truthfully feel at the present time.

1                                      2                                      3                                      4  
 Strongly Agree                      Agree                                      Disagree                                      Strongly Disagree

<p>My experience in educating children who have divorced parents within the regular  <b>Economics</b> classroo</p>	<p>to what extent do you agree or disagree</p>
<p>Children of separated families tend to grow up in households with lower incomes, poorer housing and greater financial hardship than intact families (especially those headed by lone mothers)?.</p>	<p>1    2    3    4</p>
<p>Family disruptions affect a child’s school performance due to the, loss of certain resources, with the most significant resource being the loss of income. Parents with limited incomes experience fewer options concerning where they can send their children to school, and rarely can afford extra lessons or any extracurricular activities.</p>	<p>1    2    3    4</p>
<p>Children’s nutrition and health may be affected if their custodial parent cannot provide the proper food and medical treatment. Academically, the parent will probably not be able to provide books, educational toys and private lessons or tutoring that the child may need.</p>	<p>1    2    3    4</p>
<p>The loss of income disrupts children’s coping resources. Changes such as moving, changing schools, losing contact with friends, spending more time in childcare settings while mother is working, and dealing with the parent's concerns over financial pressures affect the interactions children have with their custodial parents.</p>	<p>1    2    3    4</p>
<p>A child’s self motivation can be affected due to the loss of economic and social resources. Children who do not expect to go onto college will be less motivated to</p>	<p>1    2    3    4</p>

<p>excel in school.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Emotions</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>To what extent do you agree or disagree</b></p>
<p>Children of divorce exhibit a host of emotional difficulties, which are far worse than children of intact families.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1   2   3   4</p>
<p>Children from divorce are more likely to be aggressive and get in trouble with school authorities or the police. Boys are more likely to be aggressive and have problems getting along with their peers and teachers. These problems could affect the amount of time the child spends in school or on their schoolwork.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1   2   3   4</p>
<p>Aggressiveness and anti-social behavior are common among children. Also, these children are more likely to have low self-esteem and feel depressed.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1   2   3   4</p>
<p>Girls, on the other hand, are more likely to experience depression, which may interfere with their ability to concentrate on schoolwork or to put as much effort into their work. School success has long-term implications for children's success in life, and so it is important to find ways to support children from divorced families.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1   2   3   4</p>
<p>Immediately upon the breakup of their families through divorce, children experience reactions ranging from anger, fear, and sadness to yearning, worry, rejection, conflicting loyalties, anger, lowered self-confidence, heightened anxiety and loneliness, more depressed moods, more suicidal thoughts, and even more attempts to commit suicide. Also, emotions such as pervasive sense of loss, anxiety, feeling rejected, lonely, being angry, and conflicting loyalties continue through the years.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1   2   3   4</p>

<b>Academics</b>	<b>To what extent do you agree or disagree</b>
Children of divorced parents obtained a lower grade point average than children of non-divorced parents.	1 2 3 4
Children from single-parent homes demonstrate higher rates of absenteeism and truancy, have lower achievement scores, and higher dropout rates than those from two-parent families. Children of divorce are more apt to be absent from school and tardy than children from two-parent homes.	1 2 3 4
Children from divorce are more likely to drop out of high school, are less likely to attend college, are more likely to be unemployed, and enter adulthood with fewer financial resources than children of two-parent households.	1 2 3 4
Frequent relocation, due to divorce, affects a child's school performance, regardless of family background. The moving tends to increase the incidence of behavioral, emotional, and academic problems for all adolescents, regardless of family structure.	1 2 3 4
Divorce may affect a child's ability to freely participate in the learning process, as evidence by a decline in academic achievement, less time on task, and inability to concentrate, and increased distractibility.	1 2 3 4

