



For Better or Worse? Marital Conflicts and Divorce Narratives among Celebrity Couples in Nigeria

Olugbenga Seun Aina*

Peace and Development Studies Programme, Institute of Communication and General Studies, Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria

*Corresponding author: ainaos@funaab.edu.ng

Received: 5 September 2026 • Accepted: 6 October 2026 • Published: 17 October 2026

ABSTRACT

This study examines marital conflict and divorce narratives among Nigerian celebrity couples, which have become recurrent episodes, often playing out across traditional media and digital platforms. Despite the sanctity of marriage and the sacredness of marital vows, the number of celebrity breakups not only keeps increasing but also signals shifting attitudes towards marriage, gender, and privacy in Nigeria's public space. Drawing on social exchange and symbolic interactionism theories and using content analysis of media reports, celebrity interviews, and social media discourse from 2009-2025, this paper focuses on high-profile breakups involving Nollywood and Kannywood actors, musicians, and media personalities. The study identifies dominant causal factors, which include infidelity, financial disputes, career incompatibility, domestic violence, irreconcilable differences and the role of public scrutiny in escalating conflict. The findings show that while the public frequently raises traditional expectations of marital endurance, female submission, and reputation management, younger audiences increasingly frame divorce as a reasonable response to abuse, incompatibility, and personal well-being. Although celebrities use direct posts to control narratives, they remain vulnerable to speculation, misinformation, and gendered moral policing. It further finds that the narratives of celebrity marital breakdowns in Nigeria are not merely personal events but cultural texts that mirror broader societal tensions between modern individualism and entrenched marital norms, and that they shape public perceptions of divorce beyond the elite class. By analysing these narratives, the paper examines how media, celebrities, and audiences construct meaning around marital breakdown and what this reveals about contemporary Nigerian society.

Keywords: Celebrity, Divorce, Separation, Marital Conflict, Media Framing

Cite this article: Aina, O. S. (2026). For better or worse? Marital conflicts and divorce narratives among celebrity couples in Nigeria. *African Journal of Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 16(8), 2364–2378. <https://doi.org/10.68442/ajsbs/2026/v16i8.001>

Introduction

Divorce as a social problem is a global phenomenon that attracts grave consequences in different nations across the world (Nwanosike, 2025). Among diverse ethnic groups in Nigeria, marriage is culturally constructed as a sacred and lifelong contract, reinforced by religious institutions, kinship networks, and communal expectations. From legal perspective, marriage is a voluntary union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others for the rest of their lives, governed by laws, rules, customs and ethos that prescribe the rights and obligations of the parties involved, for the purpose of founding and maintaining a family (Osugwu et al., 2023; Oloyede et al., 2024; Obi & Aduma, 2026). However, marriage is increasingly being regarded as a relationship rather than a contract, and the rate of divorce is quite alarming in recent times (Afolayan, 2025). By getting married, many people do not perceive themselves as entering a binding lifelong contract. Rather, they are hoping to establish a personally satisfying relationship (Collins-Dike, 2025). Marital conflicts, which arise from disagreement, quarrels, clashes, or strife between husband and wife, and sometimes with other members of the household, over opposing needs, ideas, beliefs, values or goals, are inevitable; and poorly managed ones often sadly end up in divorce (Aniche, 2015; Agboola et al., 2018; Ozad et al., 2020).

Despite the fact that it is legally recognised, divorce remains stigmatised, particularly for women who face economic hardship, social, and moral sanctions after dissolution (Baguda et al., 2025; Obi & Aduma, 2026). However, demographic data indicate a gradual rise in marital dissolution. Although the 2006 National Population Census recorded 704,000 divorced Nigerians (230,000 males and 474,000 females), the official statistics are at variance with reality. This is because official data by the National Bureau of Statistics tremendously understate Nigeria's divorce rates, as many separations/divorces, which are customary/religious, are not court-recorded. Thus, there is a problem of underreporting because most divorces under customary/Islamic law are not captured in court statistics, and the actual prevalence is not well documented nationally, leading to a data gap. The disparity between official data and reality is because there is no national database for customary and Islamic divorces (Ikubanni et al., 2023).

Recent evidence indicates that marital dissolution is an important demographic and social issue in Nigeria, although estimates vary according to the population and measures used. Using pooled data from the 2008, 2013, and 2018 Nigeria Demographic and Health Surveys (NDHS), Ononokpono et al. (2025) examined divorce and separation among 116,795 ever-married women aged 15-49 years and reported an increase in the proportion of women who had divorced or separated from their partners from 17.0% in 2008 to 60.4% in 2018. This finding reflects the trend reported within their analytical sample and should not be interpreted as the national prevalence of divorce among all Nigerian women. Regional variation has also been documented. Using data from the 2018/2019 Nigeria Living Standard Survey and the 2018 NDHS, Arigbede (2025) reported marital dissolution rates of 7.2% in the South-South, the highest among the six geopolitical zones, and 1.3% in the North-West, the lowest. Divorce is highly stigmatised in the North, where women often face social exclusion, economic hardship, and reduced prospects for remarriage (Baguda et al., 2025), unlike in the South-West and South-South, where women experience a rise in financial independence (Arigbede, 2025). Nigeria's divorce rate as at 2023 was 2.9%, and this placed Nigeria 11th globally for highest divorce rates (Taiwo, 2025; Saanyol, 2025).

This shift is particularly visible in the entertainment industry, where the marriages and separations of Nollywood/Kannywood actors, musicians, and media personalities frequently dominate public discourse. Celebrity marriages are no longer private affairs as social media platforms often transform personal disputes into public spectacles, where announcements of separation, allegations of infidelity, and counter-narratives circulate within hours. High-profile separations have dominated headlines, gossip blogs, and social media timelines over one decade (Onikoyi & Ebirim, 2013; Banjo, 2021). Unlike ordinary citizens, celebrity couples navigate marital breakdown under intense public scrutiny, and their disputes are announced, narrated, debated, and moralised in real time by diverse audiences. This transforms private conflict into a national conversation (Onodjæ, 2025). The media plays a central role in shaping these narratives. Linguistic analysis of Nigerian newspaper reports shows that divorce stories often use negative other-representation, framing husbands as adulterers or abusers and wives as uncaring or diabolical, while each party constructs themselves as the aggrieved victim (Osisanwo & Oluwayemi, 2018; Bassey, 2025). On social media, the dynamics change further, as celebrities gain direct access to audiences and can control their narratives, but they also face intensified scrutiny, speculation, and moral judgement.

This situation reflects a broader tension between tradition and modernity in Nigerian society. While cultural and religious norms continue to emphasise marital endurance and female sacrifice, younger Nigerians and urban populations increasingly view divorce as a legitimate response to abuse, infidelity, and incompatibility. Celebrity divorce narratives sit at the intersection of these tensions, serving as cultural texts through which the public negotiates changing attitudes towards marriage and family. This phenomenon raises questions about the connection of fame, gender, and cultural norms. Nigeria's socio-cultural context views divorce as taboo, particularly for women, who face labelling as "troublemakers" and risk economic and social exclusion.

Despite extensive media coverage, academic research on celebrity divorce narratives in Nigeria remains limited. Existing studies focus on divorce from sociological, psychological, religious, and linguistic perspectives, but few examine how celebrity marital conflicts are narrated in the public domain and what these narratives signify for broader attitudes towards marriage and divorce. This gap is critical because celebrity couples function as cultural symbols and role models, and their marital breakdowns influence public perceptions of acceptable marital conduct. This study therefore explores marital conflicts and

divorce narratives among Nigerian celebrity couples. By analysing media reports, social media posts, and public statements, the study not only seeks to uncover the cultural, gendered, and economic meanings embedded in these narratives, but also contributes to debates on family change, media culture, and the negotiation of tradition and modernity in contemporary Nigeria.

Research Questions

This study intends to answer the following questions:

- i. What are the major causes and recurring themes in narratives of marital conflict and divorce among Nigerian celebrity couples from 2009 to 2025?
- ii. How do celebrities, the media, and social media audiences construct meanings around celebrity marriage, divorce, and gender roles?
- iii. How does public scrutiny influence the representation of celebrity marital conflict and divorce in Nigeria?
- iv. What do celebrity divorce narratives reveal about changing attitudes towards marriage, divorce, gender expectations, and personal well-being in contemporary Nigeria?

Conceptual Clarification

In Nigerian family law and scholarship, divorce and separation are operationalised as distinct but related constructs, though demographic surveys often aggregate them due to data limitations (Ononokpono et al., 2025). The distinction is critical for academic work because datasets and legal systems treat them differently. However, media often conflate legal divorce with separation. Conceptually and from a legal perspective, separation denotes cessation of cohabitation without dissolution of the marital bond. Thus, parties remain *de jure* married. (Matrimonial Causes Act, 1970, s. 39). Parties to a separation lack legal capacity to remarry as a subsequent marriage constitutes bigamy under the Criminal Code Act (2004, s. 370). On the other hand, divorce constitutes judicial or customary termination of the marriage contract, restoring parties to single status with full capacity to remarry (Matrimonial Causes Act, 1970, ss. 15-16). In this situation, a marriage bond has broken irretrievably. Thus, dissolution of marriage or divorce is a formal, legal ending of a marriage or marital union by a court of law (Osuagwu et al., 2023). It is to be noted that under separation, the couple are still married but just living apart, and it could lead to either divorce or reconciliation. Legally, neither of them has the right to remarry.

Divorce under the Matrimonial Causes Act differs procedurally from customary dissolution and Islamic *talaq*. Legally, divorce means that the marriage is dead or dissolved and the two of them are single again (Ojen, 2025). Based on typology under Nigeria's plural legal system, Statutory marriage upholds that judicial separation (means court orders that the couple no longer have to live together) may be granted on grounds identical to divorce, which include adultery, cruelty, or desertion of one year or more, but it does not dissolve the marriage. In a case of divorce, the court grants a decree nisi and a decree absolute after three months, which officially ends the marriage completely. Thus, divorce requires proof of irretrievable breakdown and culminates in a decree absolute. It has, however, been noted that the absence of a unified legal framework for pre-nuptial agreements complicates dissolution processes (Ikubanni et al., 2023). Customary marriage indicates that *De facto* separation occurs through spousal relocation or family intervention, often without refund of bride price, indicating the marriage subsists. Both remain married and cannot remarry, but inheritance or will benefits may change. Divorce is perfected upon refund of bride price and performance of dissolution rites before family elders (Ikubanni et al., 2023). In Islamic marriage, separation means that the husband swears not to have sexual relations for 4 months (Ila), or if the wife is disobedient, the husband withholds maintenance (*nushuz*). Divorce, on the other hand, is *talaq by the husband or khul' by the wife through a Sharia court after the iddah* waiting period of months (Arigbede, 2025).

Empirical studies on marital dissolution in Nigeria frequently combine the two categories due to measurement constraints. The Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) combines "divorced" and "separated" into a single indicator because of the problem of under-registration. Court divorces constituted only 0.2% of men and 0.3% of women in 2016 National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) data,

whereas survey-based estimates of “divorced or separated” reached 60.4% among married women in 2018. Besides, customary and Islamic dissolutions rarely enter civil registries, leading to undercounting of formal divorce. Sometimes, some do report “separated” to avoid stigma associated with “divorced”, particularly in northern Nigeria where divorce rates are lowest at 1.3% compared to 7.2% in the South-South. Consequently, Ononokpono et al. (2025) analyse “divorce or separation” as a composite outcome when using pooled NDHS 2008–2018 data, noting that household socioeconomic factors predict this combined status. In socio-legal analysis, separation preserves spousal inheritance and next-of-kin status, while divorce terminates them. Thus, most NDHS surveys report divorced/separated together because customary/Islamic separation is common and often not formalised. The fact that court divorce is expensive and slow makes couples separate informally for years. Besides, many women prefer to say they are “separated” and not “divorced” even after the refund of bride price to avoid societal stigma (Ononokpono et al., 2025).

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in Social Exchange Theory and Symbolic Interactionism. Social Exchange Theory posits that individuals remain in relationships only while the perceived rewards outweigh the costs. It explains relationships as systems of cost and reward in which individuals seek to maximise benefits such as affection, support, and satisfaction while minimising emotional, social, or material costs. Thus, relationships are maintained when perceived rewards outweigh the costs and when alternatives are considered less attractive (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). For celebrity couples, the initial rewards are substantial, which include financial gain, brand visibility, political access, and social prestige. However, the costs are equally amplified, as public scrutiny, career conflicts, infidelity exposure, and the erosion of privacy create persistent strain (Levinger, 1965 & 1976; Rusbult & Buunk, 1993). It is pertinent to note that celebrities possess lower exit barriers than the average Nigerian couple. This is because their status provides access to alternative partners and post-divorce income streams, reducing the material and social penalties of separation. When the cost-benefit calculus shifts unfavourably, divorce becomes a rational choice. In the Nigerian context, high-profile Nollywood/Kannywood and music industry divorces often follow scandals or brand conflicts that tip this balance, making separation economically and reputationally viable.

Symbolic Interactionism, particularly Goffman’s dramaturgical perspective, frames marriage as a performance managed for an audience (Goffman, 1959). Celebrity couples routinely perform a “perfect family” image to maintain endorsements, fan loyalty, and public sympathy. This performance creates role strain, as the demands of spouse, parent, and public figure frequently conflict (Stryker, 1980). Nigerian celebrity culture intensifies this pressure by rewarding glamour and punishing perceived failure. Because the marriage is staged for public consumption, private conflicts cannot be resolved discreetly. Small disputes escalate under media and fan scrutiny, and when the performance collapses, the divorce itself becomes a managed public act through press statements and social media narratives (Blumer, 1969; Amato & Previti, 2023).

Literature Review

Scholarship on celebrity has increasingly moved beyond viewing celebrities simply as famous individuals to examining celebrity as a mediated social relationship and a form of cultural production. Early work by Horton and Wohl (1956) introduced the concept of parasocial interaction to explain the one-sided sense of intimacy that audiences develop with media personalities. Subsequent research has demonstrated that such relationships can be strengthened when media personalities address audiences directly and disclose aspects of their personal lives (Hartmann & Goldhoorn, 2011). This perspective is particularly relevant to celebrity marriage and divorce because audiences may interpret highly visible celebrities as familiar social actors whose private experiences are open to public interpretation.

The expansion of social media has further complicated the boundary between celebrity publicity and private life. Marwick and boyd (2011) conceptualise celebrity on social media as a practice through which public figures perform intimacy by providing audiences with apparently informal or “backstage” access to

their lives. Personal disclosure can create perceptions of authenticity and closeness while simultaneously serving celebrity self-presentation and reputation management. Similarly, Kim and Song (2016) found that celebrities' personal and professional self-disclosure on Twitter increased perceived social presence and was associated with stronger parasocial interaction. These findings suggest that celebrities do not merely experience public scrutiny; they also participate in the mediated production of intimacy through which audiences come to feel entitled to know and interpret aspects of their personal lives. The literature on micro-celebrity and social media further demonstrates that privacy and publicity are not necessarily fixed opposites. Abidin (2016) shows how social media personalities selectively disclose personal information as part of the construction of public personae, making aspects of everyday life visible while retaining strategic control over self-presentation. In this environment, personal life can become a resource for maintaining visibility, authenticity, and audience attention. Celebrity marital relationships therefore occupy an ambiguous space: they may be experienced by celebrities as private relationships but simultaneously function as publicly consumed aspects of their celebrity identities.

This tension becomes particularly significant when celebrity relationships experience conflict or dissolution. Divorce, separation, allegations of infidelity, and public accusations can transform private marital difficulties into highly mediated narratives involving celebrities, journalists, bloggers, fans, and other social media users. The celebrity's attempt to manage the narrative may therefore compete with media framing, audience speculation, and competing accounts from other parties. Rather than treating audiences as passive consumers, parasocial scholarship suggests that audiences actively interpret celebrity disclosures and develop meanings around the celebrity's perceived personality and relationships (Chung & Cho, 2017). Consequently, social media can become a space in which the boundaries between observation, participation, judgement, and intimacy become increasingly blurred (Horton & Wohl, 1956; Chung & Cho, 2017).

African scholarship has begun to extend these debates to the Nigerian context. Popoola (2023) observes that celebrity studies remains comparatively underdeveloped in Africanist scholarship despite the increasing cultural significance of Nigerian celebrity and digital media. In the Nigerian context, celebrity is increasingly produced through interactions among traditional media, social media platforms, entertainment industries, and audiences. Similarly, Inya's (2021) study of Twitter Nigeria demonstrates that relationships between Nigerian celebrities and online audiences are socially constructed through interaction and can involve expectations concerning appropriate behaviour and even targeted bullying. These studies indicate that Nigerian celebrity culture should be understood not simply in terms of fame but as a negotiated relationship between public figures, media platforms, and audiences.

Recent scholarship on Nigerian celebrity gossip provides an additional connection to marital-breakdown narratives. Jemiluyi (2026) argues that gossip and celebrity culture in Nigeria's digital environment transform scandals into circulating cultural objects in which entertainment, moral scrutiny, and digital spectacle intersect. This is particularly relevant to celebrity divorce because marital breakdown can become a form of publicly negotiated spectacle in which private conflict is repeatedly narrated, interpreted, contested, and consumed across interconnected media platforms.

Taken together, this literature suggests that celebrity marital breakdown should not be understood solely as the outcome of private marital problems. It is also a mediated process through which intimacy, privacy, identity, reputation, and gender expectations are publicly negotiated. However, much of the established literature on parasocial relationships, celebrity self-disclosure, and the management of private life has developed outside the Nigerian context, while Nigerian studies have only recently begun to examine the interaction between celebrity culture, digital media, and audience participation. The present study addresses this gap by examining how marital conflict and divorce among Nigerian celebrities are represented across traditional media, celebrity self-narration, and social media discourse, and how these representations contribute to wider cultural meanings of marriage and divorce in contemporary Nigeria.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design using content analysis to examine narratives of marital conflict and divorce among Nigerian celebrity couples between 2009 and 2025. The study focuses on high-

profile marital breakdowns involving Nollywood and Kannywood actors, musicians, and media personalities. A qualitative approach is appropriate because the study seeks to examine how marital conflict, divorce, gender expectations, privacy, and personal well-being are represented and interpreted rather than to establish the statistical prevalence of divorce.

Data are drawn from three principal sources: traditional media reports, media interviews granted by celebrities, and publicly available social media discourse. Traditional media materials include newspaper reports, entertainment publications, online news reports, and feature articles concerning celebrity marital conflict, separation, and divorce. Media interviews include publicly accessible television, radio, print, and online interviews in which celebrities discuss their marriages or marital difficulties. Social media materials comprise publicly accessible posts, responses, and comments on platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, X, and YouTube. Cases are selected purposively based on their public visibility, relevance to the research questions, and availability of sufficient documentary material. Data are coded according to recurring themes, and the analysis also distinguishes between celebrities' direct accounts, media interpretations, and audience responses in order to examine differences in the construction of marital-breakdown narratives. The data collected are subjected to thematic content analysis.

Ethics Statement

This study did not require formal ethical clearance because it relies exclusively on materials already available in the public domain. Nevertheless, publicly available materials were handled with due ethical consideration by distinguishing allegations from verified statements and excluding unnecessary private or identifying information.

Findings

Causes of Marital Conflict among Nigerian Celebrity Couples

Analysis of the celebrity divorce narratives examined between 2009 and 2025 shows that marital breakdown was rarely the result of a single event. Instead, six recurring and overlapping categories emerged: infidelity; domestic violence and emotional abuse; career and economic or resource conflicts; family interference and value differences; religious and cultural expectations; and irreconcilable differences arising from accumulated disagreements. These factors often interacted, with private disagreements becoming intensified through public exposure, competing narratives and audience involvement.

Infidelity and competing expectations of marital fidelity were among the most recurrent themes. Cases involving Frank Edoho, Sandra Onyenucheya, and Innocent "2Baba" Idibia and Annie Idibia illustrate how allegations or disclosures of additional relationships could become both marital and public controversies (Bassey, 2025). Issues of fidelity were frequently connected to trust, recognition, family expectations and public reputation. Infidelity therefore functioned not only as a private breach of marital expectations, but also as a source of competing public narratives concerning responsibility, legitimacy and gender (Njoku, 2023; Osaji, 2023).

Domestic violence and emotional abuse constituted another important pathway to marital breakdown. Narratives involving physical assault, intimidation, emotional distress and alleged abusive behaviour often shifted the meaning of marital disagreement towards questions of safety and well-being (Obi & Aduma, 2026). In some cases, separation was represented as a means of withdrawing from relationships perceived as harmful. The public nature of celebrity relationships further complicated such cases by generating competing accounts, audience reactions and demands for accountability.

Career demands and economic or resource conflicts also appeared repeatedly. Frequent travel, filming, performances, public appearances and prolonged absence from home created tensions concerning time, attention, parenting and household responsibilities. Differences in income, business interests and financial expectations similarly contributed to marital strain (Oloyede et al., 2024). The findings indicate that celebrity status does not remove conventional economic pressures; rather, fame can increase their visibility because professional identity, income and personal relationships are closely interconnected. A

related issue was the tension between marital identity and celebrity brand management. Celebrities must manage both their relationships and the public images attached to them. Attempts to keep family matters private could become difficult once disputes entered the media domain. As illustrated by statements attributed to AY Makun concerning the difficulty of managing personal family matters publicly, celebrity status complicates the boundary between private marital life and public visibility. Once marital disputes become media content, efforts to control the narrative can themselves become part of the conflict (Onikoyi & Ebirim, 2013; Njoku, 2023).

Family interference and socio-cultural expectations constituted another recurring theme. In-law relationships, gender roles, religious obligations, family loyalty and expectations concerning acceptable marital behaviour appeared across several narratives (Aliche, 2015). Polygamy also emerged as a contested cultural issue, particularly in the recent Yul Edochie and May Edochie case, where the introduction of an additional wife generated wider debates concerning culture, religion, gender and the legitimacy of plural marriage (Bassey, 2025). Celebrity marital conflicts therefore became sites for negotiating broader understandings of acceptable Nigerian marriage.

Public Scrutiny and the Mediatisation of Marital Conflict

A major finding is that public scrutiny did not merely report celebrity marital conflict but became part of the conflict environment. Once disagreements became visible online, fans, bloggers, journalists and social media users participated in interpreting events and assigning responsibility. The case of Osas Ighodaro and Gbenro Ajibade illustrates how online communication concerning parenting contributed to public interpretation of marital difficulties. Similar patterns occurred when photographs, deleted posts, interviews or indirect statements were treated as evidence of marital problems. Social media consequently created a form of public trial, in which audiences divided into competing camps while blogs and online platforms reproduced and interpreted events (Onikoyi & Ebirim, 2013; Njoku, 2023). This generated a feedback loop: celebrity disclosures attracted media attention, media coverage produced audience reactions, and those reactions encouraged further commentary and celebrity responses. The boundary between the original marital dispute and its mediated representation therefore became increasingly difficult to maintain. Publicity also generated pressures relating to reputation and brand protection. Because celebrity careers may depend on audience perception, endorsements and commercial relationships, marital disputes can have consequences beyond the relationship itself. Disagreements over what should be disclosed, denied or acknowledged publicly could consequently become an additional source of tension.

Career, Fame and Relationship Strain

The findings indicate that fame intensified rather than eliminated familiar sources of marital tension (Njoku, 2023). Career mobility, travel, professional interaction with other entertainers, financial independence and constant visibility created conditions in which jealousy, mistrust and disagreements over time could develop. Screen intimacy was particularly relevant to entertainment celebrities because on-screen romantic relationships and repeated proximity to co-stars could blur the distinction between professional performance and perceived personal intimacy. Social media audiences sometimes interpreted professional relationships as evidence of private relationships, making celebrity identity inseparable from public interpretations of the marriage (Onikoyi & Ebirim, 2013). Celebrity marital conflict must therefore be understood not only through interpersonal factors but also through the occupational and media conditions within which those relationships operate.

Conflict Escalation and the Movement from Private Dispute to Public Dissolution

Across the cases, marital breakdown can be understood as a process of escalation. The first stage involved latent conflict, including unresolved disagreements over careers, finances, family expectations, parenting, intimacy and household responsibilities. The second involved a triggering event, such as an alleged revelation of infidelity, accusation of abuse, financial disagreement, separation or online disclosure that made an existing problem publicly visible. The third stage involved media and audience amplification, as blogs, news platforms and social media users constructed competing interpretations of the dispute. This

reduced the couple's control over the meaning of their conflict, even when one or both partners attempted to clarify their positions. The final stage was formal separation or legal dissolution, with “irreconcilable differences” often functioning as a broad description of accumulated relational problems rather than a single cause. Divorce narratives should therefore be understood as the culmination of interacting conflicts rather than responses to one isolated incident (Gottman, 1994).

Gendered Interpretation of Marital Breakdown

The analysis also identified gendered patterns in the representation of marital breakdown. Women who left relationships were frequently discussed in relation to self-protection, abuse, infidelity and personal well-being, whereas men's departures were more often framed around incompatibility, career pressures or irreconcilable differences. Although these patterns were not uniform, they reveal the persistence of gendered expectations surrounding celebrity marriage. The cases further demonstrate tension between traditional expectations of marital endurance and increasingly individualised understandings of marriage (Obi & Aduma, 2026). Female celebrities could be expected to preserve the marriage, protect the husband's reputation and tolerate difficulties, while separation was increasingly legitimised where abuse, repeated infidelity or severe incompatibility was alleged. Celebrity divorce narratives therefore became sites for negotiating changing ideas about gender, marriage, autonomy and personal well-being.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that celebrity marital dissolution in Nigeria emerges from the interaction of interpersonal conflict, structural pressures and media visibility. Infidelity, abuse, economic disagreements, career demands, family interference and cultural expectations provide important sources of tension, but their consequences are shaped by celebrity status and the public circulation of private information. Celebrity divorce is therefore simultaneously a marital event, a media event and a cultural discourse through which Nigerian audiences negotiate changing expectations concerning marriage, gender, privacy and individual autonomy.

Table 1. Overview of Nigerian Celebrity Divorces/Separations 2009-2025

S/N	Celebrity Couple	Year Married	Year Divorced/ Separated	Duration	Industry	Stated Reason	Type	Source
1.	Funke Akindele & JJC Skillz	2017	2022	5 years	Nollywood/ Music	Irreconcilable Differences	Separation	Daily Trust, 2025
2.	Frank Edoho & Sandra Onyenucheya	2014	2025	11years	Broadcasting	Infidelity	Divorce	The Guardian, 2025
3.	Doris Simeon & Daniel Ademinokan	N/A	2013	N/A	Nollywood	Irreconcilable Differences	Divorce	Vanguard, 2013
5.	Tonto Dikeh & Olakunle Churchill	2015	2017	2years	Nollywood	Domestic Violence/ Infidelity	Divorce	The Guardian, 2025
6.	Kalu Ikeagwu & Ijoma	2016	2021	5years	Nollywood	Career ambition	Divorce	The Guardian Life, 2022
7.	Paul Okoye & Anita	2014	2022	8 years	Music	Infidelity/ irreconcilable Differences	Divorce	Vanguard, 2025
8.	Damilola Adegbite & Chris Attoh	2015	2017	2years	Nollywood	Undisclosed	Separation	Legit.ng, 2025
9.	Mercy Aigbe & Lanre Gentry	2013	2017	4years	Nollywood	Domestic Violence	Separation	Vanguard, 2023
10.	Femi Adebayo & Omotayo Sanusi (Iyan Aladuke)	2016	2025	9 years	Nollywood	Career Issue & Infidelity rumour	Separation	Legit. ng, 2026
11.	Stella Damasus & Daniel Ademinokan	2014	2020	6 years	Nollywood	Undisclosed	Divorce	Thisday, 2023
12.	Tiwa Savage & TeeBillz	2013	2016	3years	Music	Infidelity/Financial Issues	Separation	Vanguard, 2025

S/N	Celebrity Couple	Year Married	Year Divorced/ Separated	Duration	Industry	Stated Reason	Type	Source
13.	Lilian Esono & Ubi Franklin	2015	2016	1year	Nollywood/Music	Irreconcilable Differences	Divorce	PremiumTimes, 2022
14.	Yewande Adekoya & Abiodun Thomas	2014	2022	8years	Nollywood	Emotional Abuse	Divorce	Vanguard, 2023
15.	Basketmouth & Elsie	2010	2022	12 years	Comedy	Undisclosed	Divorce	Daily Trust, 2025
16.	Toyin Abraham & Adeniyi Johnson	2013	2015	2years	Nollywood	Undisclosed	Divorce	Daily Trust, 2025
17.	Nkechi Blessing & Opeyemi Falegan	2021	2022	10 months	Nollywood	Infidelity Allegations	Separation	Daily Trust, 2022
18.	Adam A. Zango & Safiya Umar	2019	2023	4 years	Kannywood	Genotype incompatibility	Divorce	PremumTimes, 2026
19.	Toke Makinwa & Maje Ayida	2014	2016	2years	Media	Infidelity	Divorce	PremiumTimes, 2017
20.	Regina Daniels & Ned Nwoko	2019	2025	6 years	Nollywood	Domestic tension/ Emotional strain	Separation	Vanguard News, 2025
21.	Osas Ighodaro & Gbenro Ajibade	2015	2019	4years	Nollywood	Parenting Dispute	Divorce	Punch, 2021; Legit. ng, 2025
22.	I K Ogbonna & Sonia Morales	2015	2019	4 years	Comedy/Nollywood	Family Issues	Divorce	Independent Newspaper Nigeria, 2019
23.	Oluwadamilola Adekoya (Princess) & Jeremiah Adekoya	2013	2013	2 weeks	Comedy/ Nollywood	Irreconcilable Differences	Divorce	PremiumTimes, 2018
24.	Oritsefemi & Nabila	2017	2022	5years	Music	Physical and Emotional Abuse/ Infidelity	Divorce	PremiumTimes, 2024
25.	Yvonne Jegede & Olakunle Fawole	2017	2019	2 years	Nollywood	Irreconcilable Differences	Divorce	PremiumTimes, 2026
26.	Israel DMW & Sheila Courage	2022	2023	1year	Music/Comedy	Family Interference/ Financial	Separation	Daily Trust, 2025
27.	Mansura Isah & A Lagos Businessman	June, 2024	late 2024	6 months	Kannywood	Dispute over contract/endorsement, control of finances	Divorce	The Cable, 2025
28.	Hafsat Tuge & Sani Umar Gwarzo	Not disclosed	2023	-	Kannywood	Conflict over career & public image, irreconcilable differences	Divorce process on-going	The Cable, 2023
29.	Hafsat Shehu & Alh. Jamilu Muhammed	Not disclosed	2010	Less than 5 months	Kannywood	Polygamy pressure, quick marriage (short courtship)	Divorce	The Cable, 2010
30.	2 Face Idibia & Annie	2012	2025	13 years	Music	Long term Strain/ irreconcilable differences	Divorce	The Guardian, 2025

Implications of Dissolution of Celebrity Marriages for National Development

Celebrity divorces are not just conversations in Nigeria's context; they have measurable spillovers into social norms, policy, and development indicators. They have adverse effects on social norm diffusion and the marriage institution owing to their parasocial influence. Celebrities are "role models" and "cultural scripts" for millions of Nigerians and the frequency of divorce is like a normalisation of dissolution. When celebrities that the upcoming generation is looking up to as role models are spearheading divorce and announcing splits, it lowers stigma for ordinary citizens. National "divorced/separated" rates rose from 50.5% in 2008 to 60.4% in 2018 among married women between the age of 15 and 49. Celebrity visibility

between 2013 and 2024 overlaps this increase, and the repeated infidelity/violence narratives of Nollywood and Kannywood actors may shape Gen Z marital expectations leading to higher exit tolerance and lower commitment thresholds. Thus, in terms of development impact, incessant celebrity divorce or separation weakens marriage institution and affects household stability, which UNICEF links to child education, nutrition, and poverty cycles (UNICEF, 2021).

There are also economic implications. It increases female labour force, as divorced women are more likely to work. Some female celebrities became entrepreneurs post-divorce and labour participation, but also single-parent poverty risk (Yahya & Roddin, 2025). Besides, it increases legal system burden, as there was a record of 14 celebrity cases in 2022 alone. Lagos courts report 2,160 divorce petitions in 2 years and court congestion often causes delay in justice for ordinary citizens. However, lack of pre-nuptial agreements framework leads to lengthy legal battles over property/wealth redistribution (Ikubanni et al., 2023). Celebrity cases amplify national gender patterns, affecting Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 5 targets. SDG 5.2 on “End violence” is significant as 17% of celebrity cases cite violence/abuse. High-profile cases like Tonto Dikeh, Mercy Aigbe publicise Gender Based Violence, potentially increasing reporting, but also risk normalising it if consequences are absent. Besides, SDG 5.4 on “Recognise unpaid care” is also noteworthy as custody battles highlight gaps in family law because Nigeria lacks unified child support enforcement.

This problem has exposed both legal and policy system gaps. Celebrity cases reveal the plural legal system confusion affecting many Nigerians, which has made many citizens to misconstrue separation for divorce. Ordinary citizens face same ambiguity affecting inheritance, remarriage etc. The lack of PNAs framework creates uncertainty and celebrity wealth disputes preview what middle-class will face over asset ownership (Ikubanni et al., 2023). Thus, there is need for unified Marriage Act that will include PNA framework to reduce litigation and protect vulnerable spouses. The children in the dissolved union are also affected. This is because 60.4% “divorced/separated” women have dependent children and celebrity custody battles model outcomes. Children in single-parent homes have 23% higher stunting risk in Nigeria (UNICEF, 2021; Ojen, 2025). Despite the aforementioned, there are positive development spillovers. Quiet divorces model of some celebrities (“no drama” separation) reduces social ostracism for ordinary women and promotes destigmatisation. Female economic empowerment narratives, for example, Kate Henshaw fitness brand and Doris Simeon salon post-divorce show viable single life and supports SDG 8. Lastly, it promotes legal literacy and increase the demand for family lawyers as public cases educate citizens on Matrimonial Causes Act, judicial separation and custody.

Discussion of Findings

The traditional marital permanence norm embodied in the sacred vow, “...to stay together in sickness and in health... for better or worse until death do us part” appears eroded among many Nigerian celebrities. As shown in Table 1, the selected celebrity marriages frequently ended within the early years of marriage, suggesting a shortened interpretation of lifelong marital commitment. Based on durations reported in the media, many of the marriages lasted less than five years, while others endured for more than ten years; the shortest reported marriage lasted less than six months. The most frequently cited reasons for dissolution were infidelity, irreconcilable differences, domestic violence and emotional abuse. Other reported factors included family interference or distance, financial difficulties, media pressure and fame. Career demands, frequent travel, screen intimacy and access to potential partners were also associated with jealousy and distrust. The findings further indicate that media visibility played an important role in celebrity marital conflicts, while reported relationships with governors, serving senators or wealthy individuals, together with financial strain and career-related conflict, featured in some accounts of divorce and separation. The findings also show that 2022 recorded seven high-profile celebrity marital dissolutions, involving Paul Okoye, Basketmouth, Oritsefemi, Kaffy, Yewande Adekoya, Kalu Ikeagwu and JJC Skillz. Many of the dissolutions were publicly announced through social-media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. This demonstrates the important role of social media in transforming celebrity marital dissolution into a public event. For example, Chika Ike reportedly announced her divorce “via her official Twitter page” following a “violent incident,” that forecloses private reconciliation. (Onikoyi & Ebirim, 2013; Onyango, 2023; Alake, 2025).

A further finding concerns gender and initiation of marital dissolution. Wife-initiated dissolution was prominent among the selected cases and was presented as broadly consistent with the cited NDHS pattern in which women initiated a substantial proportion of reported divorce cases nationally. Within the entertainment industry, Nollywood recorded the highest number of cases, with wife initiation particularly prominent. Infidelity and domestic violence were common reasons reported in these cases. Several female celebrities, including Kate Henshaw and Doris Simeon, were reported to have remained single after divorce. At the same time, some celebrity marriages ended quietly, without extensive online controversy. AY and Mabel and Osas and Gbenro are examples of couples whose separations were described as occurring without major online drama, whereas other cases, including that of Funke Akindele, received considerable attention through Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. The findings nevertheless show that celebrity status does not inevitably lead to marital dissolution. Examples of relatively enduring celebrity marriages include Mercy Johnson and Odi Okojie, whose marriage has lasted for more than ten years, and Olu Jacobs and Joke Silva, whose marriage lasted for more than thirty years. These illustrative cases demonstrate that some celebrity couples maintain their marital commitments despite the pressures associated with fame and public visibility (Njoku, 2023).

The empirical analysis of selected Nigerian celebrity divorces between 2009 and 2024 identifies infidelity as the most frequently cited cause, followed by irreconcilable differences and domestic violence or emotional abuse. Marriages involving two entertainment professionals were frequently reported to dissolve within the early years of marriage and were associated with higher reports of infidelity than celebrity/non-industry unions. Media pressure, access to extramarital partners and the absence of prenuptial agreements were recurring themes in the press coverage examined (Njoku, 2023; Onikoyi & Ebirim, 2013). These patterns differ from national population data, where financial issues and violence are identified as primary predictors (Ononokpono et al., 2025). Differences also emerged across entertainment sectors. The music industry showed a particularly strong association with reported infidelity and public scandal, with cases including 2Baba and Annie, Tiwa Savage and TeeBillz, Paul Okoye and Anita, and Oritsefemi and Nabila. In contrast, comedy and media recorded fewer cases and included some of the longer-lasting marriages. AY and Mabel, for example, were reported to have been married for 16 years, while Basketmouth's marriage lasted 12 years. Their dissolutions were more commonly associated with irreconcilable differences than with public scandal. The findings further indicate that Nollywood actresses contributed substantially to the pattern of wife-initiated dissolution and were more frequently associated with reports of violence. This was presented as consistent with the cited national NDHS finding that physical violence accounts for a proportion of divorce cases. The music industry, by contrast, showed a more balanced pattern of initiation, with male artists also publicly announcing marital separation, as illustrated by JJC Skillz and Paul Okoye. Infidelity was reported as a factor involving both male and female celebrities (Njoku, 2023).

In the North, divorce carries heavier religious and communal stigma, while in the South, it is more normalised but still sensationalised. Yet in both, celebrity status removes the privacy that ordinary couples have. In North/Kannywood, Hafsat Shehu and Adam Zango cases highlight cultural/religious pressure, polygamy disputes, and public shaming as triggers, and because celebrity marriages are performed in public, social media platforms and tabloids turn private conflicts into national conversations, often escalating tensions (Baguda et al., 2025). However, celebrities' marital breakdowns are not reported neutrally. They are construed through gendered narratives where male and female celebrities are assigned different forms of blame, agency and sympathy based on prevailing gender norms in Nigerian society. The fact is that female celebrities often faced more public blame and scrutiny, while male celebrities framed exits as "moving on".

Divorce among Nigerian celebrity couples is more than a personal event. It functions as a public text where culture, gender, economics, and media intersect. A critical reflection reveals three competing dynamics namely the erosion of traditional marital norms, the commercialisation of personal pain, and the reinforcement of gendered double standards. The phenomenon of divorce is a testament of a shift in cultural norms and a reflection of eroding commitment norms (Osaji, 2023). Traditionally, divorce in Nigeria is stigmatised, especially for women. Igbo and Yoruba cultures frame marriage as a lifelong covenant, and divorced women risk being labelled "troublemakers" or economically abandoned (Ojen,

2025; Yahya & Roddin, 2025). Data confirms that women are divorced/separated at three times the rate of men (National Population Commission (NPC) & ICF, 2019). Although stigma of divorce is weakening, it is not gone. Public reactions to divorce cases among celebrities show a split audience. Older and religious demographics often condemn divorce as moral failure. Younger and urban audiences frame it as self-preservation against infidelity, abuse, or incompatibility. The prominence of celebrity separations accelerates this shift by making divorce thinkable and discussable. However, it remains unclear if this reflects genuine attitude change or simply “celebrity exceptionality” where fame shields individuals from the social costs ordinary Nigerians face. The critical issue is the commercialisation of marital breakdown arising from the economic incentive around celebrity divorce. Media outlets and brands increasingly treat divorce as marketable content, as brands sign divorced female celebrities for endorsements (e.g. Toke Makinwa and Tiwa Savage), framing their separation as “resilience” and “reinvention”. Divorce has therefore become commercially valuable in the influencer economy as brands commodifies private trauma and turns allegations of infidelity or abuse into engagement bait. This creates a perverse narrative that marriage appears to “dim a woman’s shine,” while divorce becomes a career reset. The problem is not empowerment itself, but the selectivity. Married women excelling quietly rarely get the same brand attention. This suggests that the market rewards pain and conflict over stability. For audiences, it risks romanticising divorce as aspirational rather than treating it as a last resort (Shakaa, 2025).

Media framing and gendered double standards are also noted. Analysis of Nigerian newspaper reports shows divorce stories use negative other-representation. Husbands are framed as adulterers or abusers, wives as uncaring or diabolical, with each party presenting themselves as the victim (Osisanwo & Oluwayemi, 2018). Social media amplifies this through selective disclosure and real-time updates. Gender bias persists. When men like AY Makun or Gbenro Ajibade announced separation, they often request privacy and receive relatively muted backlash. When women like Funke Akindele or Osas Ighodaro separated, discourse quickly shifts to motherhood, “character,” and perceived neglect of domestic roles. This reflects the cultural expectation that women bear primary responsibility for holding marriages together, even in high-pressure celebrity marriages.

Although social media accords celebrities a direct control over their narrative, and reducing dependence on tabloids, and AY Makun’s 2024 statement requesting privacy is an example of boundary setting, the same platforms exposed them to unverified claims, cyberbullying, and “trial by public opinion.” In the 2Baba-Annie Idibia case in January 2025, the social media revealed a hacked-account claim, followed by a public video confirmation, and turned a private separation into a national spectacle within hours. This dual role means social media both democratises storytelling and erodes privacy. For audiences, it blurs the line between news and gossip, making it hard to distinguish verified claims from speculation. It also has implications for public perceptions of marriage and the net effect is ambiguous. On one hand, celebrity divorce narratives can destigmatise leaving abusive or irreconcilable marriages, which aligns with human rights and mental health perspectives (Baguda et al., 2025). On the other hand, when celebrity divorces occur frequently enough, they risk normalising marital instability as a lifestyle rather than a last resort. The young Nigerians, who consume these narratives more than court records or academic studies, stands the risk of a misleading understanding of marriage as either transactional or disposable.

Conclusion

The analysis of celebrity divorces across Nigeria’s North, South-West, and South-East shows that marital conflict among public figures mirrors broader societal issues, but is amplified by fame, increased extramarital access, media scrutiny, and cultural expectations. Marital conflict and divorce among Nigerian celebrity couples is not just about individual failure, it is a product of personal incompatibility, economic pressure, and the unique burden of living under public gaze. The divorce narratives of Nigerian celebrities reflect real issues in Nigerian marriages such as trust, money, infidelity, and changing gender roles. Conflict functions as the proximal mechanism in Nigerian celebrity marital dissolution, with career pressure, polygamy, infidelity and domestic violence producing the shortest marriage durations. Celebrity marital dissolution in Nigeria has macro-level implications beyond entertainment as parasocial influence of high-profile divorces may accelerate national trends. This is because celebrities are role models, their separations influence public attitudes towards marriage, divorce, and women’s independence. The

absence of a unified pre-nuptial agreement framework and confusion between statutory, customary, and Islamic dissolution processes impose costs on the judicial system and household economic stability. Nigeria's plural legal system prolongs conflict, and there is need for policy intervention that would not only prioritise legal harmonisation, but also strengthen family court with a view to mitigating negative externalities on child welfare. While the law and religion in Nigeria still largely promote the sanctity of marriage, the increasing number of high-profile separations in recent time signals a shift, as more celebrities, especially women, are choosing personal well-being over staying in dysfunctional marriages despite public judgement and the role of the media in reporting celebrity family matters.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommends that media organisations adopt more ethical and evidence-based reporting of celebrity marital conflicts by distinguishing verified information from allegations and avoiding sensationalism. Counsellors and family therapists should employ gender-sensitive and violence-informed approaches that prioritise safety and psychosocial support, particularly where domestic violence is alleged. Public-awareness efforts should challenge gendered moral policing and victim-blaming in discussions of celebrity divorce while encouraging responsible engagement with marital disputes on social media. Future research should also incorporate interviews with affected couples, counsellors, lawyers, and other relevant stakeholders, alongside court records where accessible, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of celebrity marital dissolution.

Limitation of the Study

The study has some limitations. First, it relies primarily on media reports and publicly available accounts rather than direct testimony from the couples involved. Second, court records and other primary legal documents were not systematically examined, limiting independent verification of reported claims. Third, the study is subject to media-visibility bias, as highly publicised cases are more likely to receive extensive coverage and become available for analysis. Finally, the reasons given for marital dissolution are often contested between the parties; therefore, reported allegations and explanations are treated as attributed accounts rather than independently established facts. The findings should consequently be understood as an analysis of publicly visible narratives surrounding celebrity marital dissolution rather than a complete account of the couples' private experiences.

References

- Abidin, C. (2016). *Please subscribe!: Influencers, social media, and the commodification of everyday life* [Doctoral dissertation, The University of Western Australia]. <https://doi.org/10.26182/5ddc899d698cb>
- Afolayan, D. (2025, August 21). *Nigeria divorce trend 2000–2025*. Medium. <https://medium.com/@deborahafolayan97/nigeria-divorce-trend-2000-2025-c9eb35855400>
- Agboola, J. O., & Oluwatosin, S. A. (2018). Patterns and causes of marital conflict among staff of selected universities in Southwest Nigeria. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal*, 5(8), 306–320.
- Agency Report. (2019, August 8). IK Ogbonna, estranged wife divorce after 4 years. *Independent Newspaper Nigeria*. <https://independent.ng/ik-ogbonna-estranged-wife-divorce-after-4yrs/>
- Alake, O. (2025, November 21). *Nigerian celebrities who ended their marriages quietly: No drama on social media*. Legit.ng. <https://www.legit.ng/entertainment/celebrities/1684310-nigerian-celebrities-ended-marriages-quietly-drama-social-media/>
- Aliyu, R. (2010, February 2). My marital affair not for public dissection-Hafsat Shehu. Daily Trust. <https://dailytrust.com/my-marital-affair-not-for-public-dissection-hafsat-shehu/>
- Amato, P. R., & Previti, D. (2003). People's reasons for divorcing: Gender, social class, and the life course. *Journal of Family Issues*, 24(7), 602–626. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X03254507>
- Aniche, A. (2015). Sociological approach to the study of divorce as a social problem and Nigerian situation: Imperatives for sustainable solutions. *Global Journal of Applied, Management and Social Sciences*, 8(1), 13–18.
- Arigbade, Y. A. (2025). Geospatial analysis of marital dissolution in Nigeria. *FUDMA Journal of Earth and Environmental Sciences*, 2(1). <https://doi.org/10.33003/jees.2025.0201/04>
- Augoye, J. (2018, April 30). *Why my marriage lasted two weeks—Comedian Princess*. Premium Times. <https://www.tori.ng/news/95134/why-my-marriage-lasting-two-weeks-popular-female-co.html>
- Baguda, A. S., Umar, M. U., Abiola, T., Habib, Z. G., Gudaji, M. I., Aghukwa, N. C., Owolabi, D. S., & Dankishiya, F. S. (2025). Divorce and mental health in Northern Nigeria: Exploring post-divorce risk factors. *Ibom Medical Journal*, 18(4), 670–676.

- Banjo, N. (2021, September 11). *How social media exposed cracks in celebrity marriages*. *Punch*. <https://punchng.com/how-social-media-exposed-cracks-in-celebrity-marriages/>
- Bassey, R. E. (2025, October 25). *Crumbling stories of Nigerian celebrities*. *Daily Trust*. <https://dailytrust.com/crumbling-love-stories-of-nigerian-celebrities/>
- Blumer, H. (1969). *Symbolic interactionism: Perspective and method*. Prentice-Hall.
- Chung, S., & Cho, H. (2017). Fostering parasocial relationships with celebrities on social media: Implications for celebrity endorsement. *Psychology & Marketing*, 34(4), 481–495. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.2100>
- Collins-Dike, J. (2025). Review of spousal communication and the increasing rate of divorce in Nigeria society. *Matondang Journal*, 4(2), 102–112.
- Ekechukwu, F. (2023). *Stella Damasus recounts failed marriage with Daniel Ademinokan*. THISDAY. <https://www.thisdaylive.com/2023/08/05/stella-damasus-recounts-failed-marriage-with-daniel-ademinokan/>
- Enweani, C. (2025, December 19). Celebrity separations, divorces that happened in 2025. *The Guardian Nigeria*. <https://guardian.ng/life/celebrity-separations-divorces-that-happened-in-2025/>
- Eze, C. (2022, May 31). *Kalu Ikeagwu seeks custody of children and divorce from wife*. *The Guardian*. <https://guardian.ng/life/kalu-ikeagwu-seeks-custody-of-children-and-divorce-from-wife/>
- Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. Anchor Books.
- Gottman, J. M. (1994). *What predicts divorce?* Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Guardian Nigeria. (2025, January 27). *10 Nigerian celebrities whose marriages ended in separation*. *The Guardian Nigeria*. <https://guardian.ng/news/nigeria/10-nigerian-celebrities-whose-marriages-ended-in-separation>
- Hartmann, T., & Goldhoorn, C. (2011). Horton and Wohl revisited: Exploring viewers' experience of parasocial interaction. *Journal of Communication*, 61(6), 1104–1121. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2011.01595.x>
- Horton, D., & Wohl, R. R. (1956). Mass communication and para-social interaction: Observations on intimacy at a distance. *Psychiatry*, 19(3), 215–229.
- Ikubanni, O. O., Oyeade, A. A., Ololu, T., Mohammed, I. B., Adam, A., Hussaini, M., & Hussaini, Y. (2023). Planning for divorce before the marriage: The concept of pre-nuptial agreement and its enforceability in Nigeria. *NAU/JCPL*, 10(2), 215–230.
- Inya, O. (2021). “Egungun be careful, na Express you dey go”: Socialising a newcomer-celebrity and co-constructing relational connection on Twitter Nigeria. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 184, 140–151. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2021.08.005>
- Jemiluyi, O. (2026). Conceptualizing the ‘gossip genre’ in Nollywood: Digital aestheticization of celebrity scandal and the performance of gossip in *Truth or Dare*. *Celebrity Studies*, 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19392397.2026.2642656>
- Kim, J., & Song, H. (2016). Celebrity's self-disclosure on Twitter and parasocial relationships: A mediating role of social presence. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 62, 570–577. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2016.03.083>
- Levinger, G. (1965). Marital cohesiveness and dissolution: An integrative review. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 27(1), 19–28.
- Levinger, G. (1976). A social psychological perspective on marital dissolution. *Journal of Social Issues*, 32(1), 21–47.
- Maishanu, A. A. (2026, August 2). *Trending: Kano TikTok star tackles Adam Zango following divorce of sixth wife*. *Premium Times*. <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/more-news/900219-trending-kano-tiktok-star-tackles-adam-zango-following-divorce-of-sixth-wife.html>
- Marwick, A., & boyd, d. (2011). To see and be seen: Celebrity practice on Twitter. *Convergence*, 17(2), 139–158. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354856510394539>
- Matrimonial Causes Act*, Cap. M7, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004, 15–16, 39.
- Medeme, O. (2022, December 6). How my failed marriage led me to depression—Lilian Esono. *Premium Times*. <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/entertainment/nollywood/569286-how-my-failed-marriage-led-me-to-depression-lilian-esoro.html>
- Muna, E. (2026, July 5). *Yvonne Jegede's friendly ex, Kunle Fawole, reveals strong postmarital love for her*. *Premium Times*. <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/entertainment/naija-fashion/893096-yvonne-jegedes-friendly-ex-kunle-fawole-reveals-strong-postmarital-love-for-her.html>
- National Population Commission [NPC], & ICF. (2019). *Nigeria demographic and health survey 2018*. NPC; ICF. <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/fr359/fr359.pdf>
- Njoku, B. (2023, March 25). *Poverty, infidelity, violence threatening marriage institution as divorce cases soar*. *Vanguard*. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2023/03/poverty-infidelity-violence-threatening-marriage-institution-as-divorce-cases-soar/>
- Nwanosike, C. L., Nwankwo, B. E., Odo, V. O., Orji, I. P., & Chimemena, N. C. (2025). Marital conflict among couples: The roles of spousal support and unfulfilled expectations. *Nigerian Journal of Social Psychology*, 8(1), 190–204.
- Obi, H. O., & Aduma, O. C. (2026). An analysis of current divorce in Nigeria: Rising divorce rates among young couples. *Nnamdi Azikiwe University Journal of Human Rights Laws*, 3(1), 157–170.
- Ojen, N. (2025). The increasing rate of divorce and its effects on the family and society's development in the 21st century. *Nigerian Journal of Social Psychology*, 8(2).
- Ojo, J. (2023, January 12). *Marital status of actress Hafsat Tuge sparks controversy in Kannywood*. *TheCable*. <https://lifestyle.thecable.ng/marital-status-of-actress-hafsat-tuge-sparks-controversy-in-kannywood/>
- Olaeze, C. (2022, April 7). Why I parted ways with my husband – Actress Nkechi Blessing. *Daily Trust*. <https://dailytrust.com/why-i-parted-ways-with-my-husband-actress-nkechi-blessing/>

- Oloyede, A. O., Babalola, O. F., Saka, A. B., & Adalakun, M. A. (2024). Assessment of determinant factors responsible for divorce among divorcees in rural areas of Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. *World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews*, 22(2), 474–483.
- Onikoyi, A., & Ebirim, J. (2013, August 2). *Unending saga of Nollywood divorces*. Vanguard. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2013/08/unending-saga-of-nollywood-divorces/>
- Onodjae, E. (2025, March 2). *Nigerian celebrity marriages that ended in divorce and stories behind the splits*. Vanguard. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2025/03/nigerian-celebrity-marriages-that-ended-in-divorce-and-stories-behind-the-splits/>
- Ononokpono, D. N., Ugwu, N. H., & Odimegwu, C. O. (2025). Household status and socio-economic determinants of divorce among married women in Nigeria: A pooled data analysis. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 11(1).
- Onyango, W. (2023, January 14). *10 divorced Nigerian actresses who are enjoying single life*. Legit.ng. <https://www.legit.ng/ask-legit/top/1512256-10-divorced-nigerian-actresses-enjoying-single-life/>
- Osaji, S. (2023, April 23). *Marriage experts worry over rising divorce among young couples*. Punch. <https://punchng.com/marriage-experts-worry-over-rising-divorce-among-young-couples/>
- Osisanwo, A., & Oluwayemi, V. (2018). *Divorce as conflict: Representation of participants in selected Nigerian newspapers reports on divorce cases*. Faculty of Arts, University of Ibadan.
- Osuagwu, A., Amucheazi, C., Obiefuna, O., Ekwelem, C., Nwodo, F., & Orabueze, C. (2023). A contemporary review of divorce laws in Nigeria. *International Review of Law and Jurisprudence*, 5(2), 101–102.
- Özad, B., Uygarer, G., Jamo, M. S., & Okaiyeto, S. (2020). Relationship failure and divorce among Nigerian couples: A case of poor conflict resolution. *Journal of Social and Political Sciences*, 3(2), 456–467.
- Popoola, R. O. (2023). When charity and camera collide: Nigerian celebrity philanthropy in the age of technology. *Journal for Cultural Research*, 26(3–4), 332–347. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14797585.2022.2161052>
- Rusbult, C. E., & Buunk, B. P. (1993). Commitment processes in close relationships: An analysis of commitment level, commitment mechanisms, and relationship stability. *Human Relations*, 46(7), 829–845.
- Saanyol, T. (2025, September 28). *Nigeria rated 11th out of 26 nations with highest number of divorce cases—Clergy*. Tribune Online. <https://tribuneonline.ng/nigeria-rated-11th-out-of-26-nations-with-highest-number-of-divorce-cases-clergy/>
- Shakaa, S. (2025, July 7). *Divorce sells, marriage doesn't; What are Nigeria brands really saying?* Vanguard. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2025/06/divorce-sells-marriage-doesnt-what-are-nigerian-brands-really-saying-by/>
- Stryker, S. (1980). *Symbolic interactionism: A social structural version*. Benjamin/Cummings.
- Suleiman, T. (2021). Divorce trends in Kano State. *Northern Nigeria Sociology Review*, 13(1), 56–73.
- Taiwo, K. (2025, January 30). *The rising cases of divorce in Nigeria*. Dataphyte. <https://dataphyte.com/issue/senorrita/2025/01/the-rising-cases-of-divorce-in-nigeria>
- The Cable. (2025, May 26). *Kannywood's Mansura Isah: How N4bn business ended my second marriage*. TheCable. <https://lifestyle.thecable.ng/kannywoods-mansura-isah-how-n4bn-deal-ended-my-second-marriage/>
- Thibaut, J. W., & Kelley, H. H. (1959). *The social psychology of groups*. Wiley.
- UNICEF. (2021). *The state of the world's children 2021: On my mind—Promoting, protecting and caring for children's mental health*. <https://www.unicef.org/reports/state-worlds-children-2021>
- Vanguard. (2025, November 9). *We were never married, Regina Daniels tells Ned Nwoko*. Vanguard. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2025/11/we-were-never-married-regina-daniels-tells-ned-nwoko/>
- Yahya, R. B., & Roddin, R. B. (2025). Single mother entrepreneurship: Empowering women through enterprise. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science (IJRISS)*, 2780–2785.