

**CORRELATION OF DIVORCE ON THE WELL BEING OF CHILDREN IN  
OGBE COMMUNITY, EDO STATE. A SOCIAL WORK PERSPECTIVE**

**BY**

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**BEING A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL  
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AWARD OF BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (B.Sc.) DEGREE IN SOCIAL WORK**

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## CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this project was carried out by Odufa AMEDU and it is adequate in scope and accuracy for the award of Bachelor Degree (B.Sc.) in Social work, University of Benin, Benin City.

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this project to God Almighty, whose endless blessings, guidance, Wisdom and strength have made this journey possible. Without His grace none of this would have been achievable

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Amedu Odufa  
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## ABSTRACT

*The study sets to examine the correlation of divorce on the health and lifestyle of children in Ogbe Community. It also investigated ways in which children are affected psychologically and emotionally leading to the breakdown of their physical health and social challenge. Four research questions were raised. The descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. Existing literature on divorce and health and lifestyle of children are often hinged on the holistic approach of parents, without considering the effects on the well-being of children. Three(3) secondary schools in Ogbe Community were selected based on access to road and the population available in the area. The sample size of this study consisted 150 secondary school students selected through stratified proportionate sampling technique. The research instrument that was used to elicit opinions and facts from the secondary school students was structured questionnaire. It was however subjected to face validity by the researcher's supervisor. Findings from the study indicate that children of divorced parents are more likely to experience negative health and lifestyle outcomes, including psychological distress, emotional instability, and social difficulties.*

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

Divorce can have a significant impact on the well being of children, both in the short term and the long term. Research has shown that children from divorced families are at a higher risk of developing mental health problems, behavioral issues, and physical health problems compared to children from intact families. Throughout history, divorce has remained a contentious subject. Divorce is defined as the separation of husband and wife by ending their social contract which is marriage. However, perceptions of divorce have drastically changed basically because the significance of marriage has changed (Marriage was earlier seen as a practical necessity and an irreversible obligation). (Amato, P.R, & Anthony, 2014.)

A commonly accepted and encompassing definition of marriage is a formal union and social and legal contract between two individuals that legally, economically, and emotionally unites their lives. The contractual marriage agreement usually implies that the couple has legal obligations to each other throughout their lives or until they decide to divorce. Being married also gives legitimacy to sexual relations within the marriage. Traditionally, marriage is viewed as having a key role in preserving morals and civilization.(Sheri stritof, 2010).

According to Luscombe, Belinda, (2015). Marriage is a social and legal institution that involves a formal and voluntary union between two individuals, typically recognized by law, in which they become partners in a committed and intimate relationship. While the concept of marriage has evolved over time and varies across cultures and religions, it generally entails certain key elements such as mutual rights and obligations, shared responsibilities, and the establishment of a family unit. The origins of marriage can be traced back to ancient times, with evidence of marital practices dating back thousands of years. For example, archaeological findings suggest that marriage existed in ancient Mesopotamia as early as 2350 BCE, where it served various purposes such as preserving social order, ensuring inheritance rights, and facilitating alliances between families or tribes. Different societies have developed diverse understandings and customs surrounding marriage. In many cultures, marriage has traditionally been seen as a union between a man and a woman, based on religious, social, or cultural norms. However, the definition and recognition of marriage have evolved over time, reflecting changing societal values and legal frameworks.

The legal aspects of marriage can vary significantly between jurisdictions. Marriage typically confers certain legal rights and responsibilities, such as property rights, inheritance rights, tax benefits, and decision-making authority in various matters. Additionally, marriage may also entail social and emotional aspects, including commitment, companionship, and the formation of a family unit. In the 1970s, divorce

was relatively uncommon and onerous to come about. There needed to be cases of adultery, abandonment, cruelty, intoxication, domestic violence or some other reason that made it necessary to end the marriage. However, in our present society, divorce happens every ten to thirteen seconds. Similarly, in the 1920s it was a rare find to know a person who had been divorced, today it is a rarity not to know of one who has been, or will be divorced (Kiernan k., 2000). Divorce is difficult for all members of the family. However, children are the focal point that is affected the most. This means that divorce does not only hurt the individuals directly involved (the parents) but also affects the children tremendously. When couples find it difficult to tolerate one another, the effect is on their offspring. Some children's reactions to divorce can be natural and understanding while in other cases, children may struggle with the transition. It can be easy for parents to get caught up in the pressure and stress of the process, and often, the effect on a child's life can be ignored. For most children, this process can be just as stressful, so it is fundamental that they are not overlooked during this process and that the right amount of support is rendered to them as much as attainable.(Anthony, Amato, & C.J, 2014).

Therefore, this research aims to explore the correlation between divorce and the health and well being of children in Ogbe Community. It will involve a literature review of studies that have investigated the effects of divorce on children's health and lifestyle. The review will include studies from various disciplines, including psychology, sociology, and medicine. The studies will be analyzed to identify common themes and trends

regarding the impact of divorce on children's health and lifestyle. Furthermore, this investigation attempts to acquaint readers with the challenges children might face when their parents decide to get divorced, to identify the various effects of divorce on children's health and general lifestyle, and also suggests some ways to mitigate these negative effects and help children cope with the situation.

## **1.2 Statement of the Research Problem**

The family constitutes a fundamental social unit, consisting of the parent(s) and their offspring. It is unassailable to say that parents play a crucial role in the emotional growth of their children. Hence, whatever the form of the family, the primary role of parents has always been to guide their kids and to guarantee that their needs are met. Accordingly, children and young adults are best off when raised by two continuously married parents with a low-conflict relationship. Divorce usually means children lose daily contact with one parent which is most often the father. It likewise affects a child's relationship with the custodial parent which is most often the mother. Amato, Paul R., and Keith, Bruce,(1991) research has found that kids struggle the most during the first year or two after the divorce. Kids are likely to experience despair, bitterness, anxiety, and incredulity. Divorce is a common phenomenon that affects many families, and it has been shown to have adverse effects on children's health and lifestyle. The impact of divorce on children is a complex issue that has not been exhaustively analyzed. Although some studies have investigated the effects of divorce on children, there is a necessity for further

investigation to comprehend the extent of the influence of divorce on children's health and lifestyle. It has been observed that divorce is problematic to children, some children may feel insecure, having aggression, hostile and exhibit withdrawal from peers, feel incompetence in the society and bring low performance in academics. It is also observe that one or both of couples may have psychological problems, health challenge, having low esteem and inability to integrate with the society and couples might be distance from their children. The society might have problems of menace of children who are uncared for which might result to increase of crime. This study aims to explore the correlation between divorce on the health and lifestyle of children. Additionally, the study will provide valuable insights to parents, caregivers, and family counselors on how to support children during and after a divorce.

### **1.3 Significance of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to explore the correlation of divorce on the well being of children in Ogbe Community. The study aims to provide insights into the emotional, psychological, social, physical, and lifestyle effects of divorce on children. This study also seeks to identify interventions that can support children of divorced parents in coping with the challenges they face.

The study's findings will help parents, family therapists, and policymakers to understand the needs of children of divorced parents better. The study's results will also be useful in developing interventions that can support these children in coping with the challenges

they face. The study will contribute to the existing literature on the impact of divorce on children's well being and increase awareness of the effects of divorce on children. Ultimately, this study aims to promote the well-being of children of divorced parents and help them lead healthy and fulfilling lives despite the challenges they may face.

#### **1.4 Aims and Objectives of the Study**

The main aim of this study is to investigate the correlate of divorce on the well being of children in Ogbe Community. The specific objectives are to:

1. Identify the emotional, psychological, and social challenges faced by children of divorced parents.
2. Examine the effects of divorce on the physical health of children.
3. Analyze the impact of divorce on the lifestyle choices of children.
4. Ascertain the interventions that can support children of divorced parents in coping with the challenges they face.

#### **1.5 Research Questions**

1. What emotional, psychological, and social challenges do children of divorced parents face?
2. How does divorce affect the physical health of children in Ogbe Community?
3. What lifestyle choices do children of divorced parents make, and how does divorce influence these choices?

4. What interventions can be implemented to support children of divorced parents in coping with the challenges they face?

### **1.6 Scope of the Study**

This study will focus on the correlation of divorce on the well being of children in Ogbe Community. The study will explore the emotional, psychological, social, physical, and lifestyle effects of divorce on children. The study will involve children aged 10 to 18 years whose parents have divorced. The study will be conducted in Ogbe Community, Benin City. The study will use a quantitative research design, and data will be collected through a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire will collect data on the emotional, psychological, social, physical, and lifestyle effects of divorce on children. The study will contribute to the existing literature on the impact of divorce on children's health and lifestyle and identify interventions that can support children of divorced parents in coping with the challenges they face.

### **1.7 Area of Study**

The study was conducted in Ogbe Community, Oredo Local Government Area, Benin City, Edo state. It is located in the southwestern part of Oredo Local Government Area, Edo State, Nigeria. Edo State is located in the southern part of Nigeria, and Oredo Local Government Area is in the central part of Edo State. The specific coordinates of Ogbe Community are 6.3359° N, 5.5862° E. The population density in Ogbe Community is relatively high, and the area is home to a number of social infrastructure including

schools, hospitals and market places. The secondary schools in the area were used for the research. They include Ogbe secondary school, Garrick Memorial Group of schools, Ezoti Secondary School.

### **1.8 Limitations of the Study**

It is important to note that this study has some limitations. The study will rely on self-reported data from children, which may be subject to bias. The study will also focus on a specific age group and may not be generalizable to other age groups. Finally, the study may not be able to capture the full range of effects of divorce on children's well being. Regarding the age group of the children, the study will focus on children between the ages of 10 to 18 years. This age group was chosen because children in this age range have a better ability to communicate their experiences and feelings, and they are more likely to be affected by their parents' divorce. However, this study may not capture the experiences of children who are younger or older than this age range

Regarding the limitations of the study, self-reported data from children may be subject to bias, as they may not be fully aware of or able to articulate all of their experiences and feelings accurately. To mitigate this limitation, the study will use a structured questionnaire to collect data, which will ensure that all participants are asked the same questions in the same way. Additionally, while the study aims to provide insights into the emotional, psychological, social, physical, and lifestyle effects of divorce on children, it may not be able to capture the full range of effects. This is because the impact of divorce

on children can be complex and multifaceted, and it may be difficult to capture all aspects of this impact in a single study. Despite these limitations, the study will contribute to the existing literature on the impact of divorce on children's well being, and it will provide insights into interventions that can support children of divorced parents in coping with the challenges they face

### **1.9 Delimitation of the Study**

While this study aims to investigate the correlation of divorce on the well being of children in Benin City, Using Ogbe Community as a case study, there are some delimitations that should be noted. Firstly, the study will focus only on the children's experiences, and not the experiences of their parents. The study will not explore the reasons for divorce or the effects of divorce on parents. Instead, it will focus solely on the experiences of the children of divorced parents. Secondly, the study will only involve children whose parents have divorced. It will not include children whose parents have separated but not divorced, or children whose parents have remarried. This is because the impact of divorce on children may be different from the impact of separation or remarriage.

Thirdly, the study will be conducted using a quantitative research design. While this design has its strengths in terms of providing statistical analysis of the data, it may not capture the full complexity of the experiences of children of divorced parents. Qualitative research methods, such as interviews or focus groups, may be better suited to capture the

nuances of children's experiences. Finally, the study will be limited to children between the ages of 10 to 18 years. While this age range was chosen because children in this age range are more likely to be affected by their parents' divorce, the experiences of younger or older children may be different and may not be captured in this study.

Overall, these delimitations will ensure that the study remains focused on the experiences of children of divorced parents and provides insights into the specific impact of divorce on their well being.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2. 1 Concept of Marriage

Marriage is a legally recognized union between a man and a woman in which they are united sexually; co-operate economically; and may give birth to, adopt, or rear children (Lee, 2008). According to Macharia (2010), marriage is a deep and powerful commitment between a man and a woman who have given themselves to life long relationship with each other. Since marriage is meant to be a long time union, each spouse needs to be committed to the course which is only possible when conditions are favourable for both. Each of them needs to ensure that there is proper comfort and understanding of the issues related to marriage.

Marriage is a complex relationship and requires learning to be both separate and together; learning to allocate power, play and work together as well as learning to rear another generation. Instability in this institution affects many aspects of life as well as individuals involved (Gichinga, 2010). There are needs to be satisfied in and through marriage. If such needs are not met, it leads to challenges within the institution. Marriage is an intimate relationship in which there is willingness to share the activities and situations that are strictly private like sex. Marriage is described as a voluntary relationship where most people make free choices of their mates (Harway, 2005).

The concept of marriage is an essential factor to consider when examining the correlations between divorce and the well being of children. Understanding the dynamics and quality of the marital relationship can provide insights into the potential effects on children's well-being. Here is an explanation of the concept of marriage in relation to the correlations of divorce on the health and lifestyle of children. Johnson, Galambos and Krahn (2002), examines the influence of interparental conflict, a common precursor to divorce, on the relationships between young adults and their parents. It emphasizes the significance of a stable and harmonious marital relationship as a foundation for healthy parent-child relationships. When the marital relationship becomes strained, conflictual, or ends in divorce, it can impact the quality of parent-child interactions and subsequently affect children's health and lifestyle outcomes.

Cummings and Davies (2010) provides an in-depth analysis of the emotional security perspective in understanding the impact of marital conflict on children's well-being. It highlights how exposure to chronic marital conflict, which may precede divorce, can disrupt children's sense of emotional security. The resulting insecurity can have adverse effects on their psychological and physical health, as well as their lifestyle behaviors. It emphasizes the importance of promoting a positive and supportive marital relationship for the well-being of children. Demo, D. H., & Acock, A. C. (1988), explores the impact of divorce on children from a sociological perspective, considering factors such as parental conflict, economic changes, and changes in living arrangements. It underscores

the significance of the marital relationship as a protective factor for children's health and lifestyle. A stable and supportive marital relationship provides a conducive environment for promoting healthy lifestyle behaviors and overall well-being in children. A healthy and stable marital relationship can contribute to positive parenting practices, emotional security, and consistent routines, which are beneficial for children's well-being. Conversely, marital conflict, disruption, and divorce can have adverse effects on children's health and lifestyle behaviors. Understanding these dynamics can inform interventions and support systems aimed at promoting healthy marriages and minimizing the negative impact of divorce on children.

### **2.1.2. Concept of Stability in Marriage**

Marital stability means that the marriage stays intact, without dissolution or divorce. It is a situation whereby the partners remain legally married in a shared household over time. People get into a marriage with an expectation of enjoying and living happily, but after marriage takes place, there are many issues that may arise which affects the individuals leading to instability. Strong commitment to the institution of marriage and a lifetime relationship leads to higher levels of marital satisfaction, (Wilcox & Nock, 2006). Chartier (2016) argues that commitment to the marriage is important in ensuring stability. Stability takes place when spouses are well prepared before they commit themselves to marriage. A lot of training is done for people to gain knowledge in different areas, but, little is done to prepare people for marriage. Training is necessary to avoid the tragedy of

plunging into divorces which end up affecting generations. Stability in marriage leads to happiness, love and affection and marital satisfaction, (Gottman, 2011). Characteristics of a strong family as follows: family members appreciating one another, spending time together, having positive communication patterns, displaying a high level of commitment to their family, possessing a spiritual orientation and being able to deal positively with crises. Lack of such qualities in marriage lead to instability and people need to embrace and practice them in their marriages.

The concept of stability in marriage is an important factor to consider when examining the correlations between divorce and the health and lifestyle of children. Stability refers to the consistency and durability of the marital relationship, which can have implications for children's well-being. Children raised in stable marriages tend to have better health and lifestyle outcomes compared to those from unstable marriages or divorced families. Stability in the marital relationship provides a secure and consistent environment for children, which contributes to their overall well-being, (Amato, P. R., & Keith, B.,1991). Children from stable marriages are more likely to engage in healthy and constructive activities, such as sports, hobbies, and social interactions, compared to children from unstable marriages or divorced families. Stability in the marital relationship provides a supportive foundation for children's involvement in positive lifestyle behaviors, (Vandewater, E. A., Park, S. E., & Cook, T. D., 2006). According to Fiese, B. H., Tomcho, T. J., Douglas, M., Josephs, K., Poltrock, S., & Baker, T. (2002), stable

marriages provide a conducive environment for the establishment and maintenance of consistent family routines and rituals. These routines, such as regular mealtimes and bedtime routines, promote well being behaviors and contribute to children's physical and psychological health.

### **2.2.2 Concept of Divorce**

Divorce is a legal dissolution of a marriage, resulting in the termination of the marital relationship between spouses. It represents a significant life event that can have far-reaching consequences, not only for the couple involved but also for their children. Understanding the concept of divorce in the context of marriage is crucial for exploring the correlation between divorce and the well being of children. Divorce represents a disruption in the family structure and dynamics. It often entails changes in living arrangements, parenting responsibilities, and family routines. The process of divorce can introduce a period of instability and uncertainty for children, impacting various aspects of their lives, including their emotional well-being, social relationships, physical health, and lifestyle behaviors.

Children may experience a range of emotional responses to the concept of divorce, such as sadness, anger, confusion, and feelings of abandonment. The breakdown of the marital relationship and subsequent divorce can create a sense of loss and upheaval for children, challenging their emotional resilience and overall mental health. The impact of divorce hits them most cruelly as they go in search of love, sexual intimacy and commitment.

Their lack of inner images of a man and a woman in a stable relationship and their memories of their parents' failure to sustain the marriage badly hobbles their search, leading them to heartbreak and even despair (Wallerstein et al., 2000). As Divorce also affects the social relationships of children. They may experience changes in their social networks, such as reduced contact with extended family members or friends associated with the noncustodial parent. The disruption in social connections and support systems can influence children's social adjustment and academic performance. (Amato 1994).

Furthermore, the concept of divorce in marriage can have implications for the physical health of children. The stress and emotional upheaval associated with divorce can contribute to physiological responses, potentially impacting the immune system and increasing the risk of health problems. Children may also face lifestyle changes, such as alterations in diet, exercise routines, and sleep patterns, which can influence their overall health and well-being.

## **2.2 Emotional and Psychological Effects of Divorce on Children**

The terms "emotional effect" and "psychological effect" refer to the impact or influence that something has on a person's emotions or mental state, respectively. (Amato, P. R., & Sobolewski, J. M. (2001). Here's a breakdown of each term: Emotional Effect: Emotional effects pertain to the impact on an individual's emotions, feelings, and mood. Various events, experiences, or stimuli can trigger emotional responses, which may range from positive emotions like joy, happiness, or love, to negative emotions like sadness, anger,

or fear. Emotional effects can be short-term or long-term, and they can vary in intensity depending on the individual and the circumstances involved.(Amato, P. R., & Sobolewski, J.M. 2001).

**Psychological Effect:** Psychological effects refer to the impact on an individual's mental processes, cognition, thoughts, beliefs, and behavior. They are often more comprehensive and encompass a broader range of mental and cognitive functions. Psychological effects can be influenced by various factors, including life events, traumatic experiences, social interactions, cultural influences, and personal beliefs.(Amato, P. R., & Sobolewski, J.M. 2001). Divorce can have profound emotional and psychological effects on children, as it represents a significant disruption to their family structure and dynamics. Children may experience a range of emotional responses following their parents' divorce, including sadness, anger, confusion, fear, and a sense of loss. They may also grapple with feelings of guilt, self-blame, and loyalty conflicts between parents. These emotional responses can persist over time and impact their overall psychological well-being. Gottman, J.S (2011)

Divorce can also disrupt children's sense of stability and security. The changes in family structure, living arrangements, and routines can create feelings of uncertainty and anxiety. Children may struggle with adjusting to new living situations, school changes, and changes in relationships with parents and siblings. (Anthony, C.J, 2014). Furthermore, the ongoing conflict between parents that often accompanies divorce can significantly affect children's emotional and psychological well-being. High levels of parental conflict

can create a hostile and stressful environment for children, leading to increased rates of anxiety, depression, and behavioral problems.

It is important to note that the emotional and psychological effects of divorce on children can be influenced by various factors, such as the child's age, temperament, coping mechanisms, and the presence of supportive relationships. Additionally, the quality of parenting and the level of co-parenting cooperation can play a significant role in mitigating or exacerbating these effects. Numerous studies have consistently shown that children of divorced parents are more likely to experience emotional and psychological challenges compared to those from intact families. Research indicates higher levels of depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and internalizing and externalizing behaviors among children of divorced parent (Amato & Keith, 1991). The disruption of the family structure, conflict between parents, and changes in living arrangements contribute to these negative emotional and psychological outcomes.

### **2.2.1 Social Adjustment of Children to Divorce**

Social adjustment refers to the process by which individuals adapt and conform to the social norms, expectations, and behaviors of a particular social group or society. It involves acquiring the necessary skills, attitudes, and behaviors that allow individuals to effectively interact, communicate, and participate in social relationships and activities. According to Sun, Y., Li, Y., & Sun, J. (2018), Social adjustment encompasses various aspects of an individual's life, including personal relationships, work settings, educational

environments, and community interactions. It involves understanding and conforming to social norms, values, and cultural practices, as well as developing appropriate social skills, such as communication, empathy, and cooperation. Divorce can significantly affect children's social adjustment. Children of divorced parents often experience difficulties in peer relationships, low academic performance, insecurity and overall social functioning. They may exhibit lower social competence, reduced academic achievement, and higher rates of behavioral problems compared to their peers from intact families (Amato & Keith, 1991). These challenges may stem from disruptions in social support networks, changes in family dynamics, and exposure to parental conflict during and after divorce. According to Lansford, J. E. (2009), the social adjustment of children affected by divorce is a critical aspect to consider when examining the impact of divorce on their well-being. Here is an explanation of the social adjustment effects; Divorce can significantly influence children's social adjustment, as it introduces changes to their family structure, relationships, and support systems. Understanding these effects is crucial for recognizing the challenges children may face in their social interactions.

Children from divorced families may encounter difficulties in forming and maintaining social relationships. The disruption in family dynamics and changes in living arrangements can affect their social networks, leading to feelings of instability and loss. The stress associated with divorce may also impact children's social functioning, potentially affecting their ability to connect with peers and form new friendships. The

quality of the parent-child relationship post-divorce can also influence children's social adjustment. A supportive and nurturing parenting style can promote healthy social development, while high levels of conflict and strained parent-child relationships can hinder children's ability to form positive relationships with others.

Also, the transition between different parenting arrangements (e.g., joint custody, visitation) can pose challenges for children's social adjustment. Adjusting to different routines, rules, and expectations in different households may require adaptive skills and flexibility. Sun,J (2018). However not all children from divorced families experience negative social outcomes. Some children demonstrate resilience and develop effective coping strategies. Factors such as access to social support networks, involvement in extracurricular activities, and positive school environments can promote positive social adjustment despite the challenges of divorce. Comprehending the social adjustment effects of divorce on children can inform interventions and support systems that help facilitate healthy social interactions and provide resources for building and maintaining supportive relationships. Karol, L .Kumper (2013).

### **2.2.2 Physical Health of Children Affected by Divorce**

Physical health refers to the state of well-being and optimal functioning of an individual's body and its various physiological systems. It encompasses the overall condition of the body, including its organs, tissues, and physical capabilities. Physical health is influenced by a range of factors, including genetics, lifestyle choices, environmental factors, and

access to healthcare. Several studies have explored the relationship between divorce and physical health outcomes in children. Findings suggest that children of divorced parents may experience higher rates of physical health problems, such as respiratory illnesses, asthma, and gastrointestinal issues (Amato & Keith, 1991). Stress-related factors, disrupted routines, and changes in living conditions may contribute to compromised physical health in this population. Divorce can have an impact on the physical health of children, potentially leading to changes in their well-being, lifestyle behaviors, and overall health outcomes. The stress and emotional upheaval associated with divorce can contribute to physiological responses that may influence children's physical health. Children from divorced families may experience increased stress levels, which can have implications for their immune system functioning and overall health. Chronic stress associated with divorce may weaken the immune system, making children more susceptible to illnesses and infections. Moreover, changes in lifestyle and routines following divorce, such as disrupted sleep patterns, altered eating habits, and decreased physical activity, can contribute to poor physical health outcomes. (McLeod, B. D., Weisz and Wood (2007). In addition, the parental conflict often present during and after divorce can further impact children's physical health. High levels of conflict can create a hostile and stressful environment, leading to increased levels of cortisol, a stress hormone, which can have negative effects on children's immune system functioning and overall physical health. Notwithstanding, the impact on physical health may vary among children,

depending on individual factors such as resilience, coping mechanisms, and access to social support networks. Protective factors such as positive parenting, stable routines, and a supportive environment can mitigate the negative physical health consequences of divorce (Emery, R.E. 2003).

### **2.2.3. Lifestyle Behaviors of Children to Divorce**

Lifestyle behaviors refer to the choices and habits individuals make in their daily lives that can significantly impact their overall health and well-being. These behaviors encompass various aspects of life, including diet and nutrition, physical activity, sleep patterns, stress management, substance use, and social interactions. Adopting healthy lifestyle behaviors is crucial for maintaining and promoting optimal physical, mental, and emotional health. Divorce can also influence children's lifestyle behaviors. Studies have shown that children of divorced parents are more likely to engage in unhealthy behaviors, such as smoking, alcohol consumption, and substance abuse (Amato & Keith, 1991). These behaviors may arise as coping mechanisms or responses to emotional distress and disrupted family dynamics.

Divorce can introduce significant changes to the lifestyle behaviors of children, including their daily routines, habits, and choices related to health and well-being. Understanding these effects is important for recognizing the potential impact on their overall lifestyle outcomes (Jansen, P. W., Dommisse-van Berkel, A., de Winter, A. F., Verhulst, F. C., Reijneveld, S. A., & Jaddoe, V. W. 2013).

Following parental divorce, children may experience changes in their daily routines, such as meal patterns, sleep schedules, and physical activity levels. Disruptions to established routines can lead to irregularities in these lifestyle behaviors, potentially affecting their overall well-being. The stress and emotional upheaval associated with divorce can also influence lifestyle behaviors. Children may engage in emotional eating or exhibit changes in appetite, leading to alterations in dietary patterns and potentially unhealthy eating habits. Similarly, the emotional distress and anxiety experienced during and after divorce can impact sleep quality and duration, which can further affect their physical and mental health. Furthermore, the co-parenting arrangements and differences in parenting styles post-divorce can influence children's lifestyle behaviors. Inconsistencies in rules, discipline, and routines between households may result in varied expectations and behaviors related to nutrition, physical activity, and screen time.

#### **2.2.4 Intervention that can Support Children of Divorced Parents in Coping with the Challenges they Face**

To support children of divorced parents means providing them with the emotional, social, and practical support they need during this difficult time. This can include helping them to process their emotions, building positive relationships, and providing them with stability and resources to meet their needs. It's important to understand that divorce can have a big impact on children, and to provide them with the support they need to cope and heal. Isolina, R (2016).

Supporting children of divorce requires a multifaceted approach involving social work interventions, strategies, and coping mechanisms. Here are some effective methods that social workers and families can employ to help these children:

### **Social Work Interventions**

**Individual and Group Counselling:** Social workers can provide individual counseling for children to help them process their feelings and concerns. Group counselling sessions with peers experiencing similar situations can also be beneficial. Individual and group counselling are both valuable types of support for children of divorced parents. Individual counselling allows the child to work one-on-one with a therapist to process their emotions and experiences. Group counselling provides the opportunity for the child to connect with other children who are going through similar situations. Both types of counselling can be beneficial in helping the child to cope with the divorce and its aftermath. Isolina, R (2016).

**Parenting Programs:** Offer parenting programs that educate divorced parents on effective co-parenting strategies. These programs can help reduce conflict and create a stable environment for children. One specific way to support children of divorced parents is through parenting programs. These programs can teach parents how to effectively support their children during and after a divorce. They can provide information on topics like co-parenting, communication, and conflict resolution. These programs can also help

parents to understand the emotional and developmental needs of their children. They can teach parents how to create a nurturing and stable environment for their children, and to build positive relationships with them. Karol, L.K (2013).

**Mediation Services:** Provide mediation services to resolve conflicts between parents outside of the courtroom. Mediation can help parents reach mutually agreeable solutions regarding custody and visitation. Mediation services can be another way to support children of divorced parents. This is a process where a neutral third party helps parents to communicate and resolve conflicts. The mediator can help parents to develop a parenting plan that meets the needs of their children, and can provide a safe and confidential space for parents to discuss their concerns and issues. This can reduce conflict and help parents to make decisions that are in the best interests of their children. Barry, B(2013)

**School-Based Support:** Collaborate with schools to identify children who may be struggling academically or emotionally. School counselors and social workers can provide additional support. These professionals can help children to cope with the divorce and its aftermath, and can provide a safe space for them to talk about their feelings. They can also provide resources and referrals to other services, such as counseling or financial assistance. Robin, M. Deutsch (2018).

**Referral to Specialized Services:** Refer children and families to specialized services when needed, such as child psychologists, therapists, or support groups. This involves connecting families with professionals who have specific expertise in dealing with the

unique challenges faced by these children. For example, some children may need to see a child psychologist or social worker who can provide more in-depth therapy or counseling. Others may need to see a financial planner who can help to manage the family's finances. This type of support can be tailored to meet the specific needs of the family. Robert, E. Emery (2016).

**Case Management:** Social workers can offer case management services to help families access needed resources, including financial assistance, housing support, and healthcare services. Case management is a comprehensive approach to supporting children of divorced parents. This involves connecting families with the resources and services they need, such as counseling, financial assistance, and legal support. The case manager can coordinate these services and provide ongoing support and advocacy for the family. This can help to ensure that all of the family's needs are being met, and can take some of the burden off of the parents. Nancy, A.A (2016).

**Play Therapy:** For younger children, play therapy can be an effective way to help them express their feelings and concerns in a safe and non-verbal manner. Play therapy is a type of therapy that can be very effective for children of divorced parents. This type of therapy uses play to help children express and process their emotions, and to develop coping skills. Play therapy can take place in a group setting or one-on-one with a therapist. It often involves the use of toys, games, and art to help children work through their feelings and learn to cope with difficult situations. Garry, L. Landreth (2017).

**Family Therapy:** Family therapy sessions can involve both parents and children to improve communication and address family dynamics post-divorce. Family therapy is another way to support children of divorced parents. This type of therapy involves the entire family, and can help to improve communication, resolve conflict, and strengthen relationships. In family therapy, a therapist can help parents and children to understand the impact of the divorce, and to develop coping skills and strategies for moving forward. It can also help to address any underlying issues that may be contributing to conflict in the family.

**Art and Expressive Therapies:** Art, music, or drama therapy can provide alternative channels for children to express their emotions and cope with stress. Art and expressive therapy can also be very helpful for children of divorced parents. This type of therapy allows children to express themselves in nonverbal ways, such as through art, music, and movement. It can help children to process difficult emotions and experiences, and to feel a sense of control and mastery over their situation. Art and expressive therapy can also be used to help children communicate and connect with others. Michael, P. Nichols (2019).

**Home Visits:** This type of support involves a professional coming to the child's home to provide assistance and guidance. Home visits can be used to provide parenting education, to address issues like domestic violence, and to help families access community resources. In addition, home visits can be a way to build trust and rapport with the family, and to create a safe space for the child to express their needs. Deborah, K. Scheurman (2018).

**Legal Advocacy:** Social workers can provide advocacy and support for children during legal proceedings to ensure their best interests are considered. Legal advocacy is another important way to support children of divorced parents. This type of support involves helping families to navigate the legal system and understand their rights. It can also involve advocating for the best interests of the child in court proceedings. Legal advocacy can be particularly important in cases where there are concerns about child custody or visitation, or where the child's safety or well-being is at risk. Robert, E. Emery (2016).

### **Coping Mechanisms for Children**

**Journaling:** Encourage children to keep journals where they can write down their thoughts, feelings, and experiences as a way of processing their emotions. Journaling is a useful coping mechanism that can help children of divorced parents to process their thoughts and emotions. Through journaling, children can express their feelings in a safe and private space. They can also use journaling to track their progress and growth over time. In addition, journaling can help children to identify their triggers and to develop strategies for coping with difficult situations.

**Positive Affirmations:** Teach children to practice positive self-talk and affirmations to boost their self-esteem and self-worth. These are statements that the child can repeat to themselves to help them feel more confident and optimistic. Some examples of positive affirmations for children of divorced parents could include: "I am strong and capable." "I

am loved and supported." "I am resilient and can overcome any challenge." These affirmations can help to build a child's self-esteem and sense of self-worth.

**Conflict Resolution Skills:** Provide children with conflict resolution skills to help them manage disagreements and conflicts with peers, siblings, or parents. Conflict resolution is a valuable coping mechanism that can help children of divorced parents to navigate conflicts and disagreements. This can include learning how to communicate effectively, to listen actively, and to find common ground. In addition, conflict resolution can teach children to be assertive while also respecting the needs of others. When children learn these skills, they can feel more confident and empowered in their relationships.

**Resilience Building:** Focus on building resilience in children. Help them recognize their strengths and abilities to overcome challenges. This involves helping children to develop the skills and strengths they need to cope with challenges and adversity. Some of the ways resilience can be built include promoting a sense of hope, teaching problem-solving skills, and fostering a supportive environment. Children who are resilient are better able to cope with the changes and challenges that come with divorce.

**Mindfulness and Relaxation:** Teach mindfulness and relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing exercises, to help children manage stress and anxiety. Mindfulness and relaxation are excellent coping mechanisms for children of divorced parents. Mindfulness is the practice of being present and aware of one's thoughts and feelings without

judgment. Relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing and progressive muscle relaxation, can help children to manage stress and anxiety. By teaching children these skills, they can learn to better cope with the changes and challenges associated with divorce.

**Goal Setting:** Encourage children to set achievable goals, both short-term and long-term, to give them a sense of purpose and direction. Goal setting is a very effective coping mechanism for children of divorced parents. By helping children to set achievable goals, they can feel a sense of accomplishment and progress. This can be particularly important during a time of change and transition, like divorce. Setting goals can also provide a sense of control and direction in life.

**Volunteer and Community Engagement:** Engage children in volunteer activities or community projects to promote a sense of belonging and contribution. Volunteer and community engagement can be a really powerful coping mechanism for children of divorced parents. When children are able to give back to their community, they can gain a sense of purpose and belonging. They can also develop social skills and make new friends. This can help them to feel connected and supported, even during a time of change and uncertainty.

**Hobbies and Interests:** Support children in pursuing hobbies and interests they are passionate about, which can provide a sense of joy and accomplishment. Hobbies and interests can be an extremely valuable coping mechanism for children of divorced parents.

When children have something they love to do, it can provide them with a sense of joy and fulfillment. It can also be a great way to take their mind off of the divorce. Whether it's playing sports, drawing, or reading, having a hobby can make a big difference for children of divorced parents.

**Healthy Lifestyle Choices:** Emphasize the importance of healthy lifestyle choices, including regular exercise, balanced nutrition, and adequate sleep, to support overall well-being.

**Role-Model Identification:** Help children identify positive role models outside of the family, such as teachers, coaches, or community leaders, who can inspire and guide them. Role model identity is another valuable coping mechanism for children of divorced parents. This involves identifying positive role models who can serve as a source of inspiration and support. These role models can be real-life individuals, such as a teacher, coach, or family friend. They can also be fictional characters from books, movies, or television shows. Children can learn from these role models and draw strength from their stories and experiences.

**Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Programs:** Encourage participation in SEL programs at school or in the community. These programs teach valuable skills in self-awareness, self-regulation, and relationship building. Social and emotional learning is a very effective coping mechanism for children of divorced parents. Social and emotional

learning (SEL) teaches children to understand and manage their emotions, build positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. This can help children to cope with the stress and challenges of divorce.

**Open Communication:** Encourage open and age-appropriate communication between parents and children. Children should feel comfortable discussing their feelings and asking questions about the divorce. When children can talk openly and honestly with their parents, it can help them to process their feelings and understand what is happening in their lives. Open communication can also build trust and strengthen relationships. When children feel comfortable talking about the divorce, it can help them to cope with the changes they are experiencing.

**Routine and Stability:** Help parents establish and maintain stable routines for their children. Predictable schedules can provide a sense of security. When children have a predictable schedule and know what to expect, it can help them to feel more secure and safe. Routine and stability can also help to reduce stress and provide a sense of normalcy during a time of change. For example, having regular mealtimes, bedtimes, and school routines can be very helpful.

## **2.3 Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for understanding the correlation between divorce and the well being of children involves drawing from multiple theoretical perspectives that provide insights into the complex dynamics at play. Two commonly utilized theoretical

frameworks in this area of research are the Family Systems Theory and the Ecological Systems Theory.

### **Family System Theory**

Murray Bowen's Family theories focus on the dynamic interactions among family members, describing changes in typical patterns of parent–child relationships, and the characteristics of family interactions that enhance or disrupt development. From an evolutionary perspective, families have evolved as the social context to support human development. Human infants have few innate reflexes, but they have a wealth of sensory and motor capacities to engage in social interactions, and an enormous capacity to learn. Families have evolved as contexts within which infants and children are protected from harm, nurtured, educated, and socialized into their cultures. (B.M. Newman, P.R. Newman, 2011).

Family Systems Theory by Murray Bowen 1950, posits that a family functions as a system with interconnected parts, and changes in one part of the system, such as parental divorce, can have ripple effects on other family members, including children. According to this theory, divorce disrupts the family system and alters the functioning of family dynamics, leading to emotional, psychological, and social challenges for children. It emphasizes the importance of understanding the interdependence and interactions among family members in the context of divorce (Amato & Keith, 1991). Family Systems Theory provides a valuable framework for understanding the correlation between divorce

and the health and lifestyle of children. According to this theory, a family is viewed as an interconnected system where changes in one part of the system affect the functioning of the entire family unit. Divorce represents a significant disruption to the family system, which can have profound effects on children's well-being.

In the context of divorce, Family Systems Theory highlights several key concepts and dynamics:

**Interdependence:** Family systems theory emphasizes the interdependence of family members. The divorce of parents disrupts the interdependent relationships within the family, leading to changes in roles, responsibilities, and family dynamics. Children may experience a sense of instability and uncertainty as a result of these changes.

**Boundaries:** Boundaries define the limits and rules within a family system. During and after divorce, boundaries may become blurred or rigid, impacting the interactions and relationships between family members. Unclear boundaries can lead to role confusion, conflict, and difficulties in establishing new routines and structures.

Family systems theory also emphasizes the importance of boundaries within a family. Divorce often involves the restructuring of boundaries, both physical (e.g., living arrangements) and emotional (e.g., parent-child relationships). The redefined boundaries can impact children's sense of security, stability, and connectedness within the family system.

**Communication:** Effective communication is crucial for healthy family functioning. Divorce can introduce challenges to communication patterns within the family. Children may experience difficulties expressing their emotions, concerns, and needs during this transitional period. Communication breakdowns can hinder the adjustment process and contribute to emotional distress in children.

**Parental Conflict:** Divorce is often accompanied by increased parental conflict, which can have negative effects on children's well-being. Family system theory recognizes the detrimental impact of ongoing conflict on children's emotional and psychological adjustment. High levels of conflict can create a hostile and stressful environment for children, exacerbating the challenges they face post-divorce.

**Differentiation:** Differentiation refers to the ability of individuals to maintain a separate sense of self while remaining connected to the family system. During divorce, family members may struggle with their emotional and psychological boundaries. Children may experience loyalty conflicts or feel pressured to take sides, which can impact their emotional well-being and ability to navigate relationships.

**Triangles:** Triangles are a concept in Family system theory that describes how conflicts can manifest in triangular relationships. During divorce, the parental relationship may become more strained, leading parents to involve children in their conflicts or rely on them for emotional support. This can burden children with additional stress and affect their emotional development.

**Emotional Fusion:** Emotional fusion refers to a lack of differentiation, where individuals become enmeshed in each other's emotions and struggle to separate their own feelings from those of others. Divorce can intensify emotional fusion within the family system, as parents and children navigate the emotional challenges associated with the separation. Children may experience heightened emotional distress or difficulties in expressing their own emotions.

**Role Changes:** Divorce often leads to changes in family roles and responsibilities. For example, children may take on new roles, such as being a confidant to one parent or assuming more household responsibilities. These role changes can affect children's development and well-being, as they may feel burdened or experience a loss of childhood.

**Coping Strategies:** Family system theory highlights that families develop coping strategies to manage stress and maintain balance. During and after divorce, both parents and children may develop adaptive or maladaptive coping strategies to navigate the changes. Understanding these coping strategies can provide insights into the resilience and adjustment of children following divorce.

**Parent-Child Relationships:** Divorce often affects the quality and dynamics of parent-child relationships. Family system theory underscores the significance of healthy and supportive parent-child relationships for children's well-being. It is important to consider how divorce may impact the emotional closeness, communication patterns, and overall quality of these relationships.

**Extended Family:** Family system theory acknowledges the influence of extended family members, such as grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins, on the family system. During divorce, the involvement and support of extended family members can play a crucial role in buffering the impact on children and providing additional sources of stability and care.

**Co-Parenting:** Co-parenting refers to the collaborative effort of both parents in raising and supporting their children after divorce. Family system theory highlights the importance of effective co-parenting, as it contributes to a more stable and nurturing environment for children. Co-parenting strategies, communication patterns, and conflict resolution skills are crucial aspects to consider in promoting positive outcomes for children.

**Transition and Adjustment:** Divorce represents a significant transition for all family members. Family system theory underscores the importance of understanding the transitional process and providing support during this period of adjustment. Recognizing the unique needs and challenges that children face during this transition can inform interventions aimed at promoting their well-being and facilitating a smoother adjustment process.

**Systemic Interventions:** Family system theory supports systemic interventions that address the family as a whole rather than focusing solely on individual family members. Interventions may include family therapy, parent education programs, or support groups

that aim to strengthen the family system, improve communication, and enhance coping strategies.

By applying Family Systems Theory to the correlation between divorce and the health and lifestyle of children, researchers can gain insights into the complex dynamics at play. Understanding how divorce disrupts the family system and impacts the interdependence, boundaries, communication, and conflict within the family can help identify strategies and interventions to support children's well-being during and after divorce.

### **Ecology System Theory**

According to Renn, K.A, & Arnold, K.D (2003), Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory is one of the most accepted explanations regarding the influence of social environments on human development. This theory argues that the environment you grow up in affects every facet of your life. Social factors determine your way of thinking, the emotions you feel, and your likes and dislikes. If you change your environment, you'll change. If you move to another country with a different culture, your identity will certainly change. The same can happen if your social role within one of the five systems changes.

### **The Five Systems Include**

**Microsystem:** Made up of the groups that have direct contact with the family. This level includes immediate and direct influences, such as the family environment, parent-child

relationships, and changes in routines and structures following divorce. The quality of co-parenting, communication, and support within the microsystem can significantly impact children's well-being.

**Mesosystem:** The relationships between the groups from the first system. The mesosystem encompasses the interactions between different microsystems, such as the relationship between the home and school environments. Following divorce, children may face challenges in navigating these different settings, and the level of coordination and support between parents and schools can influence their health and lifestyle outcomes.

**Exosystem:** Factors that affect an individual's life but, the elements of this system don't have a direct relationship with the individual. The exosystem refers to influences that indirectly affect children's lives, such as extended family, community resources, and societal attitudes towards divorce. The support or strain experienced in these broader systems can shape children's adjustment and access to resources that contribute to their health and lifestyle.

**Macrosystem:** Contains those cultural elements that affect the individual and everyone around them. The macrosystem involves cultural and societal factors, including cultural norms, legal systems, and prevailing attitudes towards divorce. These factors influence how divorce is perceived and experienced, potentially affecting the well-being and social support available to children.

**Chronosystem:** The stage of life that the individual is in regarding the situations they're going through. The chronosystem is a dimension of Ecological systems theory that recognizes the influence of time and historical context on individuals' development. When examining the impact of divorce on children, it is important to consider how the timing of the divorce (e.g., early childhood, adolescence) can shape their health and lifestyle outcomes. The duration since the divorce and subsequent changes in family circumstances over time also play a role in children's adjustment.

**Resilience and Protective Factors:** Ecological systems theory highlights the importance of identifying resilience factors and protective resources within a child's ecological environment. These factors can include supportive relationships with extended family, friends, teachers, and access to community resources. Recognizing and fostering these protective factors can help buffer the negative effects of divorce and promote positive health and lifestyle outcomes for children.

**Multilevel Interventions:** Ecological system theory suggests that interventions should target multiple levels of influence to effectively support children affected by divorce. Interventions can include individual-level support (e.g., counseling), family-level interventions (e.g., co-parenting programs), school-based interventions (e.g., support from teachers and counselors), and community-level programs (e.g., support groups for children of divorced parents). Taking a holistic approach that addresses various

ecological levels can contribute to more comprehensive and long-lasting positive outcomes for children.

**Differential Impact:** It is important to recognize that the impact of divorce on children's health and lifestyle outcomes can vary depending on individual and contextual factors. Each child has a unique set of characteristics and experiences that interact with the divorce process. Factors such as age, gender, temperament, pre-existing vulnerabilities, and the presence of other life stressors can influence how children are affected by divorce. Considering these individual differences and the specific context in which the child is embedded is essential for understanding the diverse outcomes associated with divorce.

**Long-Term Effects:** Ecological system theory emphasizes the importance of considering long-term effects and trajectories of children's development following divorce. The impact of divorce on children's health and lifestyle outcomes may extend beyond the immediate post-divorce period and can have implications for their well-being into adolescence and adulthood. Longitudinal research that examines the long-term effects of divorce can provide insights into the dynamic nature of children's adjustment and inform interventions that support their ongoing development.

Ecological Systems Theory, proposed by Bronfenbrenner, considers the impact of various environmental systems on child development. It recognizes that children's well-being is influenced by multiple systems, including the microsystem (immediate family and relationships), mesosystem (interactions between different settings), exosystem (external

influences on the family), and macrosystem (cultural and societal influences). Divorce affects each of these systems, potentially leading to changes in parenting practices, support networks, social norms, and access to resources, which, in turn, can impact the health and lifestyle of children (Amato & Keith, 1991).

Bronfenbrenner sees the instability and unpredictability of family life we've let our economy create as the most destructive force to a child's development (Addison, 1992). Children do not have the constant mutual interaction with important adults that is necessary for development. According to the ecological theory, if the relationships in the immediate microsystem break down, the child will not have the tools to explore other parts of his environment. Children looking for the affirmations that should be present in the child/parent (or child/other important adult) relationship look for attention in inappropriate places. These deficiencies show themselves especially in adolescence as anti-social behavior, lack of self-discipline, and inability to provide self-direction (Addison, 1992). This theory has dire implications for the practice of teaching. Knowing about the breakdown occurring within children's homes, is it possible for our educational system to make up for these deficiencies? It seems now that it is necessary for schools and teachers to provide stable, long-term relationships. Yet, Bronfenbrenner believes that the primary relationship needs to be with someone who can provide a sense of caring that is meant to last a lifetime.

This relationship must be fostered by a person or people within the immediate sphere of the child's influence. Schools and teachers fulfill an important secondary role, but cannot provide the complexity of interaction that can be provided by primary adults. For the educational community to attempt a primary role is to help our society continue its denial of the real issue. The problems students and families face are caused by the conflict between the workplace and family life – not between families and schools. Schools and teachers should work to support the primary relationship and to create an environment that welcomes and nurtures families. We can do this while we work to realize Bronfenbrenner's ideal of the creation of public policy that eases the work/family conflict (Henderson, 1995). It is in the best interest of our entire society to lobby for political and economic policies that support the importance of parent's roles in their children's development. By integrating these theoretical frameworks, researchers can gain a comprehensive understanding of the correlation between divorce and children's health and lifestyle. They can examine how divorce influences the family system, the interactions between different environmental systems, and the subsequent impact on children's well-being

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter focuses on ways and manner in which the research study was carried out.

The chapter highlights the study design, population of the study, sample size and sample

method, method of data collection, the research instrument as well as data analysis techniques.

### **3.1 Research Design**

The research design employed in this study is the survey research design. Survey research technique utilized the quantitative method of collecting and analysing social data through highly structured and often very detailed interview or questionnaire in order to obtain information from large number of respondents, presumed to be representative of a specific population (Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafo and Okpanachi, 2012, p. 109).

Berger (2000, p.147) further adds that survey will be used to determine the following: what people know; what people think; what people own; what people do; what people plan to do; what people's attitudes are; people's taste; people's beliefs; and what people value.

This design enabled the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the correlation of divorce on the health and lifestyle of children, what emotional, psychological, and social challenges do children of divorced parents face, how does divorce affect the physical health of children, what lifestyle choices do children of divorced parents make, and how does divorce influence these choices and see What interventions can be implemented to support children of divorced parents in coping with the challenges they face.

### **3.2 Population and Sampling**

The population consists of senior secondary school students of Ogbe Senior Secondary Community School. The sample size of the study consists of 150 respondents. The stratified proportionate sampling technique was used to select the sampling size. This involves selection of three classes in Ogbe Senior Secondary School as strata. Respondents will randomly selected from SS1, SS2 and SS3 amongst this classes 20% of the population was select to represent the total population.

The sampling is represented in the table below.

**Table 3.1: Sampling frame**

<b>SCHOOLS</b>	<b>CLASS</b>	<b>TOTAL POPULATION</b>	<b>20% OF POPULATION</b>
Ogbe Secondary School	SS1	50	10
Garrick Memorial Group of School	SS2	50	10
Ezoti Secondary School	SS3	50	10
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>30</b>

### **3.3 Instrumentation**

The instrument that was used for data collection is the questionnaire. The questionnaire is titled the correlation of divorce on the well being of children in Ogbe Community. The questionnaire was divided into sections; Section A and B. Section A covered the demographic information of the respondents such as age, gender, and class. While section

B consist of 16 items raised from the research questions. Responses were rated on Yes( ) or No( ) bases.

### **3.4 Validation and Reliability of Instrument**

Validity according to Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafo & Okpanachi (2012) is the accuracy or truthfulness of a measurement. It is the appropriateness, meaningfulness and usefulness of the specific interference made from test scores or data collected. The research is valid because the research instrument i.e the questionnaire was set and administrated to the respondent and responses gotten were used for the purpose of research.

Reliability is the consistency with which an instrument measures what is set out to measure.

The study is reliable because when repeated elsewhere it would produce same result;

### **3.5 Data Collection**

The data collection methods included quantitative techniques. Quantitatively, a survey was conduct using a questionnaire with some respondents. The respondents responded through giving the information required in the questionnaires.

### **3.6 Method of Data Analysis**

Data collected was analyzed using the simple percentage analysis and presented in tables. The simple percentage analysis was used as it enables the researcher to fully explore and explain the data collected and collated from the questionnaire in a non-complex mathematical way. Data were measured in terms of the frequency and percentage distributions of different categories of variables displayed in the tables.

### **3.7 Summary**

This chapter has described the methodology of carrying out the research and the methods described in this chapter were applied in the research in order to give the desired information which was used in the study. This issues highlighted were necessary for the collection of information required and were helpful in ensuring that the right steps were followed in the research findings

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

#### 4.0 Introduction

Data from this study were presented in simple tables. That was analyzed using simple percentages. In order to get answers to the research question, one hundred and fifty (150) copies of questionnaire were distributed to three schools in Ogbe Community, Oredo Local Government Area:

Each of these schools had 50 copies of the questionnaire.

**Table 1:** Sample size for each population

S/N	SCHOOLS	CLASS	POPULATION	SAMPLE SIZE
1	Ogbe Secondary School	SS1	400	50
2	Garrick Memorial Group of School	SS2	300	50
3	Ezoti Secondary School	SS3	400	50
	Total		1100	150

**Source: Field Study, 2024**

**Table 2:** Are children with divorced parents happy and active in school?

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	6	5%
No	144	95%
Total	150	100%

**Source: Field Study, 2024**

Table 2 above indicates that 144 respondents representing 95% said 'No' disagreeing with the question that children with divorced parents are happy and active in school, while only 6 respondent representing 5% agreed.

The implications of this result is that majority of the respondent agree to the fact that children with divorced parents are not happy and active in school

**Table 3:** Do they tend to be withdrawn and distracted during class activities?

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	141	94%
No	9	6%
Total	150	100%

**Source: Field Study, 2024**

Table 3 above indicates that 141 respondents representing 94% said 'Yes' agreeing with the question that children with divorced parents tend to be withdrawn and distracted during class activities, while only 9 respondent representing 6% disagreed.

The implications of this result is that majority of the respondent agree to the fact that children with divorced parents tend to be withdrawn and distracted during class activities

**Table 4:** Do they experience low self esteem?

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	146	97%
No	4	3
Total	150	100%

**Source: Field Study, 2024**

Table 4 above indicates that 146 respondents representing 97% said 'Yes' agreeing with the question that children with divorced parents experience low self-esteem, while only 4 respondent representing 3% disagreed.

The implications of this result is that majority of the respondent agree to the fact that children with divorced parents experience low self-esteem.

**Table 5:** Do they blame themselves sometimes for parents separation.

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	148	99%
No	2	1%
Total	150	100%

**Source: Field Study, 2024**

Table 5 above indicates that 148 respondents representing 99% said 'Yes' agreeing with the question that children with divorced parents blame themselves sometimes for parents separation, while only 2 respondent representing 1% disagreed.

The implications of this result is that majority of the respondent agree to the fact that children with divorced parents blame themselves sometimes for parents separation.

**Table 6:** Do they get sick easily because they don't eat properly and overthink?

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	145	95%
No	5	5%
Total	150	100%

**Source: Field Study, 2024**

Table 6 above indicates that 145 respondents representing 95% said 'Yes' agreeing with the question that children with divorced parents get sick easily because they don't eat properly and over think , while only 5 respondent representing 5% disagreed.

The implications of this result is that majority of the respondent agree to the fact that children with divorced parents get sick easily because they don't eat properly and over think

**Table 7:** Could a loss of appetite lead to weight loss in children of divorced parents?

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	145	97%
No	5	3%
Total	150	100%

**Source: Field Study, 2024**

Table 7 above indicates that 145 respondents representing 97% said 'Yes' agreeing with the question that children with divorced parents lose weight due to loss of appetite, while only 5 respondent representing 3% disagreed.

The implications of this result is that majority of the respondent agree to the fact that children with divorced parents lose weight due to loss of appetite.

**Table 8:** Could depression in children lead to binge eating, and could that cause excessive weight gain?

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	147	98%
No	3	2%
Total	150	100%

**Source: Field Study, 2024**

Table 8 above indicates that 147 respondents representing 98% said 'Yes' agreeing with the question that children with divorced parents are depressed and their depressed state can lead to binge eating in some children which can lead to excessive weight gain , while only 3 respondent representing 2% disagreed.

The implications of this result is that majority of the respondent agree to the fact that children with divorced parents tend to be depressed and their depressed state can lead to binge eating in some children which can lead to excessive weight gain.

**Table 9:** Do they self-isolate and have sad demeanor?.

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	142	96%
No	8	4%
Total	150	100%

**Source: Field Study, 2024**

Table 9 above indicates that 142 respondents representing 96% said 'Yes' agreeing with the question that children with divorced parents self-isolation and have sad demeanor, while only 8 respondent representing 4% disagreed.

The implications of this result is that majority of the respondent agree to the fact that children with divorced parents get self-isolation and have sad demeanor.

**Table 10:** Is there a noticeable change in their sleeping patterns?

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	141	94%
No	9	6%
Total	150	100%

**Source: Field Study, 2024**

Table 10 above indicates that 141 respondents representing 94% said 'Yes' agreeing with the question that there is a noticeable change in the sleeping patterns of children with divorced parents, while only 9 respondents representing 6% disagreed.

The implications of this result is that majority of the respondents agree to the fact that children with divorced parents change their pattern of sleeping

**Table 11:** Do children of divorced parents tend to overthink and are they easily susceptible to stress?

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	148	99%
No	2	1%
Total	150	100%

**Source: Field Study, 2024**

Table 11 above indicates that 148 respondents representing 99% said 'Yes' agreeing with the question that children with divorced parents overthink and are easily prone to stress, while only 2 respondents representing 1% disagreed.

The implications of this result is that majority of the respondents agree to the fact that children with divorced parents overthink and are easily prone to stress.

**Table 12:** Do they have to deal with loss of appetite and eating disorder?

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	120	95%
No	30	5%
Total	150	100%

**Source: Field Study, 2024**

Table 12 above indicates that 120 respondents representing 95% said 'Yes' agreeing with the question that children with divorced parents have to deal with loss of appetite and eating disorder, while only 30 respondent representing 5% disagreed.

The implications of this result is that majority of the respondent agree to the fact that children with divorced parents have to deal with loss of appetite and eating disorder.

**Table 13:** Do they throw tantrums very often?

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	146	96%
No	4	4%
Total	150	100%

**Source: Field Study, 2024**

Table 13 above indicates that 146 respondents representing 96% said 'Yes' agreeing with the question that children with divorced parents throw tantrum very often, while only 4 respondent representing 4% disagreed.

The implications of this result is that majority of the respondent agree to the fact that children with divorced parents throw tantrum very often.

**Table14:** Does talking to a trusted person (counselor) help?.

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	150	100%
No	0	0%
Total	150	100%

**Source: Field Study, 2024**

Table 14 above indicates that 150 respondents representing 100% said 'Yes' agreeing with the question that children with divorced parents talking to a trusted person would help them ,while only 0 respondent representing 0% disagreed.

The implications of this result is that majority of the respondent agree to the fact that children with divorced parents taking to a trusted person (counselor) would help them

**Table 15:** Are there any non-governmental organizations that offer support networks for children of divorced parents?

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	147	97%
No	3	3%
Total	150	100%

**Source: Field Study, 2024**

Table 15 above indicates that 147 respondents representing 97% said 'Yes' agreeing with the question that there are non-governmental organization that offers children with divorced parents with support networks, while only 3 respondent representing 3% disagreed.

The implications of this result is that majority of the respondent agree to the fact that children with divorced parents should connect with support network.

**Table 16:** Children of divorced parents should be encouraged to express their emotion?.

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	149	99%
No	1	1%
Total	150	100%

**Source: Field Study, 2024**

Table 16 above indicates that 149 respondents representing 99% said 'Yes' agreeing with the question that children with divorced parents should be encouraged to express themselves, while only 1 respondent representing 1% disagreed.

The implications of this result is that majority of the respondent agree to the fact that children with divorced parents should be encouraged to express themselves.

**Table 17:** Should children of divorced parents be reassured of love and support?

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	150	100%
No	0	0%
Total	150	100%

**Source: Field Survey, 2024**

Table 17 above indicates that 150 respondents representing 100% said 'Yes' agreeing with the question that children with divorced parents should be reassured of love and support, while only 0 respondent representing 0% disagreed.

The implications of this result is that majority of the respondent agree to the fact that children with divorced parents should be reassured of love and support.

#### **4.1 Discussion of Findings**

Research Question 1 on emotional, psychological and social challenges children of divorced parents face. The findings revealed that children of divorced parents experienced lower levels of happiness and activity in school due to a variety of factors, including the stress and anxiety associated with divorce, changes in family dynamics, and the loss of a sense of stability and security. This is in the agreement with the findings of Cummings and Davies (2010) provides an in-depth analysis of the emotional security perspective in understanding the impact of marital conflict on children's well-being. It highlights how exposure to chronic marital conflict, which may precede divorce, can disrupt children's sense of emotional security. The resulting insecurity can have adverse

effects on their psychological and physical health, as well as their lifestyle behaviors. It emphasizes the importance of promoting a positive and supportive marital relationship for the well-being of children. Demo and Acock (1988) explores the impact of divorce on children from a sociological perspective, considering factors such as parental conflict, economic changes, and changes in living arrangements. It underscores the significance of the marital relationship as a protective factor for children's health and lifestyle. A stable and supportive marital relationship provides a conducive environment for promoting healthy lifestyle behaviors and overall well-being in children. A healthy and stable marital relationship can contribute to positive parenting practices, emotional security, and consistent routines, which are beneficial for children's well-being. Conversely, marital conflict, disruption, and divorce can have adverse effects on children's health and lifestyle behaviors. Understanding these dynamics can inform interventions and support systems aimed at promoting healthy marriages and minimizing the negative impact of divorce on children.

Research Questions 2 on divorce and its effect on the physical health of children in Ogbe Community. The findings revealed that the emotional impact of divorce on children can lead to physical health problems. When children experience stress and anxiety, it can affect their immune system and make them more susceptible to illness. Poor eating habits and overthinking can also contribute to poor health. This is corroborated with the findings of Amato and Keith (1991) opined that children of divorced parents may experience

higher rates of physical health problems, such as respiratory illnesses, asthma, and gastrointestinal issues. Stress-related factors, disrupted routines, and changes in living conditions may contribute to compromised physical health in this population. Divorce can have an impact on the physical health of children, potentially leading to changes in their well-being, lifestyle behaviors, and overall health outcomes. The stress and emotional upheaval associated with divorce can contribute to physiological responses that may influence children's physical health. McLeod et al., (2007) opined that children from divorced families may experience increased stress levels, which can have implications for their immune system functioning and overall health. Chronic stress associated with divorce may weaken the immune system, making children more susceptible to illnesses and infections. Moreover, changes in lifestyle and routines following divorce, such as disrupted sleep patterns, altered eating habits, and decreased physical activity, can contribute to poor physical health outcomes.

Research Question on lifestyle choices children of divorced parents make and how it influence their choices. The findings revealed that children of divorced parents experienced changes in their sleeping patterns. This can be a result of anxiety and stress related to the divorce, or it can be a symptom of depression. Sleep disturbances can have serious consequences for children's physical and mental health. This finding is in line with the findings of Jansen et al., (2013) opined that divorce can introduce significant changes to the lifestyle behaviors of children, including their daily routines, habits, and

choices related to health and well-being. Understanding these effects is important for recognizing the potential impact on their overall lifestyle outcomes. Following parental divorce, children may experience changes in their daily routines, such as meal patterns, sleep schedules, and physical activity levels. Disruptions to established routines can lead to irregularities in these lifestyle behaviors, potentially affecting their overall well-being. The stress and emotional upheaval associated with divorce can also influence lifestyle behaviors. Children may engage in emotional eating or exhibit changes in appetite, leading to alterations in dietary patterns and potentially unhealthy eating habits. Similarly, the emotional distress and anxiety experienced during and after divorce can impact sleep quality and duration, which can further affect their physical and mental health. Furthermore, the co-parenting arrangements and differences in parenting styles post-divorce can influence children's lifestyle behaviors. Inconsistencies in rules, discipline, and routines between households may result in varied expectations and behaviors related to nutrition, physical activity, and screen time. Amato & Keith (1991) stated that children of divorced parents are more likely to engage in unhealthy behaviors, such as smoking, alcohol consumption, and substance abuse. These behaviors may arise as coping mechanisms or responses to emotional distress and disrupted family dynamics.

Research Question 4 on social work interventions/strategy and coping mechanism how it can be employed to support children of divorced. The findings indicated that children of divorced parents feel more comfortable talking to a counselor than they would with their

parents or another adult. This finding is corroborated with the findings of Isolina (2016) stated that to support children of divorced parents means providing them with the emotional, social, and practical support they need during this difficult time. This can include helping them to process their emotions, building positive relationships, and providing them with stability and resources to meet their needs. It is important to understand that divorce can have a big impact on children, and to provide them with the support they need to cope and heal. Supporting children of divorce requires a multifaceted approach involving social work interventions, strategies, and coping mechanisms. Social workers can provide individual counseling for children to help them process their feelings and concerns. Group counselling sessions with peers experiencing similar situations can also be beneficial. Individual and group counselling are both valuable types of support for children of divorced parents. Encourage children to keep journals where they can write down their thoughts, feelings, and experiences as a way of processing their emotions. Journaling is a useful coping mechanism that can help children of divorced parents to process their thoughts and emotions. Through journaling, children can express their feelings in a safe and private space. They can also use journaling to track their progress and growth over time. In addition, journaling can help children to identify their triggers and to develop strategies for coping with difficult situations.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter focuses on summary, conclusion and recommendations

#### 5.1 Summary

This study examined the correlation of divorce on the well-being of the children in Ogbe Community, Edo State. Four research questions were raised. The study employed a descriptive survey research design. The population for the study comprised 3 secondary school at Ogbe Community. The sample size of this study consisted 150 secondary school students at Ogbe Community, selected through stratified proportionate sampling technique. The research instrument used to elicit opinions and facts from secondary school students was structured questionnaire. It was however subjected to face validity by the researchers supervisor. The measuring instrument for this study was subjected to her supervisor for validation. The comments, suggestions and corrections from the supervisor were effected in the final draft of the instrument. The data gathered were analysed using percentages and frequency counts.

The major findings of the study were as follows:

1. Children of divorced parents experienced lower levels of happiness and activity in school due to a variety of factors, including the stress and anxiety associated with divorce, changes in family dynamics, and the loss of a sense of stability and security

2. The emotional impact of divorce on children can lead to physical health problems. When children experience stress and anxiety, it can affect their immune system and make them more susceptible to illness. Poor eating habits and overthinking can also contribute to poor health.
3. Children of divorced parents experienced changes in their sleeping patterns. This can be a result of anxiety and stress related to the divorce, or it can be a symptom of depression. Sleep disturbances can have serious consequences for children's physical and mental health
4. Children of divorced parents feel more comfortable talking to a counselor than they would with their parents or another adult.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

Divorce significantly impacts the well-being of children, affecting their emotional, psychological, academic, and social development. While the degree of impact varies based on factors like age, temperament, and the circumstances surrounding the divorce, the disruption of family structure often results in a sense of loss, confusion, and insecurity. Children from divorced families may experience higher levels of anxiety, depression, and difficulty in maintaining relationships compared to their peers from intact families. Nonetheless, supportive parenting, effective communication, and professional interventions can mitigate the adverse effects and foster resilience in children.

## **Recommendations**

1. Divorcing parents should prioritize the well-being of their children by maintaining open communication, avoiding negative remarks about each other in front of the child, and cooperating to provide a stable and nurturing environment.
2. Professional counseling for children and parents can help address emotional challenges and equip them with coping mechanisms to navigate the changes brought about by divorce.
3. Schools should be informed about the child's situation to offer appropriate academic and emotional support. Teachers and counselors can monitor their progress and provide guidance as needed.
4. Establishing predictable routines for the child can create a sense of stability and security, helping them adapt to the new family dynamics more easily.
5. Support groups for children of divorced parents can provide a safe space for them to share their experiences and learn from others facing similar challenges.
6. Continuous monitoring of the child's emotional and psychological health is essential to address emerging challenges promptly.

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**APPENDIX**  
**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK**  
**FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**  
**UNIVERSITY OF BENIN**  
**BENIN CITY.**

The correlation of divorce on the well being of Children in Ogbe Community, Edo State.  
a social work perspective

Dear Respondent,

I am a final year student of the above named institution and I am carrying out a research study on the topic: “the correlation of divorce on the well being of the children in Ogbe Community, Oredo Local Government Area”. This questionnaire is designed to find out your opinion on the above research topic.

This study is strictly for academic purpose and you are hereby assured that all information supplied will be treated in strict confidentiality. Thanks for your anticipated cooperation.

Yours faithfully,

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**Amedu Odufa**

**Instruction:** Please tick (✓) appropriately in the following section.

**SECTION A:** Socio demographic characteristics

Age: 13- 18 ( ) 18-24 ( )

Gender: Male ( ) Female ( )

Class: SS1 ( ) SS2 ( ) SS3 ( )

Religious Affiliation: Christian ( ) Islam ( ) ATR ( ) Others ( )

**Key:** YES( ) or NO ( )

**Section B**

S/N	ITEMS	YES	NO
<b>RQ1</b>	<b>What emotional, psychological, and social challenges do children of divorced parents face?</b>		
1	Are children with divorced parents happy and active in school?		
2	Do they tend to be withdrawn and distracted during class activities?		
3	Do they experience low self esteem?		
4	Do they blame themselves sometimes for parents separation?.		
<b>RQ2</b>	<b>How does divorce affect the physical health of children in Ogbé community?</b>		
5	Do they get sick easily because they don't eat properly and overthink?		
6	Could a loss of appetite lead to weight loss in children of divorced parents?		
7	Could depression in children lead to binge eating, and could that cause excessive weight gain?		
8	Do they self isolate and have sad demeanor?.		

<b>RQ3</b>	<b>What lifestyle choices do children of divorced parents make, and how does divorce influence these choices?</b>		
9	Is there a noticeable change in their sleeping patterns?		
10	Do children of divorced parents tend to overthink and are they easily susceptible to stress?		
11	Do they have to deal with loss of appetite and eating disorder?		
12	Do they throw tantrums very often?		
<b>RQ4</b>	<b>What social work interventions/strategy and coping mechanism can be employed to support children of divorced</b>		
13	Does talking to a trusted person (counselor) help?.		
14	Are there any non-governmental organizations that offer support networks for children of divorced parents?		
15	Children of divorced parents should be encouraged to express their emotion?.		
16	Should children of divorced parents be reassured of love and support?		