

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

PERCEIVED IMPACT OF DIVORCE ON THE ACADEMIC  
PERFORMANCE OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN OSINO IN  
THE FANTEAKWA DISTRICT, EASTERN REGION, GHANA

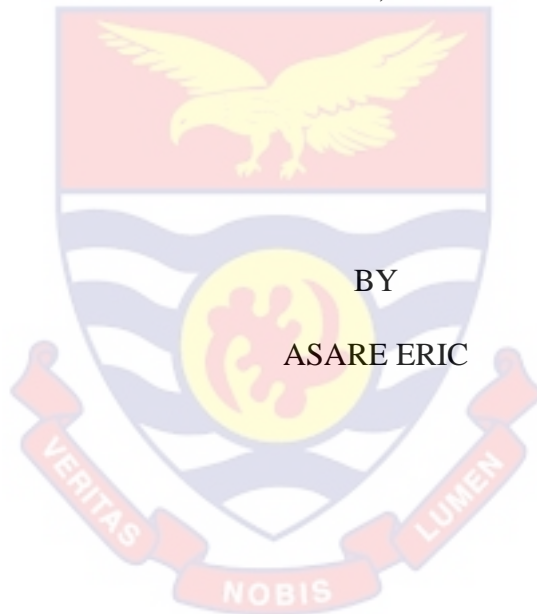


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2024

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Thesis submitted to the Department of Guidance and Counselling of the  
Faculty of Educational Foundations, College of Education Studies, University  
of Cape Coast, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of  
Master of Philosophy degree in Guidance and Counselling

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## DECLARATIONS

**Candidate's Declaration**

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature..... Date.....

Name: .....

**Supervisor's Declaration**

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Supervisor's Signature..... Date.....

Name: .....

## ABSTRACT

The main purpose of the study was to examine the impact of divorce on the academic performance of students in Osino in the Fanteakwa District in the Eastern Region of Ghana. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design using the mixed-methods approach. A sample of 158 students from divorced homes in Osino were selected to participate in the study. Data were collected using structured questionnaire and interview guide. Quantitative data were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics while the qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis. The study revealed that majority of the students found it difficult to resolve their personal, everyday life challenges since their parents dissolved their marriages. Others reported that social and community activities become so hard to keep up with since the divorce of their parents. The students reported that grades in class have been affected negatively after the divorce of their parents. Students found it difficult to focus in class and have stable mind and good mood to learn. There were differences in the academic performance of students from divorced homes on the basis of gender and duration of divorce, but not on the basis of age and whom the children lived with. It was recommended that school heads set up support systems in their schools particularly the kind that could provide some financial aid and emotional support to ease the challenges experienced by children from divorced homes.

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Finally, I am grateful to all my family members and friends who supported me in diverse ways during the conduct of this research.

**DEDICATION**

To my children, Laura Dede Asare, Yvonne Asare, Emerald Ruth Asare and  
Gerald Nartey Asare.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

The family is a universal institution and therefore the society cannot function without the family (Anderson, 2002). Parents are perhaps the family members with the most genuine interest in the academic performance of children (Levin, 2001). The home environment has a profound impact on the psychological, emotional, social, and economic well-being of students (Uwaifo, 2008). Parents, as the primary socializing agents in an individual's life, play a critical role in shaping the individual's development, and the state of the home can significantly influence a student's behaviour, attitudes, and academic performance (Anyakoha, 2016). In this regard, the kind of home (intact or broken) a child comes from can have an impact on the child. When compared with children from stable homes, those from divorced homes are likely to have several challenges in their academic and personal lives (Schultz, 2006). This study therefore examines the impact of divorce on the academic performance of junior high school (JHS) students in Osino in the Fanteakwa District of Ghana.

#### **Background to the Study**

Educating people entails developing their minds and hearts, establishing desirable character traits, and teaching them the skills they will need to succeed in the real world (Harnarayanan & Pazhanivelu, 2018). Education systems are designed to aid children in acquiring the skills essential for competent and productive adulthood within their communities. The primary focus of the educational systems is developing skills to enhance academic performance. According to Magpilay and Mercado (2015), the

academic achievement of a student is an essential factor in the production of graduates of excellent quality who are able to go on to become outstanding leaders and professionals, contributing to the country's economic and social development.

The educational process of development occurs within various environments, including the physical, social, cultural, and psychological contexts. Ashenafi and Ayenew (2021) emphasized that family and parents play a significant role that influence students' academic performance. They provide crucial environmental, social, and economic factors that have a profound impact on pupils' academic lives. Parents play an integral role in the upbringing of a child. According to Ebong (2015) and Mahony, Lunn, Petriwskyj, and Walsh (2015), achieving quality education requires some collaboration between parents and teachers to impart treasured skills and knowledge to students. This collaboration is essential in promoting effective learning and overall academic performance. Several studies (Kessy, 2015; Chauke & Obadire, 2019; Worugji, Ndukwe, & Endeley, 2019) have found that those who have recently undergone family disintegration encounter greater difficulties in their educational pursuits within the school setting when compared to those hailing from intact families. The disruptions caused by family dissolution can have negative effects on their academic performance and overall educational experiences. Bartholomew and Kwadwo (2015) argued that parents' stable lives and their willingness to interact with teachers about their wards' progress are likely the initial steps towards becoming actively involved in the education of their children. Establishing a strong

foundation of parental involvement in education starts with these important aspects of stability and communication.

Divorce has become a prevalent occurrence in modern society. It entails the separation of a husband and wife, either through mutual agreement, religious rituals to dissolve their bond, or through a legal decree that grants them the right to remarry. It is a distressing and emotionally challenging experience for all parties involved, often leading to disruptions in family dynamics (Akinrotimi & Olowe, 2016; Familusi, 2019; Giddens & Phillip, 2013). Children may be torn between parents, forced to live in one house and visit the other. There exist multiple causes that may contribute to the dissolution of a marital union. Divorce occurs in case of lack of trust, financial problems, infidelity, gender-role ideology, all forms of abuse, alcohol and drug use (Namele, 2017; Osafo, Asante, Ampomah, & Osei-Tutu, 2021). Preller (2013) states that sexual incompatibility is a factor that contributes to divorce.

Research consistently demonstrates that parental relationships significantly impact the academic work of school children. Amoakohene (2013) noted that family structure can either enable or restrict parents' capacity to positively influence their children's psychosocial and educational outcomes. The outcomes of parental divorce are diverse and contingent on multiple factors. The absence of one parent can notably impact adolescents, especially in households led by single mothers, resulting in reduced household income and its subsequent effects, which, in turn, affects their educational opportunities and success in school (Nusinovici, Olliac, Flamant, Mu'ller, Olivier & Rouger, 2018). It is widely acknowledged that resource reduction

has a negative effect on children's education, particularly their ability to attend and complete school. Inadequate resources can create barriers, such as limited access to educational materials, inadequate facilities, and reduced support systems, which hinder children's educational progress and overall academic performance (Brand, Moore, Song, & Xie, 2019; Lee & McLanahan, 2015).

Given the several adverse consequences associated with divorce, such as attributions of fault, sources of stress, feelings of culpability, and reduced available resources for children, it is unsurprising that divorce has been found to have detrimental effects on a child's classroom involvement, drive and learning-related conduct (Egbochuku & Oliha, 2014; Ngure & Amollo, 2017). Additionally, there is evidence that divorce is linked to slower cognitive growth and poorer academic performance (Van Voorhis, Maier, Epstein, Lloyd, & Leung, 2013). Bubelwa (2014) highlighted that children with divorced parents are approximately two times more likely to dropout from school in comparison with their peers living in non-divorced households. According to the findings of Akyina and Alubokin (2015), it can be inferred that the occurrence of parental divorce is linked to adverse consequences in various domains, including self-esteem, academic performance, behaviour, social interactions, and psychological well-being.

### **Statement of the Problem**

This current study focuses on identifying the association between divorce and students' academic performance. This topic is important, considering the recent high rate of divorce in Ghana and its detrimental effect on students' educational welfare. Statistical data shows that 42 percent of marriages in Ghana ended in divorce, and 34 percent of married couples



undergo divorce prior to their 20th year of marriage (Johnson, 2018). With a significant number of children growing up in divorced homes, there is a pressing concern about how divorce affects the academic work of students, especially in this period of consistent poor student performances (Bubelwa, 2014). According to the study conducted by Adebusuyi (2018), a significant majority of children specifically 70%, indicated that their academic achievements were negatively affected by parental divorce.

In the context of Ghana, scholarly investigations conducted by Kwakye (2013) and Amofa (2013) have examined the impact of single parenting on students' academic achievement and revealed a discernible association between familial structure and academic performance. Additionally, it is documented that there are so many children living in single parent homes who are struggling academically (Azumah, Krampah, & Nachinaab, 2018). Most of these children experience some forms of struggles that affect their academic work.

Even though the studies of Kwaky (2013), Amofa (2013) and Azumah et al. (2018) have been conducted in Ghana, there still appears to be some gap for the current study to bridge. For instance, all of the studies mentioned used quantitative approaches where they obtained data using questionnaires. This did not allow them to obtain in-depth information. The current study however uses mixed approach in order to obtain in-depth data from the respondents. Also, the studies above did not look into how duration of divorce can play a part in the impact of divorce on children. The current study however examined this.

Further, there is a problem necessitating the study in Osino. In Osino, it is observed that children from dissolved marriages often abandon their education and take up hawking as a means to assist their parents or support their younger siblings (Fanteakwa South District Education Report, 2022). The challenges arising from their parents' divorce can lead to significant disruptions in their academic pursuits, compelling them to seek alternative ways to contribute to their family's financial well-being. If this situation is not addressed, the future of a lot of children in the Osino community would be affected negatively. In spite of the glaring problem of divorce in Osino, there seems to be no research seeking to find out the impact of divorce on students' performance in Osino.

All of these provide justification for conducting the study in Osino. The current study therefore bridged the gap in the literature as indicated above as well as the gap in addressing the problem in Osino. It was thus necessary to examine the impact of divorce on the academic performance of Junior High School (JHS) students in Osino in the Fanteakwa District, Eastern Region, Ghana.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of divorce on the academic performance of Junior High School students in Osino in the Fanteakwa District in the Eastern Region of Ghana. Specifically, the objectives of the study are to:

1. find out the type of experiences that adolescents from divorced homes have,

2. determine the impact of divorce on the academic performance of Junior High School students in Osino in the Fanteakwa District, Eastern Region,
3. determine the gender difference in the academic performance of students from divorced families,
4. find out the age difference in the academic performance of students from divorced families,
5. identify the difference in the academic performance of students from divorced families on the basis of duration of parents' divorce, and
6. find out the difference in the academic performance of students from divorced families on the basis of whom they live with.

### **Research Questions**

The study was guided by the following two research questions:

1. What experiences do adolescents from divorced homes have?
2. What is the impact of divorce on the academic performances of students from divorced homes?

### **Hypotheses**

The conduct of the study was further guided by the following research hypotheses:

- $H_{01}$ : There is no statistically significant difference in the academic performances of male and female students from divorced families.
- $H_{A1}$ : There is a statistically significant difference in the academic performances of male and female students from divorced families.
- $H_{02}$ : There is no statistically significant difference in the academic performances of students on the basis of age.

$H_{A2}$ : There is a statistically significant difference in the academic performances of students on the basis of age.

$H_{03}$ : There is no statistically significant difference in the academic performance in the basis of duration of parents' divorce.

$H_{A3}$ : There is a statistically significant difference in the academic performance in the basis of duration of parents' divorce.

$H_{04}$ : There is no statistically significant difference in the academic performances of students on the basis of whom they live with.

$H_{A4}$ : There is a statistically significant difference in the academic performances of students on the basis of whom they live with.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study provided a comprehensive understanding of how divorce impacts students' academic performance. It would be beneficial for parents, as it highlighted the importance of avoiding potential issues that could lead to divorce, considering the negative effects it can have on their children's academic performance and potential psychological problems that may arise during adolescence due to parental divorce. The findings would also aid children from divorced parents, helping them comprehend the educational challenges associated with divorce and providing reassurance about their future prospects. The findings of this study could have practical implications for both the Ghana Education Service (G.E.S.) and several religious bodies. The utilisation of these findings can be employed to increase the provision of guidance and counselling services within educational settings and religious organisations, with a specific focus on students from divorced homes. Teachers and counsellors would also benefit from the study's insights,

allowing them to plan more effectively in providing support to these students. Moreover, the research findings would serve as a valuable resource and reference for other researchers exploring similar topics in the future.

### **Delimitations**

The study focused on JHS students in Osino in the Fanteakwa District, Eastern Region, Ghana. Students from divorced homes were targeted. The study generally assessed the students' academic performance and how divorce influences them. The study also looked at the differences in the academic performances of students with regard to gender, class level, age, length of parents' divorce, and whom they live with.

In terms of the data, the study was delimited to both quantitative and qualitative data. Thus, data for the study was obtained from both questionnaire and interview guide.

### **Limitations**

The study was limited in the sense that the study focused on only a single community, Osino. As a result, the degree to which the outcomes can be generalized is low. Also, the study was challenged in the sense that even though being raised in divorced home was connected to academic performance, cause and effect relationship could not be determined since the study was not an experimental study.

### **Definition of Terms**

The main terms utilised in this research work are operationally defined in this section.

**Academic performance:** Academic performance refers to the assessment of a student's achievement in different academic subjects. In this study, academic

performance was assessed based on their scores in the last examination prior to data collection. Thus, average scores for English, Mathematics and Science were obtained from the schools for the sampled participants as a way to determine their academic performance.

**Divorce:** Divorce is the legal dissolution of a marital union, resulting in the termination of the obligations and responsibilities of marriage and ending the marital relationship between the parties involved. In this study, divorce was said to have happened when two married individuals have legally and customarily dissolved their marriages.

**Marriage:** A state of being legally joined as husband and wife. In this study, marriage is when a man legally joins with a woman as husband and wife and recognized as such in the society.

**Separated:** This is when spouses in a marriage stop living together without being divorced.

### **Organisation of the Study**

The study comprised five chapters. The first chapter dealt with the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, hypotheses, significance of the study, delimitations of the study, limitations of the study, definition of terms and the organisation of the study.

Chapter Two of the study dealt with the review of related literature. It was made up of the theoretical framework, conceptual framework and empirical review. The third chapter dealt with the research methods of the study. It was made up of the research design, study area, population, sampling

procedures, data collection instrument, data collection procedures and the data processing and analysis.

The fourth chapter dealt with the results and discussion. It covers the presentation of the results, the interpretation and the discussion. Finally, chapter five covered the summary of the research, the conclusions, recommendations as well as suggestions for further research.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Introduction

This chapter of the study focuses on the literature review. The chapter reviews literature on the issue being discussed from different settings and through this, gaps are identified to be covered in the study. Literature is reviewed in the following thematic areas:

- i. Conceptual Review
- ii. Theoretical framework
- iii. Empirical review

#### Conceptual Review

This section provides a comprehensive review of the key issues examined in the study.

#### The Concept of Divorce

In Scelza's (2021) view, marriage is characterized as a committed, enduring, and sexually exclusive or semi-exclusive relationship, frequently leading to procreation, and involving substantial levels of economic cooperation. Conversely, Brake (2016) depicted marriage as a a complex institution that encompasses various dimensions, including a legal agreement, civil status, religious ceremony, and social activity, subject to variation across legal jurisdictions, religious doctrines, and cultural contexts. The institution of marriage establishes a framework wherein parents are obligated to fulfil their duties and obligations towards one another as well as their offspring. Gürmen, Anderson, and Brown (2018) assert that the extended family can serve as a valuable support system during divorce, offering assistance in alleviating



parental stress and bolstering the parents through their continued relationships. According to Khan and Rehman's (2017) explanation, marriages in the community refer to unions where the two people equally shares all assets and liabilities, essentially forming a joint estate. Consequently, both spouses have equal entitlement to their combined wealth, but also share responsibility for any mutual debts, regardless of which spouse accumulated the wealth or incurred the debt.

Over the past five decades, the global surge in divorce rates has led to an increasing prevalence of broken homes and step-relationships in families worldwide (Wang & Schofer, 2018). Originally defined as the termination of a legal marriage, Eyo (2018) highlights that the term “divorce” has expanded its usage to encompass the dissolution of two entities or circumstances, such as the separation between the state and religious organisations or other religious groups. Drawing from a behavioral ecology standpoint, Conroy-Beam et al. (2019) propose that divorce is more probable if at least one spouse views the benefits of divorce as outweighing those of staying together.

According to Van Zyl (2017), divorce is likened to a minefield, emphasizing that regardless of the reasons for ending the marriage, the process of divorce is inherently challenging, necessitating careful consideration of various aspects. It is essential to note that divorce can be initiated by either spouse, often leading to one or both partners moving out of the shared residence and going back to their respective families. Scelza et al. (2020) add that divorces are most common in the early years of a marriage, which can simplify the procedure, specifically if there are no children involved. Upon the dissolution of marriages that have endured for numerous years, certain couples

opt for mediation by local or familial figures to fairly distribute accumulated resources, such as livestock. In many cases, fathers contribute funds to support the education and welfare of children who continue to live with their mother (Kurten, 2019).

Dixon (2017) emphasized the importance of post-divorce collaboration between parents to establish consistency in schedules, routines, holidays, and school-related activities. Van Zyl's advice (2017) emphasizes the significance of maintaining stability in a child's life during divorce, urging parents to minimize drastic changes in the child's routine as much as possible. Dixon (2017) acknowledges that while couples enter marriage with the intention of staying together but divorce has become increasingly prevalent. Therefore, he emphasizes that parents must be mindful of their responsibilities towards both themselves and their children after the divorce. In formulating post-divorce arrangements, Dixon stresses the importance of considering the emotions of the children involved, recognizing that children may not possess the coping skills necessary to navigate significant life changes effectively.

### **Divorce and Stages of Grief and Loss Resulting from Divorce**

Whiteman (2007) explored the intricacies of divorce, drawing a fascinating comparison between the divorce experience and the process of death and grieving. Thus, denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance are espoused by the renowned Swiss psychiatrist, Kübler-Ross's five stages of grieving and loss. Chapman (2013) and Snyder (2015) viewed that these were of the view that these stages can be used in handling divorce.

**Denial** – During this stage, children may be in a state of denial regarding their parents' divorce, holding onto the belief that the separation is not permanent and that their parents will eventually reconcile

**Anger** – When young victims of tragedy are quick to assign blame.

**Bargaining** – Children often make efforts to maintain a positive outlook, hoping that their parents won't divorce. They might even attempt to negotiate, expressing that they would act in better ways or make improvements if their parents remain together.

**Depression** – When the divorce actually happens and children understand that they cannot prevent it, they often experience feelings of sadness, withdrawal, and isolation.

**Acceptance** – The realisation that things will not change sets in. There is no way out except acceptance.

Kübler-Ross's observations on the interconnections between various grieving processes align with the outcomes of other existing studies. In the case of adolescents, the experience of divorce can trigger a complex grieving process, further compounded by the ongoing struggle with identity formation during this developmental stage. The emotional impact of divorce on adolescents may have significant adverse consequences on their academic achievement.

### **Legal Framework for Divorce in Ghana**

The process of divorce has been a long-standing practice in courts across the country for countless years. Couples file divorce petitions in either the “District, Circuit, or High Court”, regarding the worth of properties they aim to divide during the divorce proceedings. In certain situations, divorce

matters might also be addressed in the Supreme Court, especially when conflicts come up regarding the distribution of property. In Ghana, the “Customary Marriage and Divorce (Registration) Law of 1985” was signed into law to mandate the appropriate recording of traditional unions and dissolutions of marriage. Notably, this law had a retroactive effect, meaning before and after its passage, it was applicable to divorces and marriages performed according to local tradition. Initially, noncompliance with the Customary Marriage and Divorce (Registration) Law of 1985 could lead to punishment by fine or imprisonment, yet the marriage itself would remain binding. Regardless of this, in 1991, an amendment to the law eliminated the mandatory requirement for registering customary marriages and divorces. This change created a weakness in the legal framework that undermined efforts to promote registration of such marriages and divorces. As a result, individuals were no longer compelled by law to register their customary unions, potentially leading to lower registration rates and reduced legal recognition of these marriages and divorces.

In Ghana, the following legislations are considered during divorce proceedings: “the Courts Acts (Act 459) S.47 (F); the District Courts Rules C.I 59; High Court (Civil Procedure) Rules 2004 C.I 47; The Matrimonial Causes Act (Act 367)”. The legal framework regarding divorce procedures, specifically divorce registration and procedures are shown in in “Order 65 of C.I. 47”, also known as the High Court Civil Procedure Rules (Government of Ghana, Ghana Statistical Services, 2021). Under the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1971 (Act 367) in Ghana, it is indeed likely to dissolve a customary law marriage through an application to the court. Section 41 of the Act allows for

the termination of such marriages by filing a petition for divorce. Either party to the marriage can present the petition to the court. The only permissible ground for granting a divorce petition is that the marriage has irretrievably broken in a way which cannot be repaired or restored. This legal provision grants individuals the option to seek divorce from a customary law marriage through the established court process when the conditions for irreconcilable breakdown are met (Government of Ghana, Ghana Statistical Services, 2021).

To establish irretrievable breakdown of the marriage, the petitioner is required to substantiate their claim by presenting the court with evidentiary support for one or more of the following factual circumstances:

- a) that the petitioner contends that the respondent has been involved in an extramarital affair, which has caused the petitioner significant distress and renders cohabitation with the respondent intolerable.
- b) that the individuals involved in the marital union have made conscientious attempts but have ultimately been unsuccessful in resolving their divergences.
- c) the couple involved in the marriage has not cohabitated as spouses for an uninterrupted duration of at least five years before the submission of the divorce petition; or
- d) that if the couple have not cohabited as a married couple for a consistent period of a minimum of two years before filing the petition, and if the respondent agrees to the divorce, the court may grant a divorce decree. However, the respondent's consent must not be unreasonably denied; if the court determines that such consent was

unreasonably withheld, it can still grant the divorce under this provision; or

- e) that the respondent has willfully abandoned the petitioner for an uninterrupted duration of no less than two years directly preceding the submission of the petition; or
- f) that the respondent's actions make it impossible for the petitioner to continue living with the respondent (Government of Ghana, Ghana Statistical Services, 2021).

Either partner in a marriage possesses the legal right to initiate a divorce request in the court of law to terminate the marriage they entered into. Divorce certificates are essential, especially when a party intends to undergo remarriage, receive inheritance and child support, and insurance-related matters. Moreover, divorce certificates may be required during the visa application process for individuals who have been divorced and wish to travel abroad.

In customary marriages, the divorce process involves the families of the couple granting the divorce. This process bears similarities to that of law courts, where one of the parties initiates the divorce proceedings by presenting their case before the leaders of the family and community. Similarly, in customary divorces, the dissolution of the marriage is only granted after all attempts at reconciliation have proven unsuccessful. During the customary divorce proceedings, both parties and their families are invited to participate. The petitioner is required to present evidence for seeking the divorce. In situations where the two people are in agreement to dissolve the marriage, the symbolic drinks “schnapps” used to signify the marriage agreement are sent

back and served to everyone present as tangible sign of the marriage dissolution. In the context of customary divorces, no formal records are maintained for these cases. They are handled on a case-by-case basis as and when they are brought before leadership of the families, and once a divorce is granted, it is not recorded but considered resolved.

For Ordinance marriage, divorce can only be granted by the courts. Once the law courts have issued the divorce decree, it is officially registered, and comprehensive records are kept throughout the different stages of the process. The divorce procedure commences with the petitioner filing a suit, which is subsequently served to the respondent by the court. The respondent is given a period of eight days to submit a response or appear in court to address the divorce proceedings (Government of Ghana, Ghana Statistical Services, 2021). After the respondent submits their response, the petitioner is duly served with the response and is obligated to arrange a suitable date for the adjudication of the case, commonly known as "setting down." In the majority of divorce cases, the proceedings take place in camera, meaning they are conducted behind closed doors. The judgment provided by the court serves as a certificate of divorce.

Over the years, there have been significant transformations in divorce in Ghana. In recent times, some studies have indicated that divorce in the sub-region may actually be declining contrary to previous assertions. Using "Demographic and Health Survey (DHS)" data from 33 countries and relying on multiple rounds of 110 surveys spanning from 1986 in some countries to 2013 in others found that divorce may actually be declining in 20 countries including Ghana (Clark & Brauner-Otto, 2015). In addition, some other

studies in Ghana have shown that divorce may be declining even though cohabiting unions which are known to be less stable have almost doubled in Ghana (Clark & Brauner-Otto, 2015).

### **Contributing Factors of Divorce**

Regarding predictors of divorce, extensive literature reviews consistently highlight several factors that are associated with an increased likelihood of divorce (Raley & Sweeney, 2020). These factors often create challenges in managing a household, such as getting married at a young age, facing financial difficulties or unemployment, having lower levels of education, and having children early in the marriage. Furthermore, there are other variables that may indicate predispositions associated with divorce, like being in a subsequent marriage or having a familial history characterised by parents who were not consistently married (Rehim et al., 2020).

Winking and Koster (2021) reported that the three highest ranked scenarios for women were alcoholism, laziness, and abuse of the partners. Among men, the leading reasons for divorce were partner infidelity, partner alcoholism, and relationship difficulties. Both men and women concurred that issues with in-laws, infertility and lack of love were the least compelling factors to prompt divorce. According to Gravningen, Mitchell, Wellings, Johnson, Geary, and Jones (2017), the primary factors contributing to divorce and the termination of cohabitation commonly include couples experiencing a gradual emotional distance, instances of adultery, a desire for individual autonomy, occurrences of domestic abuse in certain situations, and challenges in sustaining intimacy.



In Ghana, certain divorce issues are handled through the court of law, and it is crucial to examine the reasons behind these cases to gain better insight the factors contributing to the termination of marriages in the country. Osafo, Asante, Ampomah, and Osei-Tutu (2021) collected data from 30 legal cases involving divorce, comprising 11 men and 19 women, with ages ranging from 29 to 71 years. Osafo et al. recognised six main factors as possible reasons for divorce: gender-role ideology, third-party intrusion, financial problems, intimacy, financial support, abuse, and infidelity. The reasons for divorce, as cited by women, often revolve around a perceived lack of respect from their husbands and differences in gender-role ideology. On the other hand, men tend to seek divorce at a later age in comparison with women. These findings highlight the importance of pre-marital counselling provided by psychologists, as it can assist prospective couples in addressing crucial issues that may otherwise lead to distress and ultimately result in divorce within their marriages.

### **The Concept of Students' Academic Performance**

The academic performance of students is not just an indicator of school effectiveness, but it also significantly influences the future prospects of both young individuals and the nation as a whole. Academic performance holds a crucial role in child development as it directly impacts various outcomes, such as educational attainment, work performance, income levels, physical and mental health, and even life expectancy. Proficiency in academic skills, especially in subjects like reading and mathematics, bears a strong correlation with these critical life outcomes and overall well-being (Calvin et al., 2017).

In the past, academic performance was considered the primary outcome of formal education. While its significance remains evident, researchers and policymakers are now recognizing the growing importance of social and emotional factors, along with their interplay, as indicators of student well-being and psychological growth (Chernyshenko, Kankaraš, & Drasgow, 2018; Moore, 2019). Academic performance is also addressed by Eakman, Kinney, Schierl, and Henry (2019), who explore the intricate emotional and social aspects of returned veterans and service personnel. Academic performance plays a role in the studies by Colmar, Liem, Connor and Martin (2019) and Martinez, Youssef-Morgan, Chambel and Marques-Pinto (2019).

As stated by Lopez et al. (2020), academic performance is influenced by a combination of psychological, social, and economic factors that contribute to students' overall development. It is not a singular concept but encompasses various factors such as motivational beliefs, task values, goals, and performance motives (Wigfield et al., 2016). Performance motivation energizes and directs behavior toward performance and therefore is known to be an important determinant of academic success (Wigfield et al., 2016). Over the past twenty years, numerous studies have been conducted to examine the factors linked to academic achievement or lack thereof in higher education (Amo & Santelice, 2017).

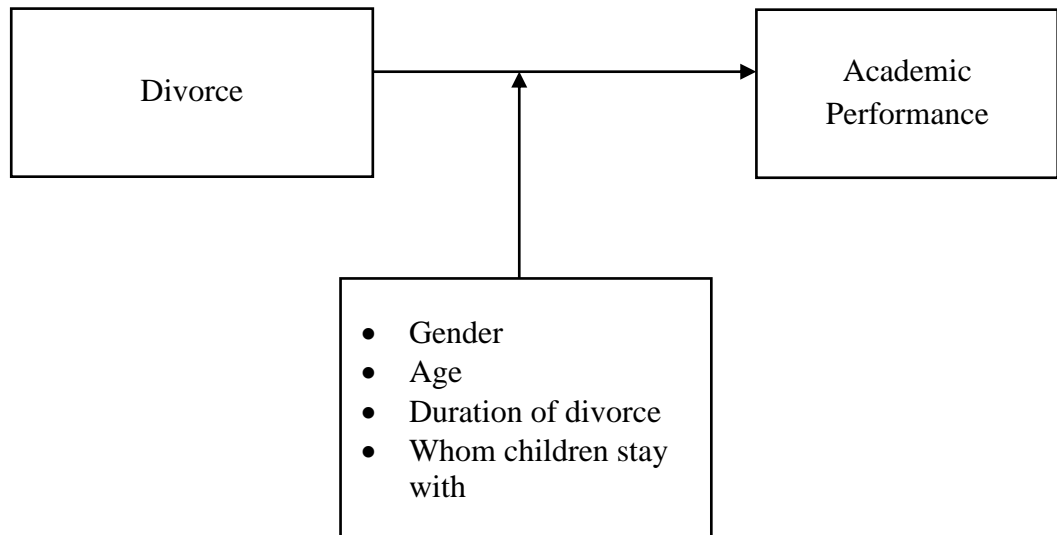
Schneider and Preckel (2017) found that academic performance is influenced by various factors. The aforementioned components encompass instructional aspects such as interpersonal engagement, assessment and critique, comprehensibility of content, and involvement in supplementary

educational initiatives. Additionally, student-related variables, such as intelligence, past academic achievements, motivation, and learning strategies, play significant roles. Additionally, it has been recognised that a dearth of previous academic readiness and financial obstacles may contribute to the difficulty encountered inside the higher education system (Orozco et al., 2017; Vásquez-Martínez & Rodríguez-Pérez, 2020).

As highlighted by Skaalvik (2018), previous academic records have demonstrated a positive correlation with mastery and performance-approach goals, while displaying a negative connection with performance-avoidance goals and academic anxiety. Brown et al. (2020) emphasized the significance of involving students and parents as essential stakeholders in the decision-making process. They underscored the importance of considering their perspectives when evaluating the school's performance and determining its future direction.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Figure 1 presents the proposed conceptual model of the study for the regression analysis. The framework illustrates the linkage between the independent variables (divorce) and dependent variables (academic performance).



*Figure 1: Conceptual Model*

Source: Author's Construct (2022)

The conceptual model depicts that divorce has a direct impact on students' academic performance. Aside the direct impact of divorce, there are other variables which deserve consideration. These variables are gender, age, duration of divorce and whom children stay with. The extent to which divorce affects the academic performance of students can differ on the basis of gender, age, duration of divorce and whom children stay with. It is imperative to comprehend the intricacies associated with the social and economic changes that have contributed to the variations in divorce rates within the Ghanaian context in order to ensure that researchers and policy makers take well-versed decisions on how to address these transformations to keep the family as a safe and intact environment for the well-being of couples and children. On this basis, this study sought to determine the effect of divorce on academic performance of students in the Junior High Schools in Ghana.

## **Theoretical Framework**

The study reviewed Risk and Protective Factor Model, the Family Deficit Model and Family Socialisation Model.

### **Risk and Protective Factor Model**

Raiter et al. as cited in Amoakohene (2013) developed the Risk and Protective Factor Model in the early 1990s. The model in question does not label divorced families as unusual, as it acknowledges that all families possess strengths and weaknesses. The perspective does not attribute exclusive responsibility to single parenting for the adverse consequences experienced by children in such households. Instead, it recognizes that family structure is one among several risk factors. McLanahan and Sandefur (1994) collected data from various American surveys, which demonstrated that children raised by both biological parents tend to perform better on school tests, experience fewer teenage pregnancies, have higher high school completion rates, attend college more often, and achieve higher early adulthood incomes. The “Risk and Protective Factor Model” categorizes family structure as one of several risk factors. These factors include aspects of a child's upbringing or experiences in life that may have a detrimental effect on the child's growth and development.

There has been a significant amount of research done on the link between living with a single mother who has been divorced and antisocial behaviour. According to the findings of several studies, children and adolescents who come from broken families are more likely to engage in antisocial behaviour than their counterparts who come from intact households (Dornbusch, 1985). Moreover, in certain instances, when single parents resort

to child abuse, using the children as outlets for their anger, distress, or personal struggles, the consequences can be profoundly devastating for the young ones involved.

In most cases, having both parents present can help mitigate the impact of a single parent turning out to be abusive. The presence of both parents offers hope, moral support, and the opportunity for positive influence, as the child can rely on the good parent for guidance and nurturing. Consequently, regardless of the parental issues or relationship dynamics, it is crucial to shield children from the negative effects of single parenting. Creating a safe and nurturing environment for children should be a priority to ensure their well-being and healthy development.

The Risk and Protective Factor Model is relevant in the current study because it assumes that in any family, there are risk and protective factors. In an intact family, the protective factors are more than the risk factors and so it is assumed that the lives of the people in the family will be better. However, in a divorced, the risk factors may be more than the protective factors and as such the lives of the children may be affected negatively. Thus, the academic performance of children in divorced homes may be affected negatively. In this sense, the model was deemed to be relevant in the study.

### **The Family Deficit Model**

The Family Deficit Model was developed by Hetherington and Kelly (2002). They were of the view that the ideal family unit consists of a mother, father, and their biological children. In this model, single-parent families are perceived to have a negative effect on children primarily due to the absence of the ideal family system which is nuclear. Supporters of the “Family Deficit

Model” assume that single parenting is harmful to children, and their research outcomes typically support this viewpoint. However, it is important to note that some of these studies using the “Family Deficit Model” may downplay or the influence of economic and other elements in the background of the individual on the academic performance, rather than modifying the model itself. This could lead to an incomplete understanding of the complex factors affecting children's development in various family structures.

Donahoo (2003) emphasizes the nuclear or intact homes are ideal while single-parent families are a deviation from this norm. This theory suggests that raising a child in a single-parent household can be detrimental to their upbringing and cognitive development, as they are perceived to be less effective in providing a nurturing environment. Even if they are equally intelligent, children raised in single-parent households face a higher risk of negative outcomes, according to the model. This suggests that family structure can be instrumental in shaping a child's overall well-being and development according to the “Family Deficit Model” (Donahoo, 2003).

Ushie et al. (2012) underscored the heightened likelihood of high school dropout among children hailing from single-parent households, which is estimated to be three times more compared to their counterparts from two-parent households. Likewise, Amato and Keith (1991), as cited in Ushie et al. (2012), found that children in divorced homes are at a higher risk compared to those in intact homes. Given that families frequently function as the primary or exclusive provider of financial assistance, single parents may encounter limitations in terms of the amount of time they can allocate to assisting their children with homework, displaying consistent disciplinary measures, and

exercising parental authority. These may, in turn, contribute to low academic performance among the children (Weyburne, 1999). In the context of the present study, this theory suggests that students' academic performance in school can be influenced by students are brought up, which, in turn, may be affected their home background.

According to Fadeiye's (1985) research, within households consisting of two parents, each parent assumes specific responsibilities in facilitating a child's educational development. The paternal figure assumes the responsibility of procuring the essential materials and instruments required for the educational progression of the kid, while the maternal figure is anticipated to supplement the paternal figure's endeavours in this domain. However, in the absence of the father and the mother is not financially able in fulfilling all the basic needs and monitoring the child's academic performance adequately, the child may experience setbacks or become withdrawn. The absence of one parental figure and the lack of sufficient support can have an adverse effect on the child's overall development and academic progress (Fadeiye, 1985).

Owusu-Bempah (2007) holds a similar viewpoint, suggesting that in situations where the mother is absent and the father lacks financial resources, children may face economic difficulties. In single-parent households, the responsibilities of upbringing are doubled, demanding more time, attention, and financial resources to properly care for the children. In contrast, children residing in households where both parents are present are often perceived to receive superior care and socialization, as they benefit from the combined efforts and support of both parents. Having both parents present can provide a more stable and nurturing setting for the child's overall well-being and growth.



Indeed, the whole socialization process is believed to rely on the complementary roles of the two parents in raising a child.

In situations where the two parents are actively involved, a child is more likely to experience well-rounded development and have a better chance of achieving self-actualization later in life. Contrarily, children from broken or divorced homes may face certain deprivations and may be denied certain rights and opportunities that could significantly influence their performance in real-life situations (Owusu-Bempah, 2007).

In relation to the current study, the Family Deficit Model depicts intact families as ideal and suitable while divorced homes are not seen to be ideal. The theory stresses that when families do not have all the members intact then the members of the family are likely to struggle. The struggle is likely to affect the academic performance of children. On this basis, the model is considered relevant in the current study as the study was focused on the effects of single parenting on the lives of pupils.

### **Family Socialization Model**

The model presented by Bowen (1971) posits that the absence of a parent could result in decreased overall parental involvement, potentially leading to lower academic achievement for the child. Additionally, Santrock (cited in Berns, 2007) noted that females living with fathers and males living with mothers tend to exhibit lower levels of adjustment compared to those living with same-sex parents. Specifically, boys residing with fathers tend to display characteristics such as lower demands, increased maturity, independence, sociability, and higher self-esteem than girls in similar father-custody situations.

Similarly, girls who reside with mothers tend to display characteristics such as being less demanding, independent, and sociable, more mature, and they also tend to have higher self-esteem in comparison to boys in similar mother-custody situations. Moreover, in same-sex parenting scenarios, children often experience an environment where they can freely ask questions and explore issues related to their sexuality without fear of judgment or misunderstanding. Female children living with their fathers might not feel as comfortable asking questions about their private parts as they would if they were residing with their mothers. Similarly, boys may not feel at ease discussing intimate matters with their mothers.

Brusius (1989) emphasized the importance of parents imparting clear values regarding sexuality to their children, considering the influence of societal teachings on this subject. Children's curiosity about things they see on television and hear from their peers is entirely natural. In this sense, it is crucial for parents to help them comprehend such matters while taking necessary safety measures. Children benefit from the perspectives of both parents, making single parenting have a significant effect on them.

Moreover, certain bodily changes in females that fathers might take a lot of time to become aware of can be observed by mothers within days. Similarly, there may be differences in noticing changes between fathers and sons.

The Family Socialization Model was considered relevant in this study because it showed that through divorce, one parent would be absent or uninvolved in the life of the child and this can affect the child's overall

development. Ultimately, the academic performance of the child would be affected negatively.

### **Empirical Review**

This subsection presents a comprehensive analysis of prior research that holds relevance to the current topic. It includes studies on experiences of adolescents in divorce families and how their academic work becomes affected.

#### **Experiences of Adolescents in Divorce Family**

Obeid, Al Karaki, Haddad, Sacre, Soufa, and Hallit (2021) conducted a study to investigate the link between divorce and mental health issues like depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation. The focus was on adolescents in Lebanon. Data were collected at one time from 1810 students between the ages of 14 and 17 years selected through simple random sampling. The results showed that adolescents from divorced homes as opposed to intact homes experienced higher levels of social anxiety, depression and suicidal ideation.

In comparison to the current study, the study of Obeid et al. (2021) was purely quantitative and focused on mental health issues while the current study was a mixed study. In spite of the difference in approach, the findings had relevance in the current study.

Wang (2019) explored and described the experiences encountered by participants in the context of divorce, as well as the subsequent impact on teenagers. The study used an exploratory design due to the limited research on the post-divorce phase. A qualitative approach was chosen to focus on personal experiences from those directly affected. Twelve participants were recruited through the procedures of purposive and snowball sampling. Using

interviews, data were gleaned from these participants. The results showed that participants struggled financially after divorce. It also affected adolescents emotionally, their standard of living was also affected. Engaging in recreational activities proved to be beneficial for managing stress and diverting focus away from the challenges of divorce.

Wang's (2019) study was qualitative while the current study was mixed. This means that the study of Wang sampled a small group of participants while the current study sampled a large group of participants.

Njeru (2017) conducted a study examining the impact of divorce on adolescents. The research included 100 adolescents sampled using purposive sampling. Data was collected using a questionnaire, and subsequent data analysis was carried out. The study findings revealed a positive and significant link between divorce and social wellbeing among the adolescents. In the same vein, a positive significant link was shown between divorce and emotional and spiritual wellbeing. Moreover, the study indicated that divorce is associated with a decrease in overall wellbeing among children. The findings also highlighted substantial effects of parental divorce on adolescents' wellbeing, which can be interpreted in two ways.

According to Mucaj and Xeka (2015), parental divorce significantly influences adolescents' perception, beliefs, and attitudes. The adolescents become preoccupied with others' judgments and may withdraw socially to avoid scrutiny because they have become victims of divorce. Additionally, the personality of the young people might negatively be altered due to the experience of divorce. This can ultimately affect their social well-being

adversely. The adolescents from divorced homes are highly likely to have behavioural and social struggles compared to those from intact homes.

Adofo and Etsey (2016) highlighted that adolescents who experience divorce often go through emotions like anger, fear, loneliness, depression, and guilt. These emotional challenges significantly impact their social interactions. For instance, regarding depression, the adolescent may constantly experience a low mood and lack interest in regular activities. As a result, they might withdraw from their usual social groups and interactions within the community, leading to feelings of isolation. The emotional turmoil resulting from divorce can profoundly affect the adolescent's ability to relate to others in a healthy and fulfilling manner. This negative impact on their social well-being can be significant since social interactions and affiliation are fundamental needs for individuals. Every human being desires to interact with others and form healthy and functional relationships.

Adofo and Etsey (2016) added that males are more prone to display externalizing behaviours following parental divorce. However, as times change, females are also showing externalizing behaviours like drinking and sexual aggression, similar to males. This highlights the evolving nature of behavior patterns and gender roles in the context of parental divorce.

Adofo and Etsey's (2016) study was a Ghanaian study just as the current study. However, their study focused on internalizing and externalizing behaviours of adolescents whose parents are going through divorce. The current study focused on general experiences of pupils from divorced homes.

In Wolf's (2016) study, the emphasis was on the psychosocial and academic effects of divorce on adolescents, alongside the factors influencing

these responses. Interviews were conducted with six school social workers experienced in working with adolescents experiencing parental divorce within a school setting. The findings revealed that positive and respectful interactions between parents and adolescents played a pivotal role in determining the adolescents' psychosocial well-being and academic outcomes. The collected data brought to light a crucial aspect: the significance of support. The participants underscored the significance of the help offered through personalised expert interventions, support groups, community resources, and mentorship. These supportive measures emerged as essential components for promoting the overall well-being of the adolescent along with the entire family during the process of divorce. Such support systems can be significant in assisting adolescents cope with the challenges and changes brought about by divorce, fostering a healthier transition for them and their families.

Tullius, De Kroon, Almansa, and Reijneveld (2021) conducted a study examining the escalation of mental health issues among teenagers subsequent to the occurrence of parental divorce. They utilized data from the first four waves of the “TRacking Adolescent’s Individual Lives Survey (TRAILS)” cohort, which comprised 2230 participants aged 10–12 years at the start of the study. The study's results demonstrated that internalizing and externalizing problems were notably higher in the period following parental divorce, but not in the period before the divorce occurred. Moreover, these effects persisted and even increased over the follow-up periods compared to adolescents who did not experience divorce. Adolescents are more likely to develop more emotional and behavioural problems in the aftermath of divorce rather than before. These effects were found to be long-lasting, underscoring the

importance of providing better care and support for children with parents going through divorce. The study highlights the need for interventions and resources to help adolescents navigate the issues and problems associated with parental divorce and mitigate the probable long-term impact on their well-being.

Unlike the study of Wolf (2016) which was qualitative, the study of Tullius et al. (2021) was quantitative. Regardless, the two studies had similarities in terms of their focus. The two studies were also similar to the current study even though the current study was mixed.

Overall, the literature reviewed have shown that adolescents whose parents are going through divorce have several experiences most of which affect their emotions and behaviours. This means that the lives of adolescents are affected negatively after the divorce.

### **Impact of Divorce on Academic Performance of Adolescents**

In his study conducted in Dodoma Municipality, Kessy (2015) aimed to examine the influence of divorce on the academic performance of primary school pupils. The research involved 41 participants, including teachers, parents, pupils, and influential community members. Data was collected through questionnaires and interviews. The study's main outcomes indicated that various stakeholders, including teachers, parents, community members, and pupils, recognized the adverse consequences of divorce on the academic outcomes of children. Teachers, in particular, acknowledged their role in alleviating these effects by offering guidance and counselling to children from divorced families. On the other hand, community members emphasized their

role in ensuring that children from divorced homes had no sufferings in terms of hunger or lack of basic necessities.

Wosowei (2020) studied early childhood educators' views on the influence of divorce on the academic performance of children in Nigeria. The information for the study was obtained from 12 participants using interview as the tool. Three themes were identified: (1) divorce benefits children by removing them from toxic environments, (2) being distressed emotionally can impair children socially and academically, and (3) resilience of children depends on how adults treat them. The study's findings indicated that divorce negatively affects children's academic performance, highlighting the need for effective strategies when working with such children. Participants recommended providing educators with training to equip them with approaches for handling children of divorced parents. By establishing professional development tailored for these children, school officials can enhance teachers' pedagogy and better nurture these students, potentially leading to positive social change in academic outcomes for children raised in divorced homes.

The findings revealed that children of divorce exhibited lower performance test scores immediately after the divorce, but their grades did not seem to be negatively affected. In the fifth year following divorce, distinctions based on gender became apparent. Boys experienced a negative impact on their grades and performance test scores due to divorce, whereas girls did not exhibit the same trend. These findings carry important implications for the study of divorce's influence on academic performance, as well as its broader repercussions for children.



The study of Wosowei (2020) was conducted in Nigeria, using a qualitative approach. This made it different from the current study which was a mixed study. The focus of the study was however similar to the focus of the current study.

Adebusuyi (2018) adopted exploratory research design to investigate the effects of divorce and separation on how students perform in Nigeria. The study utilized a multi-stage random sampling technique in choosing participants. Nearly 70% of the children acknowledged that divorce or separation could impact their academic performance, while 45.0% stated that it had serious effects on their academic life.

Adebusuyi's (2018) study was exploratory while the current study was descriptive. Irrespective of this difference, the focus of both studies was similar in examining how divorce affected academic performance of students.

Chauke and Obadire (2019) conducted a research work in Madonsi Village, Limpopo Province, South Africa, investigating the impact of divorce on the academic work of youth. Purposive sampling technique was adopted. The study identified factors such as poor communication, adultery, abuse, sleep, and sexual incompatibility as causes of divorce. It highlighted how divorce impedes youths' concentration on their studies due to the absence of home support. The study's recommendations include professionalizing youth work in South Africa for licensed counselling to provide necessary support to young people from divorced families. It also suggested policy formulation addressing financial hardships faced by youths from broken homes.

Using quantitative and qualitative techniques, Ashenafi and Ayenew (2021) investigated how divorce affected students' academic work in Arba

Minch town. Participants comprised 204 children of divorced parents, 4 school counsellors, and 10 parents who had gone through a divorce. Using questionnaires and interviews, data were gathered. The outcomes of the study showed that there was “a significant difference in the academic performance of students” before and after their parents' divorce, with better performance observed before the divorce. However, no substantial difference was found based on gender.

The study of Ashenafi and Ayenew (2021) was mixed just as the current study. This implied that both studies share significant similarities and as such was an essential part of the literature underlying the study.

Akanbi (2014) conducted a study to assess “the influence of divorce on the academic performance of senior secondary students in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State”. The research employed a survey approach and data were taken from the 120 students sampled using purposive and simple random techniques. The research utilized the "Students of Divorce Family Questionnaire" (SDFQ) and conducted academic performance tests called "English Language and Mathematics Test" (EMT) for the participants. It found a significant negative link between experience of divorce and academic performance, along with an age difference. The recommendation is for the government to provide rehabilitative programmes in schools to support students from divorced families and improve their academic performance.

Babalís, Tsoli, Nikolopoulos and Maniatis et al. (2014) investigated “the effects of divorce on preschool children's behavior problems and academic performance” based on teachers' views. The study included 314 students and 118 teachers in Greece. Through a questionnaire, the "Pupil

Behavior Rating Scale" (PBRS) data were obtained. The study found statistically significant links between (1) family structure and the prevalence of behavioural issues in children. (2) The correlation between family background and academic success for both groups of students (single-parent families vs. intact families). The study's outcomes indicate that family patterns have an influence on children's emotional development and school work. Considering the uniqueness of each family, certain factors become particularly crucial, including a family setting that is structured and has strong connections between family members, regular interaction with parents based on regard and confidence, respect, and social support and aid from institutions that are knowledgeable for families with just one parent. These can play a vital role in promoting the well-being and academic success of children in diverse family settings.

In their study, Nusinovici, Olliac, Flamant, Müller, Oliver and Rouger (2018) examined "the impact of parental separation or divorce on school performance in preterm children". The results indicated that parental separations were connected to a reduction in academic work at age five. However, this effect was observed only in children who already faced difficulties at school, resulting in a 3.7-point decrease ( $p < 0.01$ ) in their academic performance. The study noted that the reduction in performance was particularly evident when separations occurred between the ages of 3 and 5 years. Notably, these separations were linked to lower levels of being motivated and personal autonomy in the affected children.

The study of Nusinovici et al. (2018) looked at how divorce affected school children's academic performance just as the current study. However,

Nusinovici et al. focused more on those who experienced divorce between ages 3 and 5 while the current study looked at divorce at later ages.

Akyina and Alubokin (2015) investigated “the effect of divorce on the academic performance of selected public Senior High School students in Bolgatanga Municipality, Ghana”. After choosing descriptive survey design, “simple random, purposive, and convenience sampling techniques” were used in sampling 100 students, 10 counsellors and 10 parents. The findings revealed that students from divorced homes were initially high performers but experienced a decline in academic performance after their family's divorce. This means that divorce significantly reduced academic achievement. The study recommended that counsellors should provide appropriate counselling support to help them cope with the challenges brought about by the divorce.

Tobishima (2018) investigated the impact of divorce on children's academic performance in Japan. This study used data from the “Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)”. It employed quantile regression techniques to analyze the DATA. The outcomes revealed that there was disparity in academic performance of children from divorced homes and those from intact homes. This finding provides further evidence that the low educational attainment and income of single mothers may be contributing factors to their children's underachievement. On the other hand, children from single-father households tend to fare worse in school, but this is most likely due to the moms' absence, not the fathers' lack of formal education.

Comparing the study of Tobishima (2018) to the current study, it was realised that even though both studies were similar, the study of Tobishima

compared children who lived with their mothers alone to those who lived with their fathers alone. This comparison was not done in the current study.

Bubelwa (2014) carried out a research work on the impact of broken marriages on the academic performance of primary school pupils in Ilala Municipality, Tanzania. The research employed both qualitative and quantitative methods, involving pupils, head teachers, and community members from selected primary schools. Data collection methods included interviews, observations, and document reviews. The outcomes showed that broken marriages had notable effects on students' academic performance, contributing to psychological challenges and delinquent behaviour. Community members were well aware of the impact of broken marriages on the academic performance of students and acknowledged that such marital issues contributed to negative perceptions. The researcher suggests that parents take responsibility for their children's welfare by working on their marriages to ensure a positive impact on their academic performance. Additionally, community members, including teachers and neighbors, should share in this responsibility, regardless of their biological relationship to the children. Schools should establish strong guidance and counselling units to cater to students' individual needs.

Ngure and Amollo (2017) conducted a study to investigate “the influence of parental divorce on the academic performance of Unity preschool children in Embakasi District, Nairobi County”. Descriptive survey was chosen and sampled 27 parents, 27 children, and 5 teachers. The study's findings revealed a significant impact of family structure on children's academic performance. In terms of specifics, children from broken homes and

polygamous homes faced socio-economic disadvantages, leading to limited resources and subsequently affecting their academic performance.

Bernardi, Boertien, and Popova (2014) conducted a study to examine whether the indications from previous research suggesting that children from higher social backgrounds are more affected by divorce can be substantiated. The study was longitudinal comprising 11,073 individuals. Their aim was to examine how educational and occupational outcomes vary based on family structure and socioeconomic background, as well as the interaction between these factors.

In contrast to previous studies and even the current study, the research of Bernardi et al. (2014) incorporates a comprehensive range of pre-divorce characteristics, enabling them to demonstrate that variations in the impact of divorce indeed exist and are unlikely to be solely attributable to selection effects. Notably, the study of Bernardi et al. showed that children whose parents have higher levels of education experience a more substantial 'divorce penalty' concerning their educational and occupational achievements

A significant portion of the variability in outcomes can be attributed to factors such as the parents' income when the child was 16, the level of parental monitoring, the child's involvement in extracurricular activities, and the child's perception of the benefits of education at the age of 16. Surprisingly, the outcomes of the study pointed out that divorce, contrary to the prevailing focus in recent research, appears to have played a role in enhancing intergenerational mobility during the period under investigation.

In Adewale's (2019) study, "the impact of single parenting on the academic performance of secondary school students in Nigeria" was

investigated. The study also delved into the root causes of single parenting. The research emphasized the implications of single parenting on the academic performance of children in secondary education in Nigeria.

Amoakohene (2013) explored “the correlation between single parenting and academic performance among secondary school students in the Afigya Sekyere East District of the Ashanti Region”. The researcher utilised a questionnaire as the primary data collection tool. Quantitative analysis, involving descriptive statistics and multiple regressions, was performed to investigate associations between variables. The outcomes indicated a negative association between academic performance and single parenting, suggesting that a higher incidence of single parenting is associated with poorer academic performance.

The review of studies under this objective showed clearly that regardless of the context, divorce affected academic performance negatively. The different studies reviewed demonstrated this clearly. The different studies adopted different methods and they all still come out similar conclusions. Thus, it can be confirmed that divorce affected academic performance negatively.

### **Demographic Variables and Academic Performance of Children from Divorced Homes**

Demographic variables include gender, age, duration of parents’ divorce and whom children lived with. Mbuvi (2015) conducted a research study to examine “the impact of single parenthood on the academic performance of secondary school students in Mwingi Central District, Kitui County”. After adopting descriptive survey, data were collected from 150

participants using questionnaires and interview guide. The study found that “significant difference existed between the academic achievement of males and females from single parenting homes”.

Similarly, Alike and Edosa (2012) conducted a research study to explore the correlation between broken homes and academic work of students. The study was correlational and data from 150 participants. The study found that “there was a significant difference in the academic performance of male and female students from broken homes”. Specifically, female students from broken homes were found to perform at high levels compared to males.

Efosa-Ehioghiren, Orusengha, Haruna and Iwenanogie (2022) examined the consequences of divorce on adolescents in Nigeria. The study was conducted in Oredo metropolis Edo state, using stratified random sampling technique in selecting participants. Data were gathered through the use of questionnaire. The outcomes revealed that there was no substantial gender and age difference after divorce effects on adolescents’ academic performance.

Additionally, Moschion and van Ours (2019) revealed that “there is no age significant difference in the effects of divorce on the adolescents’ academic performance”. The study conducted by Amato, Patterson, and Beattie (2015) shares similarities with the research done by Alike and Edosa (2012). Amato et al. conducted a study to examine the correlation between been raised in broken homes and academic work. From the outcomes of the study, it was shown that being raised in a broken home was not significantly linked to test scores. Additionally, their research revealed that the age of



students did not significantly affect the academic outcomes of students raised in broken homes.

Further, Sangeet and Singh (2022) aimed to identify the lived experiences and social perceptions of single-parent children within the contemporary Indian context. To achieve this, they employed a qualitative research approach and gathered data through semi-structured interviews. Subsequently, they conducted thematic analysis on the collected data. The sample for the study comprised 11 college-going young adults who had been living with their single mothers in the Delhi-NCR region since their early years. The results gave the indication that as children grew in single-parent homes, they took on more responsibilities and became more resilient. These served as strengths for such children and as such the effects of being raised in single parent homes became less pronounced as time passed.

The study of Sangeet and Singh (2022) described above was qualitative while the current study was mixed. Another difference observed was that, participants in the study of Sangeet and Singh were older than the participants in the current study.

Rubamande and Mukadi (2021) also investigated “the factors enhancing positive performance of students from single parent families in secondary schools specifically Alfagems secondary school in Tanzania”. The approach used in the study was mixed. A total of 50 participants were selected using purposive and random sampling techniques. Through the use of interviews and questionnaires, data were obtained. The study's findings indicated that students' positive attitude towards studies, having a positive social system, self-motivation and encouragement, access to counselling, and

having high goals in life. The researchers also noted that these factors seemed to strengthen over time as the students continued to grow up in a single-parent home. Thus, it was a function of duration.

The choice of mixed methods used in the study of Rubamande and Mukadi (2021) is similar to that of the current study. Generally, Rubamande and Mukadi focused on the attitudes of the students from divorced homes. Even though this was not a major objective of the current study, the outcomes were similar to what was observed in the current study.

Moreover, Adegboye and Adegboye (2021) compared the academic outcomes of students from two-parent homes and one-parent homes in Plateau state, Nigeria. From their results, one finding which was significant was that students from broken homes who had lived there for long did not perform very badly. In most cases, their academic performance was not very different from students who lived in intact homes.

Oluwatosin and Tenibiaje (2011) conducted a study to assess the influence of single parenting on the academic performance and attendance of students. Their sample included 250 randomly selected subjects. The outcomes of the study revealed that students from single-parent homes experienced an improvement in their academic performance over time, to the extent that there existed no discernible difference between their performance and that of students from two-parent families.

According to Kelly's (1993) findings, the sole custody status of children after a divorce does not independently predict their post-divorce adjustment. Instead, how children end up are influenced by a combination of various socio-economic and psychological elements. The quality, stability, and

reliability of the care provided, especially by the primary residential parent, play a more significant role in determining the well-being of the children after the divorce, rather than the specific structure of the post-divorce family. Kelly thus noted that the person that children lived with did not affect their academic performance.

Similarly, several other studies (Buchanan, Maccoby & Dornbusch, 1992; Rosen, 1979) showed no significant variation between the parent who had custody of the child and the adjustment of children, particularly in terms of academic work.

### **Chapter Summary**

Chapter two reviewed literature that is very relevant to this research. It explored and gave more meaning to the contextual, theoretical foundations as well as empirical issues underpinning the phenomena being studied. The study reviewed the following theoretical models – Risk and Protective Factor Model, the Family Deficit Model, Family Socialisation Perspective, and the Social Exchange Theory. It is imperative to understand that the theory being discussed in this study may have been validated in some works of literature. The chapter ended with a conceptual model, which summarizes the relationship between the key variables of the study and identified the gap bridged by the study.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODS**

#### **Introduction**

This study aimed at assessing the effects of divorce on the academic performance of adolescents in Junior High School. This chapter provides an outline of the research methodology used in the study. The research methodology encompasses the techniques utilized for data collection and analysis. This chapter identifies the research approach, research design, study area, population, and sample and sampling procedures. Data collection instruments and procedures, ethical considerations, validity and reliability of instruments and data processing and analysis are also captured in the methodology. The chapter ends with a summary.

#### **Philosophical Orientation to the Study**

Different types of philosophical orientations that reinforce various approaches to research, each with its distinctive emphasis on their epistemological positions, the nature of scientific inquiry and its outcomes as well as varying prescriptions for methodological accuracy (Cobbold, 2015). These orientations include post-positivism, constructionism/interpretivism, pragmatism, postmodernism, among others. This study was underpinned by the pragmatism philosophical orientation.

According to Creswell (2013) and Morgan (2007), the philosophical bases for pragmatist research include:

- Pragmatism is not committed to any one system of philosophy and reality.

- Individual researchers have a freedom of choice. In this way, researchers are free to choose the methods, techniques, and procedures of research that best meet their needs and purposes.
- Pragmatists do not see the world as an absolute unity. In a similar way, mixed methods researchers look to many approaches for collecting and analyzing data rather than subscribing to only one way (e.g., quantitative or qualitative).
- Truth is what works at the time. It is not based in a duality between reality independent of the mind or within the mind.
- Pragmatists agree that research always occurs in social, historical, political, and other contexts.

These bases apply to mixed methods approach which is the approach for this study. In the current study, the pragmatist philosophical orientation was adopted because it helped to adopt different systems and multiple approaches to understand and obtain information on the impact of divorce on academic performance of students.

### **Research Approach**

This research used a mixed-methods approach for the study. This approach combines quantitative and qualitative approaches to a problem in one investigation (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). In this approach, data is collected or analyzed concurrently or sequentially, and there is integration of the data at different stages in the course of the research. By using both quantitative and qualitative data, the researchers aimed to gain a far comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the research topic (Hanson, Creswell, Clark, Petska, & Creswell, 2005).

The fundamental principle underlying mixed methods studies is the notion that integrating quantitative and qualitative methodologies yields a deeper understanding of research challenges and intricate phenomena in contrast to employing either methodology in isolation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Triangulating data from both methods enhances the validity of inferences, as one set of results can be cross-validated with the other. The mixing of quantitative and qualitative data allows researchers to approach research questions from multiple perspectives, leading to more reliable and insightful findings.

The choice of mixed methods approach was suitable for the current study because the researcher had interest in obtaining in-depth information from the respondents on all the objectives of the study. Therefore, through the use of the mixed methods approach, the researcher was able to address all the objectives of the study by obtaining large amount and in-depth data from the respondents.

In this study, the concurrent triangulation type of mixed methods was employed. In concurrent triangulation mixed methods, quantitative and qualitative data are gathered at the same time. By comparing and combining the two data sets, the research aimed to improve the insight of the research problem and identify any convergence or differences between the findings. This can be in the form of confirmation, disconfirmation, cross validation, or corroboration (Morgan, 1998). In using this method, the qualitative method made up for the lack of in-depth information which is a limitation of the quantitative method whiles the quantitative method covers the inability of getting a large amount of data which is a limitation of the qualitative method.

This makes the choice of mixed methods approach suitable for the current study.

### **Research Design**

A research design is a comprehensive blueprint that guides the researcher in addressing the research question (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). It serves to direct the research process, ensuring that valid and reliable conclusions are drawn from the study. It depicts how a researcher plans to practically conduct a research work (Creswell, 2012). A research design serves as a guide for gathering and analyzing data, tailored to the type of study and desired results.

This study employed a descriptive survey design. Descriptive research, as defined by Shuttleworth (2008), is a scientific approach that involves the observation and explanation of behaviours exhibited by a subject, without any form of manipulation. In the view of Fabe (2012), descriptive research aims to gather information about the current state of affairs or existing conditions. It is employed to describe the inherent characteristics of a given situation as it now exists within the context of the investigation and to investigate the reasons behind such a situation. This research design therefore helped to examine the impact of divorce on the academic performance of Junior High School students in Osino.

### **Study Area**

The research was carried out in the town of Osino, situated in the Eastern region of Ghana. Osino serves as the capital of the Fanteakwa South district and is positioned along the Accra-Kumasi highway, specifically between Anyinam and Bunsu Junction. This semi-rural area is known for its

agricultural activities and is notable for the street vending of a local treat called "Osino Graphic," which involves sweetened boiled maize dough.

Osino is located in the Fanteakwa South District. There are two senior high schools in the district. In terms of junior high schools, there are 26 public junior high schools and 10 private junior high schools in the entire district. The indication is that education is considered important in the district. In spite of this, the academic performance of students in schools in the district has not been good (Fanteakwa South District Assembly, 2022).

### **Population**

As per Gravetter and Forzano (2012), the population refers to the complete group of persons from whom the researcher aims to draw conclusions or generalize the results of the study. This means that the population often includes the complete collection of items in which the researcher is interested, regardless of the specific unit. The target population comprises JHS students in Osino. In Osino township, there are four public junior high schools and six private junior high schools. The total number of students in these schools is 1025. This means that the target population for this study was 1025 students.

The justification for using JHS students for the study was because, divorce usually has more damaging effects on adolescents (Njeru, 2017) and as such since most JHS student were adolescents, it was appropriate to use them. Also, the academic performance of JHS students in the Fanteakwa South district was poor compared to students of other levels like SHS (Fanteakwa South District Assembly, 2022). These two reasons informed why JHS students were used.



However, the accessible population comprises JHS students in public JHS in Osino. Therefore, the accessible population for this study comprised students in Osino D/A JHS, Osino Presbyterian JHS, Osino Islamic JHS and Osino Methodist JHS. Students from JHS 1 to JHS 3 who are from divorced homes were the focus of the study. The total accessible population was 473. Table 1 presents the breakdown of the students according to schools.

**Table 1: Student Population of Selected Schools**

School	Boys	Girls	Total
Osino D/A JHS	60	61	121
Osino Presbyterian JHS	95	96	191
Osino Islamic JHS	31	36	67
Osino Methodist JHS	46	48	94
<b>Total</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>473</b>

Source: Field survey, 2022

### Sample and Sampling Procedure

Sampling is the process of selecting units from a larger population of interest to enable researchers to make reasonable generalizations about the entire group on the basis of the sample (StatPac, 2012). Sampling is done under the assumption that the insights gleaned from the smaller group will give the researcher the chance to draw conclusions regarding the larger population as a whole (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis, & Bezuidenhout, 2014).

The sample size was drawn based on the sample size calculation formula of Krejcie and Morgan (1970) with a view of 5% margin of error. According to Hunter (2018), the margin of error serves as a measure of a survey's effectiveness. A smaller margin of error indicates higher confidence

in the research results, as it suggests that the sample's findings are more representative of the overall population. On the other hand, a larger margin of error allows a researcher to deviate further from the perspectives held by the entire community.

$$\text{Formula} \quad ss = \frac{X^2 \times N \times P \times (1 - P)}{(d^2 \times (N - 1)) + (X^2 \times P \times (1 - P))}$$

“ $ss$  = required sample size”

“ $X^2$  = the table value of chi-square at 1 degree of freedom for the desire confidence level (3.841)”

“ $N$  = the population size (estimated number students)”

“ $P$  = the population proportion (assumed to be .50 since this would provide the maximum sample size)”

“ $d$  = the degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion (.05)”

Thus, sample size for this study was chosen using the formula below:

$$ss = \frac{X^2 \times N \times P \times (1 - P)}{(d^2 \times (N - 1)) + (X^2 \times P \times (1 - P))}$$

$$\text{Sample size} = \frac{3.841 \times 473 \times 0.50 \times (1 - 0.50)}{((0.05)^2 \times (473 - 1)) + (3.841 \times 0.50 \times (1 - 0.50))}$$

$$\text{Sample Size} = \frac{257.347}{1.62775} = 158.1$$

Therefore, the sample size for students in the study was 158.

The sampling procedure for the study was proportional stratified, simple random and purposive sampling procedures. Proportional stratified sampling procedure involves putting the population into strata, which are

reasonably homogeneous groups, and then taking random samples from each stratum (Albright, Winston, & Zappe, 2010). Thus, in arriving at the number of students to sample from each of the four schools, stratification was used. Each stratum's size in the sample was equivalent to its size in the larger population. This means that the sample size for each school depended on the size of the school in the main population. Stratification was done to ensure that each of the four schools was appropriately represented in the study. This was the justification for using proportional stratified random sampling.

In arriving at the sample size for each school, the following computations were done:

Sample = Population of School / Population of all Schools X Sample size

The sample for the various schools can be seen below:

Osino D/A JHS:  $121 / 473 \times 158 = 40$

Osino Presbyterian JHS:  $191 / 473 \times 158 = 64$

Osino Islamic JHS:  $67 / 473 \times 158 = 22$

Osino Methodist JHS:  $94 / 473 \times 158 = 32$

After the stratification, the actual respondents from each school were selected using simple random sampling. This method ensures that each student from the chosen schools has an equal chance of being part of the sample. Specifically, the lottery method of the simple random was used. In doing this, I obtained a list of the names of all students in each of the four junior schools. The names of the students were written on sheets of paper and folded into a separate box. I then randomly picked from the box until I reached the specific number for each school.

The breakdown of the sample according to the schools is shown in Table 2 below:

**Table 2: Sample Breakdown**

School	Population	Sample
Osino D/A JHS	121	40
Osino Presbyterian JHS	191	64
Osino Islamic JHS	67	22
Osino Methodist JHS	94	32
<b>Total</b>	<b>473</b>	<b>158</b>

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Concerning the interview data, 12 participants were sampled for the study. In determining the right sample for an interview data, Guest, Bunce and Johnson (2006) proposed that since saturation in qualitative studies usually happens around the 12th participant, a sample of 12 is appropriate. Saturation is the point at which no new data is obtained from participants. Therefore, the use of 12 participants for the interview data was appropriate.

The 12 participants for the interview were sampled from the four schools, picking three students from each school. The sampling procedure used was purposive sampling. In purposive sampling, participants with characteristics needed in the study are sampled. In this study, students from divorced homes who were among the least performing in their schools were sampled. This was how purposive sampling was used in reaching the participants for the interviews.

## Data Collection Instruments

Since the study was a mixed study, data were collected using questionnaire and interview guide. Questionnaire was used in collecting the quantitative data. The use of questionnaire was fitting for the current study because questionnaires help to gather huge amount of data within a short period of time and also afforded the respondents the freedom and privacy to respond in an honest manner. Also, questionnaire was deemed appropriate since all the respondents could read and write and the questionnaire was more convenient to ensure anonymity of responses.

The questionnaire was adapted from the instruments of Adewale (2019), Bernardi, Boertien and Popova (2014), Ngure and Amollo (2017), and Tobishima (2018). The instrument of Adewale was content validated and the reliability was established using Cronbach alpha coefficient. It had a reliability of 0.79. Also, the instrument of Bernardi et al. had a reliability coefficient of 0.84 and was taken through face, content and construct validity. Additionally, Ngure and Amollo's instrument had a reliability coefficient of 0.83 while that of Tobishima had a reliability coefficient of 0.85. Content and construct validity were also established for these instruments.

The main advantage of questionnaires is the reduced time and costs compared to personal interviews (Babbie, 2013). The survey questionnaire in this study consisted of both open-ended and closed-ended items. Closed-ended questions allow researchers to assess respondents' prior knowledge base and feelings, whereas open-ended questions encourage extensive qualification and clarification from the respondent. The questionnaire comprised three sections labelled A, B, and C.

Section A measured respondents' socio-demographic characteristics such as age, gender, parental educational status, parental employment status, parental income level etc. Section B finds out the experiences of students from divorced home. The data was collected using "five-point Likert-type scale" ranging from "1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)" consisting of nine items. Section C explored the effects of divorce on the academic performance of students. This was measured using 10 items which were collected through "five-point Likert-type scale" ranging from "1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)".

A semi-structured interview guide was used to gather the qualitative data. Since the interview guide was semi-structured, as such, even though there were fixed questions, the length, depth and type of questions asked were unique for the participants. This is so because after asking a main question from the interview guide, follow-up questions were asked depending on the responses of the interview. A semi-structured interviewing approach was considered suitable to provide participants with a level of liberty to express their thoughts and emphasize specific areas of interest. This method allowed for a more flexible and in-depth exploration of the participants' perspectives and experiences (Horton, Macve & Struyven, 2011). Thus, by using the semi-structured interview guide, the information obtained was in-depth.

In ensuring that the interview guide was useful, the researcher checked all the questions to be certain that they addressed the objectives of the study. This means that content-related validity was used in ensuring that the interview guide was useful. Content-related validity is a type of validity evidence where the content of the instrument is assessed to be sure the content

covers what the instrument was intended to measure. Through this means, the interview guide was able to ascertain the information needed in the study.

### **Validity**

According to Van der Riet and Durheim (2009), validity is the degree to which generalisations drawn from a study may be trusted as having been supported by sufficiently strong evidence. Validity ensures that the results accurately represent what the researcher intended to measure and helps establish the trustworthiness of the study's outcomes. To ensure validity, a copy of the questionnaire was sent to the research supervisor to see whether the number and form of items accurately assess the variables of interest to the study. Based on supervisors' comments, the researcher made the necessary changes. The instrument was adapted and modified from international tools and literature to meet the objectives of the study.

### **Reliability**

When the same method is used multiple times on the same object and yields the same result each time, it can be said that reliability is achieved. This indicates that the measurement is stable and dependable, providing researchers with confidence in the consistency of their findings (Babbie & Mouton, 2004). The instrument was first be piloted with 30 students, who were not included in the actual work to ensure that the questions were simple to comprehend, relevant to the research subject, and straightforward, as well as to get an idea of how long it would take to conduct the survey. It assisted the researcher in recognizing some of the issues that would be most likely to arise during the collection of data (Fellows & Liu, 2008). Pre-testing the instrument ensures

that the questionnaire items are clear and convey the same meaning for all participants (Kothari, 2008).

Assessment of the instrument was possible during the pre-testing phase. For example, the language of the questions may be vague, eliciting unintended answers that do not correspond to the researcher's objectives. For all of the Likert scale variables, Cronbach's coefficient reliability was determined. Cronbach's alpha coefficient value of 0.70 is usually considered acceptable for reliability while values above 0.8 are usually deemed high.

For the instrument used for the study, Adewale (2019), Bernardi, Boertien and Popova (2014), Ngure and Amollo (2017), and Tobishima (2018) reported higher Cronbach's alpha coefficient values of 0.87, 0.92, 0.8, and 0.89 respectively. These were the reliability values of the original instruments of the researchers. The instruments were adapted because all the instruments were originally designed for use in foreign countries. As a result, they had to be adapted so that modifications could be done to suit the current study in the Ghanaian setting.

In this study, an overall reliability co-efficient of 0.748 was realised after conducting the pilot test. This means that the reliability of the questionnaire was high. The reliability of the various sections were established. For Section B, the co-efficient was 0.762 while for Section C, the co-efficient was 0.735.

### **Data Trustworthiness of Qualitative Data**

For qualitative data, data trustworthiness encompasses the following components: "(a) Credibility; (b) transferability; (c) dependability; and (d) confirmability" (DeVault, 2018). To ensure the trustworthiness of the



qualitative data, triangulation of sources can be employed, involving data collection from different individuals, at different time points, and in various settings (DeVault, 2018). Additionally, an inquiry audit, where an external researcher reviews the data collection process, data analysis, and study results (Olivia, 2018), can also contribute to establishing the trustworthiness of the qualitative data.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

The concurrent triangulation mixed methods methodology was utilised for the conduct of this research, and as a result, quantitative and qualitative data were gathered simultaneously. The researcher communicated with the headteachers and teachers of the respective schools with respect to the purpose and nature of the research in order to gain the needed assistance in the collection of the data. All protocols in the data collection were explained to them as well as the respondents. The researcher negotiated a time period for data collection.

To gain access to the four schools, the researcher submitted the introductory letter obtained from the Department of Guidance and Counselling to the school heads. This letter introduced the researcher to the school heads and as such gave access to the schools.

Questionnaires were shared to the students in the selected schools. The researcher obtained the consent of those involved in the study before giving the questionnaires to them. Answering of a questionnaire lasted between 20 and 30 minutes to complete.

For the qualitative data, meetings were scheduled with the selected students and the interviews were conducted on such dates. The interviews

were conducted in English language since the students were able to understand and express themselves in English language. Permission was obtained from the participants for the interviews to be recorded on a tape recorder and later transcribed. The interviews were conducted on the school campus of each school. A quiet place on each school campus where there was no disturbance was used as the location for the interviews. Each interview lasted between 30 to 45 minutes.

In both the quantitative and qualitative data, the researcher carried out the data collection in person. Overall, one month was spent in collecting the data.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The study was undertaken in accordance with the principles of carrying out educational research. Ethical clearance was sought from the “Institutional Review Board (IRB)” of the university. Permission to undertake the study in the schools was sought from the schools’ administration. Respondents were asked to sign an informed consent form prior to being involved in the study. The consent form specifies the intent and aims of the research and what the participants might expect from the study. It also provided information on anonymity, privacy and confidentiality. The researcher further elaborated to the respondents that they have the right to back out of the study. The researcher included his contact details on the consent form should any participant have a query.

### **Data Processing and Analysis**

The researcher used the IBM “Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS)” version 22 software for the statistical analysis. The quantitative data

were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Specifically, the demographic data were analysed using frequencies and percentages. Quantitative data for research questions one and two were analysed using means and standard deviations. The objective of descriptive statistics, according to Mugenda and Mugenda (2013), is to allow the enable researchers to effectively characterise a distribution of scores by employing a limited number of indices or statistical measures.

Hypothesis one was tested using “independent samples t-test” while hypotheses two, three and four were tested using “one-way Analysis of Variance”.

The qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a methodology used in identifying, analysing, organizing, describing and reporting themes present within a dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Specifically, deductive thematic analysis was done. In deductive analysis, which is theory-driven, the researcher deliberately explores data within the bounds of one or more theoretical frameworks, using existing theory to shape how you identify and analyze themes. The idea is to use pre-existing frameworks as a lens to interpret the data in a “top-down” approach, providing a structured viewpoint from the outset.

Deductive thematic analysis is useful if the researcher has specific research questions or theoretical frameworks that he or she may want to apply to the data (Poltz, 2024). This was the justification for choosing deductive thematic analysis since the interview data were used to respond to specific research questions.

In this study, the data were transcribed and reported based on the research questions, allowing for a systematic examination of the data to uncover and interpret key themes relevant to the research objectives. Critical statements of the respondents were quoted. However, pseudonyms were used in the reporting to avoid using the actual names of the respondents in the reporting.

Since the study used the concurrent triangulation mixed methods, the quantitative findings were reported and the qualitative findings were also reported as a means to confirm or contradict what was obtained in the quantitative data. Thus, quantitative and qualitative findings were used in support of each other.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter highlighted the methods that the researcher employed to carry out this study. The study utilised the descriptive survey research design within the mixed-methods approach. The study was conducted in the Osino town in Fanteakwa South district of the Eastern region of Ghana. A sample of 158 junior high school students from divorced or broken homes were selected to be involved in the study. Data were gathered using structured questionnaire and interview guide. Quantitative data were analysed through the use of both descriptive and inferential statistical method while qualitative data were analysed through the use of thematic analysis.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of divorce on the academic performance of Junior High School students in Osino in the Fanteakwa District, Eastern Region, Ghana. The results and discussion of the study are presented in this chapter. The sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents are presented before the main results for the research questions and hypotheses are presented. After this, the discussion was done. Given that the research design employed in this study is a concurrent-triangulation mixed methods approach, the presentation of both quantitative and qualitative findings is simultaneous. The results of the interview data are presented in support of the quantitative results.

#### Socio-demographic Characteristics

This section presents the respondents' socio-demographic information. The socio-demographic factors include the respondents' gender, class level, age group, duration of parents' divorce, and whom they live with. Table 2 below presents results on the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents.

As observed in Table 3, majority of the respondents were males (61.4%) as compared to the female respondents (38.6%). Thus, there were more males in the study than females. The outcomes revealed that majority of the students were between 15 to 17 years old, with only 7.6% between 12 to 14 years, and 8.2% above 17 years.

**Table 3: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 158)**

<b>Variable</b>	<b><i>F</i></b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	97	61.4
Female	61	38.6
<b>Class Level</b>		
JHS 1	52	32.9
JHS 2	62	39.2
JHS 3	44	27.9
<b>Age Group</b>		
12 – 14 years	12	7.6
15 – 17 years	133	84.2
18 years and above	13	8.2
<b>Duration of parents' divorce</b>		
Less than 2 years	19	12.0
3 – 5 years	35	22.1
6 – 8 years	29	18.4
Over 8 years	75	47.5
<b>Whom they live with</b>		
Mother	95	60.1
Father	41	25.9
Guardian	22	13.9

Source: Field Survey 2022

In terms of duration of parents' divorce, it was revealed that most of the parents (47.5%) were divorced for over 8 years, 22.1% were divorced between 3 to 5 years, whilst 12% were divorced for less than 2 years. It was found that majority of the students (60.1%) were living with their mothers, 25.9% were with their father, whilst 13.9% were with guardians.

## Results for Research Questions and Hypotheses

The analysis of the study's main data is covered in this section. The research questions and hypotheses were followed while doing this.

**Research Question One:** What type of experience do students from divorce homes have?

This question was to find out the experiences of adolescents from divorced homes. The data was collected using five-point Likert-type scales ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) consisting of nine items. This was analysed using Mean and Standard Deviation.

A cut-off point of 3.0 was set for the interpretation of the mean scores. This cut-off point is arrived at through this calculation ( $1+2+3+4+5=15/5=3.0$ ). Thus, a mean value below 3.00 was interpreted as disagreement to the specific statement while a mean value of 3.00 and above was interpreted as agreement to the specific statement.

The implication is that statements with mean scores of 3.0 and above were the main experiences of the respondents. On the other hand, statements with mean scores less than 3.0 were not major experiences of the respondents. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4 presents descriptive statistics of the experiences of adolescents from divorced homes.

**Table 4: Experiences of Adolescents from Divorced Homes (N=158)**

<b>Statements</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Since my parents divorced each other, I have become quieter	2.41	.982
It is hard making new friends since my parents divorced	2.47	.903
Talking with my friends in school has become a hard task due to my parents' divorce	3.21	.891
I am not very comfortable attending family gatherings since my parents got divorced	2.68	.992
It has become harder for me to resolve my personal everyday life challenges since my parents dissolved their marriage	3.70	.955
Socially and communal activities and meetings have become so hard for me to keep up with since the divorce of my parents	3.51	.945
Managing conflicts has become a challenge for me after the divorce of my parents	2.11	.902
It has become harder for me to admit my feelings whether good or bad since my parents divorced	2.33	.806
I do not want to emotionally get involved with anyone since the divorce of my parents	2.86	1.032

\*Average: Mean = 2.809; Std. Deviation = 0.93

Source: Field Survey 2022

The study revealed that the average mean and standard deviation scores were 2.809 and 0.93 respectively. The statement “It has become harder for me to resolve my personal everyday life challenges since my parents dissolved their marriage” had the highest mean scores 3.70 with a standard deviation of .955, followed the statement “Socially and communal activities and meetings have become so hard for me to keep up with since the divorce of my parents” (mean = 3.51; SD = .945) and “Talking with my friends in school has become a hard task due to my parents' divorce” (mean = 3.21; SD = .891). Statement that had the lowest mean score was “Managing conflicts has become a challenge for me after the divorce of my parents” (mean = 2.11; SD = .902).



From the results in Table 4, it can be said that the main experiences of the adolescents were that it was harder for them to resolve their personal everyday life challenges, social and communal activities and meetings had become hard and talking with their friends had become hard after their parents' divorce. These were the main findings from the first research question.

### **Interview data for research question one**

The 12 respondents who were interviewed expressed several views. Out of their views, two main themes were derived. These were "difficulty resolving personal issues" and "difficulty with social relations".

#### **Difficulty resolving personal issues**

The respondents who were interviewed made it known that since their parents got divorced, they have struggled in resolving their personal challenges. To some extent, the absence of one parent affected them when they had difficulties and challenges in life. The only parent available could not sufficiently help meet the challenges that the respondents faced. Some of the actual comments of the respondents are quoted below:

*"Sometimes, I need some things but my mother cannot afford them and this affects me a lot. Its my mother alone taking care of me so it makes it difficult for her to solve all my problems."* (Student 3)

*"It has not been easy at all. There have been a lot of challenges. Sometimes, getting what to eat is even difficult because my mum will say she does not have money."* (Student 5)

*“In most cases, I have to ask for help from friends and external people when I have a challenge. Before my parents got divorced, it was not like that.”* (Student 9)

### **Difficulty with social relations**

The respondents also made it known they have difficulty with their social or interpersonal relations. They were not able to connect well with their friends and could not attend a lot of social gatherings. This was mostly because they felt uncomfortable and felt like they would be made fun of. Some of the actual comments of the respondents are quoted below:

*“Since the divorce of my parents, I have not been able to relate well with friends. Sometimes I feel like the odd one out of my friends.”*  
(Student 2)

*“I do not attend any gathering because my mother always ask that we stay home. She does not want people talking about divorce.”* (Student 11)

From the forgoing, it can be seen that the results obtained from the interviews were similar to the result obtained from the questionnaire. This means that overall, children from divorced homes have difficulty resolving personal issues and challenges and also struggle with social relationships and interactions.

**Research Question Two:** What is the impact of divorce on the academic performances of students from divorced homes?

This research question sought to find the impact of divorce on the academic performances of students from divorced homes. The impact of

divorce was measured using 10 items which were on a five-point Likert-type scales ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

A cut-off point of 3.0 was set for the interpretation of the mean scores. This cut-off point is arrived at through this calculation ( $1+2+3+4+5=15/5=3.0$ ). Thus, a mean value below 3.00 was interpreted as disagreement to the specific statement while a mean value of 3.00 and above was interpreted as agreement to the specific statement. The implication is that statements with mean scores of 3.0 and above showed the main impacts of divorce on the respondents. On the other hand, statements with mean scores less than 3.0 were not the main impacts of divorce on the respondents.

The results are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5: Descriptive Statistics on the Effect of Divorced on Performance (N=158)**

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
It has become so difficult to focus in class since the divorce of my parents	3.41	1.012
My parents do not have enough time to monitor my academic progress	2.62	0.997
I am no longer motivated to learn since the divorce of my parents	2.73	1.016
I do not have stable mind and good mood to learn	3.24	0.975
I do not have freedom to discuss academic matters with my parents	2.56	1.001
I am not provided with opportunities for extra tuition	3.21	1.051
I am provided with adequate learning facilities for my studies at home	2.21	0.892
My desire for learning new skills has declined since my parents divorced	2.50	0.989
My grades in class have been affected after the divorce of my parents	3.53	1.020
Since the divorce of my parents, I have become more closed minded and I am no longer open to new ideas	2.28	0.992

\*Average: Mean = 2.83; Std. Deviation = 0.995

Source: Field Survey 2022

As shown in Table 5 above, the study recorded an average mean and standard deviation of 2.83 and 0.995 respectively. It was found that the statement “my grades in class have been affected after the divorce of my parents” had the strongest mean value (mean = 3.53; SD = 1.020). Statements “it has become so difficult to focus in class since the divorce of my parents”, “I do not have stable mind and good mood to learn”, and “I am not provided with opportunities for extra tuition at home or school” had mean values above the average mean (3.41, 3.24, and 3.21 respectively). In addition, positive statement “I am provided with adequate learning facilities for my studies at home” had a low mean value of 2.21, which indicates that the majority of the students disagreed with that statement. This however, concludes that divorce had effects on the academic achievement of the students.

The results from Table 5 show that after parents got divorced, the grades of students were affected negatively, they had difficulty focusing in class, did not have stable mind and good mood to learn and were not provided with opportunities for extra tuition at home or school. These were the main impacts of divorce on the academic performance of the respondents.

### **Interview data for research question two**

The interviewed respondents expressed varied views. From their views, three main themes were identified. These included: difficulty focusing or concentrating on studies, decline in academic performance, and lack of learning resources and opportunity for extra tuition.

### **Difficulty focusing or concentrating on studies**

The respondents indicated that they had difficulty focusing or concentrating on their studies since their parents got divorced. They were of

the view that since the divorce, they have not been in an emotionally stable state to be able to concentrate on their studies. For instance, one respondent made this comment:

*“It has been difficult concentrating on my books. Even if I want to learn, I am not happy and so I am not able to focus.”* (Student 4)

Another respondent made the following comment:

*“I struggle to study...I am always emotionally not stable and as such I cannot focus on my academic work.”* (Student 9)

### **Decline in academic performance**

The respondents noted also that there had been a decline in their academic performance since their parents got divorced. They believed that their performance was better before the divorce happened. For instance, one respondent made the comment below:

*“hmm, I think I have not been able to study well since the divorce so my performance has been bad.”* – (Student 7)

### **Lack of learning resources and opportunity for extra tuition**

The students who were interviewed also indicated that because of the divorce situation at home, the single parent has not been able to provide all the resources they need to aid their learning. They also noted that they would wish to have some extra tuition or classes but because the parent they live with cannot afford to pay for that extra tuition, they did not get that opportunity.

A few of the comments of the respondents are as follows:

*“My mother complains that she does not have the money to get all my school needs. It is a real challenge because it affects my academic work.”* (Student 3)

*“Most of my friends do extra classes but if I ask my mother that I want to be part, she always complains of money.” (Student 6)*

The results obtained from the interview are shown to be similar to the data obtained from the questionnaire. It is thus clear that divorce affects the academic performance of students since they do not have the needed learning resources, do not have opportunity for extra classes, and are mostly unable to focus or concentrate on academic work.

## Hypotheses Testing

### Hypothesis One

*H<sub>01</sub>: There is no statistically significant difference in the academic performances of male and female students from divorced homes.*

This hypothesis sought to find out the significant difference in the academic performance of male and female students. The data were analyzed using an independent samples t-test with a significance level of 0.05. To assess variance homogeneity, the Levene's test was conducted as the first step in the analysis process. Table 6 summarizes the findings.

**Table 6: Levene's Test for Equality of Variances**

	F	Sig
Equal variances assumed	0.986	.321
Equal variances not assumed		

Source: Field Survey, 2022

It is shown in Table 6 that the significant value of .321 is greater than the significant level of .05. The result implies that homogeneity of variances can be assumed for the data.

The results of the independent samples t-test are shown in Table 7.

**Table 7: Difference in Academic Performance of Male and Female Students**

Gender	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-value	Sig (2-tailed)
Male	97	83.75	11.02	157	4.088*	.003
Female	61	75.32	11.80			

Source: Field survey (2022)

\*Significant,  $p < .05$

The results of the independent samples t-test are presented in Table 7. As shown in Table 7, there is a significant difference between male and female students concerning their academic performance [ $t(157) = 4.088$ ,  $p < .05$ ]. Males obtained a mean score of 83.75, while females had a mean score of 75.32. The null hypothesis, which posited no statistically significant difference between male and female students in their academic performance, was rejected based on the findings in Table 6. This implies that male and female students differed in their academic performance with male students performing better than female students.

### **Hypothesis Two**

*H<sub>02</sub>: There is no statistically significant difference in the academic performances of students from divorced homes on the basis of age.*

The hypothesis sought to find out if there is significant difference in the academic performances of students on the basis of their ages. The data was analyzed using One-Way ANOVA at the 0.05 level of significance because there were three distinct age groups in the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents. Before conducting One-Way ANOVA, it was necessary to assess the homogeneity of variance among the groups. This assessment

ensures the validity and accuracy of the ANOVA results when comparing means across multiple age groups. The results of the Levene's test for homogeneity are shown in Table 8.

**Table 8: Test of Homogeneity of Variances**

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
3.006	2	155	.181

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Table 8 indicates that the significance level of .181 is higher than .05, indicating that homogeneity of variances can be assumed. As a result, conducting One-Way ANOVA is suitable.

Table 9 displays the descriptive statistics for the different age groups.

**Table 9: Descriptive Results for Different Age Groups**

Age	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
12-14 years	12	63.61	11.01
15-17 years	133	66.85	11.03
18 years and above	13	60.42	12.04
<b>Total</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>78.29</b>	<b>11.36</b>

Source: Field Survey (2022)

In Table 9, the mean and standard deviations of the various age groups are presented. Students aged 12 to 14 had a mean score of 63.61 with a standard deviation of 11.01. Those aged 15 to 17 had a mean score of 66.85 and a standard deviation of 11.03. The group aged 18 and above had a mean score of 60.42 and a standard deviation of 12.04. These mean scores highlight differences among the age groups, particularly indicating that students aged 15 to 17 exhibited better performance compared to the other groups.



Table 10 below shows the results of the ANOVA test used to significant difference in the academic performance of the different age groups.

**Table 10: ANOVA Results Comparing Academic Performance of Different Age Groups**

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1187.684	2	593.842	1.867	.211
Within Groups	49311.313	155	318.137		
Total	50498.997	157			

Source: Field survey (2022)

From Table 10, it is obvious that there is no significant difference in the academic performance of students on the basis of their ages [ $F(2, 155) = 1.867, p > .05$ ]. The obtained p-value of 0.211 was higher than the 0.05 significance level. As a result, there was no statistically significant difference in the mean scores of the three different age groups. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which states that there was no statistically significant difference in the academic performance of students based on their ages, was retained. In other words, the study did not find sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis, suggesting that age did not have a significant effect on academic performance among the students.

### **Hypothesis Three**

*H<sub>03</sub>: There is no statistically significant difference in the academic performance of students from divorced homes on the basis of duration of parents' divorce.*

The hypothesis sought to find out if there is significant difference in the academic performance of students on the basis of the duration of parents' divorce. The One-Way ANOVA was used to analyze the data at the 0.05 level of significance since there were four separate durations involved in the study. The results of the Levene's test for homogeneity are shown in Table 11.

**Table 11: Test of Homogeneity of Variances**

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
1.415	3	154	.239

Source: Field Survey (2022)

It is shown in Table 11 that the significant level of .239 is greater than .05. This implies that homogeneity of variances can be assumed. Therefore, it is appropriate to carry out One-Way ANOVA. The descriptive statistics of the various years of divorce are shown in Table 12 below.

**Table 12: Descriptive Results for Different Durations of Divorce**

Duration	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
Less than 2 years	19	62.15	10.21
3 – 5 years	35	84.42	11.12
6 – 8 years	29	67.59	11.10
9 years and above	75	89.46	10.78
<b>Total</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>75.91</b>	<b>10.80</b>

Source: Field Survey (2022)

The mean and standard deviations of the different durations of divorce are shown in Table 12. Divorce for less than 2 years had a mean score of 62.15 and a standard deviation of 10.21. The mean score for divorce between 3 to 5 years was 88.42, with a standard deviation of 11.12. The divorce period of 6 to

8 years had a mean score of 67.59 and a standard deviation of 11.10. The final group (over 8 years) had a mean score of 89.46 and a standard deviation of 10.78. From the mean scores, it is clear that there are differences among the different durations of parents' divorce. Specifically, it is clear that students from divorced homes over 8 years had better performance ( $M=89.46$ ) than students in the other durations of parents' divorce. Table 13 below shows the results of the ANOVA test used to significant difference in the academic performance of the different durations of parents' divorce.

**Table 13: ANOVA Results Comparing Academic Performance of Different Durations of Divorce**

	Sum	of			
	Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1268.810	3	422.937	4.805*	.031
Within Groups	13555.366	154	88.022		
<b>Total</b>	<b>3824.176</b>	<b>157</b>			

Source: Field survey (2022)

\*Significant,  $p < .05$

It can be seen in Table 13 that there is a significant difference in the academic performance of students from divorced homes on the basis of the duration of their parents' divorce [ $F(157)=4.805$ ,  $p < .05$ ]. The probability value (p-value) of .031 is less than .05 significant level. Based on the results, the null hypothesis is rejected. The implication of the results is that there was a significant difference in the academic performance of students from divorced homes on the basis of duration of parents' divorce.

Since a difference was observed in the One-Way ANOVA, a post-hoc analysis was conducted to identify which specific age groups were responsible

for the differences. Tukey post-hoc analysis was used for this purpose. The results of the post-hoc analysis are presented in Tables 14.

**Table 14: Summary Table for Post Hoc Test**

			Subset for alpha = 0.05	
	Years	N	1	2
Tukey HSD	Less than 2 years	19	62.15	
	6 – 8 years	29	67.59	
	3 – 5 years	35		84.42
	Over 8 years	75		89.46
	Sig.		1.000	.160

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

Source: Field survey (2022)

It is seen in Table 14 that the means of students in the groups “less than 2 years” (62.15) and “6 to 8 years” (67.59) were not significantly different from each other. In the same vein, mean scores of students in the groups “3 to 5 years” (84.42) and “over 8 years” (89.46) were not significantly different from each other. However, those within the “less than 2 years” and “6 to 8 years” groups differed significantly from those in the “3 to 5 years” and “over 8 years” groups.

Specifically, the students who lived in homes where the parents had been divorced for over 8 years had the highest mean score and thus implied had high academic performance compared to the other groups. However, the students who lived in homes where the parents had been divorced for less than 2 years recorded the lowest mean score indicating that they had the poorest academic performance.

### Hypothesis Four

*H<sub>04</sub>: There is no statistically significant difference in the academic performances of students from divorced homes on the basis of whom they live with.*

The hypothesis sought to find out if there is significant difference in the academic performance of students on the basis of whom they lived with. The data was analyzed using One-Way ANOVA at the 0.05 level of significance since there were three different groups of people. The results of the Levene's test for homogeneity of variance are presented in Table 15.

**Table 15: Test of Homogeneity of Variances**

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
4.121	2	155	.219

Source: Field Survey (2022)

It is shown in Table 15 that the significant level of .219 is greater than .05. This implies that homogeneity of variances can be assumed. Thus, it is appropriate to carry out One-Way ANOVA. The descriptive statistics of the various groups are shown in Table 16.

**Table 16: Descriptive Results for Different Groups**

Age	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
Mother	95	76.71	10.33
Father	41	73.65	11.42
Guardian	22	72.60	11.13
<b>Total</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>74.32</b>	<b>10.96</b>

Source: Field Survey (2022)

It is shown in Table 16 that the respondents who lived with their mothers had a mean score of 76.71 and a standard deviation of 10.33 while those who lived with their fathers had a mean score of 73.65 and a standard deviation of 11.42. Finally, the respondents who lived with a guardian had a mean score of 72.60 and a standard deviation of 11.13. It can be seen from the results that some difference exists among the groups. To test whether the differences are significant, one-way ANOVA was carried out. The results are shown in Table 17 below.

**Table 17: ANOVA Results Comparing Academic Performance of Students on the Basis of Who Students Live with**

	Sum	of			
	Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1193.218	2	596.609	1.954	.101
Within Groups	47336.439	155	305.396		
<b>Total</b>	<b>48529.657</b>	<b>157</b>			

Source: Field survey (2022)

From Table 17, it can be seen that there is no significant difference in the academic performance of students on the basis of whom they live with [ $F(2, 155) = 1.954, p > .05$ ]. The obtained p-value of 0.101 was higher than the 0.05 significance level. As a result, there was no statistically significant difference in the mean scores of the three different groups. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained, indicating that the study did not find sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis, and there was no significant difference among the mean scores of the three groups.

## **Discussion**

Discussions of the study's results are presented in this section. This is done under sub-headings according to the objectives of the study.

### **Experiences of Adolescents from Divorced Homes**

The study revealed that students are generally at high-risk during a family divorce. It was found that majority of the students find it difficult to resolve their personal everyday life challenges since their parents dissolved their marriage. Others also reported that social and community activities become so hard for them to keep up with since the divorce of their parents. In addition, it was found that students found it interpersonal relationship challenging. They indicated that talking with friends in school has become a hard task due to my parents' divorce.

Evidently, teenagers can be particularly vulnerable when facing challenging situations because, as students, they may experience grief or sadness. However, during this developmental stage, they are also starting to comprehend the complexities of the adult world, leading to conflicts in how they express their emotions. This finding aligns with the assertion made by Obeid, Al Karaki, Haddad, Sacre, Soufa, and Hallit (2021), who discovered that teenagers with divorced parents exhibited higher levels of social fear and avoidance, depression, and suicidal ideation. This highlights the importance of implementing effective prevention programmes to support both children and parents during this emotionally challenging period. Wang (2019) showed that participants struggled financially after divorce. It also affected adolescents emotionally and their standard of living was also affected. Engaging in recreational activities proved beneficial for them as it helped

them manage stress in a positive way and provided an opportunity to divert their focus from the divorce.

The estimated negative experiences of parental divorce on students are generally strong. Parental divorce appears to lower the wellbeing of students. As noted by Mucaj and Xeka (2015), adolescents are highly concerned about how others perceive them, leading them to isolate themselves to avoid judgment based on their new status as children of the divorced. Parental divorce can negatively impact the teenager's personality, leading to adverse effects on their social well-being. Affected adolescents are at a higher risk of developing behavioral and social disorders compared to their peers with both parents living together. For instance, in cases of depression, adolescents may experience a constant low mood, loss of interest in activities, and withdrawal from regular social interactions, leading to isolation from their usual social groups and community interactions (Adofo & Etsey, 2016).

Similarly, Tullius, De Kroon, Almansa, and Reijneveld (2021) found that adolescents are more likely to experience emotional and behavioural problems after parental divorce rather than before. Furthermore, these effects are long-lasting, emphasizing the importance of providing improved care and support for children with parents going through divorce.

The evidence from the discussion is that studies across the world affirm that being raised in a divorced home can bring along a lot of challenges such as struggling to solve issues and struggling with social lives particularly in school. These are common experiences according to the data obtained from the study.



### **Impact of Divorce on Academic Performances of Students**

Students of divorced parents may also see a change in academic success. The study showed that parental divorce has an effect on the academic performances of students. The students reported that grades in class have been affected after the divorce of their parents. It was also found that students had difficulty focusing in class, did not have stable mind and were not in good mood to learn. In addition, students lacked the opportunities for extra tuition at home or school and had inadequate learning resources for their studies.

The respondents made it clear that their academic performance was affected negatively after the divorce. This result is in accordance with findings from Wosowei. Wosowei (2020) emphasizes that parental divorce negatively affects children's academic performance and suggests that various strategies are valuable in supporting children impacted by divorce. On the other hand, Issahaku (2017) contends that the family plays a crucial role in providing physical, material, and moral care for the young. The study highlights a direct correlation between parental advice, educational guidance, homework supervision, and children's academic achievement. The quality and frequency of homework supervision are not only linked to improved learning but also have a significant impact on academic achievement.

The outcomes are consistent with the discoveries made by Kerubo and Kibera (2019), which showed that students originating from single-parent family backgrounds tended to achieve lower academic scores compared to those from two-parent family structures. Similarly, Abudu and Fuseini (2013) also revealed that single parenting had negative impact on a children's academic performance. In Ghana, Amoakohene (2013) found that single

parenting negatively affects the academic performance of students in the Afigya Sekyere East District of the Ashanti Region. The implication of these is that, living in single parent homes put children at risk of performing poorly in their academic work.

From the forgoing discussion, it is clearly demonstrated that academic work can be affected negatively when a child lives in a divorced home. Usually, they may lack the resource, the involvement of parents and the motivation needed to excel academically.

### **Gender Difference in Academic Performance of Students from Divorced Homes**

In response to whether gender difference existed in the academic performance of students from divorced homes, the study revealed that there was a significant difference between male and female students in terms of their academic performance. Male students performed better than female students.

Even though both males and females are exposed to the same experiences in a divorced home, it is possible that males may be more resilient than females in challenging situations. There is the likelihood that males paid more attention to their studies when compared to females. Also, males possibly performed better because they had more positive attitude towards difficult situations and as such approached academic work in a more positive manner (Black & Sprenkle, 1991)

The outcomes are in alignment with the conclusions reached by Mbuvi (2015), who explored the impact of single parenthood on the academic performance of secondary school students in Mwingi Central District, Kitui

County. Mbuvi's findings suggested a substantial distinction in academic achievement between males and females originating from single-parent homes. Similarly, the research by Alike and Edosa (2012) revealed a significant difference in the academic performance of male and female students from broken homes. Specifically, it was observed that female students from broken homes performed better in their studies compared to their male counterparts. This was contradictory to what was found in the current study. This could be probably be because females in the study of Alike and Edosa studied more than males.

In contrast, to the current study, Efosa-Ehioghiren, Orusengha, Haruna and Iwenanogie (2022) examined the effects of divorce on adolescents in Nigeria and showed that there was no significant gender difference after divorce effects on adolescents' academic performance. This contradiction could be because the means of assessing academic performance was different in both studies.

### **Difference in Academic Performance after Divorce on the basis of Age**

The study revealed that there was no significant difference in the academic performance of students on the basis of their ages. The results give the indication that the ages of students do not matter when it comes to the academic performance of students from divorced homes. In essence, whether students are younger or older, they are likely to be affected in a divorced home in the same way.

From the results, it is my personal view that, counselling for students from divorced homes should focus on students of all ages and not restricted to a particular age group. This is because all students, whether, old or young

could be affected in the same way by living in divorced homes. By having similar academic experiences, counselling for students from divorced homes should adopt similar approaches irrespective of the ages of the students.

Several existing research have been confirmed by the findings of the current study. For instance, the results are in line with the results of Efosa-Ehioghiren, Orusengha, Haruna and Iwenanogie (2022) examined the effects of divorce on adolescents in Nigeria and showed that there was no significant difference in the effects of divorce on adolescents' academic performance on the basis of age. In a similar vein, the findings of the current study support the findings of Moschion and van Ours (2019) that there is no age significant difference in the effects of divorce on the adolescents' academic performance.

Additionally, the findings are consistent with the findings of Amato and Keith (1991), that age was not significant in the academic performance of students from single parent homes. From the discussion, the indication is that regardless of the ages of students from divorced homes, their academic performance is likely to be the same.

### **Difference in Academic Performance after Divorce on the basis of Length of Divorce**

The study found that there is a significant difference in the academic performance of students from divorced homes on the basis of the duration of their parents' divorce. Specifically, the students who lived in homes where the parents had been divorced for over 8 years had the highest mean score and thus implied had high academic performance compared to the other groups. However, the students who lived in homes where the parents had been

divorced for less than 2 years recorded the lowest mean score indicating that they had the poorest academic performance.

The results give the indication that those who had lived in divorced homes for longer duration performed better. This could be because they had lived long in divorced homes and as such had developed better ways of coping with the divorce. As a result, the divorce did not have much effects on their academic work. However, for those who had lived in divorced homes for less than 2 years, it could be that they are still dealing with the strain and stress of the divorce and as such their academic work was more affected.

The meaning of the results indicated above is that divorce affect academic work more when it is a new experience. However, as the years pass by, the effects of divorce on academic performance minimises. Essentially, students who had stayed in divorced homes for long had good academic performance compared to those whose parents had newly divorced. As a practicing counsellor, the results connote that when divorce is new the effects on academic performance are more damaging and as such much assistance would be needed for when divorce is new.

The findings confirm the findings of Sangeet and Singh (2022) that as children grew in single-parent homes, they took on more responsibilities and became more resilient. These served as strengths for such children and as such the effects of being raised in single parent homes became less pronounced as time passed. Similarly, The current findings align with those of Rubamande and Mukadi (2021), who also reported that positive attitude towards academic matters, having a positive social circle, self-motivation, encouragement, counselling and guidance services, and setting high expectations and life goals

were influential factors contributing to good academic performance among students from single-parent households. According to the researchers, these factors were seen more as the years passed by in the single parent home. Thus, it was a function of duration.

Additionally, the findings support those of Adegboye and Adegboye (2021) that students from broken homes who had lived there for long did not perform very badly. In most cases, their academic performance was not very different from students who lived in intact homes. This was similar to an earlier study of Oluwatosin and Tenibiaje (2011) that students from single parent homes had their academic performance improved after years in single parent homes to the point that there was no difference between their performance and that of students from intact homes.

All the studies discussed and the current study have confirmed that as the years passed, students living in divorced homes adjusted and thus their academic performance got better with time. Thus, students who had lived in divorced homes for long performed better than those who were new to living in divorced homes.

### **Difference in Academic Performance after Divorce on the basis of Whom Children Live With**

The study found that there was no significant difference in the academic performance of students on the basis of whom they live with. This means that regardless of who the students lived with, they were affected in the same manner and as such their academic performance did not differ significantly. Whether students lived with a mother, father or guardian, their academic performance were not significantly different. This could be because,

either way, the students lived with only one parent and as such were not affected differently.

The implication of the results is that the kind of person or guardian who was raising the child after divorce did not have significant effect on the academic outcomes of the child. In this sense, fathers can raise their children alone, mothers can raise their children alone and other significant persons can raise children of divorced homes alone. The effects on academic performance may not be different as shown in this study.

The conclusions drawn from this study align with the outcomes observed by Kelly (1993), which indicate that the sole custody status doesn't serve as a predictor for children's adjustment following divorce. Rather, the well-being of children is influenced by a multifaceted combination of socio-economic and psychological elements. The configuration of the family after divorce holds less significance when compared to the caliber, consistency, and dependability of the care provided, particularly by the primary residential parent. Kelly's findings emphasize that the individual with whom children reside does not have a bearing on their academic performance.

Similarly, the results of the study revealed confirmed those of several other studies which (Buchanan, Maccoby & Dornbusch, 1992; Rosen, 1979) have found no significant differences between the custodial parent and child's adjustment, particularly in terms of academic work.

### **Chapter Summary**

The section highlighted the results and discussions of the study. The presentation addressed the sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents, experience of adolescents from divorced parents, and effect of

divorce on academic performance of adolescents. The study also tested the significant different in the academic performances of students in terms of gender, age, duration of parents' divorce, and whom they live with. Results derived from the analysis were discussed in relation with results and assertions made in similar past researches.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Introduction

The preceding chapter presented the results and discussion of the study. This chapter presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study. Implications for counselling and suggestions for further research are also presented in the chapter.

#### Summary of Study

The main purpose of the study was to examine the impact of divorce on the academic performance of students in Junior High Schools in Osino in the Fanteakwa District, Eastern Region, Ghana. Specifically, the study sought to answer two research questions and test four hypotheses:

#### Research Questions

1. What type of experience do adolescents from divorce homes have?
2. What are the effects of divorce on the academic performances of students from divorced homes?

#### Hypotheses

$H_01$ : There is no statistically significant difference in the academic performances of male and female students from divorced families.

$HA1$ : There is a statistically significant difference in the academic performances of male and female students from divorced families.

$H_02$ : There is no statistically significant difference in the academic performances of students on the basis of age.

$HA2$ : There is a statistically significant difference in the academic performances of students on the basis of age.

*H<sub>03</sub>*: There is no statistically significant difference in the academic performance in the basis of duration of parents' divorce.

*HA3*: There is a statistically significant difference in the academic performance in the basis of duration of parents' divorce.

*H<sub>04</sub>*: There is no statistically significant difference in the academic performances of students on the basis of whom they live with.

*HA4*: There is a statistically significant difference in the academic performances of students on the basis of whom they live with.

Literature related to the study were reviewed. The Risk and Protective Factor Model, the Family Deficit Model, Family Socialisation Perspective, and the Social Exchange Theory were reviewed as the theoretical framework for the study. Concepts relating to parenting and academic performance were reviewed. Finally, previous empirical literature were reviewed. These were related to the objectives of the study.

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design within the mixed-methods approach. A sample of 158 junior high school students from divorced or broken homes in Osino were selected to participate in the study. Data were collected using structured questionnaire and interview guide. Quantitative data were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistical method while qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis.

### **Major Findings**

The study revealed that students are generally at high-risk during a family divorce. It was found that majority of the students find it difficult to resolve their personal everyday life challenges since their parents dissolved

their marriage. Others also reported that social and community activities become so hard for them to keep up with since the divorce of their parents. In addition, it was found that students found it interpersonal relationship challenging. They indicated that talking with friends in school has become a hard task due to their parents' divorce.

The study also found that parental divorce has an effect on the academic performances of students. The students reported that grades in class have been affected after the divorce of their parents. It was also found that students found it difficult to focus in class and have stable mind and good mood to learn. In addition, students lacked the opportunities for extra tuition at home or school and had inadequate learning resources for their studies.

In response to whether gender difference existed in the academic performance of students from divorced homes, the study revealed that there was a significant difference between male and female students in terms of their academic performance. Male students performed better than female students.

The study's findings indicated that there was no significant difference in the academic performance of students based on their ages. This means that there was no statistically significant distinction in the mean scores of the three different age groups.

The study found that there was a significant difference in the academic performance of students from divorced homes on the basis of the duration of their parents' divorce. In terms of specifics, the students who lived in homes where the parents had been divorced for over 8 years had the highest mean score and thus implied had high academic performance compared to the other

groups. However, the students who lived in homes where the parents had been divorced for less than 2 years recorded the lowest mean score indicating that they had the poorest academic performance. This meant that the effects of divorce on academic performance of students were more damaging for students whose parents recently divorced than for those whose parents have been divorced.

Finally, the study found that there was no significant difference in the academic performance of students on the basis of whom they live with.

### **Conclusions**

Academic performance of students from divorced families dropped after their parental divorce. The study concludes that parental divorce is one of the factors that affect academic achievement of students. Aside academic struggles, divorce also affects the social life experience of students. In terms of demographic variables, gender and duration of parents' divorce were significant in terms of the impact of divorce on students' academic performance. However, age and whom students lived with were not of significant in the impact of divorce on academic performance of students.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher made the following recommendations to improve the performance of students from divorced families.

1. The school heads, teachers and school counsellors should identify students from divorced parents and make special efforts in examining their problems and establishing support services for them, especially during school periods.

2. School authorities should hold consultative meetings with parents, particularly, divorced parents, on how they can assist their children to excel academically.
3. The Ghana Education Service through their District offices should set-up support systems for students, particularly females, coming from divorced homes. This can help them improve their academic performance in school since the study found that male students from divorced homes performed better than their female counterparts.
4. Students from divorced homes, regardless of their ages should be provided with professional support by counsellors to enable them cope with the consequences of living in divorced homes.
5. School heads should collaborate with teachers and parent associations to quickly identify students whose parents go through divorce so that immediate support can be given to such students. This is because the study found that students whose parents have divorced for longer durations did not have their academic performance affected as much as students whose parents had newly divorced.

### **Implications for Counselling**

The findings of the study have implications for the work of counsellors. The following are some of them:

1. School counsellors should regularly update their knowledge in their care for children from divorced homes. This is because children from divorced homes may need special care and support, particularly in terms of how to resolve personal challenges.

2. Apart from providing counselling for all students, school counsellors can provide special counselling with the focus on children from divorced homes. They can set up group counselling for children from divorced homes in order to create a support network for such children.
3. School counsellors could collaborate with the appropriate health professionals and authorities to provide additional and specialized help to children from divorced homes who may still be struggling with the trauma of living in divorced homes, particularly at the early stage of the divorce.

### **Suggestions for Future Studies**

The following suggestions are made for further studies:

1. The coping strategies adopted by children from divorced homes were not explored in this study. This can be the focus of future research in order to clearly establish which coping strategies can help children from divorced homes cope with the effects of being raised by divorced families.
2. Future researchers can consider the views of divorced parents as part of such a study so that the experiences and challenges of divorced parents in raising children can be brought to light. This can help make recommendations on how divorced parents can be assisted to provide the best care and support to children from divorced homes.

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## APPENDICES



**APPENDIX A**  
**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST**  
**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS**

I would like to invite you to take part in a research that I am conducting as part of my master's degree fulfilment requirements. The study is aimed at investigating the impact of divorce on the academic performance among Junior High Schools in Fanteakwa District, Eastern Region, Ghana. As a participant in this study, you will help the researcher understand your experience of undergoing parental divorce by describing how this divorce experience has impacted your life as an adolescent, as well as your academic performance in school. Your information will be kept confidential and your names will not be shared with anyone or in any publication. The research will involve you filling in a questionnaire that takes about 15-20 minutes. The general findings of the study will be used by researchers, scholars, psychologists, consultants and professionals that would find the results of the study useful in the course of their practice or learning. This will be with the aim of helping other adolescents during periods of parental divorce to overcome the challenges associated with their parents divorcing. I am therefore asking if you could answer the following questions by ticking in the boxes (  $\sqrt{\phantom{x}}$  ) or writing in the spaces provided where applicable. Thank you.

**SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS**

1. Gender:

Male ( )                      Female ( )

2. Class:

JHS 1 ( )                      JHS 2 ( )                      JHS 3 ( )

3. Age group

12 – 14 years ( )                      15-17 years ( )                      18 years and above ( )

4. Length of parents' divorce

Less than 2 years ( )                      3 – 5 years ( )                      6 – 8 years ( )                      Over 8 years ( )

5. Whom have you been living with since the divorce was effected?

Mother ( )                      Father ( )                      Guardian ( )

6. Exam Score:

## SECTION B: EXPERIENCES OF ADOLESCENTS FROM DIVORCED HOME

7. Tick out the right alternative that fits your experiences from divorce home using the following 5-point Likert scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree   2 = Disagree   3 = Undecided   4 = Agree   5 = Strongly Agree

Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Since my parents divorced each other, I have become quieter					
2. It is so hard making new friends since my parents divorced					
3. Talking with my friends in school has become a hard task due to my parents' divorce					
4. I am not very comfortable attending family gatherings since my parents got divorced					
5. It has become harder for me to resolve my personal					

everyday life challenges since my parents dissolved their marriage					
6. Socially and communal activities and meetings have become so hard for me to keep up with since the divorce of my parents					
7. Managing conflicts has become a challenge for me after the divorce of my parents					
8. It has become harder for me to admit my feelings whether good or bad since my parents divorced					
9. I do not want to emotionally get involved with anyone since the divorce of my parents					

## SECTION C: IMPACT OF DIVORCE ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF ADOLESCENTS

8. Tick out the right alternative that fits your experiences with how your parents' divorce has affected your academic performance in school using the following 5-point Likert scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Undecided 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly

Agree

Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. It has become so difficult to focus in class since the divorce of my parents					
2. My parents do not have enough time to monitor my academic progress					
3. I am no longer motivated to learn since the divorce of my parents					
4. I do not have stable mind and good mood to learn					
5. I do not have freedom to discuss academic matters with my parents					
6. I am not provided with					

opportunities for extra tuition at home or school					
7. I am provided with adequate learning facilities for my studies at home					
8. My desire for learning new skills has declined since my parents divorced					
9. My grades in class have been affected after the divorce of my parents					
10. Since the divorce of my parents, I have become more closed minded and I am no longer open to new ideas					

**APPENDIX C**  
**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST**  
**FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS**  
**DEPARTMENT OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING**  
**INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR STUDENTS**

Dear Respondent,

The purpose of the study was to examine the impact of divorce on the academic performance among Junior High Schools in Osino in the Fanteakwa District, Eastern Region, Ghana. Your participation in this study is very important. Any information you provide will be kept confidential. Please feel free to participate in the study.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the study.

Please be assured that any information provided will be kept private and confidential.

1. Please can you tell me a little about yourself
2. How old are you?
3. Whom do you live with?
4. How long has your parents been divorced?
5. Do you think the divorce has affected you in any way?
6. If yes to question 5, can you explain how the divorce of your parents has affected you.
7. Has the divorce of your parents had any impact on your academic performance?
8. Can you give your reasons for your answer in question 7?
9. Do you have any final comment?

**APPENDIX D**  
**RELIABILITY OUTPUT**

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.748	36



## APPENDIX E

## INTRODUCTORY LETTER

## UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES  
FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS**DEPARTMENT OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING**

Telephone: 0332091854

E-mail: [dgc@ucc.edu.gh](mailto:dgc@ucc.edu.gh)UNIVERSITY POST OFFICE  
CAPE COAST, GHANA

Our Ref: DGC/L.2/VOL.1/210

29<sup>th</sup> September, 2022

Your Ref:

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

## LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

We introduce to you, Eric Asare a student pursuing an M.Phil programme in Guidance and Counselling at the Department of Guidance and Counselling of the University of Cape Coast. As a requirement, he is to submit a thesis on the topic: *"Impact of Divorce on Academic Performance of Junior High School Students in Fanteakwa District, Eastern Region, Ghana"*. We are by this letter affirming that, the information he will obtain from your Institution will be solely used for academic purposes.

We would be most grateful if you could provide her the necessary assistance.

Thank you.


Dr. Stephen Doh Fia  
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

## APPENDIX F

## ETHICAL CLEARANCE

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES  
ETHICAL REVIEW BOARD

UNIVERSITY POST OFFICE  
CAPE COAST, GHANA

Our Ref: CES/ERB/UCC/edu/v6/22-100  Date: 28th September 2022

Dear Sir/Madam,

ETHICAL REQUIREMENTS CLEARANCE FOR RESEARCH STUDY


The bearer, Eric Asare, Reg. No. EF/GCT/216003  
M.Phil. / ~~Ph.D.~~ student in the Department of Guidance  
and Counselling in the College of Education Studies  
University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, Ghana. He / ~~She~~ wishes to  
undertake a research study on the topic:

Impact of divorce on Academic  
performance of Junior High School  
Students in Fanteakwa District,  
Eastern Region, Ghana.

The Ethical Review Board (ERB) of the College of Education Studies  
(CES) has assessed his/~~her~~ proposal and confirm that the proposal  
satisfies the College's ethical requirements for the conduct of the  
study.

In view of the above, the researcher has been cleared and given approval  
to commence his/~~her~~ study. The ERB would be grateful if you would  
give him/her the necessary assistance to facilitate the conduct of the said  
research.

Thank you.  
Yours faithfully,

  
Prof. Linda Dzama Forde  
(Secretary, CES-ERB)

Chairman, CES-ERB  
Prof. J. A. Omosho  
[jomoshosha@ucc.edu.gh](mailto:jomoshosha@ucc.edu.gh)  
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Vice-Chairman, CES-ERB  
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Secretary, CES-ERB  
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