

SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS ATTITUDE TOWARDS DIVORCE: EFFECTS OF  
ACTIVITIES METHODS IN TEACHING FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION IN  
SOCIAL STUDIES IN KOGI STATE  
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EFFECTS OF ACTIVITIES METHODS IN TEACHING FAMILY LIFE  
EDUCATION IN SOCIAL STUDIES IN KOGI STATE**

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**Abstract**

*The study accessed activities method of teaching as against the conventional method in assessing the effects on family life education and attitude to divorce by junior secondary school students. As over time there have been degenerating family values in many societies, Nigeria inclusive, these problems had called for the introduction of family life and sexuality education in our national curriculum. The state of disorder among couples and family units and its embarrassing disintegration requires educational intervention. This study therefore attempted to examine the influence of family life education on secondary school students' attitude towards divorce using activities methods in social studies education in Kogi state. To guide the study, four research questions were raised and three hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance. The design adopted for the study was a quasi – experimental pretest and post-test non-equivalent control group. The research questions were answered using descriptive statistics of frequencies, percentage, mean and standard deviation, while the hypotheses were tested using students independent t-test. The findings of the study revealed that there was increase in the frequencies and percentages of students with negative attitude after treatment towards divorce, there was a significant difference in the mean scores of students between the experimental groups and the control groups. There was no significance difference in the attitude in the mean score of students based on sex and parental structure. It concluded that the teaching of family life education through activities method has a positive influence among students and thereby discouraging divorce. It recommends activities methods teaching such as role playing, dramatization, project methods and inquiry methods instead of the conventional lecture method.*

**Keywords:** Attitude, Divorce, Secondary School Students, Family Life, Social Studies

### **Introduction**

The issue of family life education has become issue of the concerns of Social Studies as a discipline because the domains of the subject include contemporary social issue in society. The question of adolescent attitudes towards divorce and the attendant implications have become very crucial and of multi-disciplinary concern, because of the complex nature and far-reaching consequences on the society. This is more so as family life education seems to be adopted as a handy tool for dissemination of information and strategy for revitalizing and degenerating family value, for moral character and attitude modification, to reduce the high rate of divorce among youths and other unpleasant consequences of mismanaged adolescent sexually, such as teenage father/mother force marriage and dropout of school.

Family life education is the process of developing awareness and understanding of population situations as well as rational attitude and behaviour towards those situations for the attainment of quality life of the family and the nation. Family life education is concerned with the study of attitudes and skills related to dating, marriage, parenthood, family health and life of the family on a socio-cultural and economic unit in the society. Family life education is an education acquired by individuals in a family through the study of attitude and skills related to dating, parenthood, family health, marriages and later life of the family. It is therefore an educational response which involves both cognitive and affective behaviours. It enables learners to perceive the world around them by promoting conducive intellectual environment to understand and prepare them for effective living. It is an educational motivation with the ultimate aim of improving the quality of life of the people.

Marriage is an important aspect of human societies which creates identity and root. It is a legal and social commitment that two people make to share their loves. It is believed to be for procreation, love, companionship, security, status, religious obligations, economic considerations and conforming to social standards. For a successful marriage one needs to be biologically, economically, emotionally and socially matured to take on the responsibilities of marriage. However, available statistics on marital breakdown shows that many couples who make such vows do not keep them to the end (Osaigbovo, 2012). The breakdown of marital relationship has become a global phenomenon affecting both rich and the poor, from the royal families of princes and princesses down to the peasant farmers in the villages. These show that marital breakdown knows no bounds irrespective of the socio-economic and political status of couples in contemporary society. This assertion is sustained because most couples frequently quarrel or fight which may eventually lead to separation and divorce in some cases.

Divorce which is a total dissolution of a malfunctioned marriage is focused

on one of the variables affecting the family stability because of the painful effects on child's psychological, cognitive and affective development. Divorce leaves children under the care of the embattled father or mother and in some cases; they are sent to their grandparents or relatives. For a child to be a functional member of his society as well as a future parent he needs to be well informed in the family life with emphasis on variables which enhance stability or discourage divorce irrespective of the fact that the child is from intact family or not. Early awareness of pressures ahead gives youth a chance to recognize in advance the kinds of situation in which they may find themselves. Effects of divorce on the family/society are child abandonment or desertion leading to a number of orphanage homes of child abuse, trafficking in children/women, prostitution and spread of human immune deficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS). Therefore, Nigerian youths must be informed and enlightened about healthy family life, perplexing rapid population growth, disease, values and attitude need for national cohesion, integration and unity which necessitated the study of Social Studies in various schools.

Family life education is the effort made by several American professional organizations and Universities to strengthen families through social science education. Family life education is the efforts of strengthen individual or family through a family perspective. The objective of family life education is to enrich and improve the quality of individual and family life, parenting, classes, pre-marriage education, marriage enrichment programmes and family financial planning courses are for examples of this human development profession.

Family life education works on a preparation model teaching families to enrich families and prevent problems before they occur. According to Beamish & Laria (2013) "family life education focuses on healthy family functioning within a family system perspective and provides a primary preventive approach". The skills and knowledge needed for healthy functioning is widely known. Strong communication skills, knowledge of typical human development, good decision making skills, positive self-esteem and health interpersonal relationships; the goal of family life education is to reach and foster this knowledge and these skills to enable individuals and family to function optimally.

Divorce usually entails the counsellor reorganising the legal duties and responsibilities of marriage, thus dissolving the bonds of matrimony between a married couple under the rules of law of the particular country. It can be said to be a legal dissolution of a marriage by a court or other competent body (Umoh, 2020, pp. 25).

There are many causes of divorce which can be different and for different reasons. An unsuccessful marriage is a maladjusted marriage. It involves resolving conflicts. Epstein & Eielson (1981) Ofoegbu (1998) pointed out that unrealistic and idealistic expectations are found to be among the factors causing unsuccessful marriage. Couples whose marriages are unsuccessful are usually disappointed, distrustful, hostile and distressed. Imogie (2004) observed that marital happiness

tend to show that there is a definite relationship between early marriage and subsequent unhappiness and divorce. Also, it has been observed that overall adjustment in marriage is tasking for teenagers who are not cognitively fit to face the marital relationship. The teenager is still battling with adolescent problems and may not readily cope with the demands of marital relationship. There is therefore high rate of marital breakdown among married young couples.

Another major cause of divorce is that a couple gets married too quickly and they have not spent enough time with each other getting into wedlock. Marriage is a lifelong responsibility and it needs to be handled maturely and with great care (Obi, 2008).

Divorce can devastate children, regardless of their age as they navigate their way towards adulthood. Youths are highly insecure, perhaps even more so than when they were children. Adolescents need the anchor of family stability as ever before (Newman, 2009). At the very time in life when youths are learning to fringe mature friendships, divine teaches them to be sceptical to such values as trust, loyalty and love. Later as adults they may avoid close relationships altogether (Newman, 2009), while it is common for children of all ages to act out their pain, adolescents are more likely to do so in dangerous ways including delinquency, alcohol and drug abuse.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Divorce is a growing social problem in the society in general and Nigeria in particular. The concern for arresting the social menace in apprehension of the negative effects it has on the individual family and the society at large. Nigeria is presently the eighth (8<sup>th</sup>) largest country in the world in term of population size. Her large population no doubt is putting pressure on the government and the individual families in terms of demand and supply of resources. The marriage institution is presently heavily affected by the pressure of high population growth, unemployment, and poor economic situation and so on as it is threatened from all directions. Other forms of threat are the gradual erosion of core values attached to matrimony in the past, particularly in terms of what kind of family values (education) youths are exposed to in the family and in school, and how much influences it has on youths' attitude towards marital stability and the marriage institution. In the face of adverse effects of divorce, the society is increasingly apprehensive of the ability of the marriage institution to survive and contribute to the nation's quest to develop its potentials. It becomes imperative to expose youths to knowledge on marital stability as part of school learning programme long before they attain the age of marriage and child bearing since the traditional means of checking youths' moral values seem to have broken down in the name of modernization. A response to this great of the society prompted this study using the school instructional approach. The study is concerned with whether family life education as theme in Social Studies will influence youth attitude towards divorce if taught by activities methods as against conventional lecture method.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to explore the instructional process in family life education as a means of influencing the attitude of youth towards divorce. Therefore, the specific objectives of the study are to:

1. determine the influence of family life education on youths' attitude towards divorce.
2. access if there is difference in teaching with activities method from conventional method on family life education on their attitude towards divorce.
3. examine the extent to which sex of youths influence the impact of family life education on their attitude towards divorce.
4. find out if parental structure of youths affects the impact of family life education on their attitude towards divorce.

### **Research Questions**

The following questions were raised to guide the study:

1. Will the knowledge of students in family life education influence their attitude towards divorce?
2. Will activities methods have more positive influence than conventional method in teaching family life education and the attitude of students towards divorce?
3. Will the knowledge of family life education in youths towards divorce be influenced by their sex?
4. Will the impact of family life education on youth attitude towards divorce be influenced by their parental structure?

### **Hypotheses**

To guide the study the following hypotheses were formulated for testing:

1. The effects of use of activities methods will not have significant effects on family life education and students attitude towards divorce.
2. The influence of family life education on youth attitude towards divorce will not be significantly influenced by their sex.
3. Parental structure of youths will not have significant influence on the impact of family life education and students attitude towards divorce.

### **Methodology**

The research design was quasi-experimental. The design for the study was the pre-test and post-test group design. The two groups was labelled group A (experimental) and group B (control). The control and experimental groups was pretested. The experimental group was exposed to six weeks of teaching on topics in family life education and youth's attitude towards divine using activities method while the control group was exposed using conventional method given the same test using questionnaire at the end of the session. The population of the study includes all second year J.S.S. 2 in Kogi Central and Western Senatorial Districts. The choice of

target population was informed by the possibility that student's ages fall within the (youth) adolescent age-bracket of 10-16.

Students in four intact classes were used for the study. Three local government areas were selected from the five local government areas in Kogi Central Senatorial and four local governments in West Senatorial District. From the sampled schools, one school each from urban and rural areas were used for the experimental group while one school each from urban and rural areas were used for the control group. A twenty item questionnaire on students' attitude towards divorce was used. The instrument was based on the modified Likert scale. It had four scales of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) weighted on 4, 3, 2 and 1. These instruments have two sections. Section A elicited personal information on respondents while section B measured their attitude towards divorce. The independent sample means was used for the data analysis. This statistical instrument will be used to test hypotheses, while research question was answered. The alpha level of significance will be at 0.05.

## Results

The study specifically determined the influence of activities/methods in teaching family life education on secondary school students' attitude towards divorce: Implications for Social Studies Education in Kogi State.

Table 1: Percentage of students with positive and negative attitudes towards divorce before and after treatment (n=104).

<b>Attitude</b>	<b>Before Treatment Freq.</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>After Treatment Freq.</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>% Diff.</b>
Positive	26	12.90	101	97.10	84.20
Negative	182	87.50	3	2.90	85.60

Table 1 shows that 26 students which represent 12.90% of the sample students taught with activities methods of teaching have positive attitude and 182 of them which represent 87.50% had negative attitude towards divorce before treatment. The table also showed that 202 of them which represent 97.10% had positive attitude and 6 of them which represents 2.90% have negative attitude towards divorce after the treatment. This shows that, there was an increase of 84.20% in the percentages of students with positive attitude and a decrease of 2.90 in the percentage of those with negative attitude after the treatment. The result shows there was an increase of positive attitude after the post test. Consequently, it may be explained that the use of activities methods increased the number of students who originally have positive attitude and decrease the number of students who originally had negative attitude.

Two hundred and eight students were taught with activities methods of teaching and two hundred and twenty students were taught with lecture method. Their attitude before treatment was measured. After the treatment, their attitudes

were equally measured. The result is summarized in table 2.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics showing students attitude mean scores at pre- and post-test based groups (n=214).

<b>Group</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Pre-test Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Post-test Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Post-test Mean</b>
Experimental	208	38.38	8.70	74.37	8.32	34.99
Control	220	36.73	9.44	69.09	10.50	32.36

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of students' attitude score based on groups. The table shows that a difference exists between the groups at both pre and post-test. At the pre-test level, the experimental group had a higher mean score of 38.38 with a standard deviation of 8.70 while the control group had a mean score of 36.73 with a standard deviation of 1.65. The mean difference within group was 35.99. At post-test, the experimental group scored higher marks with a mean score of 74.37 and a standard deviation of 8.32, than their control group counterparts who recorded a mean score of 69.09 with a standard deviation of 10.50. The difference in mean scores within the control group was 32.36. To determine if the difference was significant, independent sample t-test was used to test  $H_0$ , as shown.

$H_0$ : There is no significant difference in the attitude of students taught with activities methods towards family life education and those not taught with it at post-test.

Two hundred and eight students were taught with activities methods of teaching and two hundred and twenty students were taught with conventional method. Their attitude after treatment was measured treatment. The result is summarized in table 3.

Table 3: Students independent sample t-test statistics showing difference in students' attitude mean scores at post-test based groups

<b>Groups</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Mean Diff</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>Teal</b>	<b>Sig(@2-tail)</b>
Experimental	208	74.37	5.38	212	4.06	0.00
Control	220	69.09				

Table 3 shows the students' independence sample t-test statistics of difference between the experimental and control group attitude mean scores of students at post-test. The table showed that the difference between the experimental and control group students attitude mean scores at post test is significant. This is because the calculated sig value of 0.00 is less than the critical sig value of 0.05. This shows that there was a significant difference in the attitude means scores of both group students at post-test. With this  $H_0$ , which says that there is no significant difference in the attitude of students taught with activities methods of teaching towards family life

education and those taught with conventional method at post-test was rejected.

Two hundred and eight students were taught with activities methods of teaching, of which one hundred and twelve were males while ninety-six were females. Their attitude after treatment was measured. The result is summarized in table 4.

Table 4: Descriptive statistics showing activities methods methods of teaching students post attitude mean scores based on gender (n=104)

<b>Gender</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Mean Diff</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Male	112	73.44		8.98
			1.98	
Female	96	75.44		7.43

Table 4 shows descriptive statistics of the experimental group students mean post attitude scores based on gender. With a mean score of 73.44 and a standard deviation of 8.98, the male students scored higher marks than their female counterparts, who recorded a mean score of 75.44 and a standard deviation of 7.43. The difference in mean between the male and female attitude score is 1.98. To determine if the difference is significant, student independent sample t-test was used to test  $H_0$ , since there was no significant difference at pre-test also.

$H_0$ : There is no significant difference in attitude of male and female students taught with activities methods of teaching towards family life education.

Table 5: Independent sample student's test statistics showing difference between male and female with activities methods of teaching students post attitude mean score (n=104)

<b>Gender</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Mean Diff</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>Teal</b>	<b>Sig (2-tail)</b>
Male	112	73.46				
			1.98	102	1.21	0.23
Female	96	75.44				

Table 5 shows the students independent sample t-test statistics difference between male and female students post attitude mean scores of the experimental group. It shows that the difference in mean between the male and female students taught with activities methods of teaching as observed was not significant. This is because the calculated sig value of 0.23 is higher than the critical sig value of 0.05. This shows that there was no significant difference in the post attitude means scores between the male and female students of the experimental group. With this, the  $H_0$ , which states that there is no significant difference in attitude of male and female students taught with activities methods of teaching towards divorce was retained.

Table 6: Descriptive statistics showing students taught with activities method post attitude mean scores based on family structure (n=104)

Family Structure	N	Mean	Mean Diff	Std. Deviation
Intact family	186	74.56		8.60
Single Parent	22	72.83	1.73	5.55

Table 6 shows the descriptive statistics of the students taught with activities methods of teaching mean post attitude scores based on family structure. With a mean score of 74.56 and a standard deviation of 8.60, the students from intact family scored higher marks than their counterparts from single parents' homes, who recorded a mean score of 72.83, with a standard deviation of 5.55. The differences in means between students from the intact family and single parent home attitude score is 1.73. To determine if the difference is significant, students independent sample t-test was used to test H<sub>05</sub> since there was no significant difference at pre-test also.

H<sub>03</sub>: There is no significant difference in the attitude of students from intact and single homes taught with activities methods of teaching towards family life education.

Table 7: Independent sample student's test statistics showing difference between Intact family and Single parent home students taught with activities methods of teaching students post attitude mean scores (n=104)

Family Structure	N	Mean	Mean Diff	Df	Teal	Sig(2-tail)
Single parent home	22	72.83				
Intact family	186	74.56	1.73	102	0.65	0.51

Table 7 shows the students' independent sample t-test statistics of difference between single parent home and intact family students post attitude mean scores of those students taught with participatory methods of teaching. The table shows that the difference in mean between the single home and intact families' students with participatory methods of teaching as observed in table 7 was not significant. This is because the calculated sig value of 0.51 is higher than the critical sig value of 0.05. This means that there was no significant difference in the post attitude means scores between single parent and intact families students taught with teachers' analytical skills. With this, H<sub>05</sub> which says that there is no significant difference in the attitude of students from intact and broken families taught with activities method in family life education towards divorce was retained.

### Conclusion

The ultimate purpose of the study was to examine the effects of activities method on the teaching of family life education and the students' attitude towards divorce.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings, if population and family life education is well taught using activities method can positively influenced students' attitude towards divorce in future life situation. Secondly, since the teaching of population and family life education will positively influence how to solve the problem of divorce, it is suggested that teachers should use activities method to teach these concepts for better understanding and change of attitude. Lastly, the study suggests that influence of population and family life education is not sex, and family structure biased, it is recommended that teacher use of activities method of teaching should be used in the teaching of students irrespective of sex and family structure in the concept of population and family life education towards the change of positive attitude to success of marriage and shunning of divorce.

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