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## Nigerian Early Childhood Educators' Perspectives on the Influence of Divorce on Children's Academic Achievement

Monica Ufuoma Peremine Wosowei  
*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Education

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Monica Wosowei

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Review Committee

Dr. Terri Edwards, Committee Chairperson, Education Faculty

Dr. Maryanne Longo, Committee Member, Education Faculty

Dr. Donald Yarosz, University Reviewer, Education Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost

Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University

2020

Abstract

Nigerian Early Childhood Educators' Perspectives on the Influence of Divorce on  
Children's Academic Achievement

by

Monica Wosowei

M.ED, University of Port Harcourt, 2012

BA. ED, Delta State University, 2006

OND. ED, Delta State University, 2002

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

Walden University

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## Abstract

Parental divorce has profound negative effects on children's performance in school. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore Nigerian early childhood educators' perspectives on the effects of divorce on children's academic achievement and strategies or suggestions for working with these children. The conceptual framework of this study consisted of three theories: Bowen's family systems theory, Piaget's theory of cognitive development, and Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism. Two research questions focused on educators' perspectives on the effects of divorce on children's academic achievement. Data were collected from 12 educators who are the participants using the inclusion criteria and analyzed through in-depth interviews, which were hand-coded using open and axial coding to identify emerging themes. Three themes emerged in the data analysis: children are better off when divorce takes them out of a toxic environment, emotional distress reduces social and academic functioning, and resiliency of children depends on nurturing adults. The results of this study suggested that parental divorce has a negative impact on children's academic achievement and that different strategies are useful when working with children affected by divorce. The study participants asserted that stakeholders provide educators with training, seminars, and workshops about different strategies on how to handle children of divorced parents. Positive social change could occur as school officials establish professional development using strategies specific for children of divorce, thereby improving teachers' pedagogy and nurturing of these students

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## Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my family: my husband, Engineer John Peremine Wosowei, who encouraged and supported me through this journey; and my children, who were always there for me all through the entire program. I owe special thanks to my parents for their endless love, encouragement, and sacrifice towards my education and words of persistence as the key to success. To my many friends and church family who supported me throughout the whole academic process (despite their busy schedules). I also want to thank my professors, whose patience and dedication made this dissertation a success.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Educational stakeholders have expressed their concerns about the behavioral issues of children from divorced homes, and the resulting effects on their academic achievements. There has been a difference in the academic achievement of children within the same school environment who are taught with the same teaching strategies, methods, and content (Familusi, 2019; Obiweluozor, 2015; Umar, 2019; Veraksa et al., 2016). Mahony et al. (2015) found that most children between 6 and 9 years old from divorced homes struggle with early learning and academic achievement. Adebusuyi (2018) examined the effects of parental divorce on children's academic achievements in school and found that 70% of the children reported that parental divorce affected their academic achievements, while 45% reported that parental divorce was currently affecting their academic achievements.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) and the Universal Basic Education Commission (2013) defined early childhood education in the *National Policy on Education* as the training given to children from birth to 9 years old through approved educational institutions prior to children entering primary school. The federal government also suggested that subsequent, life-long experiences are based on this formative period. Early childhood care education (ECCE) is based on the philosophy of providing learning opportunities and experiences to young children to promote their holistic development (Akinrotimi & Olowe, 2016). ECCE provides the medium for arranging and providing services and support systems to communities and families to meet the needs of their

young children. For the objectives of the *National Policy on Education* (Federal Republic of Nigeria, (2004) and the Universal Basic Education Commission to be realized through the ECCE program, all educational stakeholders must be effective in their various offices (Ferguson et al., 2018; Fleming, 2019; Ibhaze, 2016). One reason for the importance of education in the early years is that during this period, a child's brain undergoes enormous growth biologically as neural connections are formed, providing the foundations for skills such as language, reasoning, problem solving, and social skills (Akinrotimi & Olowe, 2016; Veraksa et al., 2016).

In Nigeria, families and parents are responsible for the education of their children; children's education depends on their families' atmospheric stability or structure. The educator can get to know the extent of the child's faculties and can employ appropriate strategies for developing their academic achievement (Veraksa et al., 2016). However, there are other factors outside the educator's performance and quality assurance of teaching method provided in school that may influence the child's academic achievement, and one such factor is parental divorce (Veraksa et al., 2016). Divorce is the termination, separation, or ending of marriage (Familusi, 2019). Familusi (2019) asserted that the National Bureau of Statistics officially released information that divorce in Nigeria is exceedingly uncommon, as 0.2% of men and 0.3% of women have legally divorced, while 1% of couples have separated. While these statistics may appear low, they exclude the separations of the vast majority of Nigerians because they had not registered their marriage ceremonies (Familusi, 2019).

There is a lack of research focusing on Nigerian early childhood educators' perspectives on the influence of divorce on children's academic achievement. In this study, I explored Nigerian early childhood educators' perspectives about the influence of divorce on children's academic achievement. Traditionally, raising a child in Nigeria involved the extended family (Ekundayo & Amah, 2017). With the rapid social change engendered by globalization and industrialization, Nigerian family structures have shifted towards the nuclear family structure (Ekpenyong & Ingiabuna, 2017). Many traditional Nigerian family customs (such as polygamous family structures) have become increasingly rare (Oyebade, 2016; Worugji et al., 2019). Abdullahi et al. (2017) asserted that modern culture has changed and outgrown the norms and values once taught as the core beliefs of Nigerian society. At one time in Nigeria, marriage and family structure were the most significant and longstanding institutions (Ekpenyong & Ingiabuna, 2017). While it was once unfathomable in traditional Nigerian society, divorce has become far more common and accepted.

There is limited research literature on how divorce affects children's academic achievement in Nigeria (Ekpenyong & Ingiabuna, 2017; Familusi, 2019; Olaitan, 2018). In the few available studies on the issue, researchers have shown that the conditions of the home environment affect children's mental, physical, emotional, socioeconomic, and sociological well-being (Beley et al., 2018; D'Onofrio & Emery, 2019; Latu, 2018; Olaitan, 2018). There are more studies concerning the general effects of parental separation or divorce on children (Demir-Dagdas et al., 2018; Feldhaus & Heintz-Martin,

2015; Fridman-Teutsch & Attar-Schwartz, 2018; Haimi & Lerner, 2016; Kalmijn, 2015), yet researchers have not sufficiently examined Nigerian early childhood educators' perspectives on how divorce affects children's academic achievement (Adebusuyi, 2018; Worugji et al., 2019). The implications for positive social change are that Nigerian early childhood educators may reveal current and diverse academic approaches, strategies, and suggestions to support children experiencing academic challenges as a result of parental divorce. The findings from this study may provide educational stakeholders with information and interventions to support children struggling academically after their parents' divorce or separation (see Fleming, 2019).

### **Background**

Western values have increasingly influenced marriage practices in Nigeria. Traditionally, Nigerian couples are supposed to remain married until the death of a spouse, but divorce has become a growing trend among couples in the country (Ekpenyong & Ingiabuna, 2017). One in three marriages in Africa end in divorce (Ekpenyong & Ingiabuna, 2017; Turunen, 2017). Divorce has become an acceptable practice in some African countries such as Nigeria, Ghana, and South Africa (Olaitan, 2018). To obtain a divorce in Nigeria, couples must write a petition to the Royal Highnesses, paramount rulers, the council of chiefs from different families, and compound chiefs, who then summon the couple and their families to settle the case. This can lead to a permanent settlement of divorce (Bell et al., 2018; Ekundayo & Amah, 2017; Ola et al., 2017).



Individuals, the government, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and various international agencies have attempted to spread awareness about the positive and negative effects of divorce, including examining how divorce may violate the rights of the child, or contrarily, may liberate the children from an unhealthy or unsafe situation (Offiong & Gberevbie, 2018). Abdullahi et al. (2017) suggested that divorce is positive when it involves cases of domestic violence. However, a stable and harmonious home can create a peaceful growing environment for children both at home and at school, which translates into sound academics and social integration (Banda & Eekelaar, 2017; Coe et al., 2020). As of 2016, approximately 35% to 50% of Nigerian children under the age of 18 years old have experienced parental divorce and live in single-parent homes (Offiong & Gberevbie, 2018).

Family structures across the globe are rapidly changing (Bastaitis & Mortelmans, 2016; Ekpenyong & Ingiabuna, 2017). One major shift in family structures is the increase of divorce, leading to children being raised by a single parent, relatives, or stepparents (Anyebe et al., 2017; Ekpenyong & Ingiabuna, 2017; Endurance & Nkechi, 2017). Coe et al. (2020) asserted that a well-adapted, mature, stable, and integrated family climate might favor the development of the child, both academically and socially. An unstable family environment, by contrast, can stimulate insecurity, immaturity, and nonadaptation for children. Family climate influences active communication, emotional relationships, approaches to values, and opportunities (Garriga & Martn ez-Lucena, 2018). These factors determine the care and welfare that a child receives from the family (Ekpenyong

& Ingiabuna, 2017). Coe et al. (2020) and Noone (2019) suggested that the emotional stress caused by parents' divorce may cause a rapid decline in children's performance in schools.

Researchers in other countries, such as Ghana, South Africa, and Cameroon, have considered factors such as socioeconomic status, parents' level of education, children's attitude toward learning, the learning environment, accommodations, and the environment in studies on academic achievement (Benner et al., 2016; Majoko, 2019). Researchers have associated divorce with a direct decline in a child's ability to attain a college education due to financial constraints, decreased academic performance, and increased delinquent behavior (Crouch & Dickes, 2016; Adebusuyi, 2018; Pinguart & Kauser, 2018). Schools with a higher percentage of children from divorced homes have lower academic performance than those schools with a relatively low percentage of children with divorced parents (Fridman-Teutsch & Attar-Schwartz, 2018). This can put children at risk for reduced social progress, academic skills, emotional stability, and mental resilience (D'Onofrio & Emery, 2019). There is a need to examine the recent changes in Nigerian families, especially the effects of divorce, as they influence children's academic achievement (Andrew & Segun, 2019; Mahrer et al., 2018). Educators are with these children in the classroom and witness the changes in their academic achievement (Bonner et al., 2018). By gathering data on educators' perspectives on children's academic achievement, researchers can identify useful strategies or suggestions for educators.

Divorce may cause either the violation or protection of the rights of children; while it can have negative effects, it might also take children out of an unhealthy or unsafe situation (Offiong & Gberevbie, 2018). Nevertheless, divorce increases family struggles and social conflicts (Mahony et al., 2015). Children from broken homes may grow to become more sexually active or to show symptoms of depression, high levels of smoking, negative influence from peer groups, irresponsible alcohol consumption, and drug abuse (Adebusuyi, 2018). Mahony et al. (2015) stated that early childhood is a significant period in life for children, and divorce can deeply affect them. Researchers have not conducted any studies on the effects of divorce on children's academic performance from the view of educators in Nigeria. To fill this gap in research, I explored Nigerian early childhood educators' perspectives on the influence of parental divorce on children's academic achievement.

### **Problem Statement**

The research problem examined in this study was that many children in Nigeria come from divorced homes, and this adversely affects their academic achievement (Steinbach, 2018; Umar, 2019; Yaw, 2016). There is limited research on how Nigerian early childhood educators view the effects of divorce on children's academic achievement or the strategies that educators use to assist children in this situation. Although researchers have conducted several studies in Nigeria and elsewhere in Africa on the negative influence of the increasing rate of divorce, they did not explore the influence of divorce on children's academic achievement from early childhood educators'

perspectives (Mustapha & Odediran, 2019; Paul, 2019; Olaitan, 2018; Wayne, 2020).

There is a need to examine the Nigerian early childhood educators' perspectives on the influence of divorce on children's academic achievement because 80% of Nigerian children from divorced families face challenges (Adebusuyi 2018; Familusi, 2019; Worugji et al., 2019). The outcome is serious, as a lack of education relates to social vices such as begging, theft, or rape; these activities put them at greater risk (Ekpenyong & Ingiabuna, 2017; Moschion & Van Ours, 2019; Sands et al., 2017).

Sands et al. (2017) asserted that the whole family feels the effects of divorce in marriages where children are involved. Several authors have observed that in Nigeria, globalization has resulted in rapid social change and the transformation of traditional family structures, marked by a sharp increase in divorce rates (Anyebe et al., 2017; Bastaits & Mortelmans, 2016; Endurance & Nkechi, 2017; Smith, 2016). Recently, it has been necessary for Nigeria to loosen divorce laws due to the influence of culture in domestic violence against women in Nigeria (Abdullahi et al., 2017). Researchers who explored the influence of divorce in Nigeria have identified both positive and negative influences of divorce on the development of the child, family, and society (Adegboyega, 2019; Akindele et al., 2017; Nurmi, 2015; Oehme et al., 2016). There is a gap in the literature concerning Nigerian early childhood educators' perspectives on the influence of parental divorce on the academic achievement of children between the ages of 6 and 9.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore Nigerian early childhood educators' perspectives on the influence of parental divorce on children's academic achievement and strategies or suggestions useful when working with children affected by divorce. In Africa, it was previously common for couples to remain married until the death of a spouse. Divorce is far more common now in places like Nigeria, where two-thirds of marriages end in divorce (Abdullahi et al., 2017; Ekpenyong & Ingiabuna, 2017). In Nigeria, as of 2016, approximately 35% to 50% of children under the age of 18 had experienced parental separation and were living in single-parent homes (Offiong & Gberevbie, 2018). There is a lack of information in the current literature on the perspectives of educators concerning the influence of divorce on children's academic achievement.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided this study:

RQ1: What are Nigerian early childhood educators' perspectives on the influence of divorce on children's academic achievement?

RQ2: What strategies or suggestions have Nigerian early childhood educators found useful when working with children affected by divorce?

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework for this basic qualitative study consisted of three different theories: Bowen's (1960) family systems theory, Piaget's (1969) theory of

cognitive development, and Vygotsky's (1978) theory of social constructivism. In the family systems theory, Bowen examined the family as a whole emotional unit and used systems thinking to describe the multifaceted collaborations within the family unit (Bowen, 1960; Bridge, 2019; Yasnitsky, 2018). A central supposition of family systems theory is that the emotional system can direct human relationships. Irrespective of the fact that humans have a thinking brain, complex psychology, and vibrant culture, they still carry out the same everyday activities as other forms of life (Bowen, 1960, 1978). Keller (2019) asserted that Bowen identified eight different stages of emotional systems within the family, which also provide current and effective alternatives for solving basic problems. These stages include: *triangles*, referred to as the smallest stable relationship systems; *differentiation of self*, which is the inconsistency in an individual based on their receptiveness, and which depends on others for approval and acceptance; *nuclear family emotional system*, which contains the four defined relationship patterns in the family where a problem may develop (matrimonial disagreement, dysfunction in one's spouse, impairment and emotional distance among children); *family projection process*, which is the process of transmitting problems from parent to child; *multigenerational transmission process*, which is the transmission between parents and children at small levels of differentiation; *emotional cut-off*, which is the reducing of emotional contact as a mechanism for handling unresolved emotional issues; *sibling position*, which is the implication of sibling position on development; and *societal emotional process*, in which the emotional system dictates behavior on a societal scale and enhances both regressive

and progressive phases in the society (Keller, 2019). Family systems theory provides a framework through which to explain human behavior theory, which describes the family as an emotional entity. Through a systems approach, adherents to this theory explain complex interactions that occur within the family unit (Keller, 2019).

Piaget's theory of cognitive development proposes that children actively construct their understanding of the world by going through four stages of cognitive development (Piaget, 1969, 1997). Piaget developed and explained concepts (such as schemas) by which humans naturally strive to acquire experiences that fit into already existing knowledge. Adaptation is the process of adjusting schemas and experiences with one another to maintain a state of equilibrium. Equilibration is the drive and process of assimilating and accommodating together to promote cognitive development in an individual. Piaget's theory related to this research study as it involved informing educators' teaching practices.

This theory also relates to teaching children and their learning processes. Learning allows children to handle unexpected experiences, such as parental divorce. According to cognitive development theories, children understand their world by going through four stages of cognitive development. For example, Piaget suggested that children's ability to adapt to the world is a function of their ability to interact with the environment through assimilation and accommodation. Kazi and Galanaki (2019) supported the four levels of development that Piaget identified as *sensory-motor* (infancy); *pre-operational* (preschool); *concrete* (childhood); and *formal operational* (adolescence). Each stage is

characterized by the development of cognitive structures that support thinking skills. According to Piaget, these different stages represent the child's understanding of reality during each period of learning.

Vygotsky (1978) was a psychologist who developed a sociocultural theory on children's development—social constructivism theory. He designed this theory to understand the influence of culture on the growth and development of children (Amineh & Asl, 2015). Vygotsky's central focus was developmental psychology, through which he put forward a theory on children's academic achievement, developed through practical actions in a social environment (Yasnitsky, 2018). Vygotsky argued that social interaction was essential to children's academic achievement. Vygotsky explained children's cognitive development process through their use of symbols, signs, language, and cultural practices. This theory was related to my study, as the cognitive development process in children is one of the primary reasons for the importance of education in the early years. During this period of early childhood, the child's brain undergoes enormous growth as neural connections form, providing the foundations for skills such as language, reasoning, problem solving, and social skills (Akinrotimi & Olowe, 2016).

These three theories informed my study in three distinct ways. First, the family systems theory enabled me to construct and develop new knowledge about the Nigerian family structure. Second, cognitive theory allowed me to use new information from previous studies on the teaching and learning process of children who have experienced divorce in their family. Third, constructivism enabled me to frame, develop, and



construct new knowledge regarding educators' perspectives meaningfully. I used these theories in the exploration of Nigerian early childhood educators' perspectives on the influence of divorce on children's academic achievement performance. These theories also allowed me to develop interview questions relevant to this study and to create a detailed explanation of the conceptual framework (see Chapter 2).

### **Nature of the Study**

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore Nigerian early childhood educators' perspectives on the influence of parental divorce on children's academic achievement and to determine the strategies or suggestions they find useful when working with children affected by divorce. Basic qualitative methods help researchers to answer questions about a study and gather detailed information about the phenomenon under investigation (Lincoln, 2017). Basic qualitative research is rich in context because researchers can easily collect data from different sources (Andrews, 2019). Of the various qualitative approaches, I determined that the basic qualitative study was most appropriate for this study because it enabled me to uncover the practice, strategies, and techniques of participants' experiences. This is in alignment with my study's purpose of exploring Nigerian early childhood educators' perspectives, strategies, or suggestions on helping children influenced by parental divorce with their academic achievement (Morse, 2015; Murphy, 2017; Nutov, 2019).

The research population consists of early childhood educators who have worked with at least five children of parental divorce, have been educators for 5 years or more,

and are living within the research study location. These educators are in the best position to express their perspectives on how divorce affects children's academic achievement. I used the state government educators' Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS) to identify the study population with the help of the schools' administrators. The IPPIS is a platform that is payroll centralized by the federal or state government. It assists the government in planning and managing the payroll budget and ensuring that there is no loophole in the disbursement of salary payments to employed staff. Because the IPPIS data is confidential, I could not find it on the internet. However, I obtained access to the system from the research state's Ministry of Education Board, which granted me permission to obtain information as a PhD student carrying out a research study.

I used a purposive sampling technique for the study. Researchers use a purposive sampling technique to gather participants who represent a broad and full range of perspectives with similar criteria (Andrews, 2019). Researchers also use the purposive sampling technique to include only individual participants who meet specific research criteria (Van Rijnsoever, 2017; Wicks, 2017; Yüksel & Yıldırım, 2015). Using the purposive sampling technique, I identified and contacted 12 participants. I executed the data collection process through phone calls and semistructured interviews.

### **Definitions**

*Academic achievement.* The cognitive achievement of children in school is based on their grades and teacher assessments (Adebusuyi, 2018; Woldehanna et al., 2017).

*Cognitive development.* Woldehanna et al. (2017) described cognitive development as the assembling of thought processes, which includes problem-solving, memorization, and decision-making from the childhood stage through adolescence and adulthood.

*Early childhood.* A period of life that involves the peak of growth and development of the child socially, emotionally, physically, and intellectually. At this stage of life, individuals can easily manipulate children in their environment (James & Prout, 2015; Vondracek et al., 2019). This stage includes children from 6 to 9 years old.

*Influence of marital divorce.* The consequences (i.e., the positive or negative effects) that result from the separation of couples (Akindele et al., 2017).

### **Assumptions**

In conducting this research study, I made the assumption that the educators working with children from divorced families in Nigeria were honest and cooperative in responding to the questions in the interview process. I also assumed that educators would share their true thoughts on the topic and their experiences working with these children. Because the educators were willing to share their honest and truthful views, I received rich data for analysis, synthesis, and reporting. Another assumption was that all educators recruited lived in the community where the research took place. Finally, I assumed that the research method and the research design were adequate for obtaining educators' perspectives on each interview question (see Levitt et al., 2018; Palinkas et al., 2019).

### **Scope and Delimitations**

The specific scope I addressed in this study was Nigerian early childhood educators' perspectives on the influence of divorce on children's academic achievement. I delimited this study to three schools in the research state. I used the following inclusion criteria to select participants: educators must have worked with five or more children of divorced parents, participants must have lived in and were indigenes of Nigeria, participants must be able to speak English, and, participants must have had over five years of teaching experience. This study included 12 participants.

I excluded educators who did not teach children between the ages of 6 and 9 years. The exclusion criteria did not permit educators in higher-grade classes to participate in the study because it focused only on early childhood educators who taught children 6 to 9 years old. Because this study included a small sample size, I was careful not to make sweeping generalizations (see Archibald, 2016; Bansal et al., 2018; Levitt et al., 2018; Van Rijnsouwer, 2017). In this study, I addressed the transferability of the results by establishing that the evidence from the findings may apply to other populations, times, situations, and contexts (see Amankwaa, 2016).

### **Limitations**

The primary limitations in this study were based on the fact that I conducted the study in a remote research state in Nigeria. However, I evaluated limitations and bias, so they did not affect the data that I collected (Greener, 2018; Pifer & Baker, 2016). My method and research design may have been a limitation because I used a basic qualitative

method, which is not a common way of researching in Nigeria; quantitative approaches are more common in that setting. The amount of time I had to collect, analyze, and interpret the data may have further limited the study. To mitigate these issues, I began the interviews immediately following Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. Another limitation of this study was the inability to transfer the results to a more populated area of Nigeria (see Flick, 2018).

My sample size may have been too small to draw significant conclusions. To address this limitation, I met the number of participants needed to achieve saturation of the data (see Rochelle et al., 2018). Due to my small sample size, I took care to avoid sweeping generalizations and emphasized that I derived the data from a sample of 12 participants (see Van Rijnsoever, 2017). The length of the study and the response rate from participants was another factor to consider. To remain concise, I used a clear interview protocol guide, and kept the length of interviews between 45 and 60 minutes (see King et al., 2018).

The personal feelings, emotions, and relationships within divorced families may have biased participants' responses (Garriga & Martn ez-Lucena, 2018). Participants' levels of understanding and recollections of events, situations, and feelings may have been questionable (Greener, 2018). As the researcher and the interviewer, I remained unbiased and shielded the participants from my opinions. I kept a reflexive journal to record data collected and avoid bias.

### **Significance**

This study was significant because it addressed a gap in the literature concerning Nigerian early childhood educators' perspectives on the influence of divorce on children's academic achievement. Although several studies have been carried out in Nigeria to define the effects of divorce, no researchers have examined Nigerian early childhood educators' perspectives on the influence of parental divorce on the academic achievement of children from 6 to 9 years old (Anyebe et al., 2017; Olaitan, 2018). The current study's findings may provide educational stakeholders with information to explore diverse approaches to support children who are experiencing academic challenges resulting from divorce (see Fleming, 2019). This study is also significant to families, the state, and the government in understanding the influence of divorce on children's academic achievement. One potential positive social implication for this study may be an increased awareness of the influence of divorce on children's academic achievements and to provide strategies or suggestions useful when working with children influenced by divorce.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, I introduced the research background, problem statement, purpose of the study, and two research questions. I also explained the conceptual framework comprising Bowen's (1960) family systems theory, Piaget's (1969) theory of cognitive development, and Vygotsky's (1978) theory of social constructivism that guided the study. This chapter also included the nature of the study, definitions, assumptions, scope,

delimitations, limitations that may affect the study findings, and an explanation of the significance of the study to social change. In Chapter 2, I provide a comprehensive review of existing literature, and discuss the literature search strategy and conceptual framework.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this chapter, I explored the current literature related to my research focus on Nigerian early childhood educators' perspectives on the influence of divorce on children's academic achievement. This basic qualitative study focused on children from 6 to 9 years old. Several studies in Nigeria have included an investigation of the influence of divorce on children's academic achievement (Anyebe et al., 2017; Ekpenyong & Ingiabuna, 2017; Endurance & Nkechi, 2017; Olaitan, 2018; Pinguart & Kauser, 2018). However, there is a lack of information on educators' perspectives on the influence of parental divorce on the academic achievement of children from the ages of 6 to 9.

Chapter 2 includes a review of literature regarding the influence of divorce on children's academic achievements. I outline the search strategies used to conduct the literature review and explained the conceptual framework employed in this study. I also identify the following themes as central to my research topic: (a) belief systems influencing attitudes towards marital divorce, (b) child guardianship during divorce (c) positive and negative effects of divorce, (d) divorce and child deprivation, (e) children's post-divorce support, (f) children's academic achievement concerns, and (g) educators' cultural perspectives.

### **Literature Search Strategy**

There are many current research studies on divorce and its influence on the academic achievement of children around the world, but very few have focused on Nigeria. While various researchers have conducted studies both in Nigeria and in other



African nations to determine the influence of divorce on children's academic achievement, they have not addressed educators' perspectives (Familusi, 2019; Pinquart & Kauser, 2018). In this chapter, I provide a concise historical overview of the previous studies on parental divorce and its influence on children's academic achievements in Nigeria.

I consulted the following databases to conduct an extensive search of the literature: Walden University Library, Google Scholar, ProQuest Medline, SAGE, Medscape, Academic Search Complete, EBSCO, Child Stats, CQ Researcher, DOAJ, Academic ASAP, ERIC, Education Source, Kaiser, NAMI, eZOIC, Project MUSE, PsycArticles, SocINDEX, Taylor and Francis Online, ERIC, Research Gate, Crossref, and Teacher Reference. I used the search engines listed above to find current, peer-reviewed literature on divorce, educators' perspectives, and their opinions on the effects of divorce on children. The key terms I used in the literature search included *divorce*, *history of divorce*, *causes of divorce*, *effects of divorce*, *child/children development*, *academic achievement*, *deprivation*, *post-divorce adjustment*, and *Nigeria*.

## **Conceptual Framework**

### **Family Systems Theory**

One of the theories I used in this study was Bowen's family systems theory and its interconnected ideas on human behavior. The application of family systems theory is in connection to general systems theory, which sees the family as a whole or unit (Bowen, 1960). Family systems theory explains how families relate and interpret their problems, culture, beliefs, economy, and religion. A central supposition of the theory is

that it involves the evolution of human relationships over billions of years, irrespective of the fact that humans have a thinking brain, many diverse languages, complex psychology, and vibrant culture (Bowen, 1978). The emotional system affects a majority of human activities, which is the major driving force in the development of children (Bowen, 1960, 1978; Keller, 2019).

Bowen asserted that there are eight components of system functions in the family. Bowen provided alternatives for solving some basic problems, such as (a) triangles, (b) differentiation of self, (c) nuclear family emotional system, (d) family projection process, (e) multigenerational transmission process, (f) emotional cut-off, (g) sibling position, and (h) societal emotional process (Bowen, 1960, 1978; Keller, 2019). Bowen uses the term triangles to refer to the smallest stable relationship system. Triangles lead to the development of quantifiable problems when various sides of a conflict come to an agreement. Differentiation of self refers to the inconsistency in an individual based on their receptiveness and their dependence on others for approval and acceptance. The nuclear family emotional system contains the four defined relationship patterns in the family in which a problem may develop: matrimonial disagreement, dysfunction with one's spouse, children's impairment, and emotional distance. Family projection process is the transmission of problems from parent to child. Multigenerational transmission process is the transmission between parents and children at small levels of differentiation. Emotional cut-off involves reducing emotional contact as a mechanism for handling unresolved emotional issues. Sibling position addresses the implication of sibling

position on development. Societal emotional process dictates behavior on a societal scale and enhances both regressive and progressive phases in the society (Keller, 2019).

Researchers can use the family systems theory to explain how humans react and behave in relation to certain issues in life (Bowen, 1960). This family systems theory applies a systems approach to explaining complex interactions (Mohammadi et al., 2019). Family members typically seek support, approval, and attention from one another and respond to each other's needs, pain, and endeavors (Keller, 2019). The reactivity and connectedness of family members can affect how interdependency functions within the family. Bowen insisted that individuals cannot be understood in isolation and posited that because a family is a system of interdependent and interconnected persons it must be studied as such (Bowen, 1960, 1978; Keller, 2019; Thompson et al., 2019).

Family systems theorists focused mainly on marital conflicts, divorce, and the manner in which the family raises their children (Bowen, 1960, 1978; Keller, 2019). The family systems theory holds that the absence of one family member may affect the entire family system (Jahanbakhshian et al., 2019). Worry can increase the processes that support harmony and teamwork within the family, leading to anxiety that may escalate and spread among its members (Mohammadi et al., 2019). The extended family can be in disarray due to stress from divorce. As anxiety increases, the emotional connectedness between family members becomes more stressed and strained; this can eventually lead to a member of the family feeling isolated, overwhelmed, or out of control (Keller, 2019; Noone, 2019). These changes in individual family members can lead to crisis or divorce,

which creates a change in the established family structure and behavior (Keller, 2019; Mohammadi et al., 2019). The resulting rearrangement is based on a family's response to the stressor, which may weaken the existing family paradigm (Bronner et al., 2019; Keller, 2019). Family systems theorists advise encouraging positive changes in the collective family paradigm. This can gradually lead to a new sense of family as they struggle through crisis of divorce (Thompson et al., 2019). The family system can suffer from resentment and a sense of the burden caused by the divorce (Thompson et al., 2019).

Bowen's family systems theory is invaluable in guiding the understanding in the variations between individuals and families as they manage stressful circumstances, such as divorce (Bridge, 2019; Noone, 2019). One of the fundamental concerns in family systems theory is the perception of the closeness or distance created during or after crises in the family. If an individual cannot critically evaluate a relationship dilemma but rather reacts anxiously to perceived emotional demands, a state of chronic anxiety may result. This disturbed state can affect the academic achievement of the children (Taylor et al., 2019). This theory holds that divorce affects children, which aided me in the development of my interview questions.

### **Theory of Cognitive Development**

The second theory used to develop the foundation of my study was Piaget's theory of cognitive development, in which children actively construct their understanding of the world by going through four stages of cognitive development. The four stages are (a) sensory-motor (infancy), (b) pre-operational (preschool), (c) concrete (childhood), and

(d) formal operational (adolescence). Each stage is characterized by the development of cognitive structures that support the developing child's thinking skills and abilities. These different stages represent the child's understanding of reality during that period (Piaget, 1969, 1997). Children experience and interpret the world differently depending upon the stage they are in (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969). Children can actively construct their understanding of the world around them because they see language as secondary to accomplishment, meaning thinking precedes expression (Piaget, 1997; Vondracek et al., 2019; Xu, 2019). Piaget developed and adapted various concepts, such as schemas, adaptation, assimilation, accommodation, and equilibration in the teaching and learning process (Piaget, 1969).

Piaget (1997) asserted that humans naturally strive to acquire experiences that they can organize to fit into already existing knowledge. Piaget called these schemas. According to Piaget, a schema is a mental pattern or system that prescribes the way that people think about the world. As individuals acquire experiences, the existing schema often becomes inadequate, and at this point, the individual must adapt effectively. Adaptation in this regard is the process of adjusting a schema and experiences with one another to maintain a state of equilibrium. Adaptation consists of two reciprocal processes: accommodation and assimilation. Accommodation is a form of adaptation in which an existing schema is modified in response to a new experience. Assimilation is a form of adaptation in which an experience in the environment is incorporated into an already existing schema. Assimilation and accommodation are vital for the maintenance

of equilibrium. If knowledge is assimilated into an existing schema without adaptation, growth does not occur. On the other hand, if a current schema does not align with one's experience, a person will be in a constant state of disequilibrium, which can be related to cultural shock or an uneasy feeling that people have when they visit a new country or environment and must quickly adjust to different customs, foods, and language.

The processes of assimilation, accommodation, and the drive for equilibrium combine to promote cognitive development in an individual (Piaget, 1969, 1997). In this process, a child's ability to cope with the mathematical world expands, and development occurs. Piaget was one of the first theorists to study children using a framework that differed from that used to understand adults. Previously, researchers regarded and evaluated children as mini-adults; there was little recognition of their unique cognitive functioning (Kazi & Galanaki, 2019). Piaget's theory suggested that development is a combination of learning, experience, and motivation (Veldman et al., 2019).

Piaget's theory of cognitive development has played a significant role in directing the course of modern teaching and learning processes, such as counting and memorizing in early childhood (Walczak, 2019). Hanfstingl et al. (2019) asserted that people need order, structure, and predictability in their lives, what Piaget called the drive for equilibrium or a state of balance in the child's academic achievement (Piaget, 1969, 1997). It is incumbent upon parents, educators, and society to provide children with worthwhile experiences (Houdé, 2019; Vondracek et al., 2019; Walczak, 2019; Xu, 2019).

The implication of Piaget's theory to this study was that children can show their intelligence and abilities through learning, thinking, concept formation, and problem-solving (Piaget, 1997). Piaget also saw the environment as an essential influence on the biological, cognitive potentials, or maturational readiness of the children. Children are engaged in daily activities that aid in developing the senses of seeing, hearing, feeling, touching, and moving, which educational opportunities can enhance (Piaget, 1997; Vondracek et al., 2019). Educators have used Piaget's theory to inform their teaching practice by working to make a child's experience fit their cognitive frameworks and helping to adapt their schemas (Themane & Thobejane, 2019). Kazi and Galanaki (2019) used Piaget's theory to show that children learn best when they are active and seeking solutions for themselves. This is achievable by promoting a teaching style that engages and involves children in various activities. Early childhood educators can apply these theories by giving children the skills and opportunities they need to make discoveries and find solutions to issues in their home and surrounding environments (Kazi & Galanaki, 2019; Piaget, 1997).

It is the responsibility of educators and school systems to help all children develop their cognitive abilities, especially children from divorced homes (Paes et al., 2019). Educators allow children considerable control over their learning experiences through handling of materials and development of academic skills (Paes et al., 2019). These experiences are essential for a child's intellectual growth, security, affection, academic achievement, and emotional satisfaction. Educators strive to achieve well-

rounded cognitive, affective, and psycho-motor/psycho-social development in children (Stone, 2019; Vondracek et al., 2019; Woldehanna et al., 2017).

In teaching and learning processes, educators exposed children to a wide variety of social activities. Loss of social and cognitive development may negatively impact a child's growth, development, and acquisition of knowledge (Colen & Pereira, 2019; Jackson & Fife, 2018). Researchers showed that children's affinity to and love for parents develops as a result of regular social and cognitive development activities, along with a positive home environment (Adegboyega, 2019; Ajanthan, 2019; Leung & Shek, 2019). Piaget's theory suggests that development is the combination of learning, experience, and motivation; educators should not rush the learning process. Instead, educators should pose questions appropriate to a child's cognitive level during the teaching and learning process (Veldman et al., 2019). Children are stimulated by experiences that are well-suited to their level of development (Piaget, 1997).

Educational stakeholders must standardize learning, while taking into consideration the developmental characteristic of learners (Depeau & Pol, 2019; Devi, 2019). The central focus in Piaget's work is the activity that takes place in early childhood education, aimed at boosting changes in children's social development and academic achievement (Kazi et al., 2019).

### **Theory of Social Constructivism**

The final theory I employed in my study was Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism. Vygotsky's central focus was developmental psychology and children's academic achievement, developed through practical actions in a social environment



(Keiler, 2018). Vygotsky's (1978) theory of social constructivism proposed that the development of reasoning and learning depend on language, cultural practices, and cognitive processes (Stetsenko, 2016). Vygotsky focused on why learning progresses and in what conditions (Stetsenko, 2016). Using this framework, he developed a theory on children's academic achievement through practical actions in a social environment (Amineh & Asl, 2015; Keiler, 2018).

Vygotsky argued that social interaction is a basic requirement for children's academic achievement (Stetsenko, 2016; Van der Veer & Yasnitsky, 2016). According to Vygotsky (1978), a child's educational development is a twofold process comprising the social level and the individual level. A child's educational development relates to their increased understanding of various concepts (Shabani, 2016). Vygotsky is known for his concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which emphasizes the importance of language in learning that occurs in activity-oriented social situations (Dafermos, 2018). Vygotsky explained that children learn in a social context in collaboration with a skillful individual or more knowledgeable peer (Karpov, 2017). This aspect of social interaction provides children an opportunity to develop language and enhance academic achievement (Karpov, 2017). Vygotsky's ZPD purports that children move from the known to unknown or simple to complex through achievable steps, rather than huge steps or strides that might prove frustrating (Van der Veer & Yasnitsky, 2016).

Another characteristic of Vygotsky's principle is that the impression of potential intellectual development relies upon the ZPD, a stage of improvement reached when

children learn in social constructs (Dafermos, 2018). Vygotsky's ZPD theory explains socialization as a beginning and product of development. The increase of a child's ZPD hinges on social communication and independent performance within the social aspects of learning (Karpov, 2017). In developing the ZPD, Vygotsky showed that educators use scaffolding strategies to help an individual learner progress, including hints, prompts, questions, cues, and make-believe. By introducing these teaching strategies, educators can support the learner while they are mastering a new concept or skill (Marginson & Dang, 2017; Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky believed that speech becomes a means of thinking through a child's social communication, (Daniels, 2014; Saxena et al., 2020). Thus, awareness is the product of socialization (Gilbert, 2019). Psychological occurrences emerge from social interactions, while cognitive domains are based on the knowledge an educator imparts upon a child (Conte et al., 2018).

Vygotsky's theory applies to my study in that it outlines the critical and central role of the educator: to guide the child towards experiencing the different stages of learning, such as mastery and both conscious and unconscious incompetence (Clarà, 2017; Vygotsky, 1978). Yasnitsky (2018) explained relationships between individuals and explored their sociocultural context as they relate in collective involvements. Yasnitsky asserted that people use tools (such as communication and writing) to mediate their social environments. Early childhood care and education involves the social interactions among educators, learners, school environments, and the surrounding communities (Grant & Ray, 2018). Positive interactions between the educator and the

child help in the child's overall development. The ZPD is the period during which educators guide children through various academic issues (Marginson & Dang, 2017).

Based on the social setting of an early childhood learning environment, the school serves as a basis for a child's proper development. During the ZPD period, children need help accomplishing academic tasks and developing their academic learning (Daniels, 2014). Parental divorce can affect this development (Adebusuyi, 2018). Based on this theory, some researchers have asserted that parents must stay together in order to ensure the proper growth and development of their children's social, moral, physical, and cognitive abilities (Kazi et al., 2019; Oehme et al., 2016). Vygotsky's theory helped provide me with greater insight into my basic qualitative study which explores educators' perspectives on the influence of parental divorce on the academic achievement of children between the ages of 6 and 9.

### **Literature Review Related to Key Variables and Concepts**

#### **Marriage and Divorce Belief System**

Marriage in Africa has various institutional backgrounds, ranging from specific belief systems to the social norms of the culture. Some perceive marriage as a voluntary union between husband and wife, while others see it as a revered institution or a legal relationship (Reynoso, 2018; Uddin, 2015). In most societies, monogamous marriage is the union between one man and one woman. This is a legal form of marriage in most parts of Africa (Stevenson et al., 2018; Sunday & Amah, 2017). Polygamy is the union between a man and multiple spouses or partners. This form of marriage is acceptable in Nigeria, where women are viewed as an exhibition of wealth; men who abuse their wives

often take advantage of this type of marriage, which increases the rate of divorce (Lazarus et al., 2017; Sunday & Amah, 2017). Other forms of marriage include polyandry—which is the union between a woman and two or more husbands—and arranged marriage, where an individual marries a woman or man of another person's choosing (Lazarus et al., 2017).

Asonibare and Wuraola (2018) asserted that Nigeria offers various avenues through which a married couple can divorce: through the judgment of a court and competent jurisdiction; through the refund of the endowments; or, through a customary process prescribed by the couple's respective culture. Researchers have discussed how parents' marital issues affect the children's academic achievements, arguing that children's academic achievements depend on the joy, pleasure, peace, and happiness derived from positive home and school environments (Mahony et al., 2015; Uddin, 2015; Wayne, 2020; Worugji et al., 2019; Yaw, 2016). In this literature review I examined how the family systems theory applies to examination of divorce. The findings from the literature review strengthened the case for my research study, by confirming the influence of parental divorce on children's academic achievements.

### **Attitudes Towards Marital Divorce**

Couples' negative attitudes towards each other in marriage can lead to divorce (Worugji et al., 2019). Societal attitudes towards the couples who divorce can affect their eventual reunion in marriage (Shimkowski et al., 2018). Researchers have attributed divorce to several factors (Kravdal & Grundy, 2019; Obarisiagbon, 2016; Poortman, 2018). In Nigeria, the husband is the provider for the family and the wife is the supporter.

The man is the financial supporter while the woman is responsible for childcare. Most women seek marriage that can guarantee their security and emotional support (Collardeau & Ehrenberg, 2018; Sunday & Amah, 2017). Expectations and demands in marriage include loyalty, truthfulness, accepting responsibilities, and emotional security (Demir-Dagdas et al., 2018; Majoko, 2019). A marriage lacking these attributes is likely to end in divorce (Majoko, 2019). Additional causes of divorce include interference from a third party, financial conflict, sexual conflicts, lack of intimacy, psychological separation, lack of mutual understanding, role conflict, and lack of adequate communication (Obarisiagbon, 2016; Shimkowski et al., 2018; Sunday & Amah, 2017).

Divorce is stressful to the couple involved, their children, and the extended family (Noone, 2019). Based on my review of literature on the effects of parental divorce, I have determined that the family systems theory's explanation of the family as an emotional unit that uses systems thinking in multifaceted collaborations is in alignment with these findings. Parental attitudes have significant effects on children's growth, development, and academic achievement (Saxena et al., 2020).

### **Child Guardianship in Divorce**

Crouch and Dickes (2016) explained that marriages that ended by divorce or dissolution involved the termination of individual responsibility arising from the union. Divorce has significant implications for the children involved (Revis, 2019). It is important to examine aspects of child custody and how divorce can affect a child's growth and development (Bastaitis & Pasteels, 2019). Researchers see child custody as the legal right to care for, control, maintain, manage, supervise, and support a child under

one's protection (Steinbach, 2018; Turunen, 2017). Court jurisdiction over divorce proceedings involves authority concerning custody, protection, guardianship, provision, support, advancement, education, and maintenance in Nigeria (Nielsen, 2018; Offiong & Gberevbie, 2018). Child custody is dependent on several factors: the child's age and if there are any unique situations which demand consistent or urgent attention, such as ill-health and or disability (Bastaitis & Pasteels, 2019; Nielsen, 2018).

The rights of the child are often ignored in marital issues; rather, issues such as the child's age, separation of siblings, culture, or religion are considered paramount (Crouch & Dickes, 2016; Revis, 2019). Regarding the custody and upbringing of any minor, the mother and father are allowed the same rights and authority. For some divorced couples, the courts will decide who has control over the children (Steinbach, 2018; Trivedi & Bose, 2018; Turunen, 2017). The review of literature on the effects of parental divorce justifies the use of social constructivism development theory in this study. This socio-cultural theory on children's development helped me explain the influence of culture on the growth and development of children (Amineh & Asl, 2015). The findings from this literature review also suggested that parents' custodial rights are an important aspect of children's growth, development, and academic achievement.

### **Positive and Negative Effects of Divorce**

Researchers have shown an enduring and significant adverse effect of divorce on children (Andrew & Segun, 2019; Beley et al., 2018; Morrison et al., 2017). One of the adverse effects of divorce is a child's lowered self-esteem (Beley et al., 2018). Research in Tonga and Zimbabwe has shown that some children with high academic achievement

levels became low academic achievers after their parents' divorce (Latu, 2018; Mahony et al., 2015; Majoko, 2019). Olaitan (2018) asserted that divorce results in a change of behavior in some children. For example, children may begin to isolate themselves, display signs of stress, and become depressed (Andrew & Segun, 2019; Beley et al., 2018).

Although researchers have not sufficiently examined Nigerian early childhood educators' perspectives on the effects of divorce on children's academic achievement, many studies have revealed that children from homes with divorced parents frequently exhibit higher levels of nervousness than children from intact homes (Endurance & Nkechi, 2017; Haimi & Lerner, 2016). Adebusuyi (2018) asserted that children who experience parental divorce often experience academic difficulty as a result of problems faced at home. Adebusuyi (2018) also argued that children with low academic achievement from divorced homes sometimes display antisocial behavior by rejecting school events, staying away from peers, and failing to develop close relationships. They may also experience anxiety and difficulty in relating to their parents, leading to aggressive behavior as a result of conflicts in the home (Adebusuyi, 2018). Depending upon the home situation prior to a divorce, the influence of divorce on couples and their children can be stressful (Moschion & Van Ours, 2019; Umar, 2019). Haimi and Lerner (2016) observed that some children of divorced parents feel rejected and abandoned. Similarly, Turunen (2017) asserted that constant emotional pressures on children disturb their ability to learn, stipulating that divorce leads to emotional conflicts in learners.

Turunen also stated that emotional conflict causes difficulty in childhood and may hinder achievement and personality integration throughout life.

In a study of emotional deprivation, Oniye et al. (2018) showed that marital breakdown erodes parental care, warmth, and affection, leading children to revolt against parents, and to waywardness, truancy, aggressiveness, and delinquency (Kravdal & Grundy, 2019). Sands et al. (2017) addressed behavioral disorders in children such as pilfering, absenteeism, aggressiveness, lack of discipline, stubbornness, and lack of love for others as a result of parental divorce. In most cases, these disorders are seen in children who are unhappy with themselves and their school or home environment (Feldhaus & Heintz-Martin, 2015; Sands et al., 2017). Many of the children displaying these behavioral issues came from homes where parental relationships were damaged (Dinner, 2016; Moschion & Van Ours, 2019).

These children may eventually become unaware of how they treat others and unable to evaluate what others think of them (Austin, 2018). Oniye et al. suggested that these emotions become deeply ingrained in the personal life and developmental growth of the child, as a reaction to circumstances over which the child has no control. Latu (2018) revealed that separation and divorce often result in disjointed lives for the children involved and may negatively affect their academic performance. Mahony et al. (2015) asserted that within the home, parents function as educators, and the home itself can be seen as an educational institution. Sands et al. (2017) showed that children of divorced



parents, no matter how amicable the divorce was, may harbor strong feelings of unhappiness, anger, and rejection.

Forde (2018) posited that, in Nigeria, many delinquent children today are the products of broken homes. Basil and Ndijuye (2019) affirmed that monitoring the activity of children is an indispensable tool in the upbringing of a child, especially in situations involving divorce where the child may lack affection. The parents, stepparents, and related caregivers are responsible for managing children's coping behavior and emotional encouragement (Beley et al., 2018; Magnuson & Schindler, 2019; Sanner et al., 2018). Divorce statistics showed that children who lack parental direction submit readily to the persuasive force of peer groups (Morrison et al., 2017). The statistics also showed that adolescents affected by divorce are more likely to begin smoking (Barry & Harris, 2019; Briggs, 2018).

Researchers and educators have disagreed about the side effects of divorce on children. They have argued the extent to which parental divorce has an influence on the academic performance of children (Stone, 2019; Umar, 2019). This literature review on the effects of parental divorce supports my decision to use of family systems theory, as it deals with issues within the family unit. The findings from this review also strengthened my understanding of the phenomenon under investigation, as divorce can affect children's academic achievement positively or negatively.

### **Parental Divorce and Child Deprivation**

Basic parental care ensures the mental, social, and physical development of the child (D'Onofrio & Emery, 2019; Gadsden et al., 2016). Children experience warmth

through a continuous relationship with their biological mother or father, finding enjoyment and satisfaction through this relationship (Olaitan, 2018). In the absence of a close relationship with at least one of their biological parents, children may experience a negative influence on overall development resulting in delinquency, intellectual deterioration, despair, aggression, and affectionless psychopathy (Bernet et al., 2016). Other scholars identified these anomalies, emphasizing that the lack of a father's or a mother's care and affection in a child's youth can lead to children revolting against parents, waywardness, truancy, aggressiveness, and delinquency (Mustapha & Odediran, 2019).

Maternal deprivation occurs when a child receives inadequate care and interaction from the mother or permanent substitute mother (Kim & Kochanska, 2015). Parental deprivation of children causes adverse effects on academic performance; thus, there is a direct relationship between divorce and academic performance (Adebusuyi, 2018). Similarly, Anyebe et al. (2017) and Rodríguez-Ruíz et al. (2019) found that deterioration in parent-child relationships often occurs in the first or second year following the divorce. Continuous misunderstanding between couples and irresponsible parenting can be influential factors in the way children adapt to their changing environment (Al Gharaibeh, 2015). Anyebe et al. (2017) further suggested that consistency is the key to helping children adapt to psychological traumas from divorce. Through my research, I sought to attain an understanding of such consistency, and I strived to identify the

perspectives of educators on the effect of divorce on children's overall development—specifically their emotional and academic growth.

Chamboko et al. (2017) and Popoola and Adeoti (2016) agreed that children are generally more attached to their mothers than to their fathers. The children in their studies suffered more severe depression and anxiety when separated from mothers than from fathers. The maternal deprivation hypothesis helps affirm the significant relationship between disruption of the attachment between child and mother and long-term cognitive, social, and emotional difficulty for the child (Siddiqui et al., 2019; Taubner, 2020). Maternal deprivation causes experiences and interpersonal relationships affect children's psychological development. Therefore, the formation of an appropriate, ongoing relationship with a child is a critical aspect of parenting (Chamboko et al., 2017).

Divorce has led to socio-cultural variation in the current Nigerian family structure (Nwocha, 2016). The increase in alternative family structures can deeply affect children, due to the absence of one or both parents following divorce (Steinbach, 2018). Emmott and Mace (2018) and Opondo et al. (2017) revealed that a father's absence adversely affects a male child's sex-role development, which can impair interactions within peer groups. Conversely, Opondo et al. (2017) and Basil and Ndiujye (2019) found a positive relationship between the parent-child relationship and social interaction for both girls and boys. Parents' ability to take care of their children is essential for childhood social, mental, and emotional development (Trivedi & Bose, 2018). Attentive parental care provides a solid foundation for healthy growth and behavioral development in life

(Chamboko et al., 2017). Various research studies have emphasized a need for both parents and extended families to cater to the children in order to promote healthy behavior in life (Chamboko et al., 2017; Trivedi & Bose, 2018).

### **Children Post-Divorce Support**

Educators, caregivers, and principals are in unique positions to detect changes in their students after their parents' divorce (Gadsden et al., 2016; Magnuson & Schindler, 2019; Poortman, 2018). Significant determinants of healthy adjustments after divorce include minimal parental conflicts, access to both parents, and proper custody arrangement (Bastaitis & Pasteels, 2019; Bello et al., 2017; Campbell, et al., 2016). Children from a divorced home with a father or mother who assists with academic work and provides emotional support show less deviant behavior and improved academic achievement (Russell et al., 2016).

Olaitan (2018) asserted that guidance services can improve academic performance for children of divorced parents. The educator should be fair and honest in all dealings with the students in school. In cases where poor academic performance is a result of divorce, the teacher should refer the child to a guidance counselor (Rauh et al., 2016). The counselor should make valuable contributions, provide solutions to the identified problems, and support follow-up-activities with the educators. These strategies help children avoid repressed feelings of inferiority and other emotions resulting from their situation (Russell et al., 2016; Vittorio, 2016). The findings from this review are significant in relation to my study, as the experiences of children after their parents'

divorce are of paramount importance in their social development and academic achievement.

### **Children's Academic Achievement Concerns**

Research has shown an enduring and significant negative effect of divorce on children's academic achievement (Mahony et al., 2015). Adebusuyi (2018) asserted that children who have experienced parental divorce often have academic issues because of the problems faced at home. Despite the suggested negative influence of divorce on children, a study by Adegboyega (2019) and Williams (2019) showed a positive effect of divorce on children due to reduced parental conflict, and an improved bond among siblings. Demir-Dagdaz et al. (2018) argued that divorce may result in decreased achievement of developmental milestones, negatively affecting the child's learning ability. Researchers have conducted extensive studies on the influence of divorce on the academic and social development of children but have not studied the subject from the educator's point of view (Reynoso, 2018; Wayne, 2020).

Adebusuyi (2018) found that children from divorced homes frequently exhibit higher levels of nervousness compared to children with married parents (Mahony et al., 2015). Research revealed that these children occasionally exhibit antisocial behavior, as evidenced by their avoidance of peers and difficulty fostering close relationships. Adebusuyi stated that many children from divorced homes display anxiety and experience difficulty relating to their parents, leading them to aggressive behavior.

A significant function of the family is the provision of love and care for all members. One of the many ways in which the family prepares the child for society is by

providing a model for the child to follow (Olaitan, 2018). Children may encounter some socialization difficulties during divorce (Yaw, 2016). Children see parents as primary role models, and if parents are no longer able to fulfill that role, the children may not be able to seek an alternate person within the family or community as a model (Olaitan, 2018). If a child is raised in a positive environment, he or she is more likely to experience positive development (Johnsen et al., 2018).

The absence of one parent might affect long-term emotional development and academic achievement (Adebusuyi, 2018). The child might manifest this loss through inappropriate behavior, stubbornness, and an inability to study and perform to the expected standard in school (Mustapha & Odediran, 2019). Research by Yaw (2016) and Vittorio (2016) on the influence of divorce on a child's academic performance has shown that children need to establish a bond; if this bond is not satisfactory, it can affect the physical, intellectual, and social development of the child. Wayne (2020) explained that some children of divorced parents lack assertiveness, show poor discipline and poor morals, and are more likely to drop out of school. Wayne also suggested that behavioral factors (such as low levels of retentive memory) influence the academic performance of any child of divorced parents.

Johnsen et al. (2018) emphasized that parental attitude influences academic performance. A child from a divorced home often has hindered development. Constant emotional tension may cause headaches, restlessness, chronic fatigue, insomnia, and lack of appetite. Emotional stressors affect an individual's mood shifts and can cause

inconsistency in their emotional state (Vittorio, 2016). Constant emotional pressures disturb the ability to learn. Akindele et al. (2017) stipulated that divorce leads to emotional conflicts in students. The researchers further stated that emotional conflict is painful in the present and may result in long term detriment to academic achievement and personality integration. This invariably suggests that divorce may negatively influence the social and academic performance of the child, no matter what or who might be responsible.

Ribar (2015) showed that the lack of a father or mother's care, warmth, and affection leads children to revolt against parents, waywardness, truancy, aggressiveness, and delinquency. Kalmijn (2015) connected various behavior disorders to divorce, including: emotional instability, pilfering, absenteeism, aggressiveness, lack of discipline, stubbornness, and lack of sympathy and love for others. Mekonnen et al. (2019) further revealed that many children with these behaviors come from homes where relationships are abnormal, resulting in insecurity and lack of affection. Children who are separated from either of their parents for an extended period may develop a sense of insecurity (Feldhaus & Heintz-Martin, 2015). As a result, they may lose the ability to stay attached, develop trust, or rely on others. Children from divorced homes may eventually exhibit behavior disorders and are neither conscious of how they either treat others nor mindful of what others think of them. Yaw (2016) identified children's emotional disturbance can be a result of divorce. Divorce may lead to hatred for school, a desire for truancy, and reduced participation in classroom work (Bonner et al., 2018). Latu (2018) revealed that

separation and divorce often result in disjointed lives for the children involved, affecting their overall performance at home and in school. Forde (2018) asserted that the home is primarily an educational institution in which the parents are educators. This suggests that parents are essential to the education of the child, which implies that when divorce occurs, an educational challenge for the child may result.

Mustapha and Odediran (2019) concluded that children of divorced parents still harbor strong feelings of unhappiness, anger, and rejection throughout life, no matter how amicable the divorce was. Treat et al. (2019) posited that many delinquent children are the products of broken homes and that the parents involved in divorce might not be capable of giving the child adequate affection, direction, and supervision. Akindele et al. (2017) affirmed that monitoring and supervision of children is an indispensable tool in the upbringing of a child; when parental divorce occurs, the child does not receive the required level of affection. With only one parent at home, there may be a lack of adequate time or resources to devote to the emotional needs of the child. Parents, stepparents, and other caregivers are resources for managing children's coping behaviors and emotional encouragement (Kanjanda, 2018; Magnuson & Schindler, 2019; Oakley et al., 2018). Sanders and Turner (2018) stated that parents should give a child proper care, education, shelter, religious instruction, a balanced diet, and guidance on the rules, norms, and customs of the society.

The review of literature on the effects of parental divorce supports the theory of cognitive development, in which children actively construct their understanding of the



world by going through four stages of cognitive development. The theory is related to my research study as it informs and involves educators' teaching practices. This theory relates to academics because learning helps children develop, by preparing them to deal with challenges including parental divorce. The findings from this review were significant to my study as children's academic achievement concerns are of the utmost importance to children's all-round achievement.

### **Educators' Cultural Perspectives**

The results of this literature review suggested that divorce can cause emotional, social, and mental health problems for school-aged children. Mahony et al. (2015) conducted research on the pedagogical decision-making processes of 21 Australian early childhood educators who work with children experiencing parental separation and divorce (Mahony et al., 2015). The researchers concluded that understanding educators' reflexive pedagogical decision making is important in identifying how educational administrators and educators can support children experiencing parental separation and divorce. The difference between this study and my study is that the former concentrated on methods educators used to deal with children in broken homes as far as classroom management, whereas my research concentrated specifically on how divorce impacts children's academic performance. The Mahony et al. study and my study involve very different cultures as the study setting (Allan, 2018; Themane & Thobejane, 2019).

Roache and Lewis (2011) found that educators' perspectives on divorce and children ranged from sadness and pity for the children to frustration and confusion regarding the affected children. Mahony et al. (2015) conducted another research study

on Australian teachers' pedagogical practices with children who had experienced parental divorce and separation. The researchers found that most children from divorced homes struggled with early learning. The participating teachers reported actions on providing academic, emotional, and behavioral support for children, as well as building partnerships with school administrators, parents, and community members to assist children (Coleman, 2018; Cowan & Cowan, 2019; Mahony et al., 2015).

Chen and Phillips (2018) researched the teacher-child interactions in Head Start. They recruited teachers from three Head Start programs. They suggested that understanding teachers' reflexive pedagogical decision-making is important in identifying how educational administrators and teachers should support children experiencing parental divorce or separation. Chen and Phillips concentrated on the classroom management methods teachers used to deal with children from broken homes; my study examined how divorce impacted academic performance.

Lee et al. (2018) examined children of divorced parents who have cognitive and emotional problems, using the sand tray as a means of therapeutic counseling. Findings suggested that participants explore and express several emotions, communicate, and face their problems. Andrew and Segun (2019) researched the effects of parental divorce on children's academic performance in their study in Madonsi Village, Limpopo Province, South Africa. The results showed that divorce can be a result of infidelity, abuse, lack of communication, snoring, and sexual incompatibility. The findings further showed that divorce can cause children to experience difficulty in focusing on academics due to

reduced support from home (Andrew & Segun, 2019; Brand et al., 2019). The review of literature on the effects of parental divorce supports Piaget's theory of cognitive development, in which children actively construct their understanding of the world by going through four stages of cognitive development. Piaget's theory strongly related to my research study as it involved educators' teaching practices. The findings from this literature review were important to my study, as educators' cultural perspectives are of paramount importance to children's academic achievement.

### **Summary**

In this literature review, I identified a consistent theme regarding the influence of divorce on children's academic achievement. Adebusuyi (2018) and Adegboyega (2019) found that divorce affects children's academic achievements in schools. Additional research has also shown some significant adverse effects of divorce on children's academic achievement (Andrew & Segun, 2019; Beley et al., 2018). Adolescent social vices—such as prostitution, theft, and cyber-crime—can stem from trauma caused by divorce (Beley et al., 2018). Researchers found that some children with previously high academic achievement levels became low academic achievers after their families experienced divorce (Latu, 2018; Mahony et al., 2015; Majoko, 2019). Abdullahi et al. (2017) and Williams (2019) however, showed a positive influence of divorce on children in the areas of domestic violence, happiness, witnessing less parental conflict, and an improved bond among siblings

This literature review helped me develop a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation in my research. It is necessary for parents, educators, and school administrators to devise diverse academic strategies and suggestions to support children from divorced homes (Coleman, 2018; Cowan & Cowan, 2019; Rispoli et al., 2019). There is a lack of research focusing on Nigerian early childhood educators' perspectives on the influence of divorce on children's academic achievement. Through uncovering new literature, I explored educators' current and diverse academic approaches, strategies, and suggestions to support children who are experiencing academic challenges because of parental divorce. To achieve this, I conducted a basic qualitative study using semi structured interviews. Chapter 3 includes a detailed description of the basic qualitative study design, the data collection and analysis processes, and details of the method I used to gather basic data on early childhood educators' perspectives on the influence of divorce on children's academic achievement.

### Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore Nigerian early childhood educators' perspectives on the influence of parental divorce on children's academic achievement and to compile strategies or suggestions useful when working with children age 6 to 9 that have been affected by divorce. The study consisted of 12 participants, all of whom were educators from three different schools within one district. I used semi structured interviews to collect information based on the research questions. The outcome of this research study may deepen the understanding of Nigerian early childhood educators' perspectives regarding the influence of parental divorce on children's academic achievement. The implications for positive social change were that the results of this study may reveal current and diverse academic approaches, strategies, and suggestions to support children who are experiencing academic challenges because of parental divorce. This chapter contains the methodology for the study and addresses why a basic qualitative approach was appropriate to answer the research questions. I chose a basic qualitative approach as it gives researchers a deeper understanding of a phenomenon (Wicks, 2017; Yin, 2017). I designed the study to include semi structured interviews that allowed participants to discuss their experiences and perspectives freely.

#### **Research Design and Rationale**

I employed a basic qualitative approach, which enabled me to explore how individuals perceive their experiences and derive meaning from them (see Yüksel & Yıldırım, 2015). The following research questions guided this study:

RQ1: What are Nigerian early childhood educators' perspectives on the influence of divorce on children's academic achievement?

RQ2: What strategies or suggestions have Nigerian early childhood educators found useful when working with children influenced by divorce?

Researchers should identify study designs that are methodically congruent with the intent of their inquiry because there are numerous diverse qualitative research designs (Doody & Bailey, 2016). For the purposes of this study, I used the basic qualitative approach by conducting open-ended interviews with Nigerian early childhood educators. This basic qualitative study addressed social constructivism and the perception that research participants had of the phenomenon under investigation, Nigerian early childhood educators' perspectives on the influence of parental divorce on children's academic achievement. The basic qualitative study methodology was also in alignment with the conceptual framework of three theories: Bowen's (1960) family systems theory, Piaget's (1969) theory of cognitive development, and Vygotsky's (1978) theory of social constructivism. A basic qualitative approach involves a small sample size and the method of data collection I employed involved phone interviews (Rochelle et al., 2018).

Basic qualitative research defines the attributes of participants' in-depth understanding and experiences of a specific phenomenon (Murphy, 2017; Van Maanen, 2015). To ensure that the participants were able to provide in-depth reflections on the topic under analysis, I conducted telephone interviews rather than administering questionnaires. Qualitative research methods can provide a clear understanding of

problems through participants' experiences and their day-to-day activities (Murphy, 2017). The qualitative method was more appropriate than the quantitative approach, which generally involves questionnaire instruments and numerical data collection (Brannen, 2017). For the purpose of this study, telephone interviews and open discussions enabled participants to express and elaborate on their perspectives. Researchers use a basic qualitative approach to explore and capture participants' experiences and develop themes from emerging data (Murphy, 2017; Van Maanen, 2015). A basic qualitative study uncovers the practice, strategies, and techniques of participants' experiences (Morse, 2015; Murphy, 2017; Nutov, 2019).

### **Role of the Researcher**

I was the primary data collector in this study on Nigerian early childhood educators' perspectives regarding the influence of divorce on children's academic achievement. In qualitative studies, researchers review information, conduct interviews, compile data, and report data analysis (Wicks, 2017). My data collection processes began by collecting letters of permission to conduct research from three primary schools. I used phone calls to interview educators who have worked with children from divorced homes. The coronavirus pandemic necessitated that I performed the interviews via phone (see Appendix A). I sent the letter of permission to the prospective research participants after obtaining Walden's IRB approval. I then emailed the prospective participants a letter of invitation/consent form to obtain their consent to participate in the study.

I am presently a college lecturer in the department of early childhood care and primary education. This experience prompted me to involve educators in early childhood care who wish to help children from divorced homes learn effectively. I ensured that my role did not influence the participants when conducting interviews by phone. During the interview process, I maintained a reflective journal and made sure that there was no personal or academic relationship between myself and the educators who formed the sample population of the study. I remained neutral during the interview process and used a strict protocol to ensure dependability, improve consistency, and reduce unforeseen problems. I was an active listener during the interviews, allowing the participants to finish their thoughts and describe their perspectives. To maintain an unbiased distance between myself and the participant, I conducted phone calls interviews. With the permission of the school authorities, I introduced myself to participants as a student-in-training. It is possible that some potential participants knew that I was an educator in a higher education institution because my affiliations in the educational system are in public records. However, I ensured that I remained neutral to avoid my interference that might bias the participants' responses and jeopardize the results of this study.

There was significant potential for biased opinions regarding divorce. I used bracketing to ensure that my emotions, ego, self-esteem, feelings, and my own perspective on divorce did not interfere with the results of the study or influence the participants' responses. Bracketing permits a researcher to put away personal and professional experiences or feelings so as to have an open mind in exploring the



phenomenon under investigation (Morse, 2015). As a researcher, it is necessary to put aside subjective feelings in order to investigate the phenomenon with an open mind. Regardless of the participants' perspectives, bracketing enabled me to remain objective and unbiased. To remove the subjective views from this study, I recorded all interviews.

I invited three colleagues to review my interview questions for clarity and made adjustments where necessary based upon their recommendations (see Castillo-Montoya, 2016). I delivered documents presenting the purpose of the study, the confidentiality guarantee, and consent forms to the study participants via email. I explained the meaning of informed consent, confidentiality, and the way I planned to use codes (such as P1, P2, P3) to ensure anonymous data. I ensured the participants that I would conceal their information, protect their rights, and store all information in a private office for at least 5 years.

## **Methodology**

### **Participant Selection**

The research population for this study included early childhood educators who had worked with children experiencing parental divorce from three schools within the research state metropolis. These educators were in the best position to provide unique perspectives on how divorce affects children's academic achievement. I identified the study population by using the state government educators' IPPIS. I retrieved this data from the research state Ministry of Education Board through the help of the school administrators. This is a system or platform that is payroll centralized by the federal or state government. It assists the government in planning and managing the payroll budget

and ensures that there is no loophole in the disbursement of salary payments to employed staff. This information was confidential and was not accessible online. Using a purposive sampling technique, I found and contacted 12 participants who had experience working with children from divorced homes. Through a purposive technique, researchers either recruit participants who represent a broad and full range of perspectives, or individual participants who meet specific research criteria (Daher et al., 2017; Van Rijnsoever, 2017; Wicks, 2017; Yüksel & Yıldırım, 2015).

The suitable sample size for any qualitative research study depends on what the researcher seeks to understand about the phenomenon under analysis (Hammarberg et al., 2016; Rochelle et al., 2018). Sample size planning is necessary to determine the appropriate number of participants for the study design (Rochelle et al., 2018). Smaller sample sizes are sufficient when investigating a phenomenon (Boddy, 2019; Rochelle et al., 2018). Using purposive sampling, I recruited a sample of 12 participants, which ensured that I was able to collect adequate information concerning the perspectives of Nigerian early childhood educators on the effects of divorce on academic performance. I used a semi structured interview protocol (see Appendix A) to guarantee a level of consistency among all participants (Van Rijnsoever, 2017). All participants voluntarily participated in the study, with no promise of compensation of any kind. After performing the interviews, I then analyzed and interpreted the data provided. I used the following inclusion criteria to select participants: (a) educators must have worked with five or more children of divorced parents, (b) participants must have lived in and were indigenes of

Nigeria, (c) participants must be able to speak English; and (d) participants must have had over five years of teaching experience. After I completed the data analysis process, I presented a two-page summary to participants and asked them to confirm my interpretation of the data (a process known as member checking).

### **Instrumentation**

I asked three of my colleagues who are specialists and experts in the field of early childhood care and primary education and that of measurement and evaluation department to review my interview protocols for clarity (see Appendix A). I used semi structured interview protocols to collect data and guarantee consistency in questioning all participants (see DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019; Deterding & Waters, 2018; McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015). Interviews with each prospective participant lasted between 45 and 60 minutes per session. I interviewed each educator by phone; I audio-recorded the interviews and transcribed them manually. I used purposive sampling with specific inclusion criteria that allowed me to gather information from potential participants.

### **Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection**

I used the specified inclusion criteria to recruit participants for this study. After receiving approval from the Walden's IRB to conduct this study, I began recruiting participants. First, I sent an email to the three schools and obtained approval from school authorities. Second, after receiving letters of cooperation from the three schools (see Appendices A, B, and C), I sent emails to educators with screening questions related to the selection criteria. Using the inclusion criteria, I identified eligible educators and

explained the intentions of the study to the potential participants (Kumar, 2019). I sent an email regarding the purpose of the study to the participants in order to inform them about what to expect while participating in the study.

Participation in this research study was entirely voluntary. Participants could accept or decline the invitation to participate, and their responses remained strictly confidential. I sent emails with attached consent forms and I obtained the completed consent forms from the individual participants before the beginning the research interviews. Participants were free to ask questions about what they could expect while participating in the study. I adhered strictly to all ethical standards set forth by the IRB on ethics for dealing with human subjects.

I collected data from the 12 participants during the interviews, which I audio-recorded and transcribed. I followed up with prospective participants who agreed to participate for the entire duration of the study and informed them about the study (Kumar, 2019). This enabled me to build trust and strong relationships with the participants. It was important to use the follow-up procedure, as it encouraged participants to share meaningful perceptions about the topic under investigation. Because the interviews were only semi structured, participants had more freedom to discuss the relationship between divorce and children's academic achievement as they perceive it (Kumar, 2019).

I informed each participant that they could withdraw from the study after receiving the consent form or at any stage of the data collection process without

consequence. Once I received consent, I conducted interviews with educators on the phone due to the coronavirus pandemic to ensure the participants' safety and privacy. I thanked the participants for their assistance at the initial stage, and provided them with my data collection summary after completing all interviews.

### **Data Analysis Plan**

The data analysis plan for this study included thematic analysis, axial coding, open coding, and the use of the software program NVivo. To assist my analysis of participants' expressions and experiences, I pre-coded the data (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The purpose of pre-coding the data was to anticipate the participants' general responses based on their interpretations of the interview questions. Based on the topic of interest in this study, I checked the interview responses to discern patterns emerging from data collected (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The purpose of an initial coding process is to help researchers remain open to all theoretical and conceptual directions (Saldana, 2016). After each phone calls, I translated each voice note to a written transcript, by listening to each voice note over and over so as to get the appropriate word used by the participant. I thoroughly read all written transcripts again and input each into NVivo to gain a clearer understanding of participants' meaning, and to check for substantial impressions or ideas related to the participants' personal experiences with the impact of parental divorce on children's academic performance (Morse, 2015). I analyzed the data and took notes to identify emergent codes, searched for connections across codes, and reported them accordingly.

Research data coding requires researchers to review transcripts multiple times and to record similar words and phrases found in multiple interviews. I reviewed the responses by finding recurring ideas and organizing concepts and phrases (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015; Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Rogers, 2018). To ensure reliability and validity in data analysis, I used experts in the field of early childhood care and primary education and that of measurement and evaluation department. This requires accurate and consistent research findings that are unbiased (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019; Deterding & Waters, 2018; McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015).

I established, examined, and determined emergent patterns, themes, categories from the data. I used NVivo software, by inputting all manual interpreted transcripts so as to compare the established themes with the responses, and matched reports of data analysis and independent coding accordingly (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015; Rogers, 2018). Rogers (2018) asserted that coding symbolizes interpretative and investigative research. Rogers prescribed various ways to code data, including *complex coding*, which is defined as an open coding method that involves the use of a selected and harmonious grouping of two or more first-cycle coding methods. These approaches focus on various sources, descriptions, presentations, examples, analyses, and notes. Finally, I aligned the results with the purpose of the study, the statement of the problem, and the conceptual framework. I reflected on the whole body of research participant-provided information. I shared all data analyses with my committee members for their amendment and confirmation.

### **Trustworthiness**

To determine the quality of qualitative research, it is necessary to justify it from the outset of the study. I established trustworthiness within my study by using a sample that represented the population, interpreting data with care, applying a rigorous procedure, conducting reflexivity, and ensuring transferability. I adhered to recommended best practices for trustworthiness to ensure that the research study's findings were credible, transferable, dependable, and confirmable (Boddy, 2019). The terms validity and trustworthiness are interchangeable, both referring to the assurance of credibility in qualitative research. To establish trustworthiness, researchers must also address and clearly explain all complications that emerge in a study (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Validity is the extent to which an implemented research instrument helps the researcher obtain needed information (Amankwaa, 2016). Internal validity permits the researcher to attain a meaningful interpretation from instruments. In this research study, the selection of educators supported the validity of the results and findings. To elicit information from educators about their experiences with the influence of divorce on children's academic achievement, I ensured that the interview questions were in alignment with the study (Castillo-Montoya, 2016).

### **Credibility**

It was important to establish credibility in this study, which involves determining that the outcomes of a research study are authentic (Peterson, 2019; Wicks, 2017). Researchers must link the reality of their findings in order to illustrate the truth of the study. Yüksel and Yıldırım (2015) compared credibility to other aspects of

trustworthiness. Wicks (2017) described credibility as the process that a researcher engages to ensure that their findings are accurate. To ensure credibility in this study, I spent sufficient time throughout the interview procedure working to achieve a sound understanding of phenomenon under investigation. I transcribed the participants' recorded interviews and used the member checking technique to share a summary of the results with the participants.

### **Transferability**

Amankwaa (2016) and Brannen (2017) explained that transferability is synonymous with generalizability in quantitative research. It emerges in research studies when results can apply to other situations, times, populations, and contexts. Although researchers may not always be able to prove that the research study's results will be pertinent, they may provide evidence of its application in other situations. Researchers determine transferability by providing detailed protocols and explaining the necessary steps to take, thereby increasing external validity. Transferability refers to the ability for other researchers to achieve comparable results in another location or situation (Amankwaa, 2016). I offered a comprehensive account of the settings in which I collected data and provided an in-depth explanation of the collection, analysis, and interpretation of the data.

### **Dependability**

Dependability is an important aspect of trustworthiness, which establishes the reliability of the research findings (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015; Peterson, 2019). A researcher aims to authenticate that results are consistent with the raw data (McCusker &



Gunaydin, 2015). When this is the case, it suggests that other researchers should arrive at similar data outcomes, interpretations, and conclusions when performing similar studies (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015). This aspect of trustworthiness guarantees stability in a research study, and ensures that the researcher has not misrepresented the data in the final report. Dependability refers to the ways the methods and data are utilized in a study (Tong & Dew, 2016). In an effort to enhance dependability, I described the study's procedures in my research plan before conducting the study.

### **Confirmability**

In qualitative research, confirmability refers to the various ways that a researcher collects and interprets data (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015; Tracy, 2019). Confirmability is related to the level of confidence that other researchers have in a study's findings. For example, establishing confirmability in this study assured that the participants' words and narratives were their own, rather than influenced by prospective researcher biases (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015). Confirmability is the correctness and objectivity of data (Di Fabio, 2016). To achieve this measure of validity, I ensured transparency throughout the data analysis process. I checked for objectivity by demonstrating that the recommendations of the results were accurate depictions of the experiences and thoughts of the individual interview participants, and that they were free from my prejudices as a researcher (Lavery et al., 2019). I documented the personal, cultural, and social experiences of the participants and provided explanations regarding the factors that may have influenced the entire research process (Peterson, 2019; Sutton & Austin, 2015).

### **Ethical Procedures**

In every research study, it is important to observe ethical procedures. The first ethical question to consider is the researcher's right and ability to access the participants and data through self-reports, responses to emails, and consent forms. In this study, each participant received a consent form to sign that explained the aims, purposes, techniques, and recruitment processes of the study. Participants were aware that the purpose of the study was to examine the impacts of divorce on the academic achievement of children. I maintained the confidentiality of the participants who signed the consent form and engaged in the study, informing the participants of these measures in the letter of invitation as well as the informed consent form. Before they could participate, participants had to sign a written informed consent form acknowledging potential risks of the study (Morse, 2015; Tracy, 2019).

I informed each participant who agreed to participate in the study about their right to withdraw at any point. I treated every human participant with respect. I ensured that each participant was aware of the option to withdraw from the study with no consequences if they became uncomfortable at any time. I maintained respect, dignity, and privacy at all times and took measures to ensure participants' privacy (Joshi et al., 2017; Tracy, 2019). I stored all materials from participant recruitment and data collection on a computer with an access password or code known only to me. I adopted safe data management and security strategies to keep data safe and secure (Akinyode & Khan, 2018; Joshi et al., 2017). I immediately replaced any participants who were initially

qualified to join the study but quit during the early stages. I stored the gathered data on my password-protected computer; I will store the data in a locked safe for five years before I discard it. I strictly observed ethical standards throughout the investigation. Walden University IRB officials reviewed the proposed study for content and face validity before granting me permission to begin the research data collection process. Upon receiving IRB approval, Walden University IRB (05-21-20-0457461). I obtained every participant's consent after explaining the aims, purpose, techniques, and recruitment processes of the study. I showed my appreciation to participants for participating, and gave each a two-page summary of my study's findings. During my initial stage of conducting research, I also shared the results of the study with the schools' administrators, as requested.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, I explained the research design and its rationale, the role of researcher, and the methodology of the research study (including population selection, participant selection, sampling strategies, and sources of data collection). I discussed instrumentation, data analysis, and protocol for interviews. I also discussed trustworthiness, which consists of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Finally, I discussed the ethical procedures for the study.

Divorce may result in negative outcomes for children when it increases family struggles or social conflicts. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore Nigerian early childhood educators' perspectives on the influence of parental divorce on

children's academic achievement and strategies or suggestions useful when working with children affected by divorce. I selected the basic qualitative method because of its ability to provide rich information that describes and explains the phenomenon under investigation (Akinyode & Khan, 2018; Boddy, 2019). I used a purposive sampling technique to identify and contact 12 participants. The research method involved phone calls and semi structured interviews with the participants to explore their viewpoints in-depth on the phenomenon under investigation. In the following chapter, I provided an overview of the results, data collection site, participant demography, data collection, and data analysis—connecting all these to answer the research questions.

## Chapter 4: Results

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore Nigerian early childhood educators' perspectives on the effects of divorce on children's academic achievement and their strategies or suggestions they found useful when working with children affected by divorce. Little is known about this topic, and therefore I attempted to address this gap in research. This chapter includes the analysis of the main themes derived from interviews regarding Nigerian early childhood educators' perspectives on the influence of parental divorce on children's academic achievement. This chapter also includes information on the settings and participant demographics. It includes discussions of data collection, qualitative data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, presentation of findings, and a summary.

I implemented a basic qualitative design when conducting semi structured interviews with a purposive sampling technique to include 12 participants who met specific research criteria. This method allowed me to focus my attention on Nigerian early childhood educators' perspectives on the influence of divorce on children's academic achievement and strategies or suggestions they found to be useful when working with children affected by divorce. I used semi structured interview protocols to collect data and guarantee consistency while questioning all participants. I used a purposive sampling technique to identify and contact 12 participants. This research

method involved phone calls and semi structured interviews with the 12 participants to explore their in-depth viewpoints on the phenomenon under investigation.

I drew on my conceptual framework (Bowen's family systems theory, Piaget's theory of cognitive development, and Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism) to support the claims for the study. Two research questions regarding educators' perspectives on the effects of divorce on children's academic achievement guided the study. I generated the following research questions to guide my research.

RQ1: What are Nigerian early childhood educators' perspectives on the influence of divorce on children's academic achievement?

RQ2: What strategies or suggestions have Nigerian early childhood educators found useful when working with children influenced by divorce?

### **Settings**

Divorce was once unfathomable in typical traditional Nigerian society but has now become a far more common and accepted trending occurrence. However, because Nigerian society stills sees divorce as a private family affair, it was somewhat difficult to find participants to volunteer for the study. I conducted interviews with educators via telephone due to the coronavirus pandemic to ensure the participants' safety and privacy and to avoid family or community interference. During the initial screening, I told all participants that I would keep all of their information confidential. All interviews took place at the participant's choice of place and time. The environment network provider was somewhat poor due to 5G network and coronavirus issues in some areas. I was the

interviewer and the transcriber of data in Nvivo. None of the participants were distracted during the interview, and there was no noticeable background noise during interviews. I expressed my appreciation for all participants before, during, and after the interview sessions.

### **Participants Demographics**

The study sample included 12 participants who had experience teaching children of divorced parents. The following statistics applied to the 12 participants: (a) five were men and seven were women; (b) all were parents and three were divorced; (c) three were teaching first grade, five were teaching second grade, and four were teaching third grade; (d) three had taught children with divorced parents in the past; and (e) nine were teaching children with divorced parents at the time of the study. All of the participants shared similarities in location, were educators who had worked with five or more children of divorced parents, lived in and were indigenes of Nigeria, were able to speak English, and had over 5 years of teaching experience. Every participant provided their personal perspective for this study. To ensure confidentiality, I assigned an alphabetical and numerical identifier to each participant. All participants worked in one of the three primary schools included in the study, and I assigned each school a numerical identifier as well. All participants were Nigerian early childhood educators who had in the past and continued to work with children from 6 to 9 years with divorced parents. I used the inclusion criteria to select educators to participate in the study. Table 1 below includes a brief summary of the participants' demographics.

Table 1

*Participants Demographics*

Participant's identifier	Gender	School	Children of divorce parents in each class
P1	Male	#2	2
P2	Female	#2	1
P3	Female	#3	1
P4	Male	#1	2
P5	Female	#3	2
P6	Male	#3	3
P7	Male	#2	1
P8	Male	#1	1
P9	Female	#2	2
P10	Female	#1	2
P11	Female	#3	1
P12	Female	#1	1

**Data Collection**

Participant recruitment took about three weeks after I received approval from Walden University IRB (05-21-20-0457461). The participant recruitment commenced when I informed the schools' administrators of my Walden IRB research data collection approval, at which time I was given the contact information for all participants from their various school administrators. I used purposive sampling with specific inclusion criteria that allowed me to gather information from potential participants. I then emailed participants the invitation letter and consent form to read and complete to indicate their willingness to participate in the research study.



Due to the coronavirus pandemic lockdown in Nigeria, I conducted the whole interview process through phone calls and emails, as it was impossible to see participants face to face and collect information in person. I gave the 12 participants letters of invitation and consent forms, and all were duly signed and returned to me on various dates. I conducted the interviews on different times and dates over a period of 2 weeks. Before the commencement of the interview, I called each participant to introduce myself, allow us to familiarize with one another, and to discuss my data collection process. For easy identification, I assigned each participant an alphabetical and numerical identifier code from P1 through P12. All participants gave me permission to audio-record our interview. I informed the participants that the interview would last for a minimum of 45 minutes to 1 hour, and that after the conclusion of my research I would present a two page summary of the findings of the study to them for confirmation.

During some of the interview days, the environment network provider was somewhat poor. However, I was able to transcribe the audio version of the interview myself and subsequently develop the research findings. I organized, reviewed, and transcribed the data before uploading the interview transcript to NVivo for storage and my further analysis. I created a file for each data source after the NVivo upload. At the end of every interview, I emailed each recorded audio file to the computer for confidentiality and safety. Once I saved the audio recorded file into the computer, I then transcribed the interviews by listening to each recording several times to understand and capture the exact verbal response of each participants. I typed each response into a Word

document to create the transcripts, which I then sent to participants for review. All participants affirmed that all findings were true representation of their perspectives, so no changes were required. I uploaded all documents into NVivo for storage and later presented them to an experts in the field of early childhood care and primary education and that of measurement and evaluation department to review for missing themes and accuracy.

### **Data Analysis**

I used thematic analysis, axial and open coding, and the software program NVivo to help organize the raw data and store it safely, as well as for data analysis. I made a list of participants' statements, drew patterns and themes from their statements, and synthesized and precoded the data. The purpose of coding the data is to identify the participants' general responses based on their interpretations of the interview questions (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I repeated this step for each research participant. I read through each participant's transcript several times and selected some specific statements to transcribe manually. This was necessary because the NVivo software was occasionally unable to understand a participant's pronunciations of words. I was able to find common words and phrases in multiple interviews during the research data coding, multiple reviews of transcripts, highlighting, and recording. I reviewed the responses by grouping statement into themes, finding recurring ideas, and organizing concepts and phrases. For each participant's response, I reflected on the basic qualitative method, conceptual

frameworks, literature review, and their personal experiences in dealing with the impact of parental divorce on children's academic performance.

The thematic analysis included structural and textual description, and I synthesized every participant's experience in dealing with the impact of parental divorce on children's academic performance (see Morse, 2015). I began the data analysis process by giving special attention to the general text that reflected participants' perception and ended by reflecting upon the ways that my findings were in line with other scientific literature. The description of each participant's experience and their perceptions of those experiences supported the identified themes. Finally, I submitted the transcripts and themes to experts in the field of early childhood care and primary education and that of measurement and evaluation department who reviewed the content and evaluation of the data for missing themes and confirmability.

### **Familiarization of Data**

The first step in a data analysis process requires researchers to get involved in and familiarized with the data. I began by collecting de-identified materials from early childhood educators, such as participant demographics. Immediately after collecting the de-identified materials, I read through all of them several times for clearer understanding. Yin (2017) explained that the process of reading the data multiple times allows the researcher to explore, precode, and categorize the data based on the same similarities, differences, and characteristics. I also read through all interview transcripts several times and uploaded the transcribed interview files to NVivo.

### **Generation of Precoding/Initial Codes**

I used thematic analysis to identify, code, and interpret themes in this research study. I further used thematic analysis for the data collected from the educators' interviews. Thematic analysis involves the search for themes, recurring ideas, and emerging patterns within the data collected (Nowell et al., 2017).

### **Describing Thematic Coding**

I recorded interview data and transcribed the conversations verbatim before uploading the interview transcripts into NVivo 12 software to prepare for analysis. I used six-cycle schema coding to thematically analyze the two interview questions and responses from educators. In the first step of thematic analysis, I read and reread the data to become familiar with its content. The second step consisted of the generation of initial codes, which I labelled with key descriptive words or phrases. In conducting this step, I created nodes in the NVivo 12 software and grouped units of data that expressed similar ideas or meanings (i.e., meaning units) into those nodes. The third step involved searching for themes. In this step, I grouped similar codes into potential themes. In NVivo, this process involved the creation of parent nodes, which I labelled with descriptive words or phrases. Similar nodes created during the second step of the analysis were grouped under the parent nodes as child nodes. The fourth step of the analysis consisted of reviewing the themes. In this phase, I refined the themes developed in the previous phase by reviewing the included data and reassigning meaning units to different nodes if appropriate. The fifth phase consisted of defining and naming the themes. In this

phase, I further refined the themes' definitions. Lastly, within the sixth phase, I produced the presentation of the results, which is included in this chapter.

NVivo generated a word cloud that included the number of participants who contributed, transcript excerpts, frequency of words recorded, and reference to the de-identified data that was used to see the relevance of codes. The words that have greater significance in the research study are in bold and larger fonts. For example, "the role of teacher" was referenced 57 times, "observing behavioral difference" was referenced 45 times, and "observing academic difference" was referenced 43 times. All of these codes appeared bolder and in larger fonts than other codes, thereby indicating their significance to the research study.

### ***Identifying Themes***

Another aspect of data analysis is the categorization and merging of codes to identify themes. Yin (2017) asserted that the search for themes in research involves sorting, categorizing, and organizing different codes into themes, thereby including all important or relevant coded data extracts within the themes. Within this study, I merged all of the codes based on their similarities in meaning and characteristics. In the process of data analysis, the following prominent themes emerged: (a) children are better off when divorce takes them out of toxic environment; (b) emotional distress reduces social and academic functioning; and, (c) the resiliency of children depends on nurturing adults (see Table 2).

### ***Reviewing of Themes***

In the thematic analysis research process, the next step is to review themes based on their relevance, differences, and similarity patterns. The aim of this step is to group all codes according to their similarities and differences in the same theme. This permitted me to return to my research questions based on the theoretical and conceptual foundation.

### ***Defining of Concepts and Names of Themes***

The last step in thematic analysis is the definition of concepts and naming of themes. Through this process, I connected the narrative of the themes with the research questions. All of these processes were facilitated with manual coding and NVivo software, including the generation of the theme names.

### ***Interpreting and Discussing Findings of Themes***

In this stage of analysis, I combined key conceptual findings from each theme into a unified story. The results section includes a summary of the interpretations of every theme and the connection to the research questions and the theoretical and conceptual foundation of the research study.

### **Validating the Findings**

I used an external auditor to review the development of codes, themes, and findings. The auditor is a professor at the University of Nigeria, Nsuka. She holds a doctorate (PhD) in early childhood care and primary education from the University of Calabar, Akwa Ibom State. With the feedback from the auditor, I then organized the data and interview interpretations. I compiled and shared the summary of results in Chapter 4. In the summary, I described the participants' demographics, and the alphabetical and

numerical identifiers that I used. To maintain the agreed upon confidentiality, I did not include any personal identifiers of the participants.

### **Evidence of Trustworthiness**

During the study, I took precautions to maintain trustworthiness, rigor, accurate documenting, and unbiased data evaluation. By using thematic analysis, axial coding, open coding and multiple data sources (such as transcripts, highlighting, and recording similar words and phrases found in multiple interviews), I ensured the credibility and richness of the data. Thematic analysis requires multiple reviews of transcripts; in doing so, I highlighted similarities and differences between interview question responses, and generated unanticipated insight. This method provided credibility and rigor to the data. I allowed each research participant to express themselves to the fullest extent in order to extract rich information. I also conducted the authenticity of interview transcripts during and after the interview. To verify that their responses recorded within the transcript were valid, I presented the findings and my interpretations to every participant via e-mail for confirmation on the accurate recording of their perception.

Stuckey (2014) asserted that authenticity of interview transcripts allows trustworthiness and provides credibility to qualitative research. Within this study, to confirm the transcript authenticity, I provided participants with multiple opportunities to make changes where needed. No further additions or adjustments were suggested. Initially, I presented the instrument to experts in the field of early childhood care and primary education and that of measurement and evaluation department to review and

provide feedback to increase the validity. Sarvimaki (2018) asserted that researchers can maintain coherent methodological research designs by ensuring analogy in research questions, data, analytical procedures, and method. Transferability refers to how the results of the study may be applied to other groups or settings. The context and procedures of the study were described in great detail so the reader might determine the transferability of the results from the study to other settings. Transferability was enhanced by saturating the research with descriptions about the methodology, participants, and setting. To increase dependability in any research study, researchers must take care to follow and clearly document a logical and sequential process. Nowell et al. (2017) asserted that readers can more accurately judge the dependability of research that they can logically and sequentially follow, permitting them to audit findings. All raw data and data analysis procedures are stored on my computer and will be kept for at least five years with a protected password. My findings are auditable; another researcher can easily cross reference and follow the data (see Nowell et al., 2017).

I achieved confirmability by having a detailed objective, accurate descriptions and documentation of the research method to increase data evaluation validity and reliability and to be unbiased. This process is done by presenting the findings and interpretation to each participant for their confirmation of their personal perception, reflection and experiences. All participants were given the opportunity to make changes where necessary to ascertain the authenticity of interview transcripts. The results of this study may increase the body of knowledge that relates to children from divorced homes and



their academic achievement. The results of the study may also bring about additional information to transfer to other education stakeholders concerned with children from divorced homes.

## **Results**

I have outlined the themes that emerged from the data collection analysis procedure in this chapter. The next step is to identify significant statements, organized into themes. All the themes represented responses from research participants based on the research question asked (see Saldana, 2016; Wicks, 2017). The following themes emerged: (a) children are better off when divorce takes them out of a toxic environment; (b) emotional distress reduces social and academic functioning; and, (c) resiliency of children depends on nurturing adults. I used a semi structured interview guide to elicit and illuminate rich information and responses from educators on their perspectives about the influence of divorce on children's academic achievement. Each theme appears with evidence drawn from the participants' responses to the interview questions.

### **Research Question 1**

Based on the results of this research study, I used all data collected from the 12 participants' interviews to answer the two research questions. The first research question guiding the study was: What are Nigerian early childhood educators' perspectives on the influence of divorce on children's academic achievement? Two themes emerged from RQ1: (a) children are better off when divorce takes them out of a toxic environment, and (b) emotional distress reduces social and academic functioning,

This question addressed the perceptions and experiences of Nigerian early childhood educators' in terms of the influence of divorce on children's academic achievement and strategies or suggestions useful when working with children affected by divorce. To answer RQ1, I asked a series of open-ended questions. Two themes resulted from the following interview questions:

- What are the positive and negative effects of divorce on children's academic achievement?
- How do you describe the classroom behavior of children from divorced parents compared to those whose parents are not divorced?
- What common challenges have you observed in children from a divorced home?
- How do you describe the academic achievement of children from divorced parents compared to those whose parents are not divorced?

Table 2

*Research Question 1: Theme 1: Children Are Better Off When Divorce Takes Them Out of a Toxic Environment.*

Research question Theme used to answer research question Code grouped to form theme <i>Subcode</i>	number of participants contributing	number of transcript excerpts included
RQ1: influence of divorce on children's academic achievement	12	136
Theme 1. <i>Children are better off when divorce takes them out of toxic environment</i>	8	15
Escaping domestic violence	2	3
Escaping negative role model	3	4
Greater potential to choose own path	3	4
Safety and care increases focus-performance	2	2
Student self-determination can make a difference	2	2

***Theme 1: Children are Better Off When Divorce Takes Them Out of a Toxic***

***Environment***

As seen in Table 2, all 12 participants responded to the questions presented in the interview protocol and five codes were developed from their responses: Escaping domestic violence, Escaping negative role model, Greater potential to choose own path, Safety and care increases focus-performance and Student self-determination can make a difference.

In connection to the code *escaping domestic violence*, P3 said, “I think divorce has a great positive aspect, instead of remaining in an abusive home and be kill at the end of the day, is better to move on with your life.”

In connection to the code *escaping negative role model*, P8 said, “Don’t mind the fact that your daddy was drinking; drinking is not a good thing, and it is something you must not copy.”

In reference to the code, *greater potential to choose own path*, P4 said, Some parents have a preconceived notion on what a child should become in future, which on a long run does not really help the child. Children that are left to themselves from divorce home, discover themselves on time and choose the career pathway that is beneficial to them.

In connection to the code *safety and care increases focus-performance*. P3 said, “But the positive side, I think they will be more relaxed and focus, and they have peace which can boost their academic performance.”

In connection to the code *student self-determination can make a difference*, P8 asserted that

A child can come from a divorced and at the same time say to him or herself that, “I am not going to give myself to any form of distraction to my class work,” so the bottom base of their academic achievement could come from self-determination.

Table 3

*Research Question 1: Theme 2: Emotional Distress Reduces Social and Academic Functioning*

Code grouped to form theme <i>Subcode</i>	number of participants contributing	number of transcript excerpts included
RQ1: influence of divorce on children’s academic achievement	12	136
Theme 2. Emotional distress reduces social and academic functioning	12	121
Observing academic differences	12	43
<i>Emotional distress contributes to lack of focus- work completion</i>	8	16
<i>Less parental guidance-support in academics</i>	7	14
<i>Parental distress-inattention children's needs not met</i>	8	11

Observing behavioral differences	12	45
<i>Age and gender associated risks</i>	6	9
<i>Aggression-acting out-criminal activity</i>	7	13
<i>Depression- isolation-withdrawal</i>	9	20
<i>Lack of interest in school activities and extracurricular</i>	3	3
Relational and emotional distress	11	33
<i>Children have trust issues</i>	4	5
<i>Dysfunctional relationships-negative peer pressure</i>	3	4
<i>Evidence of emotional distress</i>	8	13
<i>Parental abdication of responsibility</i>	3	3
<i>Parental distress is connected to child distress</i>	4	6

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### ***Theme 2: Emotional Distress Reduces Social and Academic Functioning***

As seen in Table 3, all of the 12 participants responded to the questions presented in the interview protocol. I asked their opinion on the positive and negative effects of divorce on children's academic achievement and three codes were developed from their responses: Observing academic differences, Observing behavioral differences and Relational and emotional distress.

**Observing Academic Differences.** In reference to the code additional home-life demands reduce academic performance, P6 said, Some of them also suffer some financial crises, as they go hawking in the morning, farming, or even stealing just to see that they are been able to meet up with the demands of their academics and so it affects them.

In connection to the code *emotional distress contributes to lack of focus-work completion*, P3 asserted that if something is not done fast, the academic achievement is very poor due to their psychological frame of mind, their mindset, their emotional state, lead to poor performance academy unlike children that are from home that are not divorce—those one tend to do better.

In reference to the code *false generalization of divorce causing low student performance*, P5 said, There are also some children who have everything not going well for them. They still do very well in school, so saying that children coming from a parental divorce, turn to score lower than their counterparts from intact family, I think that isn't true.

In connection to the code, *less parental guidance-support in academics*, P2 explained that at times it might be in almost all the subject, at times also it might be in those demanding subjects like mathematics, English language and science, they will be poor because they don't have anybody assisting them at home—you know, no one to guide them.

In reference to the code *parental distress-inattention children's needs not met*, P4 said, I have observed with children from divorce home, one of the first challenges is that they are mostly unkempt. They don't look too good, sometimes their hair is not properly

combed, sometimes their uniforms are not ironed, and sometimes they don't even take time to eat good meal, and this can make the child sick.

**Observing Behavioral Differences.** In connection to the code age and gender associated risks, P4 said,

From experience we found out that the boys have more tendency to go into stealing and cyber bullying. For the female child, they are mostly very abusive and aggressive, engaging in premarital sex. I discovered that children who are into social vice like sex, drugs, and cultism are from divorced parents.

In connection to the code *aggression-acting out-criminal activity*, P3 said, They get angry easily with their mate at little provocations. They might even fight, they don't feel it as a play, and they are ready to fight. That kind of attitude, because of the pains they feel inside, they join negative group, bad gang, not as if they are bad children, they are not, but because the pains they feel inside of them lead them to do negative things.

In connection to the code *depression- isolation-withdrawal*, P2 said, "Usually you just notice the child is always withdrawn on his or her own. Children make friend but the child will not want to make friend with anybody."

In reference to the code *lack of interest in school activities and extracurricular*, P4 said, "They find it difficult to win class medals, awards, and other prizes that the school authorities give, and also discover that children from divorce parent are among the least in the class; they don't do well."



**Relational and Emotional Distress.** In connection to the code *children have trust issues*, P7 said, “Those children have issues trusting people.” In connection to the code *dysfunctional relationships-negative peer pressure*, P9 said it is pressure from the “peer group in the sense that, such kind of children influence others, you see the friend saying things like ‘forget about your parent, they’ve lived their lives, let’s go out and do certain things.’”

In connection to the code *evidence of emotional distress*, P4 said, “They don’t like to socialize. They feel stigmatized to talk to people or to play with other children is very difficult with them.”

In reference to the code *issue is too big for child to process*, P3 said, “Divorce affects academics negatively because the whole issue is too big for them to process, thereby making them not to participate fully as they used to do before.”

In connection to the code *parental abdication of responsibility*, P12 said, “Often in time, they suffer denial in their academic material and privileges.”

In connection to the code *parental distress is connected to child distress*, P1 said, “Divorce can cause emotional distress, okay, and this can lead to behavioral problems and general disinterest in life.”

Based on the findings in research question 1, the responses from the two themes generated shows that, children experiencing divorce in their homes actually goes through series of challenges which include poor academic achievement, behavioral and emotional

distress, but can be safe from the danger of parental divorce, such as domestic violence, negative parental role model and thereby performing better through self-determination.

### **Research Question 2**

RQ2 was: What strategies or suggestions have Nigerian early childhood educators found useful when working with children affected by divorce? The following theme emerged from RQ2: (a) resiliency of children depends on nurturing adults. This research question addressed Nigerian early childhood educators' perspectives on the influence of divorce on children's academic achievement and strategies or suggestions useful when working with children affected by divorce. To answer this research question, I asked a series of open-ended questions? Themes resulted from the following interview questions:

- What are your suggestions for others who are who are willing to assist children from divorced parents?
- What are your suggestions to school authorities on professional development for teachers who are working with children from divorced parents?
- Please give your reasons why these above suggestions are necessary?
- What other perspectives about children of divorced parents do you want to share?

Table 4

*Theme Used to Answer Research Question 2: Resiliency of Children Depends on Nurturing Adults*

Theme used to answer research question Code grouped to form theme <i>Subcode</i>	number of participants contributing	number of transcript excerpts included
RQ2 strategies or suggestions useful when working w children of divorce	12	92
Theme 3. Resiliency of children depends on nurturing adults	12	92
Involving the welfare department and other professionals	4	5
Role of school authorities	11	30
<i>Encouraging students to stay in school</i>	4	7
<i>Schools need counseling units</i>	3	4
<i>Supporting-training teachers to better assist         students</i>	9	15
<i>Understanding additional burden teachers         carry</i>	3	4
Role of teacher	12	57
<i>Social-emotional support strategies</i>	12	38
<i>Checking in as key social-emotional             strategy</i>	3	4
<i>Encouragement and motivation</i>	7	11
<i>Teacher observance and willingness to             listen</i>	10	11
<i>Understanding and nurturance are key</i>	8	12
<i>Avoid discrimination and favoritism</i>	2	2
<i>Teachers make a difference as role models</i>	6	10
<i>Teaching methods to engage students</i>	6	7

***Theme 3: Resiliency of Children Depends on Nurturing Adults***

As seen in Table 4, all 12 participants responded to the questions presented in the interview protocol. I asked, “What strategies do you use when teaching children from divorced parents?” In connection to the code *involving the welfare department and other professionals*, P6 said, “It will be a very good thing for foundation who can take the responsibility such as NGOs and other welfare foundations who can come to the aid of the children responsibility.”

**Role of School Authorities.** In connection to the code *encouraging students to stay in school*, P11 said that it is “very necessary that every person -the government, the school authorities, the teachers -in charge of helping the child all-round to achieve learning.”

In reference to the code *schools need counseling units*, P11 said, “Apart from those who are handling them in the classroom, every school is supposed to have a counseling department.”

In connection to the code *supporting-training teachers to better assist students*, P3 said, “School authorities, as a matter of fact, should send this kind of teachers to training from time to time—that will help them to learn more on how to take care of these children and to equipped themselves better.”

In connection to the code *avoid discrimination and favoritism*, P8 said, “My suggestion to them is to do away with discrimination and favoritism. I will also suggest to

them is love and avoiding any form of discrimination, treating them equally, and filling up any gap.”

In reference to the code, *understanding additional burden teachers carry*, P7 said, “It stills boils down to the fact that divorce gives teachers an extra work and burden.”

**Role of Teacher.** In connection to the code *checking in as key social-emotional strategy*, P4 reported that as a teacher, I assume the role of their parent, what they called Loco parents. Loco parents yeah, I assume the role of the parent; that gives them the opportunity to freely talk to me. Once I can get their attention, I can easily get to teach them. Another thing I do is, from time to time, so, I take time to arrange one-on-one class with them when I see their class performance that they are not doing too well for like 15 to 20 minutes thereabout.

In connection to the code *encouragement and motivation*, P1 reported that “as a teacher, I can say that we should encourage them to, help them always, because such children need encouragement, I can even make out time to motivate them.”

In connection to the code *teacher observance and willingness to listen*, P1 said, “Teacher should have a good listening ability and pay attention, so allow them to express themselves. So you have to be a good listener to be able to be a good teacher to them.”

In connection to the code *understanding and nurturance are key*, P3 reported that “they should have a lot of understanding because if you lack understanding, you can't

deal with these children. They should be patient, tolerance, boldness to encourage the children to go through.”

In connection to the code *teachers make a difference as role models*, P3 said, “You can't take the place of the parents, 100%, but you fill in the gap in the school because some teacher are also role model.”

In reference to the code *teaching methods to engage students*, P12 said, “We should consider a class activity with discussion method or interaction method when you are teaching these children.”

Based on the findings in RQ2, the responses from the only theme emerged shows that, there are divers strategies and suggestions in assisting children experiencing divorce in their homes, by school authorities, the Government, educational stakeholders, and NGOs.

### **Summary**

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore how Nigerian early childhood educators’ perspectives of the effects of divorce on children’s academic achievement and strategies or suggestions useful when working with children affected by divorce. The results from this study revealed that parental divorce has a negative impact on children’s academic achievement. All participants asserted that from time to time, school management or administrators can invite motivational speakers or counselors to speak with children in order to help build their confidence. Governments, churches, individuals, or NGOs can sponsor or organize teacher training on how to instruct children

with divorced parents and different strategies and suggestions on how to handle them. Schools can also send teachers to training sessions, seminars, or workshops. Divorce affects societies, families, and individuals. Data collected from the non-identified educators' interviews produced three emergent themes. Three themes emerged in the data analysis: children are better off when divorce takes them out of a toxic environment, emotional distress reduces social and academic functioning, and resiliency of children depends on nurturing adults. The themes provided support to answer the two research questions. The participants were sincere in expressing their perspectives on the effects of divorce on children's academic achievement and strategies or suggestions useful when working with children affected by divorce.

Chapter 5 provides greater insight into the research study findings, limitations of the study, implications for social change, and recommendations for future research. The chapter also includes a description of recommendations for further research that are stated in the strengths and limitations of the study and the literature reviewed in Chapter 2.

## Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

### **Introduction**

This chapter provides interpretations of the findings of this basic qualitative study. I investigated the purpose of my study through interviews exploring Nigerian early childhood educators' perspectives on the effects of divorce on children's academic achievement and strategies or suggestions useful when working with children affected by divorce. The analyzed data showed that divorce is a prevalent issue that negatively impacts children's academic achievement. The following section includes: (a) the findings of this study; (b) a review of the purpose of study; (c) interpretations of the findings; (d) limitations of the study; (e) recommendations for further research; (f) implications for positive social change for Nigerian educators, school administrators, educational stakeholders, and the government; and (g) my conclusions. The findings of this study generated common themes regarding educators' perspectives on the phenomenon under investigation. The results of this study may inform educational stakeholders' future seminars and trainings. All participants expressed how they perceived the effects of divorce as educators and offered strategies or suggestions on how to work with and manage the children experiencing divorce in their homes within the school setting.

Researchers have conducted several studies in Nigeria and elsewhere in Africa on the negative influence of the increasing rate of divorce. However, these researchers did not explore the influence of divorce on children's academic achievement from Nigerian



early childhood educators' perspectives. This is an essential area of study because 80% of Nigerian children from divorced families face challenges. The outcome is serious, as a lack of education relates to social vices such as children begging and picking pockets, and these activities put them at greater risk. The results of this research study combined with current literature on divorce can illuminate the perspectives of Nigerian educators on the influence of divorce on children's academic achievement. Two research questions guided this basic qualitative study, and all participants responded to the research questions based on their individual perspectives.

I conducted in-depth phone call interviews with the participants to elicit answers to my research questions. I organized the transcripts using manual transcription and NVivo and analyzed results through thematic analysis, axial and open coding, and theme development. A preplanned guide enabled all participants to respond to the same interview questions. I maintained all participants' confidentiality and adhered strictly to the ethical standards set forth by the Walden University IRB for dealing with human subjects. I audio recorded all phone call interviews and stored all of the materials from the participant recruitment process and data collection on a computer with an access password known only to me. The following section includes a presentation of the interpretations of the findings according to the research questions.

### **Interpretation of the Findings**

#### **Research Question 1**

RQ1 asked: What are Nigerian early childhood educators' perspectives on the influence of divorce on children's academic achievement? All research participants were

willing to express their perspectives regardless of the sensitive nature of the study.

Participants were educators who had worked with five or more children of divorced parents and lived in and were indigenes of Nigeria. Two key responses were:

- “Divorce affects children irrespective of sex.”
- “But the negative effect of divorce outweighs the positive.”

The study results can help increase awareness on the impact of divorce on children’s academic achievement and offer strategies or suggestions useful when working with such children. Educators and other educational stakeholders have expressed their concerns about the behavioral issues of children from divorced homes, and divorce’s effects on their academic achievement in school (Familusi, 2019; Obiweluozor, 2015; Umar, 2019). In Chapter 2, I discussed how parents’ marital issues affect children’s academic achievements, arguing that the latter depends upon the joy, pleasure, peace, and happiness derived from home and school (Mahony et al., 2015; Uddin, 2015; Wayne, 2020; Worugji et al., 2019; Yaw, 2016). Findings show that children experiencing divorce in their homes have negative experiences at different levels and ages. Demir-Dagdas et al. (2018) and Majoko (2019) asserted that efforts to reduce the rate of divorce in marriage must include the maintenance of loyalty, truthfulness, accepting responsibilities, and emotional security. A marriage lacking these attributes is likely to end in divorce.

Literature concerning divorce shows that the lack of a father or a mother’s care and affection in a child’s life can lead to children revolting against parents, waywardness,

truancy, aggressiveness, and delinquency (Mustapha & Odediran, 2019). While some participants reported some knowledge of the negative impact of divorce, others said there is positive aspect of divorce. The emerging themes from this research study mirror the findings of the literature as detailed in Chapter 2. These themes included (a) children are better off when divorce takes them out of a toxic environment, (b) emotional distress reduces social and academic functioning, and (c) resiliency of children depends on nurturing adults.

The conceptual framework for this basic qualitative study consisted of three different theories: Bowen's (1960) family systems theory, Piaget's (1969) theory of cognitive development, and Vygotsky's (1978) theory of social constructivism. Through the family systems theory, Bowen examined the family as a whole emotional unit, using systems thinking to describe the multifaceted collaborations within the family unit (Bowen, 1960; Bridge, 2019; Yasnitsky, 2018). The family systems theory explains the emotional system of human relationships. Piaget's theory of cognitive development sees children as they actively construct their understanding of the world by going through four stages of cognitive development (Piaget, 1969, 1997). Piaget developed and explained concepts such as schemas, which explained how children naturally strive to acquire experiences that are organized to fit into an already existing knowledge. Vygotsky (1978) designed social constructivism theory to understand the influence of culture on the growth and development of children (Amineh & Asl, 2015). Vygotsky's main focus was on children's academic achievement, developed through practical actions in a social

environment (Yasnitsky, 2018). Vygotsky argued that for children, social interaction is essential to academic achievement.

***Theme 1: Children Are Better Off When Divorce Takes Them Out of Toxic***

***Environment***

The data collected from participants' responses revealed that divorce has a negative impact on children's academic achievement. Participants indicated their opinions with the following phrases: "I think there is nothing like positive impact in divorce"; "I don't think there's positive effect of divorce on children"; "divorce is a problem"; "great negative effect of this on the children"; "the issue of divorce itself is a concept that can begin to imagine if there is anything positive about divorce"; "divorce naturally is not a thing that is encourage"; "divorce is not good at all and is a sin before God." Only two of the 12 participants partially and conditionally agreed that there are positive aspects of divorce, and made the following comments: "I think divorce has a great positive aspect, instead of remaining in an abusive home and be kill at the end of the day, is better to move on with your life"; "to me, if we are talking about the positive aspect, it is only maybe in a home where the children and the parents are having a lot of troubles, quarrels, beating and all the rest like foul language"; "while the positive effect of children experiencing divorce in their homes is that children get to discover their talent when left alone to struggle."

The participants' responses and phrases indicate the need for continued research on the impact of divorce on children's academic achievement and suggest that there is a

need to provide parents with information about marriage compactness and the importance of staying together for the sake of the children. Most of the participants primarily discussed the negative impact of divorce on children's academic achievement. These findings are consistent with conclusions drawn by some researchers, such as Adebusuyi (2018), who asserted that children who had experienced parental divorce often had academic issues because of the problems faced at home. This finding is also supported by Offiong and Gberevbie (2018) who explained that divorce can have negative effects on children's academic achievement, though it might also take children out of an unhealthy or unsafe situation. Bonner et al. (2018) explained that divorce may lead to hatred for school, a desire for truancy, and reduced participation in classroom work. This finding shows that Bowen's family systems theory is also in line with Theme 2, which says emotional distress reduces social and academic functioning. This shows that less parental guidance and support in academics leads to lack of interest in school activities and extracurricular distress-inattention, and as such, children's needs are not met.

***Theme 2: Emotional Distress Reduces Social and Academic Functioning***

Participants used the following phrases to describe the behavior of children dealing with divorce: "self-isolated and self-intimidated"; "not happy"; "shyness"; "pretend to be happy"; "usually distracted"; "unstable"; "usually suffer from depression"; "suffer low self-esteem"; "not feeling important"; "not feeling special"; "wouldn't want to make friends"; "play and discuss"; "withdrawn"; "terrible situation"; and, "they are aggressive." Most participants reported having different experiences with the children

from divorced parents, and this prompted them to understand their behaviors. All participants shared their personal experiences with these children in the interview. The findings of this study are in line with the conclusions drawn by Mekonnen et al. (2019), which further revealed that many children with these behaviors come from homes where relationships are abnormal, coupled with insecurity and a lack of affection. Other researchers have also asserted that children who are separated from either of their parents for an extended period may develop a sense of insecurity (Feldhaus & Heintz-Martin, 2015). This corresponds with the findings of Yaw (2016), who also identified children's emotional disturbance as a result of divorce. These findings reveal the correspondence to Vygotsky's theory on social constructivism, which included an argument that social interaction is essential to children's academic achievement.

All participants responded to the various challenges that children with divorced parents encounter. Participants explained how these different challenges have affected children's academic achievement. Some phrases and words they used include: "they lack trust in people, especially adults;" "the guardian of these children sometimes abuse these children emotionally, sexually, verbally and otherwise;" "they have poor performance in their academics;" "loss of interest in social activities;" "increase in health problem;" "they like sleeping in class;" "they lack some basic necessity;" "some drop out of school;" "they are always afraid, having tension;" "at times they are unkempt." Despite knowing all of these challenges, participants still believed that there could be a way to help these children achieve their academic goals. These findings correspond with

Bowen's family systems theory which believes that resiliency of children depends on nurturing adults. All participants responded to this theme as a great set back in the lives of children whose parents are divorced. As educators, they were better positioned to access the academic ability and standard of these children and possibly report concerns to the children's parents or guardians. Some phrase and words used within this topic are as follows: "the inability to meet up with the academic demand;" "most parent are not able to meet up with the needs of that child in school;" "their commitment to academics is low and poor;" "children from divorced parents begin to drop in performance;" "inability to meet up with school demands;" "it is very common among them and low performance in classwork;" "inability in completing their homework/assignment from school;" "they have poor academic achievements;" "the academic achievement is very poor due to their psychological frame of mindset;" and, "their emotional state can lead to poor performance." These opinions correspond with those of some researchers who explained that children with previously high academic achievement levels became low academic achievers after their families experienced divorce (Latu, 2018; Mahony et al., 2015; Majoko, 2019). Furthermore, other researchers have shown some significant adverse effects of divorce on children's academic achievement (Andrew & Segun, 2019; Beley et al., 2018). The findings are also in line with Piaget's theory of cognitive development, which proposes that children actively construct their understanding of the world through four stages of cognitive development, this corresponds to theme two which explained emotional distress as it reduces social and academic functioning and thereby false

generalization of divorce causing low student performance. Piaget's theory involved informing educators of teaching practices that allow children to handle unexpected experiences, such as parental divorce as this correspond with theme three which explained that resiliency of children depends on nurturing adults.

### **Research Question 2**

RQ2 asked: What strategies or suggestions have Nigerian early childhood educators found useful when working with children affected by divorce? Within the interview, all participants addressed children's learning processes and the various teaching methods used to support those children experiencing divorce in their homes. Some phrases and words used within this theme were: "love them, pay their tuition fees, and school materials if possible and avoid any form of discrimination in the class"; "commitment maintaining a steady and consistent communication with them and helping to do away with any form of self-pity"; "play the role or taking the place of a parent [*in loco parentis*]"; "becoming their friend"; "as a teacher I can say that we should encourage and motivate them"; "using the play way method of teaching"; and "helping them fix all their academic homework/assignments as the case may be." Participants described the diverse strategies in handling, supporting, and helping the children from divorced parents. By introducing these teaching strategies, the learner supported while mastering a new concept or skill (Marginson & Dang, 2017; Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky believed that speech becomes a means of thinking through a child's social communication (Daniels, 2014; Saxena et al., 2020). Thus, awareness is the product of socialization (Gilbert, 2019). Psychological occurrences emerge from social interactions, while cognitive



domains are based on knowledge gained from what a child has been taught (Conte et al., 2018). These findings correspond with the findings from researchers, who asserted that by introducing these teaching strategies, the learner is given support while mastering a new concept or skill (Marginson & Dang, 2017; Vygotsky, 1978). This is again in line with Vygotsky's theory on the product of socialization. While psychological occurrences emerge from social interactions, cognitive domains are based on what a child has learned (Conte et al., 2018; Gilbert, 2019).

### ***Theme 3: Resiliency of Children Depends on Nurturing Adults***

All participants offered suggestions on working with children affected by parental divorce. Phrases and words used within this topic included: "the school authorities should endeavor to organize seminars and trainings"; "teachers ought to be trained and re-trained"; "school administration, government, and every stakeholder has to put hands together to see that those who are handling such children would get the adequate knowledge they require to be able to handle them effectively"; "they have to invest in the development of the professionals who are handling children from divorced homes"; "there is need for a counseling department"; and "having patience with the children." Every participant expressed their opinion on the need for useful methods for teaching children affected by parental divorce and understand their unique learning process. This aligns with the conclusions drawn by researchers such as Marginson and Dang (2017) and Vygotsky (1978), who asserted that in introducing new teaching strategies and suggestions, the learner is support when mastering a new concept or skill.

The educator's critical central role is to guide the child towards experiencing the different stages of learning, such as mastery and both conscious and unconscious incompetence (Clarà, 2017; Vygotsky, 1978). Yasnitsky (2018) explained relationships between individuals and their sociocultural context as they perform and relate in collective involvements, and asserted that that people use communication and writing to mediate their social environments. Early childhood care and education involves the social interactions among educators, learners, school environments, and the surrounding communities (Grant & Ray, 2018). Positive interactions between the educator and the child help the child's overall development. The ZPD is the period during which educators guide children through various academic issues (Marginson & Dang, 2017).

Each participant provided their various perspectives on the learning processes of children affected by parental divorce. Some phrases and words used when discussing this topic were: "the child has to have a stable mind"; "there is this aspect of neglect"; "the welfare department and counsellors has to look into how the child's life goes on even outside the school"; "having a problem with the opposite sex"; "having aggressive behavior"; "divorce has an effect in the society"; "it has an effect on the child irrespective of the gender that is in play at the particular time"; "rejecting school events"; "failing to develop close relationships"; "divorce brings social vices and unrest in the land"; "staying away from peers"; and, "often time children replicate their parents as their role models."

All participants pointed out various perspectives on the effect of divorce, including the influence on children's academic achievement. Their conclusions aligned with those of researchers such as Adebusuyi (2018) who argued that sometimes, children with low academic achievement from divorced homes display antisocial behavior by rejecting school events, staying away from peers, and failing to develop close relationships. Children may also experience anxiety and difficulty in relating to their parents, leading to aggressive behavior as a result of conflicts in the home (Adebusuyi, 2018). The influence of divorce on couples and children is stressful, depending upon the home situation prior to the divorce (Moschion & Van Ours, 2019; Umar, 2019). Haimi and Lerner (2016) observed that some children of divorced parents feel rejected and abandoned. Similarly, Turunen (2017) asserted that constant emotional pressures on children disturb their ability to learn, stipulating that divorce leads to emotional conflicts in learners. Turunen also stated that emotional conflict causes difficulty in childhood and may hinder achievement and personality integration throughout life.

### **Limitations of the Study**

One strength of this research study was the careful planning of each step; I designed this study to meet standard academic, scholarly, and ethical criteria. I maintained the standard of the study by engaging peer-review scholars as well as multiple diverse sources of data. I carefully maintained trustworthiness through database documentation, and recording the study details from research questions to conclusion. The limitations of the study include the fact that the school administrators selected the

research participants, which may have resulted in bias. Further, the research was limited to only three schools within one geographical location. It is likely that including more geographical locations, schools, and educators would provide better results and a truer representation of educators' opinions. However, the strength of a qualitative study does not depend on the number of participants, but the richness of data collected for the study. Twelve educators as research participants may not be enough to transfer the results of the study. Including a wider range of schools and educators could improve the transferability of the study results. Another limitation was the lack of clarity on the interview phone calls due to network challenges at the time.

## **Recommendations**

### **Recommendation for Actions**

Individuals, educators, educational stakeholders, NGOs, religious groups, and governments should all be involved in understanding and propagating the effects of divorce on children's academic achievements. They should also consider the dangers of social vices within present and future societies. A continued effort towards public enlightenment on the effects and dangers of divorce on children is greatly important to the Nigerian communities. There is a lack of awareness of the potential dangers that the effect of divorce can inflict upon children and the society as a whole. However, researchers have not yet ascertained how parental divorce shapes and transforms a child's belief system. It is very important for school educators, school administrators, educational stakeholders, and all academia to be knowledgeable of the effects, strategies, and suggestions for caring for children from divorced parents to enhance the children's

belief system. In distilling the findings of this research study, I made some recommendations for parents, educators, educational administrators, and government, including opportunities for future research practices.

Parents need to be aware of the implications of divorce on their children's growth and development. Children's growth includes their emotional, physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual development. Parental divorce can also interfere with children's behavioral progress, which in turn determines the future of the child. Educators, school administrators, and all academia should incorporate the strategies of training educators through conferences, seminars, and workshops. Educators within school systems should also implement the following series of strategies: identifying the children from divorced parents; managing their behavior; and, supporting their development during and after school hours. All schools should have a school psychologist and guidance counsellors who occasionally see into the affairs of children in the school, especially those with divorced parents.

I would also advise that state and federal governments enforce a law on marital misconduct that discourages divorce. Enforcing a law would help couples intending to divorce understand the implications and the effects it will have on their children. The government should make conscious efforts to protect the rights of children experiencing divorce in their homes, such as providing for their personal and academic welfare in an attempt to avoid future social vices.

### **Recommendation for Future Research**

Based on the research findings, future research could replicate the study in alternative geographical locations. Studies focused on another school in a remote, rural, urban, or suburban may generate different findings. Future researchers could also replicate the study with children of other ages, which also may generate new findings due to the varied level of maturity. I also recommend the replication of my study in a varied format and methodology, such as the quantitative or mixed method. There would be various advantages to applying these alternate methods for this research. Most significantly, using a larger population or sample could generate a more significant opportunity for generalization.

### **Implications for Social Change**

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore Nigerian early childhood educators' perspectives on the effects of divorce on children's academic achievement and strategies or suggestions useful when working with children affected by divorce. The findings of this study have several implications for positive social change. I sought to fill a gap in the literature concerning Nigerian early childhood educators' perspectives on the influence of parental divorce on the academic achievements of children between the ages of 6 and 9. It is paramount for educators and school administrators to hear about the research findings and suggestions for progress. To benefit the greater field of academics, I intend to publish my findings in educational journals.

In analyzing my study's finding, I determined that there is a need to create awareness of the impact and influence of divorce on children's academic achievements. All research participants indicated that divorce has a great impact on children's growth and development. Despite their awareness of the issue, practices of divorce continue. Individuals, educators, educational stakeholders, societies, NGOs, religious groups, and the government should all embark on an enlightenment campaign to better understand the effects of divorce on children's academic achievements and the danger of social vices in the present and future society. The school administrators, stakeholders, and the government can support psychologists, guidance counsellors, and teachers by encouraging them to attend diverse seminars, conferences, or workshops that present strategies and suggestions for managing and catering to children from divorced parents.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore Nigerian early childhood educators' perspectives on the influence of parental divorce on children's academic achievement and strategies or suggestions useful when working with children affected by divorce. I generated semi-structured interview questions to answer two research questions and conducted in-depth telephone interviews to obtain data. Divorce is common in Nigeria, where two-thirds of marriages end in divorce (Abdullahi et al., 2017; Ekpenyong & Ingiabuna, 2017). In Nigeria as of 2016, approximately 35% to 50% of children under the age of 18 had experienced parental separation and were living in single-parent homes (Offiong & Gberevbie, 2018). Research participants indicated that

divorce should be discouraged due to the consequences associated with it. Three themes emerged in the data analysis: children are better off when divorce takes them out of a toxic environment, emotional distress reduces social and academic functioning, and resiliency of children depends on nurturing adults. The results of this study may enhance the understanding of educators' perspectives on the influence of divorce on children's academic achievement. This will serve as a basis for educational policy decisions and enhance future academic research in Nigeria and other African countries.



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## Appendix A: Interview Protocol/Guiding Interview Questions

I would like to appreciate you once again for agreeing to take part in my research study. My research study seeks to understand Nigerian early childhood educators' perspectives on the influence of divorce on children's academic achievement and strategies or suggestions useful when working with children affected by divorce. This interview will last 45 minutes to 1 hour. I will be asking you questions about your teaching experiences. A consent form was given to you by me and was completed showing I have your permission to audio record our conversation. May I go ahead with recording our conversation today? If yes: Thank you! Please remember, you have the right to withdraw from this interview at any time, you may refuse to answer a question, and you may leave at any time. Do you have any question (s) before we start the interview? I will answer your question(s) at any point in this study, so feel free to ask questions.

1. What is the positive and negative effect of divorce on children's academic achievement, please tell me more?
2. How do you describe the classroom behavior of children from divorced parents to those whose parents are not divorced?
3. What common challenges have you observed in children experiencing divorce in their homes?

4. How do you describe the academic achievement of children from divorced parents from those whose parents are not divorced?
5. What strategies do you use when teaching children from divorced parents ?
6. What are your suggestions for others who are who are willing to assist children from divorced parents?
7. What are your suggestions to school authorities on professional development for teachers who are working with children from divorced parents?
8. Please give your reasons why these above suggestions are necessary?
9. What other perspectives about children of divorced parents do you want to share? Possible follow up prompts that I will keep visible as I interview each participant:

What did you mean by....

Tell me more about....

You mentioned.... Tell me more

What do you mean by....?

Please give me an example when that... worked/didn't work

Using the inclusion criteria, I will identify eligible educators with screening questions such as:

10. Can you please partake in my research study interview?
11. How many years of working experience have you put in as an early childhood care educator?

12. Have you worked with five or more children of divorced parents as an educator?
13. What class do you teach and what are the pupils' age range?
14. Are you an indigene?

## Appendix B: Open codes

List of all open codes from all data sources

Open code	Participant identifier	Excerpt
Additional home-life demands reduce academic performance	P6	Some of them also suffer some financial crises where the father is not there to give support and some of them will have to. In this part of our country, go hawking in the morning or farming just to see that they are been able to meet up with the demands of their academics and so it affects them.
Age and gender associated risks	P6	The effect of the broken homes, while the boys tend to be very hard, tend to be arrogant. The ladies are easily drawn to themselves, they don't associate, but the guys tend to be very hard and arrogant in school. They are most times the stubborn ones in school. Some of them end up as cultist if they are not properly managed while the ladies end up as prostitutes if they are not also properly managed.
Age and gender associated risks	P7	I can't categorically say but I know it affects them both irrespective of sex, I think that will be another that I will like to take up to see if divorce have special effect on gender but from experience, it affects both the male and the female child. I do know it affect them both. What the males goes through, is the same thing as the females.
Aggression-acting out-criminal activity	P8	There are some children in the class that, if you're telling them to stand up, they are sitting, they act different from the supposed instruction that is given, that is number one and the number two is the kind or quality of life that they live, a child can be wayward by, as a child in JSS2 having affection or in a

Open code	Participant identifier	Excerpt
Aggression-acting out-criminal activity	P3	<p>relationship with the opposite sex, that's a wayward type of behavior from a child that is mostly from a divorced home.</p> <p>Impact in children from divorce home, truancy they might be running away from school and their not know even teacher might not take notice, they said they are going to school and branch somewhere else, eventually teacher discover, they might say oh daddy send me to so-so place or I should give and give excuse till maybe somebody find out that, this is what is happening, the child is running away from school before that area can be handle, so I think apart from rustivating parents and looking at marriage as a bad thing, academically it can affect them by dropping out of school.</p>
Aggression-acting out-criminal activity	P10	<p>But the negative outweighs the positive. The negative is that they lack concentration in class, they are usually sad. These children are aggressive and rudely in most cases. In academic generally, they don't perform normally.</p>
Avoid discrimination and favoritism	P8	<p>My suggestion to them is to do away with discrimination and also creating a sense of equality among the students in general, treating everybody equally, I will suggest to them is love-strategy and avoiding any form of discrimination, treating them equally and filling up any gap that is know that the child is losing from.</p>
Avoid discrimination and favoritism	P1	<p>As a teacher I will also advice you shouldn't do something that will trigger favor one, you have to avoid favoritism, because if you are a teacher you have to stand firm whatever you</p>

Open code	Participant identifier	Excerpt
Checking in as key social-emotional strategy	P9	<p>are doing, do as a teacher you have to avoid favoritism and stand firm when we at work.</p> <p>By asking what the problem is. 2. Draw the child close, if it's a private office, some teachers in their classroom will bring the child close to their table, try to make the child happy, and then ask questions like, is anything wrong? The way we show the love will determine the child's response, the child will always say "nothing and nothing" apart from being a teacher, you should understand the mood of a child, knowing that the child does not want to talk, u don't just say since the child does not want to talk, let me leave him/her, don't just let the child go, encourage the child and say " okay, since you don't want to talk, it's okay but anytime you are ready to talk, I'm here, don't be afraid, I know how to flog but I can be your best friend", we will observe such behavior from those in a divorced home and those in a non-divorced home, you have to proffer solution.</p>
Checking in as key social-emotional strategy	P4	<p>firstly, as a teacher I assume the role of their parent, what they called Loco parents, Loco parents yeah, I assume the role of the parent, that gives them the opportunity to freely talk to me once, I can get their attention, I can easily get to teach them, another thing I do is, from time to time I arrange one on one classes with them, hour just to tell them to wait for like 15 to 20 minutes thereabout</p>
Children have trust issues	P7	<p>Those children have issues trusting people.</p>



Open code	Participant identifier	Excerpt
Children have trust issues	P11	The major challenge I have encountered with them is how to get them to talk about the things that are troubling them. It is so difficult to get those children to talk, to me if a child opens up to what is troubling them, one can be able to help them but when they won't talk to you and they are and wont, I think it's because they lack trust in people.
Depression-isolation-withdrawal	P8	Most times if you notice that children from a divorced homes are always seemed to be self-isolated and self-intimidated, most times they are not retarded children, if you are a very observant teacher, when a student comes to school and the child is not happy, you could tell from the child appearance and the child's response to the class and to the activities in the class.
Depression-isolation-withdrawal	P3	I think that divorce can affect children's academic achievement negatively in different ways. One, psychologically this children are traumatized, because mere hearing the word mentioned in their homes, which before now may be a lovely home, confusion sets in and will make them emotionally down and they want to process this whole situation. Again, socially it will make them to be withdrawn, they won't want to mix up with people (other children). Divorce can affect children academic performance adversely.
Depression-isolation-withdrawal	P11	So, we first said, the social life and then the academic performance of the child. Also, the health of the child is involved. Such experience can cause the child to go into depression.

Open code	Participant identifier	Excerpt
Dysfunctional relationships-negative peer pressure	P2	The children might go wayward, you know, some drop out of school, you see them walking about and also, one of the disadvantage of divorce is that, when a child grow up to a certain age, maybe in secondary school and begins to travel to travel to visit the mother or the father, there will be a great problem there because if the child is living with the father and then will always go and visit the mother the father might not know whether the child is with the mother or not or even get to know when the child has gone elsewhere. For the boys, especially, they can go and join bad gang.
Dysfunctional relationships-negative peer pressure	P4	Also, they have very high tendency for drugs, to take drugs. Even children they have high tendency to take drugs, so these are some of the challenges that I have discovered with children from divorce home.
Emotional distress contributes to lack of focus-work completion	P12	Answer: Academics achievement: I will give it 30:70 ratio, meaning those people from divorce home, I will give them like 30 percent and to those that their parents are together I will give them 70 percent because those parents are together, they are happy, they are "oh I'm privileged, oh I want to make my mother proud, I want to make my father proud", they want to press forward and because of course their needs are always met and they try to be focused when they are in class but for those one that their parents are already divorced, sometimes you give them assignment or something on activities to do and they are even very slow in doing it because their mind is not in

Open code	Participant identifier	Excerpt
Emotional distress contributes to lack of focus-work completion	P10	<p>what they are doing in their performance.</p> <p>As a teacher, I noticed that they don't concentrate in the class, they find it difficult in catching up fast and thirdly, they have this low academic performance is part of the challenge they children from divorced parents go through and they are not happy. Anytime you see them, they wear this unhappy look as a result of their challenges.</p>
Emotional distress contributes to lack of focus-work completion	P6	<p>They tend to be passive in class, they most times don't concentrate on the teacher's work. Their minds are always scattered and so they are not able to deliver when they are called upon to deliver</p>
Encouragement and motivation	P3	<p>If nothing is done about their state of mind but if they are actually taken care of, if they are talk out of it, I think they can recouped and reblend back,</p>
Encouragement and motivation	P10	<p>As a teacher, what I think is right is what I do. I show them love, try to be patient with them, give them more attention and make them to understand that they can actually come out of what they are going through. Also, I encourage them and tell them that they can be better and making sure they forget all the things that is happening to them at that particular time. Catching their attention and encouraging them to do better.</p>
Encouragement and motivation	P9	<p>One of the ways to help in these challenges is by prayer, encouragement and motivation, act as the loco-parentis that we are, so that when they miss their parent with your word of</p>

Open code	Participant identifier	Excerpt
Encouragement and motivation	P1	encouragement, they will still have hope. As a teacher I can say that we should encourage them to, help them always, we can encourage them so that we can help them always because such children need encouragement, ok, yes they need encouragement, so just like I said we should encourage them, so that, they too will develop interest in learning.
Encouraging students to stay in school	P6	One thing I will say is that the authority/management should be little bit considerate in their dealings with these children and treat them like children that need their support and help instead of throwing them to the streets to become hoodlums that will later be of negative influence to the society. I will say if the school authority can, if not all, be giving them scholarship.
Encouraging students to stay in school	P1	My suggestions is that the school authorities should help those children, to encourage them to develop interest in education, but, if the school authority will also, will do such thing, those children will be happy in school and they will not be staying at home, they will be coming to school all the time,
Encouraging students to stay in school	P11	The purpose for the child being in school is for the child to learn and for a child to learn, the child has to have a stable mind and to achieve this stable mind, it is where professional come in, so it becomes necessary for the steps to be taken, so that in the long run, the learning can take place because if the learning does not take place, the aim, the goal, the objective of coming to school will be defeated, so it becomes

Open code	Participant identifier	Excerpt
Escaping domestic violence	P2	<p>very necessary that every person (the government the school authorities, the teachers) in charge of helping the child has to help the child all-round to achieve learning when the child is coming from home unhappy and nothing is done about it then learning cannot take place, that is why it becomes necessary that a child who is going through emotional troubles resulting from divorced parents has to be helped.</p> <p>The positive aspect, it is only maybe in a home where the children and the parents are having a lot of troubles, quarrels, beating and all the rest like foul language and then the parents' divorce and the better part of the couple take the child and properly takes care of that child, that's when you say it's positive, then the child is no longer learning those fowl languages he/she was learning, no longer going through the trauma of the father beating the mother or beating them as the children, you know, that's only when you say it's positive</p>
Escaping domestic violence	P3	<p>I think if they are in abusive homes, maybe father is always abusing the mother and they are aware of it, it will affect them adversely academically.</p>
Evidence of emotional distress	P7	<p>But the negative effect I think it has a lot with their emotions, social and mental health problem. That is my observation from children from divorced homes, they are more delinquent, and they deteriorate intellectually</p>

Open code	Participant identifier	Excerpt
Evidence of emotional distress	P11	Sometimes when you try to find out the reason they are keeping so cold and then the child will burst out in tears. It gives them emotional trauma from the angle I look at it.
False generalization of divorce causing low student performance	P5	Respondent: ok those parents who are divorced from those whose parents are not divorced, let me say for every child, he/she has their own individual differences or talent, there are children who have it all and going well for them, yet they find it difficult to balance their educational career because maybe they have been over pampered, they have been shown more than enough care and so they begin to misbehave,
Greater potential to choose own path	P10	To my little experience as a teacher, the positive effect to me is that it makes the children come out stronger in life and makes them see the reality of life in which themselves would take caution as they grow to adulthood.
Greater potential to choose own path	P4	From experience I have discovered that parent sometimes influence their children career path. And which is most time children don't want to be disturbed on what kind of career path they want to be involved in, a lot of parents that I have come across, maybe in an hospital they want their child to become a doctor too to continue the family profession, parents..
Involving the welfare department and other professionals	P6	It will be a very good thing and thing of joy if we can get people who can assist like foundation who can take the responsibility of these children that are from broken homes. We will be very glad to welcome and allow them to play the fatherly and the motherly role that these children lack. If it is to even meet

Open code	Participant identifier	Excerpt
Involving the welfare department and other professionals	P7	<p>up with only the fees, their books and resource materials they use in school, it will go a long way to easing the burden on such child. So, we want to appeal to NGOs and other foundations who can come to the aid of the children, it will be a very good thing and welcome development.</p> <p>Answer: people who do what needs to be done for children from divorced homes, people in early childhood, people in guidance and counseling, other counselors have the knowledge on how to cope with them. This group of people can work as a team for this purpose and can as well employ any specialized person that they may know and can recommend to help the students.</p>
Issue is too big for child to process	P3	<p>Invariably, what I have said so far is that divorce affects academics negatively because the whole issue is too big for them to process, thereby making them not to participate fully as they use to do before.</p>
Lack of interest in school activities and extracurriculars	P5	<p>Well, often time, challenges like they are afraid because they don't know what next, their lovely home have been shattered, then they don't know what next, is mummy bring in a step dad, is daddy bring in a step mum, what will happen to us? You know, that fear is there, they feel unloved, they are sad, they are very sad at time, sometime they lack some basic necessity, which made them to become aggressive at time and edging, even when their mate are playing with them, they don't feel it as a play, they are ready to fight, that kind of attitude, because of the pains</p>

Open code	Participant identifier	Excerpt
Less parental guidance-support in academics	P8	<p>they feel inside, most of them can't express this pain like talking so they put that energy towards something else like fighting, and these are the kind of children if care is not taken, they join negative group, bad gang, not as if they are bad children, they are not, but because the pains they feel inside of them lead them to do negative things because they feel am unloved, nobody love me, nobody cares before you know they will have this attitude that I can do anything I like, so the attitude is really terrible, it character fear, tension, at time they are unkept, that nobody is really checking out for them.</p> <p>I've witnessed this in the class, there is a particular boy, each time he comes to school I see him seating very separate from others, at first I was thinking he was shyness because I make so much progress with children, there are so many children in my school that tells things they could not tell their parents, and I know one thing that is responsible for that is "how much time their parents spend with them, sometimes parents think it's money when they provide the money the child will be fine, it's not true, you see, there must be a balance.</p>
Less parental guidance-support in academics	P4	<p>They find it difficult to complete classwork and homework because of lack of parental support and guidance, while there from, intact parent they complete their work and class work and homework on time, even some good as far as having lesson teacher that, to also guide them in doing their classes, homework and, activities.</p>



Open code	Participant identifier	Excerpt
Observing academic differences Observing behavioral differences Parental abdication of responsibility	P12	When the parents are not together with the children, often in time, there is denial in their academic material they need and probably they still with the guardian, may be on uncle, one aunty, and grandmother as the case may be and usually suffer denial of privileges.
Parental abdication of responsibility	P11	Also, looking at child abuse resulting from divorced parents, because sometimes when parents are divorced, there's always a third party who helps the custodian of child to take care of the child. Since the parent are not together, someone else may needed to play a guardian role for the child and sometimes they abuse these children emotionally, sexually, verbally and otherwise.
Parental distress is connected to child distress	P5	So, he or she might grow up too be that kind of withdrawn. Harsh to other people but because they don't have it express from both parents, so cases you find out that this one grows up with jealous some grow up with a father and mother I don't have or sometimes grow up with this low self-esteem, you see that a child with both parents is more caring and romantic, than he/she and in the other side, children with both parents has more opportunity because the feel like is my daddy cannot feel this thing for me, mummy will do defiantly do that if mummy can do this, daddy can do that, so they gave that

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Parental distress is connected to child distress	P5	<p>kind of back side relationship with people and they turn out to be happier children.</p> <p>So, these affect their scores a lot, compares to children whose family are still together as one. So, it's kind of bothering for especially teenagers. It's very difficult for teenagers whose parents are divorced. It affects so many of their goals. And if care is not taken, that when they split, they can just go and then I can never let my mother be deceived again.</p>
Parental distress-inattention children's needs not met	P10	<p>What I think is causing their poor performance is that at home, there is no attention for them. No one is checking their work at home. No one is following up, no love from their parents. Because why I said there is no love from home and proper follow-up by parents, children need proper follow-up which I think they are not getting. I think it's one of the reason they are not doing well and if that is not taken care of, sometimes could even lead to lost in the class most times and that leads to their drop out from school and all that.</p>
Parental distress-inattention children's needs not met	P6	<p>It tends to affect the child academically. The child is most likely not to do well compared to a child from a home that is healthy because there is no parental guidance and support, and this tends to have a psychological effect on the child's performance in school.</p>
Parental distress-inattention children's needs not met	P7	<p>Children who are not from a divorced home are shown more of affection, parental care, dynamic changes, sometimes they help them go through their homework, interact with them and</p>

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Parental distress-inattention children's needs not met	P4	<p>have a personal assessment of their academic performances and help them where they need help. Most times in divorced homes, this children don't actually get all that, they no longer enjoy this privilege, generally children from divorced homes are performing poorly than children whose parents are not divorced, children from divorced home, their education are always affected due to lacks</p> <p>I have observed with children from divorce home, one of the first challenge is that they are mostly unkempt, they don't look too good, sometimes their hair is not properly combed, sometimes their uniforms are not ironed,, sometimes they don't even take time to eat good meal, so they are looking unkempt.</p>
Relational and emotional distress Role of school authorities Role of teacher Safety and care increases focus-performance	P3	<p>But the positive side, I think if they are in abusive homes, maybe father is always abusing the mother and they are aware of it, it will affect them adversely academically, but because of the divorce, perhaps they left with the mother, they will begin to do well because of the sudden seizure of abuses they witness. They will be more relaxed and focus, and they have peace which can boost their academic performance.</p>
Safety and care increases	P5	<p>And in the other side, there are some children who loss opportunity to their own advantages, children who have all</p>

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focus-performance		this strict parents, you know both mother and father are very strict and some of them because of what they have seen outside, other children who have excess love from their parents, they the parents has the situation or divorce. You see that now one of them. I can really use my advantages e.g. When you have a mother who is no longer there but the child is with the father, you find out that he receives more love and care from the father, definitely, he will be comfortable without a mom and in that way, the child won't be affected negatively at all.
Schools need counseling units	P2	I will advise the school authorities to get a counseling unit, where they will be counselling such children..
Schools need counseling units	P11	Apart from those who are handling them in the classroom, every school is supposed to have a counseling department and if that department does exist, children from divorced homes should be their priority because they need counseling to come out of what they are going through and help them overcome the challenges. They should make sure that the counselors are trained and re-trained so that they can meet up the needs of those children.
Social-emotional support strategies Student self-determination can make a difference	P8	Academic achievement can always be described by individual self-determination. A child can come from a divorced and at the same time say to him or herself that, "I am not going to

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Supporting-training teachers to better assist students	P2	<p>give myself to any form of distraction to my class work, so the bottom base of their academic achievement could come from self-determination, that's number 1</p> <p>School authorities is that if there are programs where they can teach people on how to take care of such children. School authorities should send their teachers on programs, on seminars, seminars that will help them to learn more on how to take care of these children.</p>
Supporting-training teachers to better assist students	P5	<p>Schools can actually send teachers, you know training, seminar with workshop and all the knowhow of school, sometimes it doesn't really matter what the seminar is going to be about. School is rated as a place for training, we all have children and teachers, we all have younger one, so once in a while, sometimes the government organizer's things like that, churches organize things like that. NGO and all the could send some teachers to go and learn or get involved in the seminar or workshop you know or even give the teachers an assignment in the seminar or workshop you know or even give the teachers an assignment like bring out the research you know will once in a while with the students, help them with whatever problem or issues they are going through, especially those once how really need hat care, there are some children who are willing to do well, they have their brain, but because they don't have someone to tell them what to do, they need a little push, a little encouragement, what you need do</p>

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Supporting-training teachers to better assist students	P11	<p>is to keep talking to them a teacher can just make up to be friend with such student like they are age mates, talk to the child, he/she might be able to open up to that teacher, children who are open to teachers, turn up to do better in school</p> <p>Teachers ought to be trained and re-trained especially for those teachers who are handling early childhood education, their capacity must be developed from time to time because there are always new findings and new ways of doing things and so the school administration, government and every stakeholder has to put hands together to see that those who are handling such children would get the adequate knowledge they require to be able to handle them effectively, they have to invest in the development of the professionals who are handling children from divorced homes.</p>
Teacher observance and willingness to listen	P1	<p>I have about uh, three, strategies that's why the school should offer prospectus to those that are willing to assist children from divorce family, the school too should help them, ok, should motivate them, then the third(3) one is the teacher should always have and also attend to them in time of need. Teacher need: they should always pay attention to these children and also, what? Attend to them in time of need.</p>
Teacher observance and willingness to listen	P4	<p>The person must have a good listening ability, one of the problem that children have is people don't want to listen to them, people want to impose ideas on them, so this is what you should do, do like this, do like that, do like this and</p>

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Teachers make a difference as role models	P2	<p>they are just tired of do, do, do, so sometime they want to say things, so allow them to express themselves, so you have to be a good listener to be able to, be a good teacher to them</p> <p>If you see that, that child is lacking something, you can go extra mile to get that thing for the child. Maybe the child's book is not complete, you can ever go extra mile of going to the child's home either talk the parent which the child is staying with, is it the father or the mother, you can go to their home and tell them how to care more about that child.</p>
Teachers make a difference as role models	P6	<p>We see how we can play the role of the father or the mother to the child in the school and try to ask after the child's welfare.</p> <p>And if it means from the little, we are earning make sacrifice, why not? That is what we do to see that the child is also happy. And when the child is happy, the child will be able to learn anything and will be able to deliver. So, it is our responsibility to see how we can bring the child from the level of moodiness into the realm of happiness so that the child will be able to learn as their other colleagues are learning.</p>
Teaching methods to engage students	P12	<p>Respondent: Actually, you can also use intensive and motivation, you can use intensive like praising them, playing with children, making them feel very important, making them feel oh they can make it,</p>
Teaching methods to engage students	P4	<p>Also, I engage them in class activities, some, there are certain, em, subject or topic that are taught that is activity based ensure that they are actively</p>

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Understanding additional burden teachers carry	P7	<p>involved, sometime I make them the leader so they will be able to instruct other children so that they are actively involved so I don't allow them to just roam around the class without doing something, I engage them in class activities. I personally on my own look for way to organize extramural classes for them so that they will be able to be at the same pace with the class.</p> <p>It stills boils down to the fact that divorce gives teachers an extra work, gives the children an extra burden, they really need help and if you can help them it will all be good for a teaching-learning process, its counter-productive academic wise, and it does not only affect academically, also in attitude but I am more concerned with their academics performance which is the reason why we are in the classroom for the first place, if you can't handle the negative aspect of it, it begins to make our work</p>
Understanding and nurturance are key	P2	<p>I'm a single mother that took care of two children on my own because I'm separated with their father, so I will tell you what my girl child said sometime when she was younger. When they went to school, a day came, my child returned home and came to me and said "mummy, it's not you that is supposed to be paying our school fees, I was shocked hearing that word because I'm sure that in school, she was seeing other pupil's father coming to pay school fees and maybe them discussing some things, I'm just stating this one as an example to you, that was she said and it touched me, so whenever she</p>



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Understanding and nurturance are key	P4	says any word like that I will know how to talk to her, cuddle her and tell her that she shouldn't bother so, children are three in school, they see things happening and they talk so those that talk, the ones from divorce home hear the different things that other children talk about and it troubles them. Also, I create a space, a friendly and home-like environment in the classroom, so that they can feel free to learn and ask questions, I create an atmosphere in the class that is homely, you know, am not too hard and not too simple. I just; when I need to be firm and when I need to be playful with them, I try to balance the whole, issues, so that I will not be too firm and they will not take my authority for granted.