

Co-Parenting Dynamics in Divorced Families: An Examination of its Impact on Children's Adjustment and Well-being in Central Cross River Communities

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between co-parenting dynamics among divorced couples and the adjustment and well-being of their children in Central Cross River communities. The findings indicate a positive correlation between high-quality co-parenting and improved emotional adjustment, academic performance, and reduced behavioral issues in children. Notably, community support networks and extended family involvement unique to Central Cross River communities play a significant role in mitigating the negative effects of divorce on child development. The research underscores the importance of cooperative co-parenting strategies and community-level support in promoting resilient outcomes for children of divorced families. The study's results have implications for family interventions and community-based initiatives aimed at supporting divorced families and enhancing child well-being in similar cultural contexts.

Keywords: Divorce, Separation, Co-Parenting, Child Development, Cross River Communities

Introduction

Divorce constitutes a pivotal life transition that significantly influences familial dynamics, particularly pertaining to the well-being and adjustment of children (Jackson & Fife 2017). Central to the ramifications of this transition is the caliber of post-divorce parental relationships, which have the potential to either alleviate or intensify the adverse consequences of divorce on offspring. The dissolution of marital ties necessitates a restructuring of the parental relationship with their progeny, frequently occurring in the context of discord, which can adversely affect the parent-child connections. This phase presents formidable challenges as parents endeavor to establish new patterns of interaction and co-parenting for their children. The responses of children to the experience of divorce are heterogeneous; while certain individuals may adapt seamlessly, others may encounter significant difficulties. With adequate support, children can perceive divorce as a transitional phase rather than a traumatic event, owing to their adaptability (Song, Mailick, & Floyd 2015).

The impact on children differs due to variations in temperament and age among children of divorced parents. Immediately following divorce, most parents contend with dual challenges: adjusting to their new roles as divorced parents and managing their psychological issues. The strain of divorce can weaken or even rupture parent-child relationships, particularly affecting divorced or separated mothers. Children of parents who have undergone divorce frequently articulate a diminished sense

of support from their caregivers when compared to their counterparts from intact familial structures, with these perceptions often intensifying during the developmental stage of adolescence and subsequent years. Such children frequently experience a reduction in practical, financial, and emotional assistance from their guardians (McHale, 2017). While certain empirical investigations indicate that the act of parental divorce may not directly compromise parenting quality, it frequently precipitates increased levels of parental anxiety, fatigue, and stress. An in-depth comprehension of co-parenting dynamics across various cultural frameworks within the Central Cross River communities is essential for the formulation of effective support networks and intervention strategies tailored for families affected by divorce.

Background of the Study

Co-parenting, conceptualized as the collaborative endeavor undertaken by divorced or separated parents in the upbringing of their child, is pivotal for the dynamics of family's post-divorce (McHale, 2017). This notion accentuates the significance of sustaining a unified and cooperative parenting strategy even subsequent to the dissolution of marriage. Favorable co-parenting relationships consistently demonstrate a positive correlation with enhanced psychological, emotional, and academic outcomes for children (Nyamnjoh, 2017). Conversely, children who are subjected to conflictual or ineffective co-parenting arrangements may encounter increased levels of stress, challenges in adjustment, and behavioral problems (Johnston & Roseby, 1997).

Stable and nurturing co-parenting practices are instrumental in enhancing children's self-esteem and emotional regulation, thereby providing them with a foundational sense of security and belonging that is essential for optimal psychological development (Nyamnjoh, 2017). Moreover, effective co-parenting diminishes children's exposure to parental discord, which otherwise exacerbates feelings of sadness and anxiety. Children who are nurtured in such supportive environments display healthier emotional responses to adversities and establish more stable interpersonal relationships (McHale, 2017). Empirical evidence suggests that children residing in households characterized by effective co-parenting demonstrate superior academic performance, which can be attributed to the presence of structured and supportive home environments that prioritise their educational requirements (Jeynes, 2016).

Conversely, children can experience profound adverse effects as a result of hostile and ineffective co-parenting dynamics. The continual observation of parental conflict can generate significant distress in children, adversely affecting their overall mental and physical well-being. Chronic stress stemming from an unstable domestic environment may result in inconsistent disciplinary practices and conflicting parental directives, leading to confusion among children and hindering their social development. Such challenges frequently manifest in behavioral issues, including oppositional behavior, difficulties in peer interactions, and academic underachievement (Laroche, 2015). According to Laroche (2015), these behavioral challenges arise from children emulating negative behaviors witnessed within the home environment and reacting to emotional distress. For children originating from divorced or separated families to flourish, the establishment of effective co-parenting is of paramount importance. While uncooperative or ineffective co-parenting can yield detrimental consequences, positive co-parenting fosters a stable and supportive milieu that is conducive to children's intellectual, emotional, and psychological growth. Consequently, interventions designed to support families navigating divorce or separation should prioritise the implementation of strategies aimed at fostering cooperative co-parenting.

Overview of Central Cross River Communities

This study examines divorce and co-parenting dynamics within the cultural and socioeconomic context of Central Cross River communities in Nigeria. The region is home to diverse ethnic groups such as the Lokaa Ejagham Mmfuwa and Ekpache Nkome (National Population Commission, 2016). Each ethnic group has unique cultural traditions, beliefs, and customs that influence family life and child-rearing practices. With urban centres like Calabar, suburban areas, and rural villages, the region exhibits socioeconomic diversity in terms of community support networks, employment opportunities, and access to resources (Ekpenyong & Nyong, 2012). Close-knit community ties and traditional beliefs mitigate the impact of divorce on family relationships and support systems (Udoh & Mkpang, 2015).

These cultural nuances significantly influence perceptions and practices of co-parenting following divorce. For example, certain ethnic groups place a high value on extended family involvement in child rearing, which affects co-parenting relationships. Understanding cultural norms, social support networks, and societal influences is essential for comprehending how divorce and subsequent co-parenting arrangements impact children in this region. Each ethnic group in Central Cross River has distinct traditions and customs related to family life and child upbringing, underscoring the importance of community and extended family networks in supporting divorced families and evaluating available resources and support systems for co-parents and their children.

Socioeconomic factors such as employment opportunities and resource accessibility also influence co-parenting dynamics and family stability post-divorce. Studying co-parenting in Central Cross River communities elucidates how family dynamics and children's post-divorce adjustment are shaped by cultural norms, community support networks, and economic circumstances. This contextual understanding is critical for developing culturally sensitive interventions and policies that support divorced families in the region. Cultural traditions in Central Cross River can influence co-parenting agreements, affecting communication and division of parenting responsibilities among divorced parents. Cultural stigma attached to divorce may hinder parental cooperation and sustainment of healthy co-parenting relationships.

Moreover, customary laws and practices concerning child custody and inheritance can impact the practical aspects of co-parenting. Extended family members play a vital role in providing practical and emotional support to divorced parents and their children in many Nigerian communities. Their involvement contributes to stability and support, but disagreements over child-rearing practices or unequal reliance on extended family support can complicate co-parenting relationships.

Community support networks, including friends, neighbours, and local organisations, are instrumental in assisting separated families. These social networks provide children with a sense of stability and belonging, aiding their adjustment to changes in family structure. Community support can also enhance co-parenting practices by offering conflict resolution tools and promoting collaborative behaviour. Societal pressures to maintain harmonious relationships in communities with strong social ties can positively influence co-parenting relationships.

Co-parenting dynamics in the Central Cross River region are also influenced by socioeconomic challenges such as income levels, employment opportunities, and access to healthcare and education. Financial hardships can exacerbate the stress of divorce, making it difficult for parents to effectively collaborate. Conversely, access to resources and support services can facilitate parents' focus on their co-parenting responsibilities.

A comprehensive analysis of social support networks, cultural norms, and community influences is essential for understanding co-parenting dynamics in Central Cross River communities. The region's rich cultural diversity and varied ethnic composition provide a unique context for studying the effects of divorce and co-parenting arrangements on children. Researchers and policymakers can develop targeted interventions and support initiatives tailored to the specific needs and challenges faced by divorced families in this setting. This study aims to contribute insights into how cultural environments influence parental relationships and child outcomes, thereby enriching the growing body of knowledge on divorce and family dynamics. Understanding these relationships is crucial for effectively supporting children's adjustment and wellbeing across diverse cultural contexts.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the various co-parenting dynamics and arrangements employed by divorced families in Central Cross River communities.
2. To assess the impact of different co-parenting styles on children's emotional, behavioural, and academic adjustment post-divorce.

Research Questions

1. What are the most common co-parenting dynamics and arrangements among divorced families in Central Cross River communities?
2. How do these co-parenting styles influence children's emotional well-being?
3. What impact do co-parenting dynamics have on children's behavioural adjustment?
4. How do co-parenting dynamics affect children's academic achievement and learning outcomes?
5. How are co-parenting practices influenced by cultural and community factors in Central Cross River communities?

Research Hypotheses

- Null Hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant correlation between children's emotional adjustment and the type of co-parenting (positive vs. negative).
- Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): Positive co-parenting is positively associated with improved emotional adjustment in children compared to negative co-parenting dynamics.

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework: Family Systems Theory

The Family Systems Theory provides a foundational framework for understanding co-parenting dynamics and their impact on children's development following parental divorce. Introduced by Salvador Minuchin in 1985, Family Systems Theory posits that families are interdependent systems where each member influences and is influenced by others. This theory underscores the interconnectedness within families and asserts that changes to one aspect of the family system, such as divorce, can have ripple effects throughout the entire family (Jackson, 2015). This idea underscores the importance of understanding how changes in parental relationships post-divorce impact children's adjustment and well-being within the context of co-parenting.

Family Systems Theory views the family as a unit rather than a collection of individuals. Each member's actions and emotions create a web of relationships that influence others (Maccoby, & Mnookin, 1992). For example, a parent's emotional distress following a divorce can affect the emotional health of their child, and vice versa. Families strive to maintain equilibrium or homeostasis, which is disrupted by divorce, necessitating adjustments for stability. Each family member undergoes a unique process to establish a new equilibrium, involving changes in roles, relationships, and routines. Boundaries within the family system define each member's responsibilities and obligations, which may need redefinition or become blurred post-divorce, especially concerning co-parenting roles and extended family involvement. Children who experience strong co-parenting relationships with their divorced parents are more likely to feel secure and supported. Their emotional adjustment depends on this stability, reducing the risks of anxiety, depression, and behavioral problems. Effective co-parenting contributes to maintaining consistency and stability in a child's life.

Children exhibit better behavior when parents maintain consistent parenting practices and foster good communication with each other, thereby minimizing confusion and stress post-divorce. Family Systems Theory provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the complexities of co-parenting relationships and their impact on children's post-divorce development (Minuchin, 1985). Emphasizing the interconnectedness of family members, this theory underscores the importance of maintaining strong parental connections and adapting to changes to support children's adjustment and well-being. Researchers and practitioners can utilize this theoretical foundation to develop interventions and support strategies tailored to the needs of divorcing families, thereby enhancing outcomes for both parents and children.

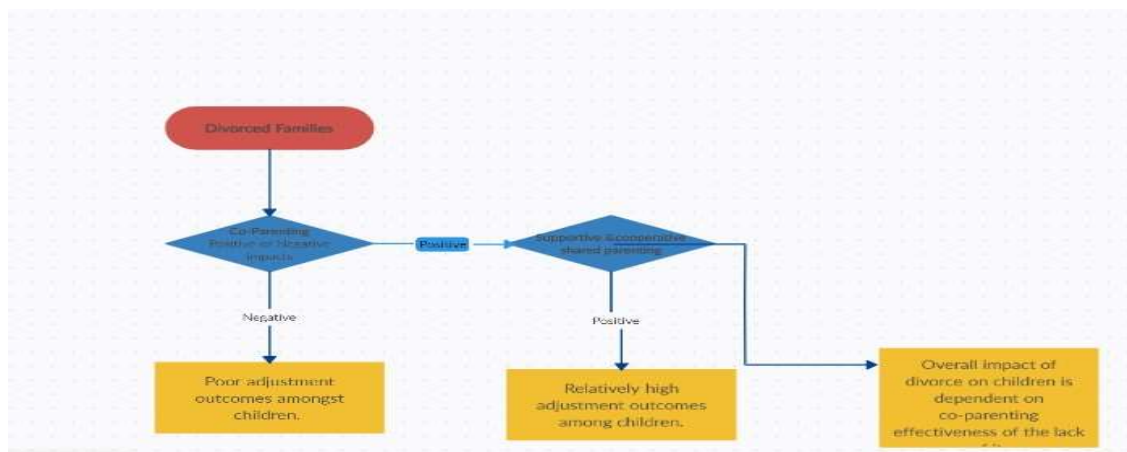


Fig. Flowchart depicting the positive and negative impacts co-parenting has on the overall adjustment and development of children.

Despite divorce, parents who engage in cooperative co-parenting effectively collaborate to meet their children's needs (Ahrns, 2007). Research indicates that cooperative co-parenting correlates with improved child outcomes, such as higher self-esteem and fewer behavioral issues (Fabricius & Lueken, 2007). Conversely, unresolved parent-child conflicts may hinder children's emotional and behavioral adjustment (Erel & Burman, 1995). Children exposed to high levels of conflictual co-parenting may experience heightened stress and anxiety, negatively impacting their overall well-being.

Attachment Theory, established by Bowlby (1969), offers another closely related perspective. According to this theory, children's secure bonds with caregivers are crucial for their emotional and social development. The quality of co-parenting relationships can influence children's attachment patterns and sense of security post-divorce, thereby impacting their social and emotional resilience (Feeney & Collins, 2016).

Previous Research of Literature

Previous research consistently highlights the significant impact of co-parenting relationships on various aspects of children's adjustment and well-being following parental divorce. Studies by Amato (2001) and Fabricius and Luecken (2007) suggest that positive co-parenting interactions enhance children's psychological adjustment and emotional resilience. Children benefit from supportive and cooperative co-parenting, exhibiting higher self-esteem and fewer emotional issues. Conversely, contentious co-parenting increases the risk of behavioral problems such as defiance, aggression, and social withdrawal (Johnston & Roseby, 1997; Kelly, 2000). Children exposed to high levels of parental conflict may struggle with emotional regulation and behavioral control. Children in divorced families with cooperative co-parenting tend to perform better academically and achieve higher levels of education (Amato, 2001; Kelly, 2000), receiving the stability and support necessary for academic success.

Understanding co-parenting dynamics requires consideration of geographical settings, cultural norms, and values that influence family relationships post-divorce. Cultural perspectives on gender roles, family responsibilities, and parental duties influence co-parenting behaviors (Ahrons, 2007). For instance, in collectivist societies, extended family networks may play a more significant role in post-divorce co-parenting and child-rearing compared to individualistic cultures. Regional characteristics such as socioeconomic status, access to resources, and community support networks also influence co-parenting dynamics and child outcomes (Fabricius & Luecken, 2007). Urban and rural settings may vary in the availability of support resources and opportunities for parental collaboration. Community attitudes and support systems significantly impact parental relationships and co-parenting behaviors post-divorce, providing practical and emotional assistance to divorced parents (Schoppe-Sullivan et al., 2004).

Gaps in Existing Literature

Much of the existing literature on co-parenting dynamics in divorced families is predominantly focused on Western contexts, with limited exploration of other cultural settings, such as the Central Cross River communities of Nigeria. There is a notable absence of longitudinal studies that track co-parenting dynamics over time and their enduring impacts on children's development, despite extensive research on the short-term benefits of co-parenting for children's well-being. Geographic disparities in support networks available to separated families are often overlooked in research, particularly in rural or underdeveloped regions.

Overview of Select Central Cross River Communities (Ugep, Obubra, Ikom, Boje)

Ugep Community

Ugep is one of the most prominent towns in the Cross-River State. It is specifically located in Yakurr Local Government Area. The major occupation of the people of Ugep is farming, a practice that is accorded great respect within their society and cultural practices such as the new yam festival, which is referred to as the Leboku new yam festival. Obol Lupon of Ugep is a political leader and a spiritual

leader too. The observation birthed from the census conducted in the year 2006 estimated the total population of Yakurr LGA to be 196,271.

In Central Cross River Nigeria, precisely in the Ugep community, families are put under a lot of strain due to high rates of divorce and the general imbalance of caregiving that follows this vice (Amato & Previti, 2003). The reason behind this phenomenon is said to be because men are not taking up their responsibilities to provide for a family and raise children while women are likely to remain in the family to raise the children. These unequal proportions have implications for the overall health, social, and psychological development of children within these families (McLanahan, 2009). Another cause for the high number of divorces in Ugep is the inability of men to offer their spouses the necessary financial and material support. This inaction shows up in levels of fiscal irresponsibility, lack of emotional engagement, and significant evasion of contribution towards home duties. The continued commingling of household chores with stereotyped gender roles where the man is the sole economic provider for the family and the woman assumes the role of a homemaker therefore intensifying the problem. The reason given is that men who are unable to meet or maintain these parameters result in marital conflict, which leads to the breakup of marriage through separation or divorce.

Obubra Community

Obubra Town is the headquarters of Obubra Local Government Area (LGA) in Cross River State-Nigeria, and it is an established community with abundant natural resources and a gripping historical background. Obubra is one of the choicest areas that are endowed with plenty of natural resources. The area provides important agricultural production with favourable conditions for a multitude of crops due to the richness of the soil. For instance, its thick forests where timber and other forest products can be sourced to support the economy. Obubra Town political population is estimated at about 172,543 residents with 98 villages in its network.

The economy of the Obubra area is majorly determined by peasant farming. Agricultural practices are considerably low compared to other areas with higher levels of human settlement. These are some reasons that explain why this kind of social organization brings stability: first, a culture that is inherited forces families to stick together, and second, the economic situation of families in farming activities helps to maintain this common cohesion. But whenever there is a case of divorce, it is normally attributed to financial difficulties and the failure of families to access food and other necessities. The culture of child upbringing predominantly resides with women, mostly because the men travel in search of income. An example of a traditional role of women is that women have always been viewed as housewives and are even to this date encouraged to remain as homemakers, thus they do not work, while men are expected to go out to earn a livelihood. This traditional division of labor may not be good for marriage, especially during lean years. Then, regarding co-parenting, it is important to note that this process can be rather complicated for the families in Obubra in case of divorce, as the single parents may experience economic and logistical issues. Women who are left behind are always forced to take responsibility for their children and do not have enough capital to support the family. This could have negative implications on children and may expose them to issues of emotional issues and poor academic performance. In some cases, pressures such as these are offset by the reliance of the community on the extended family hence the need to say that the effect on children is huge.

Ikom Community

Ikom is a prominent town in Cross River State, which is the administrative headquarters of the Ikom local government area. Ikom inhabitants have embraced several professions including agriculture,

commerce, and sawmilling. It is important to note that these activities are an essential part of the local economy as well as for the inhabitants of this area. Ikom occupies 1,961 square kilometers of land and the population of Ikom in the year 2006 was 162,383. Agriculture is a main economic activity with farmers dominating the town due to the enhanced productivity in the area. Cocoa and oil palm are the major cash crops while food crops include bananas and plantains for both domestic consumption and export.

Notably, the cultural practices in Ikom allow women to be endowed with equal proprietary rights in their family inheritance and this is a key determinant of the divorce rate. Furthermore, when comparing the divorce rate in Ikom to that in Obubra, it is evident that the rates are higher in Ikom. Among these factors, the most important one is the increasing economic independence of women. Due to the ability to inherit property or financial resources and increased chances into personally controlled sources of income, Ikom women cannot be confined to miserable or abusive marriages. Income and livelihood make women economically independent by being able to provide for themselves and their children without relying on anyone else's assistance. The specific co-parenting relations in Ikom can be regarded as progressive in terms of the community's female population. After a divorce, most of these women from Ikom are financially able to cater for their children. Such economic autonomy means that parents can set up highly predictable and well-organized parenting plans. However, there are still significant signs of concern especially concerning the emotional and psychological effects on the child since they still lose one parent.

Boki (Boje) Community

The Boki (Boje) community is situated in the central region of Cross River State in Nigeria. This community is characterized by cultural diversity, tradition, and lively demography. With reference to the 2006 National Population Census, Boki (Boje) has a population of about 186,611 people. The Boki Local Government Area (LGA) has a land area of approximately 2,561 square kilometers. It is made up of different towns and villages and among them is Boje. It is a predominantly rural area with most of the people involved in farming and other agricultural practices.

The stability of marriage in the Boki (Boje) community is supported and upheld by traditional beliefs and practices. The family culture is strong, although divorce does take place, albeit at a slightly lower frequency than in other developed regions. In this case, economic factors are considered to cause instability in marriages. As families struggle to manage scarce resources, tension results in disagreements and, in some cases, the breakdown of marriages (McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994). Since the community depends heavily on agriculture, it can be seen that the availability of money varies depending on the climate. If parents decide to divorce, then the role of the extended family becomes important for both the parents and the children. Historically, during a divorce, children are normally given to the mother, especially if they are young. The father may become less involved in the children's lives but he is required to provide for the children. This traditional practice ensures that children stay within familiar settings and are cared for by family members.

Such knowledge of divorce and co-parenting among these selected communities can yield important insights into how financial sustainability and expected roles determine marital stability and child well-being. Comparing these communities reveals the societal structures, economic status, cultural practices, and family relationships in Nigerian society.

Research Objectives

This research aims to examine how cultural norms, values, and community influences shape co-parenting practices and their impact on children's adjustment in non-Western cultural contexts. It

seeks to conduct a longitudinal analysis of co-parenting dynamics within Central Cross River communities, monitoring changes in co-parenting quality and their long-term associations with children's emotional, behavioral, and academic outcomes. By doing so, the study intends to illuminate the enduring effects of co-parenting on children's well-being within a specific cultural milieu. Additionally, the research aims to explore how regional characteristics—including socioeconomic conditions, educational opportunities, and access to community support networks—affect co-parenting dynamics and children's behaviors in Central Cross River communities. It seeks to provide nuanced insights into the contextual factors influencing co-parenting practices and child adjustment by examining these geographical variations.

Research Contribution

This research endeavors to address specific gaps in the literature by expanding knowledge on co-parenting dynamics and their implications for children's adjustment and well-being in culturally diverse and understudied regions like the Central Cross River communities. It aims to make theoretical, methodological, and practical contributions to the field of support for families experiencing divorce in similar cultural contexts globally. This approach enhances scholarly understanding of co-parenting and informs the development of interventions and policies tailored to diverse cultural and geographic contexts.

Methodology

Research Design

Given the subject matter, a mixed methods approach is ideal for this investigation. This approach allows for a comprehensive exploration of co-parenting relationships and their impact on children's development in Central Cross River communities. The quantitative component will provide numerical data to identify patterns and correlations between co-parenting dynamics and child outcomes (academic, behavioral, and emotional). Standardized questionnaires and surveys will be used to collect quantitative data on co-parenting effectiveness, indicators of children's adjustment, and demographic information from divorced parents and their children. Statistical techniques including correlation analysis, regression analysis, and comparative analysis will be employed to analyze the quantitative data. The qualitative component will offer an in-depth understanding of the perspectives, experiences, and daily lives of divorced parents and their children. Semi-structured interviews and focus groups will be conducted to explore experiences of co-parenting, family dynamics, and well-being perspectives. Thematic analysis or grounded theory approach will be used to analyze qualitative data and identify recurring themes, patterns, and variations in co-parenting practices and their effects on children.

Study Population and Sample

The research will focus on families with divorced parents residing in the Central Cross River regions of Nigeria, encompassing urban, suburban, and rural settings that reflect diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and cultural traditions.

Selection Criteria for Participants

1. Parents actively involved in co-parenting their children post-divorce.

2. Children aged between six and eighteen residing with one or both divorced parents.
3. Families residing in Central Cross River communities for at least one year to understand local dynamics.
4. Families where one divorced parent has minimal or no involvement in the child's upbringing.
5. Exclusion criteria include children with significant psychiatric or developmental issues that may hinder their participation.

Sample Size and Strategy

The study will employ purposive sampling initially to ensure a diverse participant pool based on children's ages, genders, socioeconomic backgrounds, and co-parenting dynamics (e.g., cooperative, contentious) across Central Cross River communities. The sample size will typically range from 30 to 50 families, sufficient for achieving saturation in qualitative data and statistical robustness in quantitative analysis.

Data Collection Techniques

To identify eligible participants, the researcher will collaborate with local organizations, schools, and community leaders in Central Cross River communities. Informed consent will be obtained from participants, ensuring understanding of the study's objectives, procedures, confidentiality measures, and voluntary nature. Surveys and interviews will be conducted with cultural sensitivity to respect participants' perspectives and customs. Data collection will be systematic and documented to maintain integrity.

Data Analytical Methodologies

The study will employ descriptive statistics to analyze fundamental characteristics of quantitative data gathered through surveys and questionnaires. Inferential statistics will be used to explore correlations, patterns, and differences among variables such as co-parenting effectiveness and indicators of children's well-being. Qualitative data from semi-structured interviews and focus groups will be analyzed using thematic analysis to uncover themes and patterns. This integrated approach aims to comprehensively explore the complex interactions between co-parenting dynamics and children's adjustment and well-being in Central Cross River communities, providing valuable insights and practical recommendations for supporting divorced families in diverse cultural contexts.

Results

The results are presented in two main sections: thematic analysis and descriptive statistics, and inferential analysis for the quantitative data.

TABLE 1: DEMOGRAPHICS

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA	2006 CENSUS	2022 PROJECTION	MALES	FEMALES	AGE
Yakurr	196,271	298,900	99,485	96,786	Ages 0-14: 74,481 Ages 15-64: 114,664 Ages 65+: 7,126
Obubra	172,543	262,800	87,153	85,390	Ages 0-14: 67,568 Ages 15-64: 99,038 Ages 65+: 5,937
Ikom	163,691	249,300	82,646	81,045	Ages 0-14: 65,324 Ages 15-64: 93,551 Ages 65+: 4,816
Boki	186,611	284,200	95,154	91,457	Ages 0-14: 71,662 Ages 15-64: 108,140 Ages 65+: 6,809

Source: National Population Commission of Nigeria (web)

Table 1 indicates the demographics of the participants ranging from the total inhabitants within the selected communities/LGAs in the scope of this study.

TABLE 2: Presentations of Population by Selected Communities

COMMUNITIES	POPULATION	SAMPLE SIZE
Yakurr (Ugep)	196,271	$\frac{196,450}{719,116} \times 268 = 73$
Obubra (Obubra)	172,543	$\frac{172,543}{719,116} \times 268 = 64$
Ikom (Ikom)	162,383	$\frac{162,383}{719,116} \times 268 = 61$
Boki (Boje)	186,611	$\frac{186,611}{719,116} \times 268 = 70$
TOTAL	719,116	268

Source: National Population Commission of Nigeria (web)

Table 2 shows that, at a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error, a sample size of 268 was determined using the sample size determination table provided by the Research Advisor. To guarantee representation across various socioeconomic origins and community contexts across central Cross River communities, stratified random sampling was employed.

TABLE 3: Responses on the outcomes of children from divorced homes

Effect of Divorce on Children	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Emotional instability	21	8.71
Academic difficulties	33	13.6
Sickness	40	16.5
Societal nuisance	15	6.22
Substance abuse	36	15.0
Addiction problems	11	4.60
Sexual abuse	19	8.0
Poverty	38	15.7
Dysfunctional families	28	11.6
TOTAL	241	100.0

Table 3 shows the results of the impact of divorce on the children who are most impacted. The findings show that the majority of respondents believed that poor parenting after divorce causes children in the study region to grow up to be liabilities to their extended families and society. This is explained by the fact that most children are raised by single parents (divorced), who thus provide them with inadequate parental guidance and care.

The findings underscore the crucial role of co-parenting relationships in influencing emotional, behavioral, and academic outcomes for children in Central Cross River communities. Conflictual co-parenting is associated with negative outcomes, whereas positive and cooperative co-parenting approaches correlate positively with children's adjustment. These findings underscore the importance of targeted interventions and community support to enhance co-parenting quality and promote the well-being of children across diverse cultural contexts.

Summary and Conclusion

Summary of Key Findings

This research investigated co-parenting dynamics among divorced couples and their impact on the adjustment and overall well-being of children in Central Cross River communities. The study concludes that higher co-parenting quality correlates with better emotional adjustment in children, reflected in reduced anxiety and depression scores. Improved academic performance and reduced behavioral issues such as aggression and disobedience are associated with cooperative co-parenting strategies. The negative effects of divorce on children can be significantly mitigated by community support networks and involvement from extended family members, which are prevalent in Central Cross River communities and influence co-parenting dynamics and child development.

Conclusion

This study underscores the importance of supportive and cooperative co-parenting for the emotional, behavioral, and academic adjustment of children in divorced families. The unique cultural context of Central Cross River communities highlights the need for culturally sensitive approaches to family support and intervention. Addressing the identified gaps and pursuing the suggested avenues for future research will enhance the well-being of children in divorced families and promote more effective co-parenting practices.

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