

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**DIVORCE ON ADOLESCENCES' SCHOOLING IN ASAMANKESE SENIOR
HIGH SCHOOL IN GHANA**

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**A thesis in the Department of Counselling Psychology,
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Graduate Studies in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the award of the degree of
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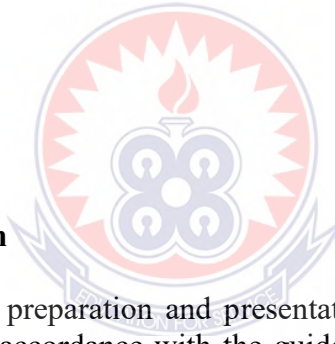
DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I, Samuelson Okpoti Gbenor, declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely the product of my own research work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for other degree elsewhere.

Signature.....

Date.....



Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was carried out under my supervision in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

Name of Supervisor: Mr. Eric Ofosu-Dwamena

Signature.....

Date.....

DEDICATION

To my dear wife, Mrs. Mabel Okpoti and all adolescent participants.



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My sincere thanks goes to my supervisor, Mr. Eric Ofori-Dwamena. Who stood by me in preparation of this thesis and has undertaken the supervision of this work in a lecturer – student relationship. He has been available at all times, giving directions and support to ensure the success of this thesis.

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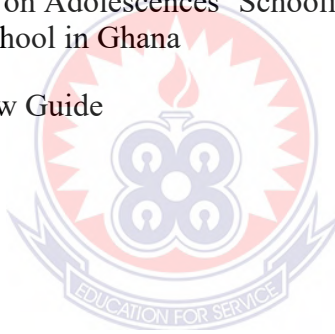
Finally, my special thanks goes to my participants who availed themselves for interview and there by contributing to the success of this research.

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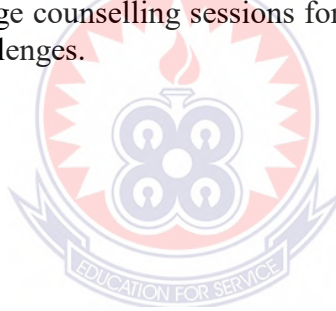
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ABSTRACT

This study explored divorce on adolescences schooling in Asamankese Senior High School in Ghana, the objectives examine the influence of divorce on their social and academic well-being as well as their coping strategies. This was done through qualitative approach. The population for the study was 244 adolescent students who were victims of parental divorce. The participants were part of adolescent students who took part in an outreach presentation by the researcher during his practicum in Asamankese Senior High School on the topic “coping strategies by adolescents after parental divorce” in 2019. Purposive sampling technique was employed to select a sample size of 12 for the study. The researcher made use of interview guide for the data collection exercise. In this study the data were analysed using the thematic method. The study revealed that divorce makes adolescents emotionally unstable, diminishes their academic performance and school attendance. The study also found that, adolescents who are victims of parental divorce exhibit suicidal ideation, isolation and withdrawal from friends, intolerance attitudes and a feeling of low self-esteem. It is therefore recommended that, Guidance and Counselling Units of various Senior High Schools should revitalize their operations by identifying students who are victims of parental divorce and organise counselling sessions for adolescents from divorced parents. It also recommended that, form masters in various Senior High schools should carry out a comprehensive study of their students, identify changes in their behaviour and arrange counselling sessions for adolescents from divorced parents to help mitigate their challenges.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Every member of the human race goes through a life-long adaptive process, which is influenced by environmental and social factors. Accordingly, Elder (1999), argued that while individuals shape their lives through personal decisions and initiatives, they are always constrained by external forces and limitations. Similar life expectations are confronted by the adolescent. Adolescence has been noted as a crucial period within which one experiences physical, cognitive, psychosocial and emotional transformations. The term adolescence is derived from Latin word, '*adolescere*' means to grow, is a transitional stage of physical and psychological development that generally occurs during the period from puberty to legal adulthood (Agochiya, 2010).

Characteristically, during adolescence, the individual starts to learn major life competencies such as managing emotions, developing a healthy lifestyle, concern about future career or prospects, dealing with peer groups, dealing with family dynamics, learning inter-personal communication skills, self-awareness, growth and self-esteem issues, among others. According to Fallon and Bowles (2001), the most influential determinant of adolescent success with the negotiation to adulthood is family structure.

In line with this, Brown (2006) argues that to a large extent, family structure determines adolescents' academic and psychosocial development. It could therefore, be said that family structure bears important influence on adolescents' abilities to successfully navigate through school and into adulthood. However, it must be pointed out that a key barrier to enable families influence adolescents to navigate successfully

through schooling into adulthood is divorce. According to Amato (2000), adolescents from divorced families face more behavioural problems, increased conflict with parents, increase in drug and alcohol use and increase in mental health problems. According to Amato, children of divorced parents experience lower academic performance, are more poorly behaved, experience more mental health problems and more trouble with relationships. Again, Amato opines that children with divorced parents achieve lower levels of success at school, are more poorly behaved, exhibit more behavioural and emotional problems, have lower self-esteem, and experience more difficulties with interpersonal relationships. Amato further observed that after divorce adolescents experienced anger, fear loneliness, depression and guilt.

Specifically, Madalyn (2016) further opines that the ramifications of divorce on the family structure can be devastating in many areas of the adolescent's development. Among these, are the effects on the adolescents' schooling in relation to their social, emotional, intellectual, spiritual well-being. Boney (2003) highlighted the negative effects of divorce on adolescent development. The author found that divorce disrupts adolescents' academic development. School engagement research denoted that adolescents from divorced families struggle with becoming academically and socially engaged in school (Buchanan, Maccoby, & Dornbusch, 1996). Divorce is not a pleasant situation for children.

Secombe and Warner (2003) proposed that divorce causes four major sources of stress for children, which include, fear of change, loss of attachment, feelings of abandonment, and tension from exposure to hostile parents. They further noted that most children experienced extreme difficulties with adjusting to the first year of the divorce. According to Smith (1999), students may lose confidence, blame themselves

for the break-up, and see their parent's separation or divorce in a complicated way. Smith argues that the adolescent students may encounter a range of feelings, namely, disbelief and denial, sadness, loss, loneliness, depression, anger, anxiety, fear, relief, and hope. Response to these feelings often results in different levels of intensity, while some students may experience mild anxiety and sadness, others may feel more intense emotions. Hargreaves (1991) documented behavioural issues and emotional problems exhibited by adolescent students post their parents' divorce. According to Hargreaves, parents may also have different expectations and rules for their child presenting inconsistencies which may confuse the child. Hargreaves posited that, students display problems during a variety of stages of family deterioration including times during this alteration period, either before parental separation or directly subsequent to a parental separation. Students will sometimes experience delayed stress responses occurring years after a divorce in a form of post-traumatic stress. These behavioural issues, which according to Hargreaves are attributed to what he describes as adolescents' stressors after parents' divorce, include disorganized daily routines, change in parenting style, reduced family income, parental conflict, limited resources, and parental accessibility. The significance of these adolescents' stressors outlined by Hargreaves lies in their manifestation of the social context that determines whether or not the impact of parent's divorce would severely be felt by the adolescent.

The above scholarly findings and positions on the impact of divorce on the adolescents' social, academic and psychological development show the seriousness of such social menace, hence its relevance in social science research across the globe. In Ghana, Mainoo (2008) reported a progressive increase in divorce from the year 2005. The scholar found that due to the increasing numbers of single-parent, mother-headed

homes in Ghana, more Ghanaian youths (4.5 million) continue to experience varying factors that affect their psychosocial adjustment following parental divorce. Ankomah (2002) and Mainoo have reported the serious lack of empirical literature on divorce studies in Ghana. It is for this reason, that this research is conducted to ascertain the influence of divorce on the adolescent, with emphasis on their schooling.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

Human beings of all ages, including adolescents, are happy and able to deploy their talents to their best advantage when they are confident that, standing behind them are one or more persons who will come to their aid should difficulties arise. Such confidence is, however, eroded when the bond that the adolescents once shared with the parents and other external family members are weakened by divorce. Several theories have emerged in recent times as a way of explaining the influence of divorce on adolescents. For instance, the social learning theory of Bandura (1977) is concerned with the relationship between social and environmental factors and their influence on behaviour. Bandura, therefore, believed that if any force, such as divorce, disorganized the unit in which the modelling is taking place, then the younger ones who are doing the modelling are affected. It is in the light of this that divorce is seen as having a negative impact on the adolescents.

Also, one of such theories on which a study such as this can be grounded is the Attachment Theory propounded by Bowlby (1982). This theory provides an important perspective on divorce because; divorce involves the disruption and often the termination of a powerful attachment bond. According to the theory, neither love nor grief nor other forms of strong emotion are felt for just any person; instead, they are felt for particular individuals with whom one has established an attachment bond

(Bowlby, 1982). Within this “attachment bonds” are strong and persistent ties that cause each member of a family or marriage union to maintain proximity to the other and to engage in proximity- seeking behaviour when greater protection or support is needed.

Once formed, an attachment bond tends to endure, and its disruption is severely felt. The theory stipulates two important criteria for healthy human functioning: First, every individual requires the presence and availability of a trustworthy figure that is willing and able to provide a safe haven and a secure base to explore the world and the person’s own capacities. These opportunities that exist in marriage bond also positively affect the wellbeing of the offspring, to the extent that the disruption of the bond has the potency of turning their world upside down.

Second, everyone must be able both to recognize when another person is a trustworthy attachment figure and to collaborate with him or her to maintain a mutually rewarding relationship (Bowlby, 1979). From the attachment theory perspective, the absence of one or both of these important features of marriage-partners - sets the stage for dysfunctional relations and eventual separation and divorce.

One significant area of the core models of the attachment theory, if impaired by divorce, is explained to affect the adolescent in his or her attachment security. In this case, the proponents of the theory posit that divorce reduces a child’s confidence in who and where his or her attachment figures (parents) are. The attachment theory does not only explain the influence of divorce on the adolescent’s attachment security, but also his or her psychological and physical health. From the forgoing discussion, it can be said that a study such as this can be understood within the parameters of

attachment theoretical perspective due to the insights the theory gives on the causes and impacts of divorce on children

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The state of affairs of social, emotional and intellectual adjustment difficulties of the adolescent as a result of divorce is a global challenge. Several scholars across the globe have conducted empirical base studies on the general impacts of divorce on adolescents. For instance, a study by Kelly (1990) on 520 adolescents in the United State of America (USA) indicated that, sixty-eight percent of adolescents from divorce home has demonstrated internalizing (anti-social behaviour) problems. Studies in Britain (Rodgers, Power & Hope, 1997), New Zealand (Fergusson, Horwood & Lynskey, 1994), Finland (Aro & Pollasaari, 1992), China (Liu, 2000) and the Netherlands (Garnefski & Diekstra, 1997) have also found lower levels of adjustment in children from divorce families. In Kenya, Mercy (2017), reports that adolescents who have experienced divorce have higher chances of experiencing divorce in their own marriages. Other findings of the researcher on the impact of divorce on the adolescents were: experienced loss of security, poor quality of child-parent relationship, adolescent, parental hostility and rejection, poor education and complication of adolescents' spiritual belief system.

Few existing studies in Ghana reveal that adolescents of divorced parents undergo some challenges. Adofu and Etsey (2016), for example, found that both the adolescent male and female experience the impact of divorce, which range from social, economic to psychological. Among the key findings of the research on the impact of divorce on the adolescents were: the adolescents' inability to pay school fees, getting involved in premarital sex, parents' inability to provide for the needs of the adolescent, loss of

inters in school and at home and low self-esteem. Adolescents in Asamankese Senior High School who are victims of parental divorce may not be completely different from the various forms of post-divorce difficulties of the adolescents established in the findings of the afore-mentioned researchers. By implication, the widespread of post-divorce problems that characterize the lives of the adolescents do not only characterize the European and American societies, but also the African and Ghanaian societies.

The weaknesses of these studies are that they are based on inferences drawn by researchers and scholars from other people's work without tapping from the experiential knowledge of the adolescents who are victims of parental divorce. Again, these studies did not provide in-depth studies on adolescents schooling, hence the researcher's motivation for delving into the reality of the phenomenon in the selected area.

Again, their findings focused entirely on the general effects of divorce on the adolescent, with little or no attention given to influence of divorce on the adolescents' schooling. The researcher is of the view that, this global state of social, emotional and intellectual adjustment difficulties of the adolescent as a result of divorce are not exclusive to nations outside Ghana. However, the influence of divorce on the emotional, intellectual and social adjustment of adolescents in Asamankese Senior High School has not been investigated. Hence the researchers motivation to conduct the current study. problems encountered by adolescents established in the findings reported by the afore-mentioned researchers.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose for conducting this research was to ascertain the influence of divorce from the adolescents of the Asamankese Senior High School who are victims of parental divorce.

1.5 Research Objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Indicate the influence of divorce on social relationship of the adolescent.
2. Indicate the influence of divorce on the emotional well-being of the adolescent.
3. Identify the influence of divorce on the academic well-being of the adolescent
4. Indicate the coping strategies of the adolescents from divorced homes in Asamankese SHS.

1.6 Research Questions

The research will be guided by the following questions;

1. Indicate how divorce influences the social relationship of adolescents in Asamankese Senior High School in the West Akim Municipality?
2. Identify how divorce influences the emotional well-being of adolescents in school?
3. Indicate how divorce influences the academic well-being of the adolescent in school?
4. Identify how the adolescent cope with the influence of divorce in the school environment?

1.7 Significance of the Study

Academically, the study added to knowledge by providing findings on the influence of divorce on the adolescent's schooling in the selected area of study, and by implication, Ghana at large. Additionally, it provided the opportunity for the school authorities and other significant others in the Asamankese Senior High School to understand the complex nature of challenges confronted by the student of divorced parents so as to design appropriate measures to mitigate such challenges.

The findings of the research also provided the useful insights to the Guidance and Counselling Unit of Asamankese Senior High School, about the plights of adolescents of divorced parents, and the need to assist them with counselling. With the findings from this study, parents would appreciate the effects of divorce on their children, hence the need to do everything humanly possible to maintain their marriages. The outcome of this study will help provide vital information in handling adolescents caught in the web of divorce. Finally, the outcome of this study are significant by way of providing education to the adolescents on the expected possible changes during divorce of their parents, so as to adjust properly when it occurs.

1.8 Delimitation of the Study

Influence of divorce on adolescents' well-being is a complex field of study and may offer itself to several spheres of research. Thus, the study was opened for the entry of several relevant information as the research unfolded. However, the main focus of the study was the influence of divorce on the adolescents' social and psychosocial and academic well-being. It primarily centred on how divorce influences the interpersonal relationship, emotional and academic well-being of the adolescent and their

coping strategies. Again, the study was geographically delimited to Asamankese Senior High School in the Eastern Region of Ghana.

1.9 Organization of the Study

The study was organized into five chapters. The first chapter dealt with the introduction, which, among others, provided an insight into the background of the study, the purpose of the study, the objectives of the study and the research questions. Chapter two focused on the review of related literature on the topic. Chapter three comprised of the methodology for the study. Chapter four centred on data presentation and analysis, while the last chapter focused on the summary of the research work.

1.10 Definition of Terms

Marriage: Is a union established and ordained by God for a lifelong, intimate relationship between a man as husband and a woman as wife as biologically defined by birth.

Influence: Influence, as used in this study refers to the power of divorce to have significant effect on adolescent schooling.

Divorce: Divorce is technically, the formal dissolution of marriage. It is more often conceived as the underlining factor for the increasing family divisions in contemporary societies.

Adolescence: This developmental stage is the transitional stage of growth between childhood and adulthood.

Well-being: This is defined as a state of being happy, healthy, or prosperous.

Social Well-being: Social well-being is defined as the power to make willful choices to enhance personal relationships and important friendships as well as build a better living space and community.

Emotional Well-being: Emotional well-being is defined as the awareness and acceptance of one's feelings. It is also seen as the degree to which one feels positively about his/herself and life.

Academic Well-being: Academic well-being refers to one's creative and stimulating mental activities an individual expands his or her knowledge, skills and engages in continuous learning while discovering their potential for sharing his or her gifts with others.

Psychological Well Being: Psychological Well Being refers to positive mental health

Depressed Mood: This refers to feelings of sadness, a loss of hope, a sense of being overwhelmed by demands of the world, and a general unhappiness.

Internalizing Problems: They are those issues whose central feature is disordered mood or emotion. This includes problems such as anxiety, depression, withdrawal, insecurity, nervousness and low self-esteem.

Externalizing Problems: These refer to those problems which are related to anti-social behaviour such as aggression and delinquency.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

In the opinion of the researcher, literature review is essential to provide direction in detecting gaps in existing studies, and to set a premise for the current study. Accordingly, Polit and Hungler (1993) maintain that, “a literature review provides a background for understanding current knowledge on the topic”. Even though the researcher seeks to examine the influence of divorce on adolescents’ schooling, it became necessary to examine the influence of divorce on the adolescent in general. This chapter, therefore, focused partly on the influence of divorce on the social, emotional and academic well-being of the adolescents. It also review works on the factors that affect the post-divorce adjustment of the adolescent. Beyond these research works, problems the adolescents face after their parents’ divorce are reviewed. Again, the theories upon which the study is grounded have also been captured under this chapter

2.1 Theoretical Review of the Study

Human beings of all ages, including adolescent, are happy and able to deploy their talents to best advantage when they are confident that, standing behind them, are one or more trusted persons who will come to their aid should difficulties arise. Such confidence is however eroded when the bond that the adolescent once shared with the parents and other external family members are weakened by divorce. Several theories have emerged in recent times as a way of explaining the influence of divorce on the adolescent. For instance, the social learning theory of Bandura (1977), is concerned with the relationship between social and environmental factors and their influence on

behaviour. According to this view, children learn through observing the behaviour of others especially their parents and by imitating them, which is referred to as modelling. Bandura (1986), therefore, believed that if any force (such as divorce) disorganized the unit in which the modelling is taking place, then the younger ones who are doing the modelling are affected. It is in the light of this that divorce is seen as having a negative impact on adolescents. Significantly, Bandura's social learning theory explains how the environment including the family influences the behaviour of the adolescent. However, the theory fails to link the behaviour of the individual to divorce. Therefore, per this theory, any behaviour the adolescent exhibit cannot be attributed to the process of divorce.

As a result of this weakness of the Bandura's social learning theory, the researcher also leaned on the Erikson's psychosocial theory (1968). Erikson labels the adolescence stage as one involving a search for identity or a series of identities, which even become a "crises of identity" in some cases. He believed that the adolescent is involved in a struggle to discover who he or she is and his or her essence. He believed that the chief task of the adolescent is to confront the crisis of identity versus identity confusion or role confusion, so as to become a balanced adult with a coherent sense of self and valued role in society. The adolescent, in this case, needs his or her parents and important or significant others to offer alternative suggestions for proper formation of identity.

According to Erikson (1968), any force, 'such as divorce' that exerts additional pressure on an adolescent put him or her in a state of disequilibrium and deepens the crises for identity formation. Erikson believed that the adolescent is at a critical stage and any destabilization which has effect on the adolescent such as divorce creates

adjustment problems for the individual. Erikson's psychosocial theory also helps one to understand the existing state of confusion of the adolescent; and also give the clue that any disruption that interferes with his or her identity search can significantly affect his adjustment. Significant as the theory may be, it also fails to explain how a disruption such as divorce can affect the adolescent in his identity and character formation.

Although, a study such as this can mildly be understood from the two aforementioned theoretical perspectives, there is a temptation that it may lose the relevant grounds and dimensions that the impact of divorce on the adolescent presents. In other words, the explanation and understanding of the processes and effects of divorce on the adolescent can be enhanced when grounded on relevant theoretical perspectives. One of such theories on which a study such as this can be grounded is the attachment theoretical perspective.

This theory provides an important perspective on divorce because; divorce involves the disruption and often the termination of a powerful attachment bond. According to the theory, neither love nor grief nor other forms of strong emotion are felt for just any person; instead, they are felt for particular individuals with whom one has established an attachment bond (Bowlby, 1982). Within this "attachment bonds" are strong and persistent ties that cause each member of a family or marriage union to maintain proximity to the other and to engage in proximity- seeking behaviour when greater protection or support is needed. Once formed, an attachment bond tends to endure, and its disruption is severally felt. The theory stipulates two important criteria for healthy human functioning: First, every individual requires the presence and availability of a trustworthy figure that is willing and able to provide a safe haven and

a secure base to explore the world and the person's own capacities. These opportunities that exist in marriage bond also positively affect the wellbeing of the offspring, to the extent that the disruption of the bond has the potency of turning their world upside down. Second, everyone must be able both to recognize when another person is a trustworthy attachment figure and to collaborate with him or her to maintain a mutually rewarding relationship (Bowlby, 1979).

From an attachment perspective, the absence of one or both of these important features of a marriage-for one or both partners - sets the stage for dysfunctional relations and eventual separation and divorce. The attachment theory, according to its proponents, does not only explains the relationship challenges couples are confronted with, but also the proposition that the divorce-related stressors experienced by parents frequently interfere with the parents' ability to respond adequately and consistently to their children's needs for safety and security (Page & Bretherton, 2001). Among the post-divorce troubles couples go through, according to the proponents of the theory, are insecurity, psychological and physical health, and possibility of weak future relationship. These problems do not only end with the couples, but also affect the relationship between the couples and their children, which usually manifest itself in multiple effects on the adolescent schooling and wellbeing in general.

One significant area of the core models of the attachment theory, if impaired by divorce, is explained to affect the adolescent in his or her attachment security. In this case, the proponents of the theory posits that divorce reduces a child's confidence in who and where his or her attachment figures (parents) are; in his or her perceived acceptability in the eyes of attachment figures; and in the availability, accessibility,

and sensitive responsiveness of attachment figures, divorce is likely to affect the child's attachment security. The mere fact that parents are living apart may undermine a child's feelings of security, because parental accessibility becomes shaky (Maccoby, Buchanan, Mnookin & Dornbusch, 1992; Page & Bretherton, 2001). Bowlby (1980) noted that some children who have experienced loss of or separation from one parent may fear the loss of or separation from the other parent. It should be noted that these are just prediction of the attachment theorists, but not necessarily grounded on empirical facts.

However, impaired attachment security after divorce is not automatic, certain circumstances and the nature of the divorce can reduce the impact of divorce on the adolescent's attachment security. Investigators have identified several factors that moderate the influence on the attachment security in adolescents. First, as predicted by attachment theory, quality of parenting moderates the influence. For example, according to George and Solomon (1999), mothers who function as a secure base for their children usually promote attachment security, despite separations due to overnight visits with fathers. Again; mothers who provide psychological protection to their children in the context of father visitation promote secure attachment to the child (George & Solomon, 1999). This means that one is likely to witness attachment security problem, as argued by the attachment theory, if father's visitation and mother's psychological protection to the adolescent is poor. Thirdly, maternal education and family income reduce the effects of divorce on attachment security on the adolescent. Clarke- Stewart et al. (2000), perhaps because better education and finances facilitate the kinds of parenting that foster attachment security. Finally, the adolescent's cognitive ability (associated with age) has been identified as a protective factor in his or her post-divorce experiences.

In this connection, Kier and Lewis (1997) tested two contradicting predictions about the effects of parental separation on adolescents' attachment to mother: Whereas the "early adversity" hypothesis predicts that infants will be adversely affected by negative life events and thus will become anxiously attached to their mothers, the "protective" hypothesis predicts that infants are resistant to stressors because of their limited cognitive ability. Results supported by the protective hypothesis, suggests that cognitive ability associated with age and incomplete attachment formation to fathers protects young children against the ill effects of divorce. In sum, Kier and Lewis's research tends to support a "context-sensitive view" in which separation effects are moderated by the conditions of separation and reunion. For example, observations of young children undergoing separations under varying circumstances show, consistent with attachment theory that a familiar and sensitive caretaking environment during separation can mitigate or even prevent infant or adolescent distress and detachment (George & Solomon, 1999). According to this view, separation is a risk factor for attachment insecurity that may be either potentiated by adverse conditions or prevented by conditions known to promote security.

The attachment theory does not only explain the influence of divorce on the adolescent's attachment security, but also his or her psychological and physical health. According to the proponents of this theory, the cumulative toll of separations and losses of family relations, coupled with other divorce-related stressors such as economic hardship, moving, changing schools, and parental remarriage, may complicate children's psychological development and influence adjustment (Amato, 2000).

Although children from divorced families are clearly at greater risk for psychological and physical problems, research has identified important moderating variables consistent with attachment theory's predictions that disruptions in important attachment bonds adversely affect individual functioning (Rogers, 2004). As it has been established under impact of divorce on adolescent's attachment security, several moderating factors have also been identified as having the potency of reducing the effects of divorce on the adolescent's psychological and physical wellbeing. For example, Rutter (1994) asserts that, the increased risk for children from divorced homes stems from discordant, conflictual relationships that precede or follow the losses associated with divorce and not from divorce itself. In this view, Amato and Booth (2000) indicate that children experience better outcomes when parents in high conflict marriages divorce rather than remain together.

Again, a strong social support network moderates the effects of divorce on children's well-being. For example, divorce mediation for the parents and extended family support (Emery, 1999) protect against maladjustment, particularly if a parent is psychologically unable to provide high- quality parenting following a divorce. For adolescents, peer support also moderates the effect of low parental support after divorce on internalizing symptoms (Rodgers & Rose, 2002).

From the forgoing discussion, it can be said that a study such as this can be understood within the parameters of attachment theoretical perspective due to the insights the theory gives on the causes and impacts of divorce on children. Although Bowlby discussed separation and loss extensively, most of his insights came from observations of children who were separated from their attachment figures; he gave much less attention to how the parental separation affects the general adjustment of

the adolescent especially in school. Notwithstanding, his theory provides a useful ground and dimensions from which one can examine and test the varied impact of divorce predicted on the adolescent, where, in this case, the researcher focuses on his or her schooling. It is as a result of these useful perspectives that the researcher resolved to ground the entire work primarily on this attachment theory. .

2.2 Adolescent's Engagement in School

The schooling of the adolescent involves a vast array of interrelated engagements or activities that define his or her wellbeing in school. In this study, adolescent's engagement in school is used to refer to the centripetal experiences of attachment of the adolescent to the school, in specific dimensions such as cognitive, affective, behavioural and agency of the adolescent. Therefore, in this study, the definition of the adolescent's schooling does not exclude these variables.

According to Ainley (1993), the cognitive domain of the adolescent engagement refers to the student's personal investment, as well as learning approaches and self-regulatory strategies. Jimerson et al (2003) operationalized this domain of learning as perceptions and beliefs about the self and school, self-efficacy strategies, motivations and academic aspirations. The cognitive domain of the adolescent's school engagement contains learning skills predominantly related to mental processes. Learning processes in the cognitive domain include a hierarchy of skills involving processing information, constructing understanding, applying knowledge, solving problems, and conducting research. Cognitive skills can be evidenced in many levels of proficiency (Bransford, Brown & Cocking, (2000).

The emotional or the psychological dimension is viewed by some scholars such as Mark (2000) and Harris (2008) as the sense of identification with school, or as

emotional reaction aroused by school, colleagues and teachers as in the case of the view of Goodnow (1993), or as school connection and sense of belonging to school, as used by Johnson, Crosnoe and Elder (2001). The behavioural dimension of school engagement is defined by the actions and practices directed towards learning and school, encompassing several conducts (Veiga, 2012). Other scholars such as Reeve and Tseng (2011) present another dimension of the adolescent's school engagement, namely agency, conceptualised as the adolescent's contribution to the course of instruction they receive.

2.3 Determinants of Adolescent's Engagement in School

The cognitive, affective and behavioural domains of the adolescent's experiences in school are influenced by several variables in the adolescent's immediate environment. These variables include the adolescent's peer groups, school and family. The perception of peer support is positively related with school outcomes and adjustment (Buhs & Ladd, (2001), academic motivation (Altermatt & Pomerantz, 2003), and pro-social behaviours (Wentzel et al, (2004). According to Juvonen (2007), positive relationships of the adolescent with his or her peers contribute to fulfil belonging and adjustment needs and promote important emotions for adaptive functioning in school context. On the contrary, Juvonen et al (2000) argues that negative relations of the adolescent with peers may affect several dimensions of self-concept. Veiga (2012) highlighted rejection, aggressions and bullying as products of lower engagement of the adolescent with peers.

The school context (school's organisational, instructional and social climate) has also been shown as another variable that influence the adolescent's engagement and academic performance. According to Roeser, Eccles and Sameroff (2000), learning

climate is regarded as having a significant impact on the adolescent's engagement, as a result of teacher's beliefs and behaviours; support to students' autonomy, as well as the opportunity to participate in decisions concerning academic task. According the scholars, this promote adolescent's engagement as they allow the practice of decision making and self-regulating abilities, and assign students the responsibility to influence the learning environment. While dialogue encourages students to metacognitively reflect about their learning, teacher support has been associated with several indicators of behavioural engagement, namely, high participation in school related activities and decrease of disruptive behaviour (Veiga, (2012).

Other researchers have studied the institutional influences, such as family, and its impact on school experiences of the adolescent. Borkowski and Thorpe (1994), for instance, found that adolescents from lower sociocultural status families tend to present more negative views of themselves, school, career and life in general. In view of this, Bradley and Corwyns (2004) contend that family structure represent an important influence on the adolescent's self-efficacy, and its capital or resources are significant determinants of the adolescent's engagement in school. Again the quality of parental relationships has been associated with the adolescent's engagement in school, his or her academic performance, academic achievement, and satisfaction with school (Furrer & Skinner, 2003). Individual differences or personal characteristics of the adolescent such as social class, sex and status also appear to influence significantly, his or her engagement in school. Furthermore, the type of goal orientation adopted in learning and future orientation, self-efficacy, and self-concept, subjective wellbeing and life satisfaction add on to the pool of these variables.

Some studies on the adolescent activities in school have found differences in gender, sense of belonging and satisfaction with school, as favourable to girls (Furrer & Skinner, 2003). A few studies grounded in achievement goal theory (Elliott, 1999) assume that the motive students have to carry out tasks have effect on their level of engagement, since they influence the cognitive strategies employed in learning situations, by means of two important factors, namely, competence perception in academic context (Bandura, 1986), and instrumentality perception. The work of Miller and Brickman (2004) suggest that the personal valuation of future goals promote the recognition of tasks importance for achieving those goals, which, in turn, has impact on the adolescent's engagement in school. In the same vein, Shell and Husman (2001) concluded in their study that students who relate school subjects with the desired profession present superior cognitive skills and greater engagement in learning objectives and tasks.

2.4 Influence of Divorce on Interpersonal Relationship of Adolescent

The institution of marriage involves the union of man and woman who have agreed to come together as husband and wife with the hope of spending their whole life married and establishing a lasting relationship together as a complete family unit comprising of the couple and their children. Accordingly, Van Pelt (2008) asserts that a fulfilling and highly satisfying marriage is a crucial factor in achieving happiness throughout life. However, marital issues such as poor communication, living with an imperfect mate, nagging partner, destructive habits, lack of coping skills in times of conflicts, unaddressed sexual issues, financial challenges and a busy work schedule have greatly contributed to the rise in marriages failing. This disruption or failing of marriages negatively affects the social well-being of adolescents who are victims of such social mess. The main focus of social well-being dimension, as espoused by Hettler (1976),

is that the adolescent lives in harmony with others, including his or her family, in the environment. Wolfinger (2005) cites that parental divorce, however, affects the offspring in that family social behaviour largely.

In view of this, Rosnati, Barni and Uglia (2014) state that, adolescents from divorced families attaches great importance to hedonism whereby they indulge in activities focusing on self-indulgence and enjoying life, like stimulation by having a varied life and being daring. According to the scholars, these adolescents adhere less to conformity, they may be disobedient and low on self-discipline as compared to the adolescents who are living with both parents in a marriage setting. According to Amato (2008), the adolescents who have experienced parental divorce experience significant loss of their close relationships such as close family friends, extended family members. Amato further argues that parental divorce destabilizes the teenager and affects their ability to form healthy social relationships and be in harmony with the community. Similarly, Esmaeili and Yaacob (2011) argues that adolescents that have been exposed to parental divorce are at a higher risk of delinquency, adjustment problems, aggression, antisocial behaviour, depression, anxiety and low self-esteem. According to these scholars, conflicts linked to parental divorce are characterized by parent's communicating in a manner that is not polite, and can be traumatic and stressful for the adolescents. The scholars further argues that adolescents pick up this as a way of interacting since they view this as the norm in social interaction, which may lead them into trouble or having strained relationships with those around them. Esmaeili and Yaacob (2011) further argues that strained relationship causes imbalance in adolescents 'social well-being.

Mucaj and Xeka (2015) relate the effect of parental divorce to changes in perception, beliefs and attitudes by the adolescents. According to these scholars, the adolescents, in the post-divorce period become highly preoccupied with how others view them which makes them want to keep to themselves to avoid being judged based on their new status as children of divorce. They further argue that, the affected adolescents are at a higher risk of behavioural and social disorders in comparison to their peers who have both their parents still living together.

Another work that explains the influence of divorce on the adolescent's social well-being is Adofo and Etsey (2016). According to them, adolescents after divorce experience anger, fear, loneliness, depression and guilt. These affect how the adolescent relates with others socially. In the work of Schwartzberg (1992), a sense of loss can be felt by adolescents following the divorce of their biological parents (Schwartzberg, 1992). This means that for a time after the divorce the parent may be physically or emotionally unavailable to their children.

Despite the innumerable works that point to negative effects of divorce on the adolescent's social relation with the parents, other researches show that in cases where marital conflict is high, divorce may be a relief for some adolescents. For instance, Yu, Pettit, Landsford, Dodge and Bates (2010), assert that divorce may allow a positive change for adolescents to escape the conflict between parents (Yu et al, 2010). In such instances, divorce may actually alleviate some stress and lessen the negative impacts commonly associated with divorce. Even though in these cases divorce can be positive, the changes in the parent-child relationship are still evident. Other scholars focus on the adolescent's behavioural problems that adolescents from disrupted family exhibit. A study by Schofield and Weaver found that starting at

grade 6 (approximately 11-12 years old) students of disrupted families had behavioural problems at a higher rate than children from intact families (2015).

These behavioural problems were reported at school and by parents at home. This study suggested that the reason for the behavioural problems post-divorce could be attributed to the lack of routine at home and the possibly chaotic living environment (Schofield & Weaver, 2015). Another study showed that children living in mother-only households or children living in families in conflict were more likely to commit acts of crime rather than children from conflict free and intact families (Hines, 1997). Although the study does not relate directly to adolescents from disrupted families, in many cases disrupted families are in conflict pre-divorce and many children live with their mothers post-divorce, making adolescents from disrupted families especially vulnerable.

Research shows that teens from divorced families are more likely to abuse substances than teens from intact families; there may be several reasons for this occurrence. A study conducted by Needle and Doherty (1990) found that adolescents from divorced families can turn to substance abuse as a means to cope with feelings related to their parents' divorce or due to the stressful divorce process. They further assigned less adult supervision as another factor that gives more opportunity to the adolescent to engage substance abuse. Their research shows that when divorce occurs during adolescence, the individual is more likely to turn to substance abuse than if the parental divorce occurs during childhood (Needle & Doherty, 1990).

2.5 Influence of Divorce on Emotional Well-being of Adolescent

According to Hettler (1976), emotional well-being is the awareness and acceptance of one's feelings. As the individual becomes aware and accepts their own feelings, they develop emotional intelligence which enables them to effectively manage their feelings. This also increases the ability to cope with stress and different pressures of life whether internal or external as well as increases the ability to form and maintain healthy functional relationships with others. As this happens, the individual is able to effectively deal with other people by applying emotional intelligence when interacting with people on a day-to-day basis.

Brownlee (2007) cites that adolescents that have experienced many pre-divorce disagreements between their parents tend to be emotionally unstable and have stress related issues that carry on even after the parental divorce has been finalized. According to the scholar, as parents' divorce, there are many issues that arise that could affect the emotional well-being of adolescents such as dealing with step parents, feeling unwanted by the parent that files for divorce, issues of child custody, visitation and support matter.

Another work that emphasizes the impact of divorce on emotional well-being of the adolescent is the work by Strong, DeVault and Cohen (2008). According to the researchers, many adolescents view parental divorce as very traumatic. The adolescents may sometimes become emotionally angry with their parents for interfering with their life and the comfort they were enjoying before the marital conflict began (Strong, et al, 2008). According to Rosnati, Barni, and Uglia (2014), though adolescents from divorced families are similar to their peers in some ways,

they exhibit certain emotional variations which are developed over time as they experience parental conflict which ends up in the divorce of their parents.

Esmaili and Yaacob (2011) state that parental conflicts whether pre or post-divorce have a negative impact on the adolescents emotional well-being. As the parents continuously fight, this affects the time they spend with their adolescent children. This emotional unavailability of the parents negatively affects their children as they are left to find their way around all by themselves.

Accordingly, Hetherington and Clingempeel (1992) argue that adolescents from divorced families are reported to commit more delinquent acts including drunkenness in public places, fighting, stealing and misdemeanours. An adolescent is described based on the Erikson psychosocial stages of development to be going through a period of identity versus role confusion. According to Newman and Newman (2015), during adolescence, the adolescents may exhibit either externalizing or internalizing behaviour or both as they try to get rid of all the emotional baggage inside them. These emotional problems, according to the scholars may strongly create emotional instability for such an adolescent to the point of messing any possible future relationships that, the adolescent may aspire to have.

According to Schwartzberg (1992), children of divorce parents may feel a heightened anxiety regarding dating and romantic relationships compared to children of intact families. The scholar maintains that forming romantic relationships during adolescence is a developmentally important stage for children, one which may prove especially difficult for children of divorce. He maintains that a child who has experienced trauma such as parental divorce may feel especially vulnerable to stressful stimuli and be unable to cope well, as peers from intact families. This view

is supported by Elliott and Richards (1991), who argue that adolescents from separated families are also more likely to report depressed mood and to be diagnosed with mood and anxiety disorders. Intact families, with two biological parents, have been shown to provide a more protective family structure than that of divorced families (Schwartzberg, 1992). A two parent family with supportive and involved parents can serve as a buffer to stress the adolescent faces during this important developmental time. Without this buffer to stress Hines (1997), maintains that adolescents must face this stress without the comfort and support from parents.

Other researchers explored the impact of divorce on the adolescent from the lens of depression that he or she may have to endure. In a study by Wallerstein and Kelly (1996), it is asserted that five-years after the divorce approximately one-third of children were suffering from moderate to severe depression. The study further maintains that a decade after the divorce, nearly half the individuals studied were worried, under-achieving and self-critical. This important research proves how divorce during adolescence can have a lasting impact on the individual well into adulthood. Another study also indicates that, depression occurs more often in adolescent girls than boys. In fact, a study by Oldehinkel et al, (2008) found that parental divorce was more strongly associated with depressive symptoms in adolescent girls than boys. The researchers suggest this could be because adolescent girls are more sensitive to conflict and family changes during this time than adolescent boys.

2.6 Influence of Divorce on the Academic Well-being of Adolescents

Divorce plays a role in the academic success of adolescents from disrupted families. Grades, attendance, and dropout rates are all shown to be impacted by divorce.

McLahan and Sandefur (1994) are of the view that in order for an adolescent to successfully navigate into adulthood, they need intellectual stimulation that comes with the appreciation that diligent and hard work accrues substantial benefits. In order for them to feel that confidence as they study, they need a close and fulfilling relationship with their parents who are committed to their well-being through the provision of guidance as they journey into adulthood. According to Hettler (1976), intellectual well-being involves a continuously engaging in learning and activities that help sharpen their mind.

Characteristically, the period of adolescence is a stage of life whereby the adolescent becomes studious in order to obtain good grades for further education at the tertiary level. At this stage in life, and as argued by Kalat (2013), the brain of the adolescent has not been fully developed and will only get fully developed by the time they get to twenty-five years. Thus, it presupposes that any external disruption to their development process will significantly affect intellectual development of the adolescent. In other words, parental divorce during this developmental stage of adolescence destabilizes intellectual well-being greatly in many different ways. Accordingly, Esmaili and Yaacob (2011) specifically state that adolescent girl who experience parental divorce have internalizing problems such as depression, anxiety and low self-esteem, which substantially affect the adolescent. According to the scholars, depression as an internalizing problem comes with low concentration, low mood and lack of interest for activities (Esmaili & Yaacob). It could be reason from these scholars' position that instead of the adolescent girl focusing on acquiring new knowledge or polishing their existing knowledge, they will spend most of their time feeling anxious about the situation at home and the parental conflict. As a result, it is

argued by Newman and Newman (2015), that this stage of adolescence is more difficult for the girl than the boy.

Esmaili and Yaacob (2011), further argue that boys, on the other hand, exhibit externalizing problems mostly such as aggression, antisocial behaviour and indulging in delinquent activities as a result of parental divorce. The idea that boys exhibit externalizing problems than the girls is supported by Adofo and Etsey (2016). The scholars argue that, as the adolescent boy get into trouble due to the externalizing behaviour, their academic performance is affected greatly. In many cases, most schools do not take kindly to any acts of aggression and will take measures such as suspension or expulsion. This means that the boy ends up losing crucial school time that they would have utilised in making themselves intellectually better. The punishments end up wasting their class time, which would have been used acquiring new knowledge that helps their intellectual well-being. Vanassche, Sodermans, Matthijs and Swicegood (2013) indicate that adolescents from broken families indulge in alcohol and drug consumption more than their peers from intact families.

As argued by Esmaili and Yaacob (2011), boys that use drugs get into trouble with their teachers and the consequences thereafter such as getting punished leads to loss of important school time that could have been used for learning. According to Kalat (2013), the brain functioning is greatly affected by the use of alcohol and other drugs. It is not certain from Kalat (2013) the reason behind the intake of alcohol in relation to this study, but as it has been argued by other scholars, in most cases, these adolescents engage in alcohol consumption as a way of dealing with the frustrations as a result of the parental divorce. Although adolescent boys experience downward effect in academics following a divorce, adolescent girls are more likely to have a

sharper decline in academic achievement than boys (Storksens, Roysamb, Holmen & Tambs, 2006). The drop in academic success post-divorce could be attributed to a decline in parental support and importance of school and homework.

According to Pálmarsdóttir (2015), anxiety is very high and common in adolescents who are experiencing parental divorce. This uncertainty affects their level of concentration in school and affects the way the adolescents concentrate in their academic work. Ahiaoma (2013) indicates that parental divorce has psycho-social effects on adolescents. The scholar argues, as the adolescents are preoccupied with their psychological, social, emotional and spiritual challenges during their parent's divorce, their mind naturally starts slowing down in terms of performing cognitive tasks. Their mental processes are greatly affected. Further, Ahiaoma indicates that their ability to analyse, be critical, reason or perform intellectual activities gets affected and hence their intellectual well-being gets affected too.

2.7 Adolescent's Relationships after Divorce

Good parent-child relationship brings a belief of security in adolescents. They can count on their parents for assistance in times of difficulty. Such feeling brings positive attitude towards life and surroundings. Children who have such relationships with parents have less risk of internalized problems such as feeling of anxiety, confusion, depression and loneliness (Singh & Singh, 2008). As a result, this section of the review examines the impact of divorce on the relationships the adolescents builds after the divorce of his or her parents. Central among these are mother-adolescent relationship, father-adolescent relation and relationship of the adolescents with his or her peers.

2.7.1 Mother-adolescent relationship

Divorce can be a challenging moment for every family, especially when it involves children. Such challenges may include strained relationships between the divorced parents and their children. One of such relationships is the mother-child relationship. Most children tend to spend more time with the mother, but such relationship can be marred by divorce in a couple of different ways. Mother-adolescent relationship depends on several factors, such as post-divorce residential arrangement of the adolescent, closeness prior to divorce and socio-economic status (Lazar & Guttman, 2004).

Research has been conducted to ascertain the effects of the different factors that may affect the relationship between mother and child. According to Fagan (1999), mothers that are divorced have a difficult time providing the same level of emotional support or attachment to the children as compared to non-divorced mothers. The scholar found that divorced mothers tend to have less affection and communication with their adolescent creating inconsistent discipline. The study further established that children are also affected by the difficult times their mothers go through as a result of the divorce. Knox, Zusman and DeCuzzi (2004), focused on the older adolescents, and examined how divorce affects their relationships with their mothers. This study found that older adolescent from divorced families was more likely to feel less close to their mother. The closeness of the adolescent to the mother was dependent on the emotional stress put on the adolescent from their mothers following the divorce (Knox, Zusman & DeCuzzi, 2004). As explained by Erikson (1968), in his psychosocial theory, the adolescents are going through periods of role confusion and identity crisis in their developmental stage; adding the divorce of their parent can add difficulty to those changes.

In another study, divorce was correlated with depression, anxiety and stress to the adolescent (Richardson & McCarbe, (2001). The conflict of the parents prior and after the divorce may also affect the outcome of the adolescent. Richardson and McCarbe (2001) looked at the parental conflict and concluded that more conflict between the parents creates to the adolescent, a negative effect with same-sex relations, global self-concept, life satisfaction and intimacy with the mother and family. The studies discussed have showed the different factors that have an impact on adolescent relationship with the mother. Emotional support of the mother seems to be one factor that the majority in the studies concluded as a contributor to the change in the dynamics of the mother to adolescent relationship.

2.7.2 Father-adolescent relationship

Other scholars have looked at the father's response and commitment to their children after the divorce. In most cases fathers tend to be parents who leave after divorce. According to Emery (1999), national survey reveals that fathers have little or no contact with their children, after divorce. Emery found that one-third of divorced fathers had seen their children only once or not at all during the first year of being divorced. Four out of ten children had seen their fathers about three times a month and one-fourth of fathers has seen them once a week. In that same survey, fathers who had been divorced for a longer period of time were found to have less contact with their children. Thirteen percent of fathers who had been divorced for two years only saw their children once a year. Forty-three percent saw them once a week or more (Emery). Finally, 50% of fathers who had been divorced for eleven years or more saw their children only once a year compared to 12% who saw their children once a week or more.

Fagan (1999) looked at the issue of custodial battle between the two divorced parents and its impact. According to him, once a divorce has happen, fathers that do not have legal custody tend to drift away from the child, especially when the child is young at the time of the divorce. This, therefore, counter intuitively suggests possible close relationship that exists between the father and the child if the child is old at the time of divorce. He also found that fathers who remarry tend to be more involved with the children in that marriage.

Central to Fagan's position is how the issues of child custody and remarriage of the father affect the father-child relationship. Knox, Maccoby and Dornbusch (2004) also found a similar result relating to the outcome of closeness of the adolescent and the father. Older adolescents, whose fathers were remarried, felt less close to their father, supporting the Fagan's (1999) study. Studies have been conducted in order to look at this relationship. Knox, Maccoby and Dornbusch (2004) also concluded that divorce does not have impact on parent-child relationship, but the involvement of the father afterwards seems to affect the father to the adolescent relationship. As these studies have shown, the father relationship is negatively affected by divorce. Adolescent relationships with their fathers seem to be poorer than the intact families (Dunlop, Bums & Bermingham, 2001). Portnoy's (2008) study also confirmed these results. His study found that adolescent see their father as less caring; and in early adulthood, one-third of divorced adolescents wonder if their father loves them. It is significant to add that most of the above studies examined how the father is viewed by the child after divorce. Their work sum up to the point that the father is an important figure in a child's life and when the father is not around, it can make it more difficult for the adolescent in their post-divorce adjustment.

Both parents take a strain on their relationship with their adolescent after divorce. Parenting style is one factor that declines after divorce. Both parents may be lonely or take on more financial responsibility resulting in less effective parenting (Conger, Ming & Glen, 2000). Strained parenting, such as ineffective discipline, lack of empathy and nurturance, may result in the child becoming less socially competent in conflict resolution (Conger et al, 2000). However, several of these studies concluded the involvement of the father after divorce is one factor that can aid in the father to adolescent relationship. Along with the difficulty of parent-child relationship, adolescents face challenges in their own relationship and also in their relationships later in life.

2.7.3 Future relationships of adolescent after divorce

Divorce also has significant impact on the adolescent's relationships with other persons within and outside his or her home environment. Several scholars have explored the impact of divorce on the adolescent's relationship with others. According to Brown (2006), adolescent is more likely to associate with antisocial peers, and possible have mental health problems in life. In view of this, Emery (1999) argues that adolescents from divorced families are twice as likely to receive psychological help at some point during or after the divorce and are twice as likely to drop out of high school (Emery, 1999) identifies four factors that validate the above assertion. These factors, according to the scholar, include the adolescent's relationship with their residential parents, the extent of conflict between parents, the families' economic standing and the frequency of contact with the non-residential parents.

Other scholars examine how the adolescents view themselves after the divorce of their parents. Literature reveals that adolescents tend to perceive themselves as more mature due to the responsibilities they assume after their parents' divorce. Buchanan, Maccoby and Dornbusch (1992), for example, argue that parents usually will turn to the adolescent for emotional support and disclose personal concern about parenting or financial issues, and the adolescent feels older and mature. Similar assertion was made by Kenyon, Rankin, Koerner, and Dennison (2007), when they argue that adolescents who take on more responsibilities after divorce tend to perceive themselves as more mature. It should be noted from the argument of the above scholars that responsibilities are not necessarily forced upon the adolescent but are taken on due to the prevailing circumstances after parental divorce.

Parental divorce may influence the adolescent in several ways. Portnoy (2008) argues that adolescents from divorced families can still recall shock, unhappiness, loneliness and anger brought on by the divorce. According to Portnoy, parental divorce may change the way of thinking of the adolescent towards future relationships due to the poor marital satisfaction she or he experiences with the parents. Thompson and Amato (1999) also found similar results including hesitancy toward commitment, lower satisfaction in relationships, poorer interpersonal skills, earlier involvement in relationships and greater acceptance of divorce.

There are a couple of different attitudes that seem to be common among individuals from non-intact families. One attitude that is shown in a couple of different studies is the level of trust in their partners (Jacquet & Surra, 2001). According to them, trust of the adolescent in future relationship can be broken when attachment between parents is lost due to the circumstances of divorce. King (2002) similarly argues that the loss

of trust in their parents may make the individual trust their partners less or other relational partners less. The way an individual displays love for their partner is also a common theme or quality of adolescent from divorced parents. According to Thompson and Amato (1999), individuals report less altruistic love for their dating partner than intact partner.

The significance of these studies does not only lie on the adolescent's future relationship, but also suggest the nature of relationships adolescents from divorced parents builds in their present environments including the school environment. The general antisocial character, trust problems, and uncertainty issues explained by Thompson and Amato (1999) give credence to a similar social life of adolescent from divorced families. Among others, this study is, therefore, tailored towards exploring how divorce influences the psychosocial and academic well-being of the adolescent in the process of his or her schooling.

2.8 Adolescent's Adjustments Difficulties after Divorce

Flowing from the attachment theory and the review on the impact of divorce on the adolescent, researchers are of the view that children of divorce parents may experience a variety of problems ranging from psychological disturbances to diminished social relationships while in school. The type, severity and persistence of these problems may be moderated by a number of factors. Some of the factors researchers have identified include: child characteristics, such as gender and age at the time of divorce; family characteristics, such as socio-economic status of the custodial household, race, childrearing skills and situational characteristics, such as parental absence, length of time since marital dissolution, conflict, support systems, divorce

proceedings, custody arrangements, remarriage, and environmental changes. These factors are examined below.

2.8.1 Child Characteristics: Gender

The findings on gender differences in children's responses to divorce have been contradictory. Some researchers such as Guidubaldi and Perry (1984), Kaye (1989), Kurdek (1991) points to more adjustment problems for boys in divorcing families than for girls. Other researchers such as Frost and Pakiz (1990), Slater (1983), Wallerstein and Kelly (1996) find more negative effects for girls than boys; and some researchers such as Kinard and Reinherz (1984), Mechanic and Hansell (1989), and Rosen (1979) have found no differences in the effects of divorce on the adolescent boys and girls.

According to Kaye (1989), both the adolescent boy and girl showed poorer performance on achievement tests compared to children from intact families immediately following divorce. However, by the fifth year following divorce, boys' grades and achievement tests were adversely affected, while girls' were not (Kaye, 1989). Other studies have found more detrimental effects for girls than boys. Slater (1983) found that adolescent girls from disrupted homes had lower self-esteem and more behaviour problems than adolescent boys in similar home-life situations. Furthermore, while female adolescents from disrupted homes reported higher levels of family conflict than females from intact families, the opposite was true for males (Slater, 1983). Notwithstanding, some studies have found no differences on various effects of divorce between girls and boys. Frost and Pakiz (1990), for example, found no gender differences for self-reported antisocial behaviour among adolescents from divorced families, although they found gender differences in other areas such as

truancy and social networks. Although, little was said by these scholars on the possible causes for the contradictory findings related to gender, it is of extreme relevance to this study. The researcher, therefore, explored the influence of divorce on the adolescent schooling by also examining the possible causes of differential effects of divorce on the adolescent boy and girl.

2.8.2 Child characteristics: Age of the adolescent at divorce

Many studies point to the relevance of age at the time of separation for children's divorce adjustment. Although early findings suggested that separation from a parent at an early age had more negative effects for children than for older youth. For instance, Amato (1987) found that the majority of children who were very young at the time of divorce reported that they were not strongly affected by the break-up.

However, the current thinking appears to be that children at every age are affected by divorce, but in differing ways. For example, Krantz (1988) suggests that early separations may be associated with deficits in social and emotional functioning, but not in intellectual functioning. From an examination of numerous studies, Demo and Acock (1988) argued that young children encounter problems with personal adjustment and peer relations, while adolescents encounter problems with sexual relations and antisocial behaviour. Landerkin and Clarke (1990) describe how children's level of development affects their reactions to divorce, although they acknowledge that there may be overlap. According to the scholars, adolescents may encounter problems establishing an adult identity, demonstrate anger towards self or others, and experience somatic complaints.

2.8.3 Family characteristics: Socio-economic status

Often one of the first impacts that divorce has on an adolescent is a dramatic decline in the standard of living in the custodial household. Krantz (1988) suggests that children belonging to lower socio-economic groups after divorce experience greater hardships. Some researchers are of the view that this decline in socio-economic status is directly linked to a variety of problems experienced by the adolescent, such as psychological, maladjustment and behavioural difficulties in school. Kalter, Kloner, Schreier and Okla (1989), for example, found a negative relation between socio-economic status of the parents and adolescent's adjustment in post-divorce households. However, they suggest that economic deprivation, along with a number of other factors such as inter-parental hostilities, and burden of single parenting take their toll on custodial mothers, which results in poorer adjustment among children or the adolescents.

2.8.4 Situational characteristics: Parental absence or remarriage

It has been found that, following divorce, many children experience a decrease in the quantity and quality of contact with the non-custodial parent (Amato, 1987). Stolba and Amato (1993), however, argue that adolescents' well-being is not solely associated with the loss of the noncustodial parent. Instead, they conclude that alternative family forms can be suitable for raising adolescents, if they provide support, control and supervision. However, they suggest that extended single-parent households may be less beneficial for younger children (Stolba & Amato, 1993).

There are conflicting views as to whether or not remarriage of the custodial parent is beneficial for the children. Researchers who emphasise the importance of economics or parent absence argues that, remarriage of the custodial parent should be beneficial

for the children because it normally increases the family income and provides more parental supervision and support for the children. On the other hand, Hetherington (1993) argued that the entrance of a new, and possibly unwelcome adult into the family can be a source of stress and rivalry for the children. Simons (1980) suggests that children may become resentful of the time they lose with the custodial parent as a result of the new partner. Finally, remarriage is often confusing for children because they must learn to adapt and accept yet another new family structure. It is interesting to note, however, that children living with stepfathers are much more likely to say that their stepfather is a member of their family than they are to include their non-residential biological father as a family member (Seltzer, 1994).

Although the financial advantages that step-children enjoy over those in single-parent families are evident, research to date has failed to show a beneficial effect of remarriage on children's achievement or behaviour. In a national longitudinal study of children (aged 12-16), Peterson and Zill (1986) found more behaviour problems among girls living with a remarried mother, as compared to boys. In a follow-up study with these children at ages 18-22, Zill, Morrison, and Cioro (1993) concluded that remarriage did not have a protective effect on children. Hetherington (1993) found remarriage to be associated with more negative effects. For instance, remarriage of the custodial mother had more adverse effects on girls than boys, while the divorce itself had more adverse, long-term effects on boys. Over time, though, children adjust to remarriage and then there is an improvement (Hetherington, 1993).

2.8.5 Situational characteristics: Time since marital disruption

A number of researchers have argued that, although there are often negative effects on children immediately following the divorce, children adjust to divorce over time. For

instance, Amato (1987) found that the length of time since marital disruption was related to children's well-being. He established after his interview with adolescent years after their parents' divorce that most children had accepted the situation and had adjusted reasonably well to the divorce.

Further, Walsh and Stolberg (1989) found that the amount of time that had passed since the separation was significantly correlated with child adjustment. They found that inter-spousal hostility was associated with increased child-reported anger for recent separations, but with lower anger for distant separations.

2.8.6 Situational characteristics: Parental conflict

The impact of parental conflict on children's post-divorce adjustment has received considerable attention in literature. Most theorists agree that parental conflict, at the very least, provides some negative influence for children's adjustment to the divorce. For instance, Grych and Fincham (1992) found that conflict can affect children's self-esteem, ability to adjust and cope, social competence and behaviour.

Johnston, Campbell and Mayes (1985) conducted an in-depth examination of the nature of parental disputes with thirty-nine families who were disputing custody or access arrangements. According to Campbell and Mayes, children's emotional and behavioural problems can be predicted by the amount of involvement the child has in disputes, the degree of role reversal with parents, the amount of disagreement between parents, and the duration of the dispute over the child.

There are some studies that go a step further, demonstrating that conflict, rather than divorce per se, is the major determinant of children's adjustment. For instance, Bishop and Ingersoll (1988) found that marital conflict had a greater impact on

adolescents' self-concept than family structure. Similarly, Mechanic and Hansell (1989) found that family conflict had more direct effects on long-term changes in well-being in areas such as depression, anxiety, physical symptoms, than divorce. Furthermore, they found that adolescents in intact families with high levels of conflict had poorer well-being than those experiencing divorce with low levels of conflict.

Other researchers have argued that while conflict is an important factor, the relationship between conflict and children's post-divorce adjustment is neither universal, simple nor straightforward. For instance, Cockett and Tripp (1994) found that, although marital conflict was associated with poor outcomes for children (in terms of health, behaviour, school, friendship, and self-esteem), family reorganisation appeared to be the main adverse factor. Although Hess and Camara (1979) found parental harmony to be a better predictor of child behaviour than family status, they also found that the parent-child relationship appeared to be the most powerful influence on the child's social and school adjustment, stronger than parental harmony. Kelly (1993) argues that the effects of conflict are indirect - they are either mediated through other behaviours of the parents or dependent on the strategies used to resolve conflict, or related to the extent to which parents expressed their conflicts directly with and through the children. Thus, Kelly states that children can escape the negative consequences of parental conflict when they are not caught in it by their parents, when their parents avoid direct aggressive expressions of their conflict in front of them or when they use compromise styles of conflict resolution.

However, in an examination of a number of common hypotheses relating to the effects of divorce on children, Kalter et al. (1989) found no support for the inter-parental hostility hypothesis. Instead, they suggest that when a number of stressors

such as economic deprivation, inter-parental hostilities, and the burden of single parenting take their toll on custodial mothers, children fare less well. Meanwhile, Kelly asserts that when parents are psychologically able to provide a loving relationship, children will be buffered from the stresses divorce can engender and will prosper developmentally.

2.8.7 Support systems

The negative effects associated with divorce on the adolescent's adjustment can be alleviated by the support system provided by parents, extended family members, peers, and teachers. In this regard, Wallerstein and Kelly (1996) have suggested that both intra-familial and extra-familial support networks take on a special significance during times of crisis for children, especially when the crisis involves the disruption of the family structure.

The relevance of this external support system is highlighted by Jacobson (1978). According to him, this outside support is particularly crucial, because it has been found that parental support may decrease during this period of crisis, as adults attempt to cope with their own divorce-related stresses (Jacobson). Many researchers have concluded that parental support, particularly the parent-child relationship, is very important in the adjustment of children following divorce. In fact, Hess and Camara (1979) found it to be a more powerful influence on children's social and school adjustment than parental harmony. While some studies have found that only a very good relationship with the mother has any mitigating effect, others, such as Hess and Camara have found that the child's relationship with the non-custodial father is of equal importance. Further, Hess and Camara argues that a positive parent-child

relationship, even with only one parent, has been found to greatly mitigate the negative effects of divorce.

Other research has indicated that support, other than that provided by parents may be sufficient for children's positive adjustment. This is evident in the work of Stolba and Amato (1993), who found that alternative family forms can be suitable for raising adolescents, if they provide support, control and supervision. However, they also found that, for younger children, extended single-parent households may be less beneficial. Further, Heath and MacKinnon (1988) found that mothers' use of support systems predicted daughters' perceptions of social competence, but not sons'. They concluded that, while the use of outside support systems may be desirable, for children's well-being, it is equally desirable for the mother to be self-reliant.

2.9 Summary

Under this chapter of this study, the researcher has examined the influence of divorce on the social well-being of the adolescent from the perspective of several scholars. Many of these scholars are of the view that the disruption or failing of marriage negatively affected the social well-being of adolescents who are victims of such social mess. Among such scholars whose works were reviewed under this section are Agochiya (2010), Newman & Newman (2015), Rosnati, Barni and Uglia (2014), Amato (2008), Esmaili and Yaacob (2011), Mucaj and Xeka (2015), Adofo and Etsey (2016), Schwartzberg (1992), Oppawsky (2000), and Needle and Doherty (1990). Among the social-well-being crisis faced by adolescents of divorced parents examined in the works of these scholars were divided attention or poor concentration (Newman & Newman, 2015), practice of hedonism (Rosnati, Barni and Uglia, 2014), anti-social behaviour (Amato, 2008), higher risk of delinquency, adjustment

problems, aggression, depression, low self-esteem, impolite communication, strained adolescent-parents relationship (Esmaeili & Yaacob 2011), inferiority complex, higher risk of behavioural and social disorders (Mucanj & Xeka (2015), experience of anger, fear, loneliness, depression and guilt (Adofo & Etsey, 2016), sense of loss (Schwartzberg,1992), feeling of insecurity, hopelessness and loyalty conflicts (Oppawsky, 2000), and substance (Needle & Doherty, 1990).

Among the influence of divorce on the adolescent's emotional well-being identified in this section of the review were emotional instability and stress related issues (Brownlee, 2007; Newman & Newman, 2015), trauma (Strong, DeVault & Cohen, 2008), loss of security (Rosnati, Barni, & Uglia, 2014), delinquent acts (Hetherington & Clingempeel, 1992), heightened anxiety regarding dating and romantic relationships (Schwartzberg, 1992), depressed mood, mood and anxiety disorders (Elliott & Richards, 1991),

Again, it has been examined that divorce plays a role in the academic success of adolescents from disrupted families. Under this section of the review, the researcher established from the works of several scholars that divorce affect the adolescent's academic progress. Among such effects established included low concentration, low mood and lack of interest for academic activities (Esmaeili & Yaacob, 2011, Pálmarsdóttir (2015), impaired brain activities due to substance abuse (Kalat (2013), and retardation of cognitive functioning (Ahiaoma, 2013).

The researcher also established from the works of some scholars that the type, severity and persistence of the problems the adolescents face after their parents' divorce may be influenced by a number of factors. Some of the factors the researchers have identified in the work of some scholars included child

characteristics, such as gender and age at the time of divorce. On the gender, for example, Guidubaldi and Perry (1984), Kaye (1989), Kurdek (1991) were of the view that adolescent boys experience more adjustment difficulties than girls. Other researchers such as Frost and Pakiz (1990), Slater, Stewart and Linn (1983), Wallerstein and Kelly (1996) finds more negative effects for girls than boys; and some researchers such as Kinard and Reinherz (1984), Mechanic and Hansell (1989), and Rosen (1979) have found no differences in the effects of divorce on the adolescent boys and girls. Another factor that affect the adolescent's post-divorce adjustment, from the perspectives of some scholars included family characteristics, such as socio-economic status of the custodial household, race, childrearing skills. Krantz (1988), for example, suggests that children belonging to lower socio-economic groups after divorce experience greater hardships. Others, such as Kalter, Kloner, Schreier and Okla (1989), are of the view that this decline in socio-economic status is directly linked to a variety of problems experienced by the adolescent, such as psychological, maladjustment and behavioural difficulties in school.

Situational characteristics were also identified from the works of other scholars as impeding the adolescent's adjustment after parents' divorce. These characteristics included poor contact with non-custodial parent (Amato, 1987), remarriage of custodial parent Camara, (1988), length of time since divorce (Amato, 1987; Walsh & Stolberg, 1989), parental conflict after divorce (Grych & Fincham, 1992, Johnston, Campbell & Mayes 1985; Bishop & Ingersoll, 1988), parental support, particularly the parent-child relationship, (Hess & Camara, 1979), and extended family support (Stolba & Amato, 1993).

Notwithstanding the contribution of the above studies to knowledge, they are largely based on the authors' experiential knowledge. In other words, the findings of the aforementioned scholars were based on their own assessment of impact of divorce on the adolescent. Their sources of information were largely secondary, with little or no attention given to field data. Again, their findings were based on general impact of divorce on the adolescents. In this study, however, the researcher generated the influence of divorce based on the response given by the victims of the parental divorce. Again, the researcher examined the problem in a school environment, by looking at how the impact of divorce affects the adolescent students in school. The focus of this study was, therefore, on divorce on adolescents' schooling in Asamankese Senior High School in Ghana.



CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

Researching into divorce on adolescents' schooling in Asamankese Senior High School in Ghana is limited to finding out to what and by what extends there be instances where the divorce of their parents has affected their social, emotional, and academic well-being, and whether such impacts occurred suddenly or gradually in the course of the adolescent's life especially in school. This brings to bear the scope and methodology of this study.

According to Creswell (2003), "individuals are born into a world of reality conferred on them by their circumstances. It is only through a subjective interpretation of the reality can the reality be fully understood". As argued by Baxter and Jack (2008), this is in recognition of the fact that truth is relative and it is dependent on one's perspective. This maxim forms the central theme of the social constructivists' paradigm of research. The paradigm recognizes the importance of the subjective human creation of meaning. Thus, the existence of the truth or the reality, according to this tradition, depends on the knowledge of the victim or the knower.

3.1 Rational for Qualitative Design

Grounded on constructivists' perspective, and for the purpose of addressing the objectives of the study, the researcher embarked on qualitative research in order to understand the context (experiences) of the adolescents by studying these experiences with the aid of interview guide. This was done by listening to the adolescents' narrations, writing down their responses to the research questions and subjecting the written data to analytic interpretation.

According to Burn and Grove (2003), a qualitative approach to research is a systematic and subjective approach used to describe life experiences and situations to give them meaning. Parahoo (1997) states that qualitative research focuses on the experiences of people as well as stressing the uniqueness of the individual. In this study, the researcher focused on the experiences of the adolescents who are victims of parental divorce. Thus, the rationale for using the qualitative approach was to enable the researcher examines and describes how divorce has influenced the social, emotional and academic well-being of adolescents.

3.2 Type of Design

Polit and Hungler (1993) defined a research design as “the researcher’s overall framework for answering the research questions”. The interest of the researcher in this study was to understand how divorce has influenced the psychosocial and academic well-being of the adolescents, from the perspective of the adolescents themselves. Thus, the researcher was committed to systematically making inquiry into the post-divorce experience of the adolescents and using them as a basis for explaining and describing how their psychosocial and academic well-being has been affected.

For this reason, the researcher employed case study design in order to ascertain the details of these post-divorce experiences of the adolescents. Therefore, the participants of this case study were the adolescent students in Asamankese Senior High School who are victims of parental divorce. The choice of case study design for this study was necessitated by the detailed and multifaceted nature of the facts needed to be gathered from the adolescents. The focus on the adolescents in this regard, therefore, helped the researcher to obtain detailed information to formalise the post-

divorce experiences of the adolescents. In order to arrive at the findings gathered and discussed in chapter four.

3.3 Researcher's Role

In qualitative research, the researcher is viewed as the instrument (Patton, 2002; Maxwell, 2005). The primary data collection method for phenomenological studies is in-depth interviewing that takes place in naturalistic settings. The researcher does not manipulate, stimulate, or externally impose structure on the situation. In analysing the data, the researcher was cautious not to impose his views. The researcher presented the interview data using verbatim quotes so that the participants' perspectives and original words are brought into focus.

In the process of data interpretation, researcher remained faithful to the commitments of research ethics to ensure that the presentation of the data did not constitute any risk to participants because the data could not be traced back to any of the participants in any way. Anonymity, confidentiality and right of withdrawal without any consequence were carefully explained to each participant.

3.4 Site and Sample Selections

Burns and Grove (2003) refer to sampling as a process of selecting a group of people, events or behaviour with which to conduct a study. The technique employed for this study was purposive sampling. This belongs to the category of non-probability sampling techniques. Using this technique enables sampled members to be selected on the basis of their knowledge, relationships and expertise regarding the research subject. In order to get valid data, there was the need to contact the adolescent students who are victims of parental divorce in Asamankese Senior High School so that accurate data in connection with this study could be collected.

3.5 Data Collection Techniques

In order to get valid data, there was the need to contact the adolescent students using a well-prepared interview guide to sought for detail information from the victims of parental divorce in Asamankese Senior High School so that accurate data in connection with this study could be collected through one-on-one interview. For this reason, third year students were used because they had been in the system for almost three years as victims of parental divorce. According to Boukar (2014), “interview is a way of understanding things from the very field of research to establish the difference between perception and reality.

The choice of this instrument of data collection was to ensure that the study is anchored on a strong base - that is, touching on the real issues in the field. In the data gathering process, the researcher used semi-structured interviews to give the participants time and room to talk about their experiences on a given subject. To facilitate the process, the researcher used interview guides, and notebooks to help in taking notes during the interviews.

According to Holloway and Wheeler (2002), “note taking is an important activity, but it might disturb the participants”. To limit this, the researcher informed the participants that notes would be taken during the interview. In the words of Georges and Owen (1980), “individuals who rely exclusively upon memory and notes always stand the chance of being charged with incompleteness or bias”. As a result of this, some audio recordings were made for later transcription based on the consent of the participants. The researcher also contacted participants on phone during the transcription process for further clarifications on the data collected.

3.6 Managing and Recording Data

For ethical consideration, the researcher requested and obtained an introductory letter from the Department of Counselling Psychology of the University of Education Winneba. The letter indicated the purpose of the study and how confidential the reports will be treated. Meetings were held in February 2020 with the participants so as to gain their acceptance to participate in the research. Specifically the researcher came into contact with, and asked them to participate in the research after explaining the nature, the scope and the purpose of the study.

The researcher contacted parents of participants below 18 years through phone calls to seek their consent to allow their children to participate in the research. In general terms, the respondents were willing to participate in the research and the interviews were conducted. The interview with the selected students took place in the Guidance and Counselling Unit of the school. Each interview lasted approximately 30 to 40 minutes per participants. During the interviews, the researcher used interview guides, kept notes and also made audio recordings in order to help him to analyse and synthesis the gathered data. The researcher gave the respondents the liberty to freely express themselves without any interference.

3.7 Methods for Verification and Trustworthiness

This qualitative study was evaluated by the four criteria used to measure the trustworthiness of qualitative data: credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability.

3.7.1. Credibility

Creswell (2003) posits that respondent validation is where the result of the research is submitted to the respondents for confirmation as a means of establishing credibility.

To achieve credibility in this study, the researcher engaged in prolonged engagement by spending one month in the field collecting data. Also, the researcher interviewed the participants and at the same time observed both the verbal and non-verbal responses of the participants. After the data is transcribed, the information was transferred from the recording device onto a laptop. Data was analysed using verbatim quotations of interviewees. The researcher took the research findings to those who participated in the research for confirmation, validation and approval.

3.7.2 Dependability

Creswell (2003) admit there could be no credibility without dependability in qualitative research. Also, it is concerned with whether we would obtain the same results if we could observe the same thing twice. An extensive and detailed evidence of the process in which the research was conducted was documented in order that others can replicate and ascertain the level of dependability. Further, in this study, dependability was established through the establishment of appropriate enquiry decision. This included review of interviewer bias to resist early closure and at the same time prevent the provision of unreliable data due to boredom on the part of the respondents because of prolonged interview sessions.

3.7.3 Transferability

This refers to the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be generalized or transferred to other contexts. The researcher achieved this in this study by extensively and thoroughly describing the processes that were adopted for others to follow and replicate.

3.7.4 Confirmability

Creswell (2003) declare confirmability to mean the degree to which the results could be confirmed or corroborated by others.

3.8 Ethical Issues Considered

This research was anchored in the observance of several ethical standards in the research field. All participants were required to report their written acceptance regarding their participation in the research through a signed Consent and Briefing Letter. The researcher contacted parents of participants below 18years through phone calls to seek their consent to authorize the students to participate in the research. The aim of the letters and phone calls was to reassure participants and parents that, their participation in the research is voluntary and that they were free to withdraw from it at any point and for any reason. Participants were fully informed regarding the objectives of the study, while they were reassured that their responses would be treated as confidential and used only for academic purposes. Again, the researcher maintained a high sense of neutrality in questioning.

According to Creswell (2003), one important aspect to evaluating a project involving case study is the quality of the interaction between the researcher and the research participants. For this reason, the researcher's relations with the respondents were characterised by honesty - by being credible, fair and not hesitant to respond to interviewees' questions when asked.

3.9 Data Analysis Procedure

The process of qualitative research is largely inductive, with the researcher generating meaning from the data collected in the field (Creswell, 2003). Generation of meaning, in this regard was made possible through analysis of the data collected. The purpose

of data analysis is to make sense of data gathered in order to respond to the research questions and objectives. In this research, data were analysed using qualitative procedure which dwells extensively on content analysis. This method of analysis employed by the researcher comprised five steps, namely: transcription, checking and editing, coding, analysis and interpretation, and verification.

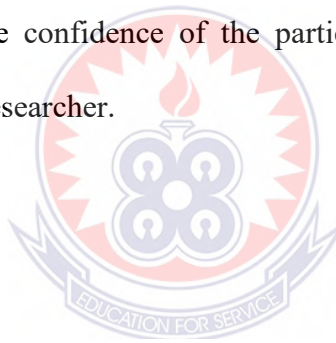
Thus, the researcher's initial exercise was to transfer the audio recording from the field during the interview onto paper, and read it to get an idea of what the data were about. The brief notes taken during the interview were also labelled. The data were divided into many related (meaningful) units. This was achieved by reading each sentence and writing the themes that were in every sentence. Similar themes were then grouped together to make related units. In research, this is referred to as initial coding. Themes gathered were interpreted to generate meaning based on the understanding of the response by the participants. This is referred to as pattern coding. Finally, the validity of the data was checked by going through the transcripts again to obtain the central themes.

Generally, the content analysis used combined the two major sources of data, namely findings from the fieldwork, on one hand, and elements from previous researches and various writings on the topic, on the other hand. The analysis was also grounded on narrative style in order to ensure originality of the respondents' position on the key questions that were raised in the course of the research. Evidences gathered on the field and verbatim quotes from respondents anchored the narrative analysis used in this study.

3.10 Limitations

Some limitations confronted in the research process included inadequate documentation on details of adolescents of divorced parents in the selected area of study. Secondly, the research work was impeded by unwillingness of some participants to avail themselves for interview. This made it difficult for the researcher to work within the time frame scheduled for the interview.

Thirdly, some participants were unwilling to disclose full information about their challenges in school as a result of their parents' divorce. Such participants were not sure of the confidentiality of their responses, even though they were fully informed about the purpose and how confidential their responses would be treated. This, also to some extent, affected the confidence of the participants in disclosing information about their plight to the researcher.



CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the data gathered from 12 adolescents with the aid of interview guide. The main purpose was to gather from the respondents, their experiences after their parental divorce, and to establish whether or not such experiences and knowledge (in its practical sense) affect their psychosocial and academic well-being. In this regard, the demographic characteristics of the respondents became indispensable in the data collection process.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Although, the objectives of the research exclude demographic characteristics of respondents, a set of data that intended to describe demographic variables of the sample units were obtained. The twelve adolescent participants were asked at the start of the data gathering for their basic demographic information such as gender, age, class, and the number of years their parents had divorced.

These demographic variables were relevant to the study in the sense that they greatly helped the researcher to understand how characteristic the participants were of the population, and the richness of information they could bring to bear in the interview process. The demographic data also became a necessary guide to the researcher in making specific recommendations for a focused intervention by the school authorities and other relevant bodies.

4.1.1 Gender, ages and names of respondents

Most of the adolescents interviewed were female, with only three being male. The researcher gathered data from adolescents whose ages ranged from 15 - 19. Out of the twelve adolescents interviewed, only one had two years of post-parental divorce experience. The rest are from four to 19 years of post-parental divorce experiences.

Names assigned to participants are pseudo names. Further examination of this set of data indicates that adolescents included in the study were still going through the impact associated with the divorce of their parents.

4.1.2 Educational level of participants

The researcher was of the view that the thinking and decision making process of a person is significantly influenced by his or her education. Stated differently, education in the view of the researcher influences the appreciation of his or her social environment, and the kind of adjustment mechanism necessary for making his or her life comfortable. For this reason, the researcher purposively included in the study adolescents who were all in SHS three, who have had significant experience or influence of their parental divorce on their psychosocial and academic well-being, for at least two years in secondary education.

4.1.3 Family upbringing of the adolescent prior to parent's divorce

The researcher was conscious of the fact that the challenges the adolescent experiences in all spheres of his or her life including schooling may not necessarily be as a result of divorce, but also the kind of family environment the adolescent once had prior to parental divorce.

As a result, the researcher delved into the family environment of the respondents prior to the divorce of their parents, to ascertain whether or not their present challenging experience (if any) were triggered by their parents' divorce, or have characterised their very lives since childhood. From the data gathered, all the adolescents, except Ms. Eve and Ms. Han who grew up to know about their parents' divorce, once lived with both parents, experience comfortable and caring family environment until their parents' divorce truncated the good life they were enjoying.

4.1.4 Residential arrangement of the respondents after parents' divorce

The researcher was of the view that the nature of the respondents' residential arrangement after their parents' divorce could significantly affects their well-being as far as their transition into adulthood is concerned. Such arrangement, in the opinion of the researcher could affect the adolescents in many spheres of life including their schooling. In this study, the researcher established that half of the respondents totalling six in number stay with their mothers after divorce; while three stay with their father and the rest with their grandmother.

It was established that those living with their grandmothers were going through harsh experience after the divorce of their parents, where in most cases, the adolescents assume full responsibility of their basic needs. Only Ms Eve, who belonged to this category of adolescents, however, indicated to the researcher that her basic needs were taken care of by the grandmother. Except, Ms Kor, adolescents who live with their fathers were enjoying good life as far as their basic needs were concerned. Notwithstanding, the researcher established that the adolescents living with their mothers, except Ms Han, were also going through challenging times as far as full attention from such mothers were concerned, due to their second marriages. In effect,

the adolescents living with their grandparents and mother were hit the most by the divorce of their parents.

Table 1: Summary of demographic characteristics of the adolescents

Name	Number assigned to Participants	Gender	Age	Years of Parental Divorce	Form	Residence	Living condition
Ms Obe	1	Female	17	6	3	Father	Not bad
Ms Kor	2	Female	17	5	3	Father	Bad
Ms Jul	3	Female	19	7	3	Mother	Bad
Ms Thes	4	Female	19	7	3	Mother	Bad
Bro Des	5	Male	19	10	3	Mother	Not bad
Ms Rho	6	Female	17	4	3	Mother	Bad
Ms Bel	7	Female	19	8	3	Father	Bad
Ms Han	8	Female	19	19	3	Mother	Not bad
Ms Eve	9	Female	19	19	3	Grandmother	Not bad
Bro Ed	10	Male	18	9	3	Mother	Bad
Ms Jos	11	Female	19	2	3	Grandmother	Bad
Bro Dan	12	Male	18	8	3	Grandmother	Bad

Source: Field Work, 2020

4.2 Influence of Divorce on Interpersonal Relations of the Adolescent in School

The first objective of this research was to explore the influence that divorce has on the interpersonal relationship of the adolescent in school. This was guided by the question: “*How does divorce influence your interpersonal relationship in school?*” The coded data gathered under this question from the adolescents interviewed, revealed two major divergent responses.

First, some of the adolescents indicated that the divorce of their parents has not had any significant impact on their relationship with peers in school. Demographic checks of these respondents indicated that these were the adolescents who did not witness the divorce process of their parents, but rather grew up to know of it. They included Ms Han and Ms Eve. A contrary responses to this question was given by rest the of the

respondents, and they centred on three major themes, namely: isolation from friends, repulsive and intolerant attitudes, and finally, inferiority complex.

4.2.1 Isolation in school environment

One defining characteristic of a school environment that facilitates learning is the opportunity it offers for interpersonal relations among the students from diverse background. With this opportunity, the adolescent can comfortably shape their behaviour and actions as well as learn how to effectively relate with peers in school, given the right family environment. This is an important element of the affective domain of learning in school. However, this is likely to be impaired if the family environment militates against the social behaviour of the students. In this study, one central theme that the researcher sought to elaborate is whether or not the divorce of couples negatively affects the interpersonal relations their children builds in school. It has been established under the review of related literature under chapter two that divorce greatly affects the social relations or wellbeing of the adolescent in and outside the school environment.

However, this is not to conclusively say at this stage that adolescents selected for this study in Asamankese Senior High School suffer disruption in their resolve to build social relations in school due to the divorce of their parents. It, therefore, became imperative to gauge the lived and live (current) experiences of the adolescents to affirm or disprove the prediction of negative impact of divorce on the adolescent's social relation as articulated under chapter two of this study.

In an interview with one adolescent, Bro Dan, it was established that divorce breeds anti-social behaviour of the child who is the victim of such family disruption. In his

response to the question of whether or not the divorce of his parents has affected his relationship with his peers in school, Bro Dan expressed:

At times I become sad when I hear my friends talk about the good things their fathers do for them. It usually dampens my spirit, so always I isolate myself from them in order for me not to hear the good things they are enjoying from their parents. (Bro Dan)

It must be stated here that, Bro Dan exhibited anti-social behaviour not because it is his nature, but rather the effect of the trauma and frustration that the divorce and irresponsiveness of his parents towards his educational needs has bequeathed onto him. According to the respondent, the pain of his parents' divorce did not afford him the opportunity to mingle and associate with friends even prior to his enrolment in senior high school, and that has greatly affected his confidence to do so in school. The occasional anti-social behaviour of Bro Dan is corroborated by Ms Jul who indicated to the researcher that she is naturally sociable, but the trauma of her parents' divorce sometimes forces her to seclude herself from her friends in school.

Responses from other adolescents reveal that the divorce does not only stimulate occasional anti-social behaviour, but also shapes the very nature or character of the adolescent who is a victim of the disrupted family system. In an interview with Ms Kor, on the same subject above, she indicated that the divorce of her parent had influence her character. She expressed:

"I don't care about anybody and about what happens to me in life. Sometimes, I feel that I don't have anybody in life so I encourage myself and isolate myself from friends". (Participant 2)

In this response, it is gleaned that the divorce of Ms Kor's parents has characteristically made her introvert, and sees anti-social behaviour as the only way she can be encouraged. She has formed the perception that those around her cannot meet her needs, and that eventually affects her harmony with those around her. Again

from her responses, it can be established that Ms Kor is likely to adhere less to conformity and associate with cohorts in school. This less conformity and self-seeking attitude of this adolescent is buttressed by Rosnati, Barni and Uglia (2014), who argues that adolescents from divorced families attach great importance to hedonism.

Two important meanings could be gleaned from the above responses of the respondents. Firstly, divorce has the potency of making an adolescent who is naturally extrovert to develop anti-social behaviour in relation to his or her school mates. Secondly, adolescents who witnessed the divorce process of their parents and suffer the consequence thereof can have a permanent change of attitude in human relations. In the opinion of the researcher, the situation becomes so because the divorce forces the adolescent to focus his or her energy to deal with the challenges at home, thereby taking away the healthy and happy interpersonal relationship that he or she has to build in school.

The anti-social behaviour of the adolescent after the divorce of his or her parents is corroborated by Amato (2008) who argues that divorce destabilizes the teenager and affects their ability to form healthy social relationships. Similarly, Esmaeili and Yaacob (2011) also states, among other things, that adolescents who have been exposed to parental divorce are at a higher risk of antisocial behaviour. This derived theme is also supported by the work of Adofo and Etsey (2016) , who argues that adolescents after divorce experiences anger and loneliness, which in turn affect how they relate with others socially. Importantly, it was established from these adolescents who exhibited anti-social and isolation posture that they hardly benefit from the

informal curricula experiences that school offers including access to basic information of life, interpersonal relation skills and communication skills.

4.2.2 Repulsive and intolerant attitude of the adolescent

Closely related to the isolation posture of the adolescent in school is yet another social disorder problem of repulsive or intolerant attitude among adolescent who experienced the divorce of their parents. It was established that such social disorder attitude is not only exhibited by the adolescent towards their peers, but also their school authorities in the school environment. In response to a question of whether or not the adolescent accommodates and tolerates divergent views from their peers, Ms Kor, for example expressed:

I have not been able to learn how to respect other people's view on a given issue, because I was not brought up that way by my parents after divorce. Responses of my parents to my requests after divorce were always harsh and unfriendly. I have grown up to appreciate life that way. (Participant 2)

In this response, it can be argued that the relative poor appreciation and respect for varied opinion are uncharacteristic of the adolescent's schooling or learning experiences. This repulsive and intolerant attitude, according to the respondent, is born out of how her parent verbally addressed and gave feedback to her after they had divorced on any given issue. The intolerant attitude of this adolescent does not only defines her present human-relation deficit, but also a behavioural crisis that she admits, it needs to be overcome.

This research finding is supported by Esmaeili and Yaacob (2011). According to these scholars, conflicts linked to parental divorce are characterized by parent's communicating in a manner that is not polite, and can be traumatic and stressful for the adolescents. The scholars further argues that adolescents pick up this as a way of

interacting since they view this as the norm in social interaction, which may lead them into trouble or having strained relationships with those around them.

4.2.3 Inferiority complex

The failure of marriages of the adolescents' parents was identified to have triggered another social well-being crisis of inferiority complex to the respondents. This problem was characteristic of adolescents who physically experienced their parent's divorce and were highly hit to the point of depression. In response to a question about whether or not they felt socially comfortable and confident around peers of intact family, most of the adolescents' responses were in the negative. Bro Dan, for example, expressed:

“When I hear my friends talk about what their parents do for them, I become sad, and that dampens my spirit”. (Participant 12)

Ms Han also used the expression, “I feel bad when I see what other parents do for their children in school”. Ms Kor expressed: “I do my things as someone without a family, so I don't get close to friends who are enjoying good life”

Most of the adolescents used expressions that suggested a feeling or state of social discomfort, jealousy and low standard of life. Most of the adolescents interviewed admitted that, considering what other parents do for their children in school, they have a strong feeling of inadequacy in their school life. They also tend to engage in social withdrawal from their colleagues who are treated well by their parents, and questioned whether their social life in school was up to standard.

Many studies have explained that adolescents of divorced parents tend to engage in disruptive behaviour to compensate for their low self-esteems. This study has, however, established a contrary finding, which is corroborated by the work of Mucaj

and Xeka (2015). According to these scholars, the adolescents, in the post-divorce period become highly preoccupied with how others view them which makes them want to keep to themselves to avoid being judged based on their new status as children of divorce. This is not different from the feeling of social withdrawal that participants in this study harboured regarding their relations with peers. It is critical to state in addition that due to relative low self-esteem these adolescents exhibited, they admitted that they were very sensitive to criticism from friends on their condition. In the opinion of the researcher, this explains the reason for the anti-social behaviour of most adolescents from divorced families.

4.3 Influence of Divorce on Emotional Well-being of Adolescent

The second question this work sought to answer was: “*How does divorce influence the emotional well-being of adolescents in school*”? Structural environment of academic institutions has been designed in a manner that usually assists the adolescents to achieve not only academic excellence, but also emotional maturity or excellence. However, this role of the school is also likely to be impaired by a structural breakdown of the adolescent’s family.

The narrated experiences of the adolescents during and after the divorce of their parents focus on circumstances that, in the opinion of the researcher, could affect their present emotional state in school. They included issues of dealing with step parents, shifting residence between parents, feeling unwanted by the parents, issues of child custody, lack of parental warmth, parental hostility, rejection, parental withdrawal, and issues of support.

The problem of step-parents as a source of emotional distress to the adolescent is corroborated by the work of Hetherington and Clingempeel (1992). They argued that

the entrance of a new and possibly unwelcome adult into the family can be a source of stress and rivalry for the children. Simons (1980) also suggests that children may become resentful at the time they lose the custodial parent. This is also a view that is strongly put forward by the defenders of attachment theory, such as Amato (2000), which according to him may complicate the adolescent psychological development and influence his or her adjustment.

Again, under the literature review, it was highlighted from the work of Brownlee (2007) that adolescents who have experienced many pre-divorce disagreements between their parents tend to be emotionally unstable and have stress related issues that carry on even after the divorce has been finalized. Following this clue, the researcher explored the emotional state of the adolescents in their new family setting (that is, the school environment) with the view of answering the second research question.

Data gathered under the question: “How has the divorce of your parents influenced your emotional state in school” revealed two important themes, namely, depressed feeling and suicidal ideation, and difficulty in building relationship (as examined above). These findings, on the surface, support the work of Esmacili and Yaacob (2011) who states that, adolescent who experience parental divorce have internalizing problems such as depression, anxiety and low self-esteem. Further clarifications sought on these emotional well-being crises revealed a significant impact on the schooling of the adolescents.

4.3.1 Depressed feeling and suicidal ideation

In an interview with Ms Kor and Bro Dan on the question of the respondents’ emotional state in school after the divorce of their parents, it was established that the

adolescents experience general discomfort or mood swings, feeling of hopelessness and poor concentration. Bro Dan, for example, indicated to the researcher that usually feels emotionally stressed up as a result of his parents' unavailability, lack of parental warmth, parental rejection and parental withdrawal. According to the respondent, he has been left to face the reality of life by himself. The respondent's emotional state, identified above, is deduced from his response to the researcher on the question of his emotional state after parental divorce. Thus, Bro Dan expressed:

“I usually get worried and uncertain about what the future holds for me because of the lonely path my parents have caused me to take. The situation gets worse and I sometimes share tears when I see how other parents are supporting their children in their education. My focus now is not even about my schooling, but how to overcome the challenges I am facing as a result of my parents' divorce” (Participant 12)

From the above narration, it can be further deduced that the emotional state of the respondent causes them to redirect their attention to other aspirations or realities of life instead of their schooling. First, there is an uncertain future to confront; second, there is a sense of loneliness to overcome; third, there is a sense of dissatisfaction and inadequacy to satisfy. These are challenges the adolescent has been left to confront in the school environment. Similar state of emotional frustration was articulated by Ms Kor when she expressed that, she does not care about whatever happens to her in life on account that she is facing the reality of life all by herself.

Almost all the respondents expressed concerns of emotional issues that they are confronted with as a result of their parents' divorce. Such issues ranged from extreme sadness or grief (depressed mood), loss of parental love and care, issues of step-parents, and conflict between parents. The issue of parental conflict affecting the emotional stability of the adolescent is supported by the work of Johnston, Campbell and Mayes (1985). According to them, children's emotional and behavioural

problems can be predicted by the amount of involvement the child has in parental disputes, the amount of disagreement between parents, and the duration of the dispute over the child.

The seriousness of the emotional issues the adolescents confront can properly be appreciated by the suicidal ideations shared by three of them, Mr Kor, Bro Dan and Ms Obe. These adolescents occasionally feel that the only way out of the problems bestowed on them by their parents' divorce is to commit suicide. This explains the gravity of the emotional pain these adolescents are facing and the possible coping difficulties they are confronted with. However, the various coping strategies employed by these adolescents have been examined in detail under this chapter.

The idea that the adolescent of divorced parents is vulnerable to emotional disorders is supported by Schwartzberg (1992). He maintains that a child who has experienced trauma such as parental divorce may feel especially vulnerable to stressful stimuli and be unable to cope as well. Again, the report of frequent depressed mood by the adolescents is supported by Elliott & Richards (1991), who argues that adolescents from separated families are also more likely to report depressed mood and to be diagnosed with mood and anxiety disorders. The moderate to severe depression, as seen in the case of Bro Dan, Ms Obe and Ms Kor (who consider suicide as the solution to their problem) is further supported by the work of Wallerstein and Kelly (1996) who argues that five-years after the divorce, approximately one-third of children were suffering from moderate to severe depression. The scholars further argue that after ten years of divorce, nearly half the individuals studied were worried and under-achieving.

However, the problem is really not about the swing emotional state of the respondents, but the impact of such mood disorder on their schooling. Of significant focus is the impact of the above emotional disorder on the affective domain of learning of the adolescents, and the benefits they derive from the vast opportunities offered by the hidden aspect of their curriculum. In this study, the researcher established that the adolescents undergoing emotional stress have difficulty in acquiring new attitude and behaviour, thus adolescents who are undergoing emotional stress were always hesitant to learn new things outside the classroom. These derivations are based on the adolescents responses to a question of a new life the adolescent have learnt in their interaction with peers. Bro Dan, for example, expressed:

“I do not involve myself in the so called campus life; neither do I take delight in mingling with friends for the purpose of learning school life. I prefer to be alone and watch what goes on campus. My life on campus has been from dormitory to classroom and vice-versa...”
(Participant 12)

Apart from the conservative attitude and lack of interest in group activities, most of the adolescents interviewed have also normalized the attitude of sad feeling or grief and difficulty in appreciating the social and economic disparity that exist between them and their peers. The school environment is designed to inculcate the spirit of appreciation of individual difference, be it cultural, economic or social. The feeling of dissatisfaction that divorce has bequeathed on most of the adolescents interviewed, has, however, eroded such aspect of hidden curriculum from their experiences.

Again, it was established that the adolescents (by virtue of their withdrawal syndrome) lack the enthusiasm and motivation to mingle with their peers, due to the perceived low self-esteem imposed on them by the divorce of their parents. This finding is supported by the work of Newman and Newman (2015), who argue that

parental divorce may interfere with the adolescents' ability to emotionally form attachments with other people. This, in the opinion of the researcher militates against the active participation of the adolescents in class and group discussion.

4.4 Influence of Divorce on the Academic Well-Being of the Adolescent

The art of schooling does not only involve the activities of building social relationships, and an affective enterprise of developing emotional intelligence, but also involves intellectual and cognitive processes. However, the researcher was not oblivious of the fact that certain externalizing and internalizing problems caused by divorce could destabilise the intellectual or academic activities of the adolescents, who are victims of parental divorce.

Thus, the impact of divorce on the adolescent academic well-being was also an important focus of the researcher. The third question of this study was: *How does divorce affect the academic well-being of the adolescent in school?* Data gathered on this subject, brought out three major themes, firstly, diminished academic performance of the adolescent; secondly, lower educational aspiration; and finally, effect on the adolescent school attendance.

4.4.1 Academic performance of the adolescent in school

The researcher established under this subject that divorce and separation of the adolescent parents contribute to their diminished school achievements and performance. This derivation was evident in their average scores and ranks recounted by themselves in their respective classes. In an interview with Bro Dan on this subject, he, for example, indicated to the researcher that his academic performance (of being ranked third with average score of 70) would have been better if he enjoyed some measure of support from his parents. According to the respondent, he is

confronted with divided attention of passing his final examination, and how he can sustain and finance his schooling. The deduction is contained in his expression:

“The thought of my parents’ divorce has greatly affected my academic performance. Although, I rank third in my class, my average mark of 70 is not satisfactory to me. I wish I could focus and do better, but right now I am also concerned about my means of livelihood...”
(Participant 12)

Ms. Rho, Ms Jul, Ms Obe, Ms Han and Bro Des, similarly indicated to the researcher that other life exigencies as a result of her parents’ divorce have divided their concentration towards academic work. Ms. Rho, for example, explained that she is unable to follow lessons in class to the end because other matters or thoughts usually interrupt with her learning process. According to Ms. Rho, she, ranks 19th out of forty-nine students in her class. Her average performance, according to her, is around 52. Similar narrations of poor academic work output were given by most of the respondents interviewed. Ms Jul also admitted that she would have performed better in academic work if she was staying with both parents at the same place. According to her, the father would have evaluated her academic work and assist her accordingly.

Ms Han, who stays with the mother and receives support from the father, admitted to the researcher that she would have performed better academically if her father was available, due to the failure of her mother to supervise her academic progress. The parents of Ms. Han divorced at the early days of this adolescent, yet she performs poorly academically. This finding contradicts a finding by Krantz (1988). According to this scholar, early separations may be associated with deficits in social and emotional functioning, but not in intellectual functioning. Again, Bro Des disclosed to the researcher that thoughts of the struggle of his single parent (mother) make him lose concentration on his academic work. Running through the narrations of the respondents on this subject were factors responsible for what the researcher describes

as “impaired cognitive functioning” of the adolescents. Central among these factors were financial difficulties, lack of parental support, loss of interest in academic activities, thought of wellbeing of their single parent, and divided attention. These are what the researcher describes as the “forces of broken home against the academic work of the victims”.

It is also significant to note that these forces have bequeathed to the adolescent, poor attention span and concentration as far as their academic work is concerned. Although, the adolescents did not mention any mood disorder as a contributory factor in this regard, the researcher agrees with Esmaili and Yaacob (2011) that depression as an internalizing problem comes with low concentration and poor attention span. The study also affirms the position of Ahiaoma (2013) that divorce has psychosocial effect on adolescents. The scholar argues, as the adolescents are preoccupied with their psychological, social, emotional and spiritual challenges during their parent’s divorce, their mind naturally starts slowing down in terms of performing cognitive tasks. She continues that their ability to analyse, be critical, perform intellectual activities gets affected as a result of their parents’ divorce.

Notwithstanding this finding, the researcher probed further to inquire about how the adolescents still achieve appreciable grades in the midst of their constraints. In response to this, the adolescents recounted that “their self-imposed sense of withdrawal and isolation” from group activities forces them to remain glued to their books so as to change their circumstance. This finding is not in line with the assertions by Esmaili and Yaacob (2011) and Adofo and Etsey (2016) that adolescents boys in particular performs poor academically due to externalizing problems such as aggression and indulgence in delinquent behaviour that divorce

bequeathed onto them. In more specific terms, this study did not establish such instances of externalizing behaviour of the adolescents as a result of their parent divorce – from which other researchers make the case of poor academic performance. Meanwhile, it is important to add that, the subject of whether the adolescent boy performs better than the girl, and vice versa, was not a subject for consideration in this study.

4.4.2 School and class attendance

In this study the researcher established a number of divorced imposed constraints, which the respondents affirmed that they affect their school attendance. Among others, they disclosed that unavailability of parents, poor commitment of the absent parent or both, financial challenges of their single parent or grandparent, makes them stay at home a little longer when school resumes so as to find their own means of survival when they report to school. Some of the respondents disclosed that, occasionally they leave school to engage in money-fetching ventures and report later to school.

The researcher describes the latter development of the adolescent as “intermittent leave from academic work”, which cumulatively affect their overall class attendance. The deductions are gleaned from the various responses by the adolescents to the question: *“How does the divorce of your parents affect your school attendance?”* In responding to this question, Bro Dan, for example expressed:

“My attendance to school and even class is not encouraging. It is so because I sometimes have to find my own money before I report to school. At times, I stay away for about two weeks and occasionally ask permission to go home to gather money...” (Participant 12)

Similarly, Ms Kor expressed: “I am a day student, and because my parents do not care for me, I take some days off, especially the market days, to make some money

towards my education. On such days, I do not wait for school to close before I go home, just to meet market for my usual sale business...” Similar account for poor school and class attendance was given by Ms Eve, Ms Obe, Ms, Jul and Bro Des.

Ms Obe, for instance, explained to the researcher that she report late to school anytime school resumes because she always relies on her single parent (father) for her school needs. She believed that things would have been better if the mother was also helping. Similar concern was shared by Bro Des, who indicated that the absence of the father put a lot of hardship on his mother. Ms Eve also indicated that her attendance to school is delayed for almost two weeks since both parents look up to each other for her school needs.

4.4.3 Lower educational aspiration

In a response to a question posed on fears the adolescents have as far as their future education is concerned, which specifically focused on their aspiration for their future education, Bro Dan expressed:

“I am not sure about what the future holds for me as far as my education is concerned. I was lucky to be here because of the free Senior High School policy. Even if I will continue, I would have to fight for my own means of funding further education. But for now I am thinking of finding some job after my Senior High School education”.
(Participant 12)

Ms Jul similarly disclosed to the researcher that she was not considering further education after her Senior High School education. She continued that she was not sure of her parents’ support after Senior High school. The respondent, however, disclosed to the researcher that she would further her education if she would get assistance from someone. Ms Han also expressed similar sentiment that she may not be able to further her education.

Four important meanings are derived from the adolescents' responses above. First, there is general willingness among all the adolescents to further their education after Senior High School. Secondly, despite their general willingness, there is low educational aspiration among all the respondents above to further their education. Thirdly, the low educational aspiration is not born out of their fear of possible failure of their final examination in SHS or their lack of readiness, but rather the fear of no support from their divorced parents. Finally, the low educational aspiration syndrome among the adolescents has affected the interest of the adolescents in their school activities for a better educational output.

The researcher's further probe into the rationale for the adolescents' low educational aspiration beyond Senior High School revealed four major reasons. First, the respondents' feeling of uncertainty is attributed to their current experiences of raging misunderstanding or conflict between their divorced parents over whose responsibility it is towards their educational needs. This derivation is buttressed by the work of Grych and Fincham (1992). According to them, conflict can affect children's self-esteem, ability to adjust and cope, social competence and behaviour. Secondly, it is derived from the adolescents' responses that their divorced parents have not yet disclosed any plan to them about their further education. Thirdly, most of the respondents attributed their low educational aspiration syndrome to the sole responsibility they have assumed over their current educational needs. Finally, they attributed the low educational aspiration to their present economic condition that they have resolved to work for sometimes before pursuing any further studies. These reasons, among others, in the opinion of the researcher have affected the commitment of the adolescent towards their current stage of schooling.

The uncertainty syndrome of the adolescents for further education is supported by the work of Pálmarsdóttir (2015). According to the scholar, anxiety is very high and common in adolescents who are experiencing parental divorce. He further argued that this anxiety or uncertainty affects their level of concentration in school and affects the way the adolescents concentrate in their academic work.

4.5 Coping Strategies of the Adolescents

The researcher has established under the themes above that adolescents of divorce parents experience a variety of problems ranging from emotional and psychological disturbances to diminished social relationships while in school. Due to the severity and impact of these problems on the schooling of the adolescents, the researcher explored the various coping strategies the adolescents have adopted to lessen the effects of their parents' divorce on their schooling.

Essentially, this was to address the fourth and final research question: *“How does the adolescent cope with the influence of divorce in school?”* The analysis of the data gathered brought out three major coping strategies the adolescents have adopted to mitigate the challenges imposed on them by the divorce of their parents. These are: temporary termination of communication with parents, support from extended family members and support from biological single-parent.

4.5.1 Temporary termination of communication with parents

In this study, the researcher established that disconnection of communication by the adolescents with parent was one of the coping strategies adopted by the adolescent to moderate the effects of their parents' divorce on their schooling. This, according to the respondents enable them stay away from the happenings at home. Most of the respondents indicated to the researcher that, constant communication with their

parents make them feel sad and more depressed due to the harsh words and insults parents rain on them on phone. In an interview with Ms Obe on the question of her coping strategy, she expressed:

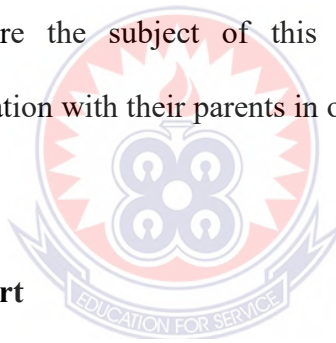
“In order for me to focus on my academic work, I decide not to call my parents (father) on any issue affecting my schooling. This is because when I call him, his anger and the kind of words he uses on me because of the absence of my mother, weakens my morale in school...”
(Participant 1)

Similarly, Ms Eve indicated to the researcher that she sometimes forget the happenings at home by not communicating with any of her divorced parents so that she would not be demoralized by the unresolved conflict between her parents. According to this respondent, her major source of worry and disturbance is the unresolved conflict between her parents, though they are separated. Similar coping strategy was advanced by Ms Jul.

The researcher makes four major inferences by the above narrations by the respondents. Firstly, communication with any of the parents while in school is a source of disturbance instead of inspiration. Secondly, none of the divorced parents has interest in the well-being of their child (adolescent) in school. Thirdly, this category of the adolescents has emotional attachment with their parents, but the family structural circumstances and conflicts between parents make them abort this emotional bond unnaturally. Finally, the unresolved conflict and hatred between the divorced parents is a more disturbing to the adolescent than the divorce itself. It is revealed in the third inference that breaking of communication may appear to be a solution to the adolescent, yet it is a potential source of emotional deficit, which in the opinion of the researcher could affect the stay of the adolescents in school. The finding of the adolescent being more traumatized by the constant parental conflict

than the effect of the divorce itself is corroborated by the work of Bishop and Ingersoll (1988).

According to Bishop and Ingersoll, post-divorce conflict had a greater impact on adolescents' self-concept than family structure. Similarly, Mechanic and Hansell (1989) found that family conflict had more direct effects on long-term changes in well-being in areas such as depression, anxiety, physical symptoms and self-esteem than divorce. This study also supports the work of Rutter (1994), who is among the proponent of the attachment theory. According to him, the increased risk for adolescent from divorced homes stems from discordant, conflictual relationships that follow the losses associated with divorce and not the divorce itself. This explains why the adolescents, who are the subject of this study, adopted the strategy of disconnecting communication with their parents in order to stay away from the known conflict between parents.



4.5.2 Intra-family support

In the review of the related literature under chapter two, the researcher highlighted that the nature of support system the adolescent receives outside her nuclear family could effectively moderate the effects of divorce bequeaths to the adolescent. In this study, the researcher established two major sources of family support to the adolescents, namely the grandparents and uncles.

These sources of family support, according to the respondents, make them hopeful and strong as they journey through school. This coping strategy was evident in a response by Ms Eve, Ms Jos and Ms Han. According to these respondents, anytime the divorce or absence of their parent gives them the cause to worry, they are inspired by the comforting words from grandparents and uncles who, according to these

respondents, assist them with their school needs. Ms Eve, for example, expressed in response to the question of her coping strategy:

“I rely virtually on my grandmother for everything, be it my school needs or advice. Anytime the thoughts of my parents’ divorce dampen my spirit in school, I call my grandmother and I get inspired by what she says. And so with my grandmother, I move on with my life despite the pain inflicted on me by my parents’ divorce...” (Participant 9)

Similarly, Ms Han and Ms Jos indicated to the researcher that regular contact and advice by her uncle on her education keeps her mind away from the thought of the absence of her father. This finding demonstrates the vibrancy of non-custodial parents or other members of the extended family can be, to moderating the impact of divorce on the adolescents. This finding corroborates the work of Stolba and Amato (1993), who argues that adolescents’ well-being is not solely associated with the loss of the noncustodial parent. Instead, they conclude that alternative family forms can be suitable for raising adolescents, if they provide support and supervision. This view is also supported by the proponents of the attachment theory. George and Solomon (1999), for example, argue that familial and sensitive caretaking environment during divorce can mitigate or even prevent adolescents’ distress.

4.5.3 Support from biological single parent

Although some respondents such as Ms. Thes, Ms. Rho, Ms. Obe, Ms. Eve and Bro. Des, indicated to the researcher a poor relationship and irresponsibility on the part of their single (mothers), some other respondents indicated that they were encouraged by the effort of their mothers towards their education. These included Ms Han and Bro Ed. Bro Ed, for example, expressed:

“My mother has been the source of my happiness. I feel very happy staying with my mother. I take things to be normal because I say to myself that I am not the only person whose father has neglected him. Having my mother around is well with me...” (Participant 10)

Ms Han in a similar expression, disclose that she takes courage from the love and attention her mother gives her. According to this respondent, the role of her mother towards her schooling makes her forget about the absence of the father, although she wished the father is within her reach.

The idea that a support from a single parent moderates the impact of divorce on the adolescent is supported by the works of many researchers, who concluded, that parental support, particularly the parent-child relationship, helps the child to cope following divorce. Hess and Camara (1979), for example, found a good parent-child relationship to be a more powerful influence on children's social and school adjustment. Further, Hess and Camara argues that a positive parent-child relationship, divorce.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the significant findings that were obtained from the various narrations of the respondents based on their experiences in schooling after the divorce of their parents. The chapter also includes the conclusions and recommendations for remedying the negative impact of divorce on the adolescent's psychosocial and academic well-being as have been established in this study.

The main objectives of the research were to investigate the influence of divorce on adolescent's social, emotional, and academic well-being; and explore the various coping strategies adopted by the adolescents of divorced parents to mitigate the impact of their parents' divorce on their psychosocial and academic well-being. To achieve these objectives, the researcher employed qualitative approach and case study design to solicit information that are accurate and of current reality from the adolescent students.

5.1 Summary of key Findings

The study answered the four research questions that were presented in chapter one of this study. The findings below were mainly the meanings derived from the narrations of the adolescent students interviewed.

5.1.1 Indicate how divorce influences the social relationship of the adolescent

In answering this question, the researcher explored from the perspective of twelve adolescent students on how the divorce of their parents has affected how they relate to others in school, with the aid of a series of probing questions. Under this question, the

researcher established two divergent responses from the adolescent: the first group indicated that divorce of their parents has not had any significant effect on their inter-personal relationship in school. The second group, however, revealed a contrary effect of their parents' divorce has affected their social well-being. The researcher established that the first group of respondents did not experience the divorce process of their parents, but grew up to know of it. The latter group of respondents, it was established, had impaired relationship with either their father or mother or both.

Focusing on the latter revelation, it was established in this study that parental divorce has caused adolescents, who are naturally extrovert, to develop anti-social behaviour in relation to his or her school mates. On the inter-personal relation deficit of the adolescent, it was established that, is as a result of the effect of trauma, frustration or anger towards parents. The irresponsiveness of their parents towards their school needs; their diminished confidence to establish friendship prior to their enrolment in SHS, the resolve of the adolescents to channel energy to deal with the challenges at home.

The researcher also established under this question that adolescents who experienced the divorce process of their parents exhibit less conformity and self-seeking attitude due to the lonely path some of them believed divorced of their parents has forced them to take. Significantly, the researcher established that the isolation or anti-social and self-seeking attitudes of the adolescents have affected their affective learning activities including inter-personal relation and communication skills.

In response to the same question, the researcher established that divorce has influenced the adolescents to develop intolerant and repulsive attitude towards their mates, which the adolescents viewed as a form of social interaction. Moreover, this

study has established that adolescent who experienced the divorce of their parents had lower self-esteem as a result of their feeling or state of social discomfort, jealousy and feeling of inadequacy in their school life.

5.1.2 Identify how divorce influences the emotional well-being of adolescents

Under this research question, the researcher established that divorce has caused the adolescent to be emotionally unstable due to their general feeling of discomfort or mood swings, feeling of hopelessness and poor concentration. Among the reasons given for their emotional disorder were, parents' unavailability, parental withdrawal, issues of step-parents, feeling unwanted by the parents, parental hostility and issues of support. The researcher further established that the adolescents were more concerned with uncertain future to confront, a sense of loneliness to overcome, and a sense of dissatisfaction and inadequacy to satisfy than their schooling.

In this study, the researcher established that the adolescents undergoing emotional stress were always hesitant to learn new things outside the classroom, lacked interest in group activities, and had the difficulty in appreciating the social and economic disparity that exist between them and their peers due to their feeling of dissatisfaction. Again, it was established that the adolescents lacked the enthusiasm and motivation to mingle with their peers, due to the perceived low self-esteem.

5.1.3 Indicate how divorce influences the academic well-being of the adolescent

The researcher established under this subject that divorce of the adolescent parents is responsible for the diminished school achievements and performance of the adolescents. The researcher established that this poor academic performance of the adolescents was attributed to poor attention span or concentration towards academic

work as a result of financial difficulty, lack of parental support, lack of motivation, thought of well-being of their single parent, and divided attention.

Again, it was established under this question that unavailability of parents, poor commitment of the absent parent or both, financial challenges of their single parent or grandparent, affect their school and class attendance. This is as a result of what the researcher described as “intermittent leave from academic work”, to engage in money-making ventures. The researcher further established low educational aspiration after Senior High School among all the adolescents. This was as result of fear of no support from their divorced parents. It was also established that the low educational aspiration syndrome among the adolescents has affected their interest in their school activities.

5.1.4 Identify how the adolescent cope with the influence of divorce in school?

Due to the severity and impact of emotional and psychological disturbances of divorce on the adolescent, the researcher explored the various coping strategies the adolescents have adopted to mediate the effects of their parents’ divorce. Essentially, this was to address the fourth and final research question above. On this question, most of the respondents indicated to the researcher that constant communication with their parents while in school was a source of disturbance instead of inspiration. As a result, the researcher established that termination of communication by the adolescents with custodial parents was one of their coping strategies. This, according to the respondents, enables them stay away from the happenings at home.

Again, it was found that support from some members of the adolescent’s external family, particularly, grandmothers and uncles, were effective in moderating the effects of divorce on the adolescent. According to the respondents, this source of

support makes them hopeful and strong in their academic pursuit. The comforting words and advice from these individuals, it was established, were sources of inspiration. Most of the adolescents indicated that they keep their minds away from the thought of the absence of their parents. Some other respondents indicated that, they were encouraged by the love, attention and effort of their custodial mothers towards their schooling. This gives credence to the relevance of parental support, particularly the parent-child relationship, in helping the adolescent cope with the frustrations of divorce.

5.2 Conclusions

A stable and enduring relationship between married couples is a pre-requisite for an enhanced livelihood and a better welfare system of their children. This generalization feeds into the perception of diminished wellbeing of the adolescent student from a destabilized home (divorced marriages). Whereas children of intact families continue to enjoy unimpeded access to support from their parents concerning their schooling, children of divorced parents do not enjoy the same opportunity. The latter conception is attributed to the breakdown of family structure that creates the needed environment for the adolescent to enjoy his or her basic rights including educational rights.

This study has proven the conception of impaired well-being of adolescent of divorced parents. The study explored a number of issues including the influence of divorce on the social, emotional, and academic well-being of the adolescent, and the coping strategies adolescents of divorced parents adopt to mitigate such impact. Various findings were gathered on each of these thematic issues with the aid of interview of 12 adolescents. The findings suggest that the social, emotional and

academic wellbeing of adolescents of divorced parents were aspirations yet to be materialized in the selected area of study.

The findings of the study have proven that adolescents of divorced parents exhibit social disorder syndrome of isolation and withdrawal from friends, repulsive and intolerance attitudes, and a feeling of low self-esteem, due to their sense of inadequacy and dissatisfaction of their condition imposed on them by their parents' divorce. The study has also proven that divorce makes adolescents of such family emotionally unstable and develop stress related issues such as grief, anger, loss of interest and poor concentration, which in turn affects their affective domain of learning. Furthermore, the findings of the study have affirmed the idea that adolescents of divorced parents have diminished academic performance, lower educational aspiration and poor attendance to class and school.

Significantly, this study has established various variables or factors that determine the degree of impact of divorce on the adolescent schooling. Such variables include the finances of the custodial parents, custodial parent-adolescent relationship, support system from intra-familial sources, number of years parents have divorced (ideal being at the early years of the adolescent), availability and care by non-custodial parent, and the relationship between the divorced parents. The poor nature or non-availability of these variables after divorce, fuels the extreme impact of divorce on the adolescents.

5.3 Counselling Implications

Some of the adolescents in this study demonstrated mal-adjustment difficulties couple with their low sense of self-esteem in school following their parents' divorce. It became apparent that these adolescents had never been contacted by the Guidance and

Counselling Unit of the School. This speaks to the inherent weakness of the established Guidance and Counselling Units in our Second Cycle institutions. In view of this, it is recommended that the Guidance and Counselling Units of the various Senior High Schools in Ghana revitalize their operations by identifying students of divorced parents and organise counselling sessions with them when necessary. This will enable such adolescent appreciate their circumstances and build self-confidence in their academic pursuit.

5.4 Recommendations

The study has partly explored various pre-dispose factors which fuels the influence of divorce on the psychosocial and academic well-being of the adolescent. It has also unveiled the various difficulties confronted by the adolescents in school as a result of the divorce of their parents. Although the adolescent revealed to the researcher a few coping strategies they have adopted at their level to mitigate the impact of their parents' divorce, the researcher recommends the following supportive interventions for addressing the influence of divorce on the psychosocial and academic well-being of the adolescent in general.

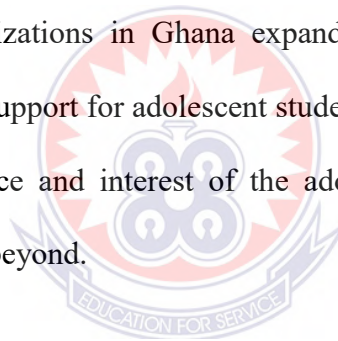
5.4.1 Strengthening the role of form masters in schools

The form masters in the various Senior High Schools function as counsellors of the students in the classroom. And indeed, such is one of the defining qualities of an effective teacher. A diligent and professional discharge of duty by form masters will help unearth the changes in their social, emotional and academic lives of the adolescents in the classes they manage. It is, therefore, recommended that form masters in the various Senior High schools carry out a comprehensive and regular

demographic study of their students, identify downward changes in their school activities, and arrange a relevant counselling for them where necessary.

5.4.2 Scholarship packages

It was established under this study that most of the adolescent have lower educational aspiration. They have simply lost interest in further academic pursuit beyond Senior High School due to the fear of “no support” for such pursuit. Many of the emotional and academic challenges they were confronting were as a result of weak financial base of their custodial parents. With assured source or means for further education, most of these adolescents would be motivated to study well, despite the odds of their parents’ divorce. In view of this, the researcher recommends that state agencies and non-governmental organizations in Ghana expand their scholarship packages and other forms of financial support for adolescent students from destabilized homes. This will revive the confidence and interest of the adolescent students in their current school environment and beyond.



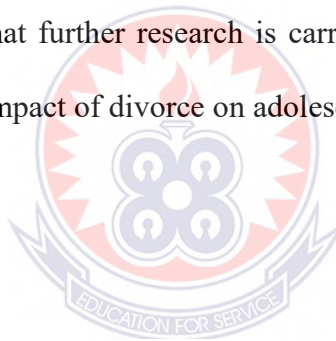
5.4.3 The role of Christian Bodies

All the respondents interviewed belonged to a Christian family or a church, but nothing was said about the role of the church in the form of support to the adolescents from destabilized homes. Like the school, the churches can also identify and assist adolescents in ways that can help moderate the impact of divorce of their parents. The researcher, therefore, recommends to the various religious groupings in Ghana to expand their role to cover social and welfare related issues of their members. This would give a home to the adolescents outside their family home. It would also go a long way to mitigate the emergence of any disruptive externalizing behaviour of the adolescents as a result of their parents’ divorce.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

The study dwelled extensively on the negative influence of divorce on the adolescents' psychosocial and academic well-being, with special focus on their emotional, social and academic wellbeing, but did not explore the opportunities divorce offers to the adolescent students. It is, therefore suggested that future researchers consider investigating into the good opportunities divorce offers to the adolescent students.

Again, extensive discussion on home-based pre-disposed factors that fuels the influence of divorce on the adolescent's schooling, but did not address how the school environment helps to absorb the effects of divorce of the student. The researcher, therefore, recommends that further research is carried out to explore the role of the school in mitigating the impact of divorce on adolescent students.



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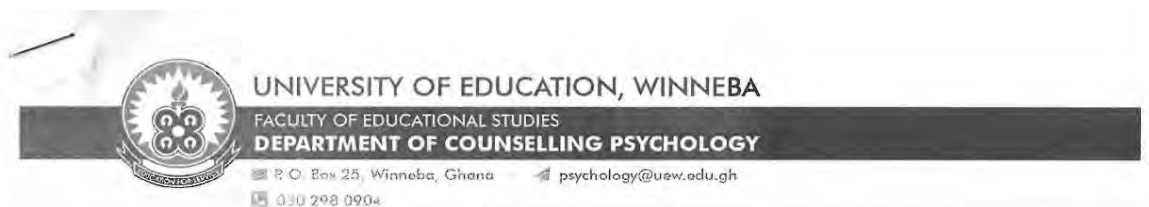
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Letter of Introductory



TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION: SAMUEL OKPOTI GBENOR

I write to introduce to you the bearer of this letter who is a student in the Department of Counselling Psychology of the University of Education, Winneba. He is pursuing a 2-Year Postgraduate Programme leading to the award of a Master of Philosophy Degree in Counselling Psychology.

As part of the requirements of the programme, he is conducting a research titled: **INFLUENCE OF DIVORCE ON ADOLESCENT'S SCHOOLING: A CASE STUDY OF ASAMANKESE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL, ASAMANKESE.**

He needs to gather information on this subject to enable him obtain authentic data to be analysed for the said research and he has chosen to do so in your institution.

I would be grateful if he is given the needed assistance to enable him conduct this important academic exercise. Thank you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Peter Eshun', is written over a faint circular watermark of the university's logo.

Peter Eshun, PhD

Ag. Head of Department



APPENDIX B

Divorce on Adolescents' Schooling in Asamankese Senior High School in Ghana

Letter of invitation

Dear

I am humbly asking you if you would kindly be a participant in a study on the topic: Influence of Divorce on Adolescents' Schooling: The Case of Asamankese Senior High School, Asamankese. I am conducting this study which aims to identify how divorce influence the social, emotional and intellectual wellbeing of adolescent's schooling, identify the coping strategies of adolescents from divorced homes and examine the support services that are available for adolescents from divorced homes. If you accept this request, I would have one-on-one interview with you in the school guidance and counselling coordinator's office. Your expert knowledge and experience will be extremely useful for establishing the success of this project.

You will only be requested to attend one interview and it may last up to one hour, depending on the nature of our discussion. Your candid opinion on the interview questions asked in here, is anticipated and your confidentiality is assured. In providing your responses, you are permitted to ask questions that may seem bothering to you.

If you have any questions or problems, please contact me on 0243962999 or e-mail me on okpotigbenor@gmail.com

Yours sincerely,

Samuelson Okpoti Gbenor

.....

MPhil Counselling Psychology, UEW

My supervisors' contact details:

Name: Mr. Eric Oforu Dwamena

Department of Counselling Psychology, UEW

Contact: 0243728213

APPENDIX C

Interview Guide

Interview with Adolescent Students

This is to solicit for the experiences of adolescent students who are victims of parental divorce and to ascertain the influence of divorce on their schooling. The rationale for this section of the interview is to address research question 1 to 4.

PART.1; Demographic Details of Respondents

1. Name;
2. Age; a.11-13 () b.14-16 () c.17 -19 () d.19+()
3. Gender Male () Female ()
4. Class: a. Form One () b. Form Two () c. Form Three ()
5. Religion: a. Christian () b. Moslem () c. Traditionalist () d. Others (specify)
6. For how long have your parents divorced?
 - 1-3 years ()
 - 4-6 years ()
 - 7-9 years ()
 - 10+ years and above ()

Research Question 1: Indicate how divorce influences the social relationship of the adolescent in school

1. Can you share what caused the divorce of your parents?
2. How has the divorce of your parents affected your relationship with your colleagues in school?
3. Do you accommodate and tolerate divergent views from your peers?
4. Explains how the divorce of your parents affected your attendance to school gatherings?
5. Do you feel socially comfortable and confident around peers of intact family
6. Kindly share your relationship towards your parents after their divorce?

Research Question 2: Identify how divorce influences the Emotional well-being of the adolescent in school

1. How has the divorce of your parents affected your emotional state in school
2. In terms of your happiness in life, explain how the divorce has affected you?
3. Do you find yourself to be lacking anything emotionally as a child of divorced parents?

Research Question 3: Indicate how divorce influences the academic well-being of adolescent

1. With regard to your concentration in school, how has your parents' divorce affected you?
2. Has the divorce of your parents affected your academic performance?
3. How does the divorce of your parents affect your school attendance?
4. Do you intend pursuing further studies after SHS?

Research Question 4: Identify how the adolescent copes with the Influence of divorce in the school environment?

How do you handle these challenges when they come your way?

- Physical and verbal abuse
- Fear
- Depression
- Stress
- Homesick
- Suicidal Ideation

