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## SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF PARENTS AND STUDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE IN EDO STATE

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### Abstract

*Marriage and divorce are important social institutions that have a big effect on how teens feel and act. In Nigeria, parental socio-economic status (SES) significantly influences adolescents' perceptions of familial dynamics, stability, and prospective marital choices. This study examined the socio-economic position of parents and the views of Junior Secondary School students in the Egor Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria, towards marriage and divorce. The research utilised a survey design, directed by three research questions and three hypotheses. The population consisted of 7,674 Junior Secondary School pupils from twelve public institutions. A multi-stage sampling approach was employed to choose a sample of 240 Junior Secondary School 3 (JSS3) pupils, consisting of 130 males and 110 females, which represents roughly 3.13% of the total population, from six zones within the local government territory. Data were gathered through a standardised questionnaire named Family Background Influence on Students' Attitude towards Marriage and Divorce (FBISAMD), which underwent validation by experts and shown reliability with a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.78. The researcher,*

*along with trained research assistants, gave out the surveys. The data were examined utilising descriptive statistics, independent t-tests, and chi-square analysis at a significance level of 0.05. The results indicated no substantial disparity in the average responses of male and female students on their attitudes towards marriage and divorce in the Egor Local Government Area of Edo State. The study identified a significant impact of parental socio-economic position on students' attitudes about marriage and divorce. It is advisable for educational and community programs to integrate understanding of family background and offer counselling regarding the social and economic factors that affect attitudes towards marriage and divorce.*

**Keywords:** Parental socio-economic status, Students' attitudes, Marriage, Divorce, Social Studies

### **Introduction**

Marriage and divorce appear to be central themes within family life education, which is often regarded as a significant component of the Social Studies curriculum. The general objective of family life education may be understood as equipping learners with basic knowledge, value orientations, and decision-making competencies that are presumed to contribute to responsible living and to the resolution of personal and communal challenges. Within this framework, Social Studies is thought to play a potentially influential role in shaping learners' perspectives on key social institutions, including marriage and the implications of its breakdown. Marriage is often viewed not solely as a private arrangement but as a culturally embedded institution that may symbolize continuity, social order, and companionship. According to Bolarinwa et al. (2022) marriage is a legally and socially recognised relationship between a man and a woman that usually involves a transfer from one's family of origin to

the construction of a new household. In many traditional African societies, marriage is conceptualised as both a personal commitment and a collective responsibility. According to Ajayi (2021), in many African societies, the validity of marriage is typically related to certain cultural milestones such as childbirth. Such expectations may contribute to the view of marriage as a lifelong commitment, the termination of which frequently has substantial social and emotional implications.

Socio-cultural and religious factors can impact parental views on marriage and divorce. Marriage is revered in conservative and traditional cultures. Religious beliefs, communal expectations, and family continuation goals shape these attitudes. Parents who view marriage as a duty and a source of stability may pass on these attitudes to their children. Thus, parental attitudes and actions may affect teenagers' views of marriage, commitment, and conflict resolution. In such cases, a happy and cooperative family may inspire marital harmony. Not all parents like marriage. In conflict, neglect, or abuse households, children may develop unfavourable or ambivalent marriage attitudes, according to Goldberg et al. (2024). Parents' opinions may unintentionally affect long-term relationships. Divorce may be a necessary step towards mental or physical healing, not a societal failure. Anecdotal data shows that children from such conditions may be more inclined to accept divorce as a regular relationship solution, but empirical findings are equivocal and may vary by culture and socioeconomic class.

The curriculum emphasises interpersonal communication, mutual respect, gender justice, conflict resolution, and family life to assist students acquire informed and responsible marital ideas. Social Studies in Nigerian elementary and junior secondary schools should encourage civic responsibility, social integration, and morality (Federal Ministry of Education, 2024).

Social class may influence parental and student opinions on marriage and divorce. Jankowska et al. (2024) defined SES as household income, education, occupation, and social capital. Children with higher SES had better schooling, relationship, and future planning attitudes. Higher SES households provide superior educational assistance, emotional stability, and supervision, which

may idealise marriage. Some empirical studies have addressed this. Omi-Ujuanbi and Osumah (2024) surveyed 273 Ambrose Alli University undergraduates about premarital counselling using a self-designed questionnaire. Negative views prevailed regardless of gender or religion. The authors suggest institutional counselling to improve student views. In Oredo LGA, Edo State, Iyamu and Imasuen (2024) evaluated single motherhood, polygamy, and family socioeconomic position as predictors of senior secondary school delinquency. A validated questionnaire with a reliability coefficient of 0.83 was analysed using regression analysis on 400 student responses. After the study found that non-nuclear families increased juvenile delinquency, family stability was advised. In Egor LGA, Edo State, Aghahowa and Bazuaye (2025) explored how family structure influences JSS 3 students' marriage and divorce attitudes. ANOVA and LSD post-hoc testing were used to evaluate data from 380 students from six public schools using a validated and confirmed questionnaire ( $\alpha = 0.74$  for marriage;  $\alpha = 0.70$  for divorce). Monogamous students were more passionate about marriage and less accepting of divorce than single-parent students. Urbanisation, gender parity, and economic developments necessitate research on how socioeconomic status affects marriage and divorce perspectives. Young individuals are exposed to more family and relationship models, which may shape their views. This complexity necessitates an empirical investigation of SES and student marital outlooks to understand increasing familial ideologies.

Social Studies family life education may help students acquire healthy views towards marriage and divorce. In Nigeria, especially in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State, family environment, social interactions, media exposure, and possibly parents' socioeconomic level affect students' opinions on marriage and divorce. Marriage may be losing its sacredness due to increased divorce rates and changing millennial attitudes. Higher SES students may view marriage more positively, while lower SES students may accept divorce owing to familial instability. These findings suggest that parental SES affects Egor LGA students' marriage and divorce attitudes, although little is known. This study asks: 'to what extent will parents' socio-economic situation be related to students' marriage and

divorce attitudes?. This study examined the socio-economic status (SES) of parents and the views of junior secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria, towards marriage and divorce. The study aimed to:

- i. investigate the prevailing attitudes of students regarding marriage and divorce in the Egor Local Government Area of Edo State;
- ii. analyse the impact of parental socio-economic status on students' attitudes towards marriage in the Egor Local Government Area of Edo State;
- iii. assess the effect of parental socio-economic status on students' attitudes towards divorce in the Egor Local Government Area of Edo State.

### **Research Questions**

One research questions were stated to guide the study:

What are the prevailing attitudes of students toward marriage and divorce in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State?

### **Hypotheses**

**The following hypotheses were stated to guide the study.**

- H<sub>0</sub>1: There is no significant influence of parental socio-economic status on students' attitudes toward marriage in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State.
- H<sub>0</sub>2: There is no significant influence of parental socio-economic status on students' attitudes toward divorce in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State.

### **Methods**

Survey research was used in this study. This design was chosen to describe and characterise student views on marriage and divorce in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State and study how parental socio-economic status affects them. All 7,674 junior secondary school pupils in Egor Local Government Area from twelve public schools were included in this study (Edo State Ministry of Education, 2023).

Multi-stage sampling chose 240 JSS3 pupils. Egor LGA was divided into six zones: Ugbowo, Evbuotubu, Uselu, Ogida, Okhoro, and Ekenhuan. Simple random sampling picked one school from each zone, creating six schools. About 40 pupils from each school were randomly picked, totalling 240. It was a systematic questionnaire called “Family Background Influence on Students' Attitude towards Marriage and Divorce (FBISAMD).” The 35-item questionnaire had two portions. Section A included respondents' gender, age, and parental socio-economic status, while Section B examined students' marriage and divorce attitudes and their parents' socio-economic status. The researcher created and validated the instrument with two Social Studies experts from the Department of Curriculum and Instructional Technology (CIT) and one University of Benin Measurement and Evaluation lecturer. Their input assured content relevancy, clarity, and appropriateness in the final edition. The questionnaire's reliability was verified using Cronbach Alpha. A school in Egor Local Government Area that was not involved in the main study gave twenty JSS3 pupils 21 copies of the instrument. The instrument was reliable with a reliability coefficient of 0.78. Principals of chosen schools approved data gathering. Two trained research assistants helped the researcher deliver the questions. The assistants learnt about the study's goals and how to distribute and collect questionnaires. To ensure informed participation and honest responses, respondents were told the study's purpose. To answer study questions, descriptive statistics (mean scores and standard deviations) were used to analyse questionnaire data. Hypotheses were tested by inferential statistics. An independent t-test compared male and female student opinions about marriage and divorce, while chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) analysis explored parental socio-economic status' impact. The significance level for all hypothesis testing was 0.05.

## **Results**

### **Research Question 1:**

What are the prevailing attitudes of students toward marriage and divorce in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State?

**Table 1: Mean score of students' Attitudes toward Marriage and Divorce**

S/N	Questionnaire Items	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Decision
1	Marriage is a lifelong commitment that should be respected by all.	3.18	0.72	Agreed
2	Divorce is acceptable when couples are unhappy in their marriage.	2.74	0.77	Disagreed
3	People should stay in marriage even when facing serious challenges.	2.52	0.80	Disagreed
4	It is better to remain single than to marry and later divorce.	2.61	0.75	Disagreed
5	Young people should receive guidance before making decisions about marriage.	3.22	0.63	Agreed
6	Divorce can have a negative impact on children involved.	3.28	0.68	Agreed
7	Love is the only important factor in deciding who to marry.	2.65	0.79	Disagreed
<b>Cumulative Mean</b>		<b>2.89</b>		<b>Disagreed</b>

**Criterion mean=3.00**

The total mean score of 2.89 shows that students in Edo State's Egor Local Government Area are mostly conservative, but their opinions on marriage and divorce are not all that clear. They all agree that getting married is a big deal that should be thought through carefully before

anybody gets married. On the other hand, they are less likely to think that staying in a bad marriage or getting a divorce is a good idea. The answer ranges from 0.63 to 0.80, which shows that the results are not very consistent. This shows that each student has their own thoughts on marriage and divorce, and that they may have been taught different family or community norms about these topics.

### Hypothesis 1

There is no significant influence of parental socio-economic status on students' attitudes toward marriage in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State.

**Table 2: Chi-square analysis for the influence of parental socio-economic status on students' attitudes toward marriage**

Variables	N	df	Ls	Critical X <sup>2</sup> Value	Calculated X <sup>2</sup> Value	Decision
Parental Socio-Economic Status						
Attitudes Towards Marriage	240	2	0.05	5.991	6.482	<b>Ho Rejected</b>

At the 0.05 level of significance, the predicted chi-square value of 6.482 is greater than the important chi-square value of 5.991, as shown in Table 5. So, the null hypothesis that parental socioeconomic position doesn't have a big effect on how students in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State feel about marriage is officially thrown out. This shows that students' parents' socioeconomic position has a big effect on how they feel about marriage in the area that was studied.

### Hypothesis 2

There is no significant influence of parental socio-economic status on students' attitudes toward divorce in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State.



**Table 3: Chi-square Analysis for the Influence of Parental Socio-Economic Status on Students' Attitudes toward Divorce**

Variables	N	df	Ls	Critical X <sup>2</sup> Value	Calculated X <sup>2</sup> Value	Decision
Socio-Economic Status	240	2	0.05	5.991	6.162	<b>Ho Rejected</b>
Attitudes Towards Divorce						

Table 3 shows that the calculated chi-square value of 6.162 is greater than the critical chi-square value of 5.991 at the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant influence of parental socio-economic status on students' attitudes toward divorce in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State is rejected. This implies that parental socio-economic status has a significant influence on students' attitudes toward divorce in the area studied.

### Discussions

The study found no difference in male and female student views on marriage and divorce. It appears that both genders view these social structures similarly. Kaufman et al. (2025) found that modern education, media, and socialisation have blurred gender distinctions in students' marriage and family life views. According to De Coninck et al. (2021), male and female students have similar views on marriage and divorce, emphasising equal and inclusive education.

The study also found that parental socioeconomic level strongly influences students' marital views. This suggests that students' marriage views are influenced by their family' finances and education. Genicot and Hernandez-de-Benito (2025) agree that family composition, parenting styles, religious affiliation, and geographic location influence people's attitudes and decisions, especially towards marriage and divorce. According to Bazuaye and Aghahowa (2025), monogamous students had more positive opinions on marriage and divorce.

The study also indicated that parental socioeconomic level strongly influences students' divorce views. This suggests that a student's view of divorce is impacted by their family's wealth and status. Affluent children are more likely to consider divorce as an acceptable solution to marital issues, according to Kaufman et al. (2025), due to their exposure to modern ideals and lessened dependency on marriage for economic security. Akhtar et al. (2024) found that lower-class people are more conservative about divorce due to cultural expectations and financial worries. These studies show that socioeconomic background strongly influences students' divorce views.

### **Conclusion**

The data imply both male and female students in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State have comparable views on marriage and divorce. This suggests that gender beliefs are similar due to common socialisation, education, and societal norms. More crucially, the study shows that parents' socioeconomic level affects students' views on marriage and divorce. Students from different socioeconomic origins have different views on marriage and divorce, highlighting the importance of family finances, education, and social exposure. Cultural capital, information, and economic security may influence how higher-class people see marriage and divorce.

### **Recommendations**

The report made various recommendations for future actions and policy. First, instructional programs on marriage and divorce should include family background understanding. Schools and community organisations can also offer counselling and courses to help students understand how social and economic variables affect family life. Policymakers implementing youth-focused programs that promote healthy family values and relationships should also consider socioeconomic inequities. Parents should be encouraged to discuss marriage and divorce with their children to help them build balanced and educated opinions. Finally, cultural and religious influences on students' views on marriage and divorce should be studied.

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