

The effects of adult separation on children's academic and psychosocial wellbeing at school: a case study of Senga Primary school in Gweru, Zimbabwe

Tadios Chisango, Michelle Mapulazi, Lissa Hombarume, Penelope Marombere and Bekithemba Ngwenya

Abstract

This study investigated the lived experiences of children from a primary school in the Gweru region of Zimbabwe, whose parents were either separated or divorced. The study was undertaken to ascertain how these learners are psychologically and academically affected by their family situations. The data were gathered using narrative stories, personal narrative diary entries, and interviews. The study was qualitative in nature and aimed to achieve an in-depth understanding of the topic through studying 12 participants, who were purposely sampled. The data were transcribed and analysed using the open-coding technique and thematic analysis. The results revealed that even though the effects of the divorce and separation varied, the participants shared similarities with regard to their emotional states. They invariably experienced feelings of sadness, distress, abandonment, anger, helplessness, and stress. The results also indicated that divorce had a significant impact on the participants' academic behaviour, school lives and integration at school. The researchers made recommendations which would improve the children's plight.

Keywords: Divorce, separation, Children, Psycho-social wellbeing, Academic effects