

## Parents Communication after Divorce and Its Impact on their Children Behavior



### Education

**Keywords:** divorce, problems behaviors, communication level, nonparametric level.

Ardiana Mali

Faculty of Educational Sciences  
University "A. Xhuvani" of Elbasan, Albania.

### Abstract

The goal of this paper is to determine the level of the communication of divorced parents and its impact on children problems behavior. This is a quantitative study which is focused on the children behavior problems with divorced parents aged 6-18 years old. The identification of the parents communication level is realized using the SDQ questionnaire, (Goodman 1997). The data of this study were self-reported by 400 children in the secondary and high schools of Elbasan district during the academic year 2013-2014. The statistical data processed using nonparametric Spearman's (rho) test, show that between the parents communication level after divorce and the children problems behavior a significant correlation exist,  $p=.039<.05$ . At the end of the study some recommendations regarding the role of the state institutions the in order to improve the management of the children problems behavior with divorced parents are given.

### Introduction

The divorce it is not a temporary experience for the child, but a process which lasts for many years, (Goodman et al., 1998). Many authors analyze the divorce from different points of view. Some of them try to compare the behavior of children with divorced parents with that of children without divorced parents. Meanwhile some others are focused on the children behavior with divorced parents analyzing their behavior with that of their classmate, their teachers and their parents. Also some others are focused on the impact of the relation mother-father, parent-child and grandparent –parent on child development in family, Hart, C. H., Olsen, S. F., Robinson, C.C dhe Mandleco, B.L. (1997). Farthermore the other authors say that when the marriage is harshly and unstable the parents tend to become less amenable toward the requests of their children. In this situation the parents show more boredom, harshness, and sometimes they punish them, Cox, M. J., Paley, B., dhe Harter, K. (2001). The children who live in this situation show many behavior problems, Davies, P. T., Myjers, R. L., dhe Cummings, E. M. (1996). The purpose of our study is to determine the level of parents communication after divorc in the behavior of their children. The data are selfreported by the children.

### Methods

The study is based on the quantitative method. The level of children behavior is based on the questionnaire SDQ, (Goodman, 1997). The teachers, parents and children complete it in five minutes. The questionnaire has 25 questions which are divided in five scales. It is completed by 400 students aged from 6 to 18 year old. All of them were students of public schools in Elbasan district during the 2013-2014 academic year. Among them 51 % were male and 49 % female. Statistical processing is based on the SPSS 20 and alfa Cronbah is .77. The minimum value of scores is 5 and the maximum is 15. The nonparametric Spearman's test, (rho) is used to.

### Results and Discussions

The results presented in **table 1** show a strong correlation between variables: parents communication and the children behavior with a correlation coefficient .103 and  $p = .039 < .05$  which shows a significant correlation.

**Table 1. The correlation between parents communication after divorce and children behavior**

			Parents Understanding After Divorce	Emotional Symptoms	In Group Behavior	Hyperactivity	In Group Behavior	Prosocial Behavior	
Spearman's rho	Parents understanding after divorce	Correlation coefficient	1.000	.069	.103*	-.047	.073	.073	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.170	.039	.346	.144	.147	
	Emotional symptoms	Correlation coefficient		1.000	.260**	.295**	.137**	-.029	
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.	.000	.000	.006	.560	
	Behavior problems	Correlation coefficient			1.000	.101*	.090	-.055	
		Sig. (2-tailed)			.	.044	.071	.274	
	Hyperactivity	Correlation coefficient				1.000	.147**	-.048	
		Sig. (2-tailed)				.	.003	.340	
	Problems in group behavior	Correlation coefficient					1.000	.110*	
		Sig. (2-tailed)					.	.028	
	Prosocial behavior	Correlation coefficient						1.000	
		Sig. (2-tailed)						.	
	*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).								
	**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).								

The linear regression shows that the parents communication after divorce affects the children behavior. The parents communication after divorce based on the children perception are presented in table 2. Based on these data, 199 children or 49.1% of them say that their parents don't communicate with each other, meanwhile 187 or 47.3% of them show that their parents have a good communication, and only 14 children or 3.5% of them prove that their parents have a very good communication after divorce. Also the data show that the maximum points of parents who don't communicate is 61, which belongs to abnormal level with 59-75 points.

**Table 2. Statistical data about the parents communication after divorce**

Parents understanding after divorce	N	Average	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Total %
Without communication	199	43.5477	5.72752	32.00	61.00	49.1%
On the average	187	44.6471	5.54682	32.00	60.00	47.3%
Very good	14	44.6429	6.82312	33.00	55.00	3.5%
Total	400	44.1000	5.69571	32.00	61.00	100.0%

Some data about the dependence of the children behavior and the parents communication in table 3 are presented. The value of the regression coefficient show that 0.8% of the children behavior variable predicts by the parents communication after divorce.

**Table 3. The dependence of the children behavior variable by the parents communication after divorce**

Model	R	R square	R approximate square	Standard error of evaluation	Statistical change					Durbin-Watson
					R square change	Change	df1	df2	Sig. F change	
1	.091 <sup>a</sup>	.008	.006	5.67894	.008	3.359	1	398	.068	1.709

a. Prediction: (Constant),parents communication after divorce

b. Dependence variable:children behavior

Monitoring studies show that the children show fear, anger, or braking of the normal behavior in front of the conflict parents. This conflict parents is highest in the parents with the low level of education. The parents conflict in front of children stress them, (Cummings, E. M. 1987). Preschools, who attempt to be egocentric, try to blame them-self, considering them self as a cause of their parents conflict. Also the parents conflict trends to show a negativ efect on relations between parents and their children, (Davies, P.T., and Cummings, E. M. 1994). According to Gerard, J. M., Krishnakumar, A., and Buehler, C. (2006), it is clear that the poor relation between parents conflict and children behavior is a result of their parents punishments. Also through their verbal and physical agression they show in front of their children the parents “ teach” them to solve the problems throughout the conflict and not by the quite conversation. As a result of that the children are not able to learn the social abilities which are a necessity in the group reciprocal relationships, (Amato, P. R., and Booth, A. 2001). But some other studies show that the children without divorced parents have problems behavior when their parents conflict in front of them. (Amato, P., and A. Booth. 1997; Emery, R. E. 1999).

## Conclusions

The data of this study show that the parents communication after divorce affects 0.8% on children behavior. Also the results show that a correlation between parents communication and the children behavior problems exists. The coefficient correlation is significant, .103 and  $p = .039 < .05$ .

## Recommendations

The specialists of the goveral institutions and the NGO should create the adaptable programs in order to improve the parents communication after the divorce, which will have an positive impact in the children behavior. These programs will decrease the stress level of the parents after divorce and will protect the children throughout the community centers, mass media, sports, etc. A permanent cooperation between teachers, divorced parents and their children in school should be a permanent necessity.

## References

1. Amato, P., and A. Booth. (1997). *Generation at Risk: Growing Up in an Era of Family Upheaval*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.
2. Amato, P. R. and Booth, A. (2001). The legacy of parents' marital discord: consequences for children's marital quality, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 81, 627-638.
3. Cox, M. J., Paley, B., and Harter, K. (2001). "Interparental Conflict and Parent-Child Relationships." In *Interparental Conflict and Child Development*, (Ed.), J. H. Grych and F. D. Fincham. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. <http://family.jrank.org/pages/921/Interparental-Conflict-Effects-on-Children-Conclusion.html>
4. Cummings, E. M. (1987). Coping with background anger in early childhood. *Child Development*. 58, 976-984.
5. Davies, P. T., and Cummings, E. M. (1994). Marital conflict and child adjustment: An emotional security hypothesis. *Psychological Bulletin*; 116: 387-411. [www.researchgate.net](http://www.researchgate.net)
6. Davies, P. T., Myjers, R. L., and Cummings, E. M. (1996). Responses of children and adolescence to marital conflict scenarios as a function of the emotionality of conflict endings. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, 42, 1-21.
7. Emery, R. E; (1999). Post divorce family life for children; An overview of research and some implications for policy. In R. A. Thompson and P. R. Amato (Eds.). *The post divorce family: Children, parenting, and society*, 3-27. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
8. Gerard, J. M., Krishnakumar, A., and Buehler, C. (2006). Marital conflict, parent-child relations, and youth maladjustment: A longitudinal investigation of spillover effects. *Journal of Family issues*, 27, 951-97.
9. Goodman, R. (1997). The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire: A research note. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*. 38, 581-586.
10. Goodman, G., Emery, R., and Hauggard, J. J. (1998). Developmental psychology and the law: Divorce, child maltreatment, foster care, and adoption. In I. Sigel & A.
11. Hart, C. H., Olsen, S. F., Robinson, C. C., and Mandlco, B. L. (1997). The development of social and communicative competence in childhood: Review and a model of personal, familiar and extra-familiar processes. *Communication Year book*, 20, 305-373.