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**Experiences and Perception of Children (Now Adults) in Broken Families Due to Parental
Divorce in Central Punjab, Pakistan**

Ghayoor Abuzar

221438824

Thesis Supervisor: Dr. Jawad Tariq

Forman Christian College

(A Chartered University)

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Abstract

This qualitative research proposal aims to explore the experiences and perceptions of adults from broken families in Central Punjab, Pakistan, with a specific focus on their behavioral changes. The purpose of this study is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the long-term impacts of family breakups on adults and contribute to the existing literature, which predominantly focuses on the effects on children. I have employed a snowball sampling technique to recruit participants who have experienced family breakups. Semi-structured interviews have been conducted to collect data, and thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. The proposed timeline for this study spans from May 2023 to February 2024. By May 2023, I had completed my general work on the research paper and submitted the proposal in June 2023. The subsequent months, from June to November 2023, were dedicated to refining the methodology, conducting data collection through interviews, and analyzing the collected data. During this phase, I also reviewed the existing literature to ensure the study was consistent with previous research. In December 2023 and January 2024, I finished the research, compiled the results, and completed the research paper for submission. This study aimed to address the gap in understanding adults' experiences following the family breakdown in central Punjab Pakistan. And contribute to the development of interventions and support systems tailored to their specific needs. The study emphasized ethical considerations, such as obtaining informed consent and ensuring participant confidentiality. Throughout the data collection and analysis process. The results of this study will provide valuable information about the behavioral changes that adults experience following family breakups. And will inform counseling and psychology. Social work professionals' society in designing effective programs to enhance the well-being of this population.

Keywords: Broken Families, Parental Divorce, Experiences, Central Punjab Pakistan

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Introduction

The family is considered the basic unit of society, providing the foundation for children's physical, emotional, and social development. However, in recent years, the divorce rate has increased significantly, leading to an increasing number of broken families. The breakdown of a marriage often leads to some changes in family dynamics. Which can affect the behavior of children. The term "broken family" refers to a family unit in which the parents are divorced, separated, or never married. This article only considers families broken up by divorce. Family breakdown can have a significant impact on children's emotions. And psychological well-being as well as their behavior. (Wells & Rankin, 1991).

Grief, rage, worry, and a sense of loss are just a few of the emotional and psychological difficulties that children in broken homes face. Long-term and short-term behavioral effects of these shifts may be substantial, thus it's critical to comprehend the underlying causes. Unfortunately, divorce affects a lot of families, and it can negatively affect children's emotional and behavioral health.

According to research, children from dysfunctional households may go through a range of behavioral changes as a result of their parents' divorce. Children from broken families may have more emotional and behavioral issues than children from intact households, claim Amato and Keith (1991). Additionally, children from broken homes were more likely to struggle academically and participate in dangerous behaviors like substance addiction, according to research by Amato and Sobolewski (2001).

Asian cultures place a great deal of importance on family structure because it influences the social, emotional, and cognitive development of the people, especially the descendants. Numerous studies have emphasized the value of committed virtue, strong family ties, and

intergenerational relationships. These cultural values emphasize respect for authority, loyalty, and family cohesion, which provide a foundation for the complete development of children. A study (Trzesniewski et. al 2006) emphasized the role of family structure in shaping Asian children's cultural identity and sense of belonging, which in turn positively influenced their self-esteem and well-being. The quality of parent-child relationships and family support positively correlated with a child's academic performance, mental health, and prosocial behavior (Bowlby, 1979). Another study says that children who witness ongoing conflict between their parents may experience more negative behavioral and emotional outcomes than those whose parents can co-parent amicably (Kelly and Emery, 2003).

This study will explore the various behavioral changes that children may experience after their parents' divorce. It will examine how the child's age, gender, and the circumstances of the divorce may impact their behavior. The study will also investigate how parental practices, family dynamics, and the support system that kids have access to help them adjust to the changes. This thesis looks at how parental divorce affects children's behavior in households that are broken.

The key research questions for this study are:

- What are the actual experiences of adults in Central Punjab, Pakistan, who come from broken families?
- How do the experiences of adults from dysfunctional families in Central Punjab, Pakistan, impact their understanding of relationships and family, and how do these understandings influence the way they establish their own families and make decisions?

The results of this study will add to the body of knowledge regarding how parental divorce affects children's behavior. It will make it easier for parents, teachers, and mental health experts to comprehend the difficulties broken family children confront and to give them the support they need to adjust to the changes in their lives.

Conceptual definition

Broken Families: relate to families that have undergone a major disturbance or breakup, frequently because of events like divorce, separation, or other types of family disintegration.

(Amato, P. R., & Keith, B. 1991)

Parental divorce: signifies the official dissolution of a marriage involving at least one parent, which ends the marital relationship and may influence the composition of the family.

(Hetherington et al. 1989)

Experiences: the experiences, feelings, and interactions, both subjective and objective, that people who grew up in dysfunctional homes experienced, each of which represents a distinct component of their journey. (Csikszentmihalyi, M., & Larson, R. 2014).

Significance of the study

This research holds paramount significance in shedding light on the experiences of adults hailing from broken families in Central Punjab, Pakistan. The unique socio-cultural context of this region, combined with the intricacies of familial dynamics, permits a focused investigation into the challenges and adaptations faced by individuals in such circumstances. By addressing this gap in understanding, the study aspires to contribute substantially to the development of targeted interventions and support systems that cater specifically to the needs of adults from broken families in this geographical area.

A core emphasis of the research lies in upholding ethical standards, ensuring that the principles of informed consent and participant confidentiality are rigorously adhered to throughout the entire process of data collection and analysis. This commitment to ethical considerations not only strengthens the validity of the findings but also reflects a genuine concern for the well-being and privacy of the study participants.

The outcomes of this research are hanging to offer valuable insights into the behavioral transformations undergone by adults originating from broken families. Such insights, in turn, hold the potential to guide professionals in counseling, psychology, and social work, enabling them to design and implement effective programs that foster the psychological and emotional well-being of this specific population. As such, the research contributes to the larger conversation on family dynamics and mental health care in various cultural contexts and represents a critical first step towards meeting the special needs of people from broken homes in Central Punjab.

Theoretical framework

The theory of attachment, which was formulated by John Bowlby, asserts that the degree of connection that exists between kids and their caretakers, especially parents, has a substantial impact on children's emotional and social growth. Changes in living situations, custody agreements, and a reduction in one or both parents' emotional availability can all result from parental divorce, which can weaken the connection link between children and their parents. This attachment disruption may result in behavioral changes in children, such as increased anxiety, insecurity, or emotional instability. Moreover, attachment theory suggests that children may

develop different coping strategies, such as seeking alternative sources of attachment, in response to the loss of attachment with their parents, which may impact their behavioral changes following parental divorce.

However, the major theory of this paper is attachment theory but in sociology, some other theories also allow me to understand this concept better. Like, Family systems theory which was developed by Murray Bowen, suggests that families are interconnected and function as a system, where changes in one part of the system can impact other parts. Then the Social learning theory, developed by Albert Bandura, posits that individuals learn from observing and imitating others. The idea of resilience also emphasizes people's ability to adjust to and prosper in times of hardship, like parental divorce. Resilience theory states that while some children from dysfunctional families may show undesirable behavioral changes, others may learn coping mechanisms that help them get through difficult times and carry out their daily lives.

A thorough framework for comprehending and investigating the possible behavioral changes in children from broken homes as a result of parental divorce can be found in the theoretical frameworks of family systems theory, social learning theory, attachment theory, ecological systems theory, and resilience theory. Following a parental divorce, children's behavior may be impacted by a complex interplay of elements at the individual, familial, social, and cultural levels, as highlighted by these theoretical viewpoints. These theoretical frameworks can help researchers gain a better understanding of the underlying mechanisms and processes that might influence behavioral changes in children from dysfunctional families. They can also help researchers plan and interpret qualitative research that explores these intricate dynamics.

The conceptual structure is an essential part of qualitative sociological research on the behavioral changes in kids from broken homes as a result of parental divorce. It directs the study

process from conception to data collection and interpretation and offers a conceptual framework for comprehending the intricate dynamics involved in this phenomenon. I can add to the theoretical and empirical understanding of this significant social issue and improve the rigor, validity, and interpretability of my qualitative research findings by utilizing theoretical frameworks.

Literature Review

In the subject of family studies, the effect of parental divorce on children's behavior has been extensively studied. According to some research, divorce may have a significant negative impact on children's emotional and mental health (Amato, 2000; Hetherington & Stanley-Hagan, 2002). The behavioral changes that children may go through following their parents' divorce have been the subject of numerous studies. Decades of research have focused on how parental divorce affects children's behavior. Much research has been done to investigate the possible behavioral impacts of parental divorce.

A family's separation can be caused by several things, such as adultery, financial hardship, and poor communication. Children's behavior and emotional and psychological health can be greatly impacted by divorce and separation. Amato and Keith (1991) found that compared to children from intact homes, children from broken families are more likely to experience mental distress, including anxiety and despair. Children from dysfunctional homes may also be less likely to complete their education and face challenges in the classroom (Biblarz & Gottainer, 2000).

Aggression is one of the most frequent behavioral changes that kids go through following their parents' divorce. Children with divorced parents are more likely than those from intact

households to behave aggressively, according to a 2003 study by Kelly and Emery. Amato and Keith (1991) discovered a similar correlation between the likelihood of delinquent behavior in children and the divorce of their parents. Emotional distress is the most frequent behavioral alteration seen in kids from dysfunctional households. According to Kelly and Emery (2003), these emotional shifts may result in behavioral changes like hostility, a reduction in academic achievement, and social disengagement.

Depression is another typical behavioral shift observed in children of separated parents. Research indicates that compared to children from intact households, children of divorced parents are more likely to exhibit signs of depression (Amato & Keith, 1991; Hetherington & Stanley-Hagan, 2002). Depressive symptoms might include low self-esteem, hopelessness, and melancholy.

A further behavioral shift that children of separated parents may encounter is anxiety. Children with divorced parents are more likely than those from intact households to experience anxiety, per a 2010 study by Cummings and Davies. It's possible for these kids to feel anxious, afraid, or fearful.

Children of divorced parents may face behavioral issues in addition to academic challenges. Studies have indicated that children of divorced parents are more likely than those from intact homes to perform worse in school and to succeed less academically (Amato & Keith, 1991; Hetherington & Stanley-Hagan, 2002). Children from dysfunctional households may also notice changes in their parent-child dynamic. Children of divorced parents are more likely to see a reduction in the quality of their relationship with both parents, according to Amato and Keith (1991). Additionally, children may experience feelings of abandonment or rejection, which can result in behavioral issues including delinquency or acting out (Kelly & Emery, 2003).

According to research, there is a link between children's delinquency and broken homes. For instance, children from broken families were found to be more prone than those from intact families to participate in delinquent behavior (Dornbusch et al., 1985). In a similar vein, McLanahan and Sandefur (1994) discovered that kids from intact homes performed better academically and were less likely to have behavioral issues than kids from fractured households.

According to a study by Kreager et al. (2011), gender mediated the association between children's criminal behavior and family structure. In particular, the study discovered that boys from dysfunctional households exhibited a higher propensity for delinquent behavior in comparison to their female counterparts. On the other hand, girls from intact families were less likely than girls from broken families to participate in delinquent behavior, according to the study.

It's crucial to remember, though, that not every child of divorced parents exhibits these behavioral abnormalities. How a child reacts to their parents' divorce can depend on several factors, including the child's age, gender, temperament, and the strength of the parent-child bond (Hetherington & Stanley-Hagan, 2002).

In the study of families, one of the most important areas of inquiry is the behavioral changes that divorced parents' children may go through. Following their parents' divorce, children may exhibit behavioral changes such as aggression, depression, anxiety, and difficulty in school. Nonetheless, while researching how divorce affects children's behavior, individual variances must be considered.

Methodology

Research design

In Central Punjab, Pakistan, this study used a qualitative research design to investigate the lived experiences of people from broken households. The use of qualitative research is suitable for this study since it enables a thorough examination of the perspectives and experiences of the participants. To gather information, semi-structured interviews were employed.

I investigated children's subjective experiences, how they understand divorce, and how they react to changes in their family dynamics using qualitative study. In addition, qualitative research enabled me to shed light on the subtleties and complexity of this phenomenon from the viewpoint of the children themselves, as well as on the contextual elements, social interactions, and coping mechanisms that may influence children's behavioral changes following parental divorce.

Participants

Adults who grew up in divorced families participated in this study. The participants were over 18 years old when they joined the study, but when their parents got divorced, they were under 18. This allowed them to share their experiences during the time they depended on their parents. The research selected participants from certain districts in central Punjab, like Lahore, Sheikhpura, and Gujranwala, using a method called snowball sampling. This means that participants were initially identified, and then they helped find others who shared similar experiences, creating a chain-like process for gathering a diverse group of participants from different backgrounds within the mentioned districts.

Sample size

The target of total potential participants was 7 to 9. I interviewed 7 participants and found saturation in responses. Participants were selected by snowball sampling technique.

Data collection

The data was collected through semi-structured interviews. It was recorded only when the respondent allowed it. The Data was transcribed word-to-word in a Word document. Caution was applied that the meaning of the data does not change in the process of transcription and then it was analyzed using arithmetic findings.

Collecting data from adults in divorced families was a sensitive and complex process. It was important to ensure that the data collection plan was well-designed and that ethical considerations were considered. Here is a data collection plan for the research:

Identify potential respondents:

The snowball sampling method was employed to identify study participants. This entailed selecting a small number of volunteers at first, and then requesting that they recommend me to other possible candidates. I began by asking my relatives, friends, and lawyers if they knew anyone who would be interested in participating. To find possible participants, I also contacted social media groups and divorce support organizations.

Recruit participants:

After locating my possible volunteers, I got in touch with them and gave them an explanation of the goal and parameters of the research. It was crucial to have participants' informed consent and to be open and honest about the study.

Schedule interviews:

I set a time and place for the interviews after getting the participants' permission. Depending on the participants' preferences, I conducted the interviews both in-person and over the phone or through video chats. The interview could be held in a pleasant setting of their choice, according to the participants.

Conduct interviews:

The interviews were semi-structured and open-ended, allowing participants to share their experiences and perceptions in their own words. I interviewed them by asking questions from my interview guide and tried to cover all relevant topics. I also asked them some follow-up questions to clarify or elaborate on participants' responses. It was important to be respectful and sensitive to participants' emotions during the interviews.

Data analysis

The study's data underwent meticulous examination through thematic analysis, a multipurpose and robust qualitative technique. Thematic analysis involves the identification, analysis, and interpretation of patterns and themes within the data, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of nuanced insights. The analytical process adhered to an inductive approach, wherein themes emerged organically from the data itself rather than being predefined. This methodological choice enhances the study's credibility, as themes naturally surfaced from the rich and varied experiences of the participants, contributing to a more authentic representation of their perspectives. The inductive approach ensures that the analysis remains open-minded and reflective of the complexity inherent in the experiences of adults from broken families in Central Punjab, Pakistan.

I recorded the interviews with participants' consent and transcribed them accurately for analysis. I made sure that while transcription the meanings would not be changed and I wrote it down in a word document word-to-word respondent's answers. The confidentiality and anonymity of the participants were ensured. I analyzed the data by using thematic analysis, which involves identifying patterns and themes in the data. After analyzing the data, I did write up the findings of the study in the research paper. Then the findings in a clear and organized manner, using quotes and examples from the interviews to illustrate the themes.

Ethics.

Ethics remained a paramount focus throughout the study, with a careful observance of ethical considerations. Every participant provided informed consent, and stringent measures were in place to guarantee their confidentiality and anonymity. Participants were explicitly informed about their right to withdraw from the study at any juncture, ensuring that their autonomy and privacy were respected throughout the research process. This unwavering commitment to ethical standards upholds the integrity of the study and prioritizes the well-being and rights of the individuals involved.

Budget

Around 60,000 PKR has been estimated to conduct and conclude the paper. It includes the estimated cost of printing, compiling, and other miscellaneous expenses. I will try to conduct the interviews via video calls, so I do not have to travel, which also reduces the expenses.

Themes

Theme 1: Parental Divorce Influences Children's Perception through Emotional Experiences

Divorce, a pivotal event in a child's life, significantly shapes their perception of the world through a spectrum of emotional experiences. One of the most prominent impacts is the challenges children face in regulating their emotions. Emotional regulation issues emerge as a common thread among children of divorced parents. Such children frequently struggle to control their emotions, which makes them more sensitive to other people's feelings and occasionally turns them into emotionally numb coping mechanisms.

In addition, these children's emotional roller coaster is marked by conflicting feelings. They struggle with contradictory emotions such as relief, confusion, rage, and even grief. They experience a sense of instability as a result of these emotions' unpredictable character, which makes it difficult for them to foresee how they will respond in different scenarios. Their unpredictable emotional reactions frequently make individuals feel exposed and apprehensive about the future. "Even though I adapted to the new living arrangements with my parents, I still felt a sense of loss," one respondent stated.

Another important factor that is significantly impacted by parental divorce is behavioral changes. Children may exhibit alterations in their behavior, ranging from withdrawal and social isolation to rebelliousness and aggression. Quoting from the responses "I also felt anger and frustration". These changes often stem from the emotional turmoil they are undergoing, manifesting as behavioral challenges that affect their interactions with peers, teachers, and other authority figures. Parental divorce also left a profound emotional impact on children's academic performance. Respondents vividly describe the emotional struggles post-divorce, leading to withdrawal, diminished focus, and a decline in academic performance. The instability caused by divorce disrupts their ability to concentrate on their studies, reflecting the intricate relationship between emotional well-being and scholastic achievements. As a respondent mentioned "The

emotional instability caused by the divorce affected my focus on academics. I found it challenging to concentrate on my studies and maintain the same level of performance as before."

Within the realm of emotions, children of divorced parents frequently experience negative valence emotions. Feelings of resentment, betrayal, and abandonment are common, leaving a lasting impact on their emotional well-being. Despite these negative emotions, there are instances where children undergo positive changes as well. Some develop resilience, empathy, and independence, becoming adept at handling adversity. "This experience made me more independent and adaptable in various situations"- a response from a participant.

Additionally, it is observed that elder children of that family often exhibit more stable emotions in the aftermath of a divorce. Their life experiences and maturity enable them to cope better with the situation, providing a sense of stability for the children. However, this stability also highlights an age factor in the emotional experiences of children. Younger children may struggle more profoundly with the emotional aftermath of divorce, finding it harder to comprehend the complexities of adult relationships and the subsequent separation.

In conclusion, the emotional experiences of children from broken families due to parental divorce are complex and multifaceted. Emotional regulation challenges, mixed emotions, uncertainties about the future, behavioral changes, and a range of negative and positive emotions significantly influence their perception of the world.

Theme 2: Practices that Assist in Developing Personality Traits like Adaptability and Independence

Growing up in families broken by parental divorce shapes individuals in important ways. It's like they go through a big change that influences their personality, making them more

adaptable and independent. Even though it's tough, certain things help them find their way through the new and complicated situation. These might be practices or habits that become like guiding lights, helping them understand and deal with the challenges that come with their changed family situation. So, even though it's not easy, going through the difficulties of a broken family can lead to positive changes and strengths in a person's character.

A fundamental aspiration observed among these individuals is the desire for stability in relationships. Having witnessed the breakdown of a significant relationship, they yearn for stability in their personal lives. This longing propels them to seek out healthy relationships, emphasizing communication, trust, and mutual respect. By learning from the past, they actively work towards building relationships founded on stability and emotional security.

One respondent shared, "After my parent's divorce, I made it a point to cultivate stable emotions, behavior and relationships. I learned from their mistakes and focused on effective communication and understanding. It made a significant difference in my personal life."

Moreover, a fundamental step towards developing adaptability skills involves rejecting the sense of self-blame. Many individuals initially grapple with feelings of guilt and self-reproach, questioning if they could have prevented the divorce. However, over time, they consciously worked towards accepting that the divorce was not their fault. This insight frees them from the weight of unjustified guilt and allows them to concentrate on their development.

People typically develop impulses towards self-care and self-support as part of this process. They acquire the skill of self-compassion and become aware of the significance of mental and emotional health. They strengthen their resilience and equip themselves to confront life's obstacles with grace and tenacity by making self-care practices a priority.

"Divorce also taught me the significance of self-care," said one respondent. I began to prioritize my mental well-being and immerse myself in enjoyable pursuits. It gave me the confidence to approach life's uncertainties with optimism."

One common trait among these people is their capacity to let go of self-blame. They can move forward with clarity and purpose after they can release the weight of shame and blame via introspection and assistance. This release from self-blame turns into a pivotal moment that empowers individuals to meet life's obstacles head-on with resiliency and resolve.

In brief, the behaviors embraced by people from fractured homes because of parent-child divorce shed light on an amazing path of human development. Their robust personalities are shaped by their shared need for secure connections, acceptance of society's opinions, rejection of self-blame, growth in adaptive skills, newly discovered independence, self-support, and the capacity to stop self-blame. By using these techniques, they not only get past the difficulties brought about by divorce but also become stronger, independent people who can deal with change when it comes to themselves.

Theme 3: Effectiveness of Communication: Pathway to Parent-Child and Personal Bonding

Communication, the cornerstone of any relationship, emerges as a critical factor in the context of parent-child and personal bonding, particularly within the framework of broken families due to parental divorce. Through the lens of effective communication, the transformational journey of these individuals unfolds, illuminating the profound impact it has on their lives.

One of the key aspects witnessed is the evolution of communication tendencies. Children from broken families often experience a significant shift in their communication patterns. As they navigate the complexities of divorce, they cultivate improved communication skills. They learn to articulate their thoughts and feelings more clearly, enhancing their ability to express themselves empathetically. This newfound expressiveness is not merely a surface-level change; it penetrates deep within, shaping them into good listeners who not only hear but truly understand the emotions underlying the words.

A respondent shared an emotional example, stating, "After my parents' divorce, I felt this compelling need to be heard and understood. I started actively working on my communication skills, and it helped."

Another respondent said: "Experiencing the challenges of divorce made me more empathetic towards others who may be going through difficult times. It also improved my communication skills. I learned to express my feelings more openly and listen more attentively to others' emotions and concerns."

Furthermore, this enhanced communication capacity empowers these individuals to confidently initiate discussions about their problems and concerns with their parents. In the face of challenges, they find the courage to voice their worries, seeking solace and guidance from their parents. This openness fosters a sense of trust and emotional intimacy, strengthening the parent-child bond even amid the turbulence of divorce-related changes.

A respondent shared, "Talking to my parents openly made me realize the struggles they were going through. Understanding their perspective helped me respect their decision to divorce. It was difficult, but our communication made it easier to accept and eventually move forward."

Emphasis on open communication emerges as a central theme in these narratives. The significance of honest and transparent dialogue cannot be overstated. It serves as the bedrock upon which trust is built. By openly discussing their feelings, fears, and hopes, children and parents bridge the gap that often emerges in the aftermath of divorce. This open channel of communication becomes a lifeline, ensuring that misunderstandings are clarified, emotions are acknowledged, and bonds are reaffirmed.

In essence, the effectiveness of communication emerges as a transformative pathway, guiding individuals through the intricate terrain of parent-child and personal bonding in the aftermath of parental divorce. Through improved communication skills, empathetic expression, active listening, and open dialogue, these individuals not only rebuild their relationships but also nurture a newfound resilience, underlining the power of communication as a catalyst for healing and strengthening familial ties.

Theme 4: Impact of Parental Divorce on Children's Perception of Relationships

The impact of parents getting divorced stays with kids, affecting how they see relationships. The echoes of divorce go deep into their hearts and minds, changing the way they understand different types of relationships. Going through the complexities of divorce makes them see human connections in a more complicated way, like shining a light on all the different feelings and aspects of how people relate to each other. So, when parents go through a divorce, it's not just something that happens between them. It also has a big influence on how their kids think about and understand relationships in general.

A significant shift occurs in their perception of their parents. Once perceived as invincible figures, divorce humanizes parents. Witnessing parental conflicts, disagreements, and

ultimately the dissolution of their marriage punctures the idealized image children often have of their parents. This experience instills a sense of reality, reminding them that even the strongest bonds can be fragile, thereby altering their perceptions of relationships and their stability.

The aftermath of parental divorce often leaves children with hesitancy towards long-term commitments. Having witnessed the challenges and uncertainties in relationships, they approach commitments cautiously. The fear of experiencing similar emotional turbulence in their relationships influences their decisions, leading to a guarded approach in matters of the heart.

One respondent shared, "Seeing my parents struggle and then separate made me wary of committing to someone for a lifetime. It's not that I don't believe in love, but I find it hard to trust that relationships can endure the trials of life."

The impact of divorce on sibling relationships is another intricate aspect. Siblings, once united under the same roof, now find themselves navigating their roles and responsibilities in divided households. The dynamics shift, and they often become pillars of support for each other, sharing unique bonds forged in the crucible of shared experiences. Furthermore, the perception of relationships within the family unit undergoes profound changes. While parent-child relationships might flourish, especially with the caretaker parent, relationships with distant parents might become strained.

As one respondent mentioned, "With my mother, I might have felt closer because we spent more time together and talked about our feelings. But with father, things could have been a bit more distant because we didn't see each other as often."

In decision, the impact of parental divorce on children's perception of relationships is intricate and multifaceted. Witnessing parental conflicts, challenges in forming commitments,

and navigating altered family dynamics reshape their understanding of relationships. The experience, while challenging, also fosters resilience and a deeper appreciation for the complexities of human connections. As they navigate these complexities, children from divorced families often emerge with a heightened awareness of the intricacies of relationships, equipping them with valuable insights that shape their future interactions and emotional bonds.

Discussion

Divorce, around the globe, is an important phenomenon that has led to significant impacts on children's mental and physical health (Amato, 2000; Hetherington & Stanley-Hagan, 2002). Children from broken or divorced families have different perceptions of the world as they experience a range of emotions ranging from anxiety to mental breakdown which adversely affects their outlook on society (Amato and Keith 1991). These children lag in academics and are expected to perform less than those having stable families. The issue here is multifaceted. Apart from academics they vent aggression in different ways (Kelly & Emery, 2003). As they feel a sense of lostness they feel like they do not have any motive and purpose in life.

Children from broken families feel detachment from society as their soul is battered, which does not let them integrate into the social fabric of society. It articulates that some children become resilient in the face of adversity as it makes them strong and mature to channel and handle their emotions more efficiently and effectively. Although they feel a sense of betrayal, mature and adult children grab this opportunity to carve out a better version of themselves hence making them independent and strong. However, it is contingent upon the age and gender of the children (Hetherington & Stanley-Hagan, 2002). Girls are more likely to be affected by divorce as they are more sensitive and emotional than boys because girls spend more time with mothers and develop a feminine trait that is less resilient to changes. Boys on the other hand are more hardened and are conditioned to face the realities of life maturely (Kreager et al. 2011).

Divorce has a transformative effect on the personality traits of individuals as they undergo the process of divorcing parents (Kelly & Emery, 2003). It has been seen that

individuals become independent after witnessing divorce and they crave a more stable and healthy relationship. Divorce, therefore, plays a positive role in their life as they embrace the realities and try not to repeat the same mistakes in their relationships. Divorce is an abhorrent practice but individuals who go through this want to build a healthy relationship for themselves so that they don't make the same mistake as their parents. Divorce presents an opportunity to such individuals, and they grab it for self-betterment and make it a ladder toward a better life.

While responding to the question, some children blamed themselves for the divorce; however, when they accept the fact that it was not their fault and free themselves from this blame burden, they tend to develop self-care and self-improvement. As one of the participants said, "I felt guilty and blamed myself". Then they try to perform their tasks more efficiently because they don't feel burdened with their souls. This is a very important step because if they do not free themselves from their present decision then the future will be adversely affected. It would also negatively transform their personality and isolate them from the rest of society. The guilt-free individual will have a positive perception of his/her relationship as he/she has gone through a transformative phase that has made him/her robust and solved the differences of a relationship without opting for divorce because they don't want to experience the horrors of divorce.

The transformative changes induced by events like divorce often instigate emotional shifts in individuals (Amato, 2000; Hetherington & Stanley-Hagan, 2002). Essentially, divorce can be viewed as a catalyst for personal development, compelling children to cultivate a heightened sense of identity and responsibility from an early age. This early maturation contributes to increased confidence in navigating life's challenges. Consequently, amidst the upheaval, children might experience positive impacts. It is within this crucible of change that resilience and adaptability may foster potentially equipping individuals with valuable coping

skills. Thus, acknowledging the potential for positive outcomes amid adversity provides a perspective on the developmental routes of children experiencing the transformative effects of divorce.

Some children from broken families are good communicators and this was revealed in the responses of participants but not mentioned in the literature to my knowledge. Children who have experienced divorce have experienced the reality of bad communication which creates a gap and mistrust in a relationship which results in good communication skills for them. According to Kelly & Emery (2003), children from broken families show withdrawal from social and personal activities which could have made them dull, but respondents have unveiled that after experiencing the divorce of the parents, children have developed a good trait of communication which helps them effectively articulate their thoughts and convey their point. Furthermore, they develop a good listening quality. They lend a sympathetic ear to people going through the same process and hear them, understand them, and advise them accordingly.

Children from broken families are good listeners and speakers as they have become resilient after the process which makes them confident about their insecurities (Dornbusch et al. 1985). This delinquent and resilient behavior could have a positive impact on the personality traits of an individual and the children learn to fight with difficult situations. This speaking and listening ability helps them practically resolve their issues. Children who are good communicators can confidently initiate a discussion with their parents about their relationship, communicate their concerns, and try to understand their perspective as well. In this way, a better understanding is developed of the situation and if parents continue with the divorce, children respect their decision because of the open discussion they had before the arrangement.

Empowerment blossoms within individuals endowed with proficient communication skills, enabling them to adeptly navigate and resolve parental differences. The protection of family bonds extends not only to caretakers but also to siblings, fostering collective resilience. As children rise from the metaphorical ashes, their enhanced communication abilities serve as a potent shield against life's harsh realities. The transformative effect of honed communication becomes a remedy, a cure addressing numerous household and personal challenges. This underscores the pivotal role of effective communication not only in familial cohesion but also in the development of individual adaptability and strength. In essence, the cultivation of communication skills emerges as a powerful and transformative force, shaping a robust foundation for familial and individual well-being.

Apart from emotional and social changes in an individual, he/she sees a closer reality of life in the process of divorce. When seen through a microscopic lens, one understands that nothing is permanent and even the strongest relationships in this world can fall like a house of cards. It inculcates in them a sense of humility and empathy due to which they play a positive role in society. It also has a profound impact on their perception of a relationship, and it reshapes their relationship realities.

As they become more realistic their approach toward relationships becomes pragmatic; they approach the relations cautiously with utmost care, learning from past experiences, and in this way, they perform better in their relations. This guarded approach in the matter of the heart enables them to invest their invaluable emotions in the right person. As they already have trust issues due to their parent's relationship history, the cautious approach makes them more mature in finding the right partner which results in a durable relationship.

In broken families marked by physical separation between parents, with one residing with the children and the other at a distance, a distinctive family dynamic emerges. Children tend to forge a closer emotional bond with the parent sharing the same living space, often concealing a negative perception of the distant parent. This tilted relationship dynamic arises from the inherent longing for proximity and the innate fear of detachment from loved ones. Consequently, children in these circumstances exhibit a heightened susceptibility to emotional attachment and a corresponding fear of separation. This emotional vulnerability manifests in possessive behaviors, where attachment to someone prompts a sense of protectiveness, and any perceived distance triggers anxious and sometimes manic responses. This intricate interplay of emotional bonds within broken families underscores the profound impact of parental distance on the psychological well-being and behavioral patterns of children.

The complexity of divorce demands an examination, considering its intricate and multifaceted nature. Exploring the causes and impacts requires a cautious approach. While divorce may reduce an individual vulnerability, detached, and mental distress, it concurrently fosters humility and resilience. The emotional upheaval can lead to societal detachment and potential delinquency. However, within this adversity, individuals may cultivate resilience, gaining a more profound and realistic perspective on life and relationships. Divorce, therefore, becomes a paradoxical experience, simultaneously overloaded with challenges and opportunities for personal growth. Navigating these dichotomies requires a careful acknowledgment of the intricate interplay between adversity and resilience, offering a more comprehensive understanding of the profound effects of divorce on an individual's psyche and life trajectory.

Limitations

The study is unique in its area as there is not much work that has been done in this field.

The nature of the study brings some limitations to it.

1. **Limited Geographic Scope:** The study focused on a specific region, Central Punjab, Pakistan, which may not represent the diversity of experiences in other parts of the country or different cultural contexts.
2. **Small Sample Size and Limited Generalizability:** The research employed a small sample size, making it challenging to draw broad generalizations. Findings from this limited sample might not apply to larger populations or different socio-cultural settings.
3. **Social Desirability Biases:** Participants might have been influenced by social desirability biases, leading them to respond in a manner they perceive as socially acceptable. Cultural norms and teachings could have influenced their responses, potentially leading to less candid answers.
4. **Lacuna Effect and Reliability Concerns:** The lacuna effect, arising from the participants' young age when the divorce occurred, raises questions about the reliability of their recollections. Memories may be influenced by time and life experiences, impacting the accuracy and consistency of their responses as adults.

These limitations highlight the contextual constraints and potential biases inherent in the research, emphasizing the need for cautious interpretation of the findings and underscoring the importance of future studies with larger and more diverse samples to enhance the validity and applicability of the research outcomes.

Research and Further Studies:

- **Longitudinal Studies:** Long-term studies that track the growth of children from broken households into adulthood might offer insightful information about their life paths. Preventive actions and support systems can be improved with an understanding of the long-term implications.
- **Cross-Cultural Research:** Culturally sensitive studies can shed light on the subtle differences in the experiences of children from dysfunctional families. Interventions that are more culturally responsive can result from an understanding of these variances.

The research's findings essentially highlight the value of comprehensive support networks that include community activities, education, mental health care, and legislative changes. Society may support children from divorced families by attending to their emotional needs, which will increase their resilience and general well-being and create a more encouraging atmosphere for their development.

Conclusion

The results of this study and the comments provided insight into the complex and varied lives of children from broken families because of parental divorce. through the prisms of relational views, personality development, communication dynamics, and emotional effects.

The complex interplay of emotional regulation problems, conflicting feelings, and behavioral shifts shape how they react to the difficulties brought on by divorce. Despite their overwhelming nature, these emotional obstacles are addressed with incredible resiliency. Children acquire the capacity to maneuver through the turbulent waters of their emotions, demonstrating resilience and fortitude in the face of difficulty.

Children fill the empty spaces left by divorce by having more expressiveness, open communication, and better communication skills. Rebuilding emotional closeness and trust is predicated primarily on communication. It serves as an outlet for comprehending parental choices, encouraging acceptance, and empowering kids to freely express their worries. This focus on communication gives students vital life skills and enables them to negotiate relationships in the future with clarity and sensitivity. They emerge resilient and self-sufficient despite their initial self-blame and hesitation. They promote self-sufficiency, steadiness, and flexibility while rejecting the opinions of society. Their struggles provide them with newfound courage and inspire them to reach their full potential, take ownership of their actions, and stop blaming themselves. This change serves as evidence of their inner strength and perseverance.

Their perception of relationships is altered by having seen parental arguments and the dissolution of their parents' marriage. Deep shifts occur in the dynamics of parent-child bonding, sibling relationships, and unwillingness to make commitments. Children from divorced

households show a sophisticated grasp of relationships despite these challenges. They handle these difficulties gracefully, developing special relationships with their siblings, valuing caring parents, and taking their time and wisdom when making future commitments.

Comprehending these heterogeneous themes bears noteworthy consequences for treatments and support structures. Helping children deal with parental divorce requires recognizing emotional difficulties, encouraging candid communication, and focusing on each child's unique strengths. The complex needs of such children must be met by family support networks, counseling services, and education systems. Additionally, more investigation into the long-term impacts and coping strategies used by these people can offer insightful information for developing policies and programs that are supportive.

Finally, the incidents constructed throughout these results show the emotional intelligence, adaptability, and resilience of children from broken homes where parents divorced. Their tales serve as a monument to the human spirit's ability to persevere, grow, and prosper in the face of the most trying situations. We learn a great deal about the human condition as we work through the complexities of their experiences, and it serves as a constant reminder to us of the value of compassion, understanding, and unwavering support for those navigating the complex path of parental divorce.

Implications

This study has important and wide-ranging implications for education, psychology, sociology, and counseling, among other fields. These are some possible implications derived from the study's findings:

Educational Interventions:

- Programs for Psychosocial Support: Schools should put in place programs specifically designed to help children from families that are broken. To help children deal with the emotional difficulties of parental divorce, these programs could emphasize emotional regulation, communication skills, and resilience.
- Teacher Training: Teachers need to be prepared to spot emotional suffering in children because of parental divorce. Teachers who are aware of these difficulties will be better equipped to support students appropriately and foster a positive learning environment.

Family Counseling Services:

- Counseling for Families: Family counseling services can assist families in navigating the challenges posed by divorce. Parent-child relationships can be strengthened after a divorce with the use of interventions that emphasize good communication, resolving conflicts, and re-establishing trust.
- Parental Guidance: It is essential to give parents advice on how to help their children emotionally both during and after a divorce. Parenting courses can give parents the tools they need to meet the emotional needs of their young ones.

Policy Development:

- Legal Reforms: Research emphasizing the psychological effects on kids may help shape legislation that puts the child's best interests first during divorce settlement negotiations. Laws that put children's mental health first help lessen the negative consequences of divorce.

Mental Health Services:

- **Accessible Mental Health Services:** The creation of easily available and reasonably priced mental health treatments may result from a greater understanding of the emotional difficulties experienced by children of divorced parents. These services, which include counseling and therapy, could be specially designed to meet the particular requirements of this group.

Community Support:

- **Community Outreach Programs:** Children and families going through a divorce might benefit from the emotional support, counseling, and resources provided by community-based programs. Building a support system inside the community might help people feel less alone and more a part of it.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Informed Consent Form

The survey will examine the influence of social and cultural capital on the institutional identity of students at FCCU. There are different scales to measure the student's institutional identity, cultural capital, and personal social capital.

This survey is being conducted for research purposes. You are invited to participate in this survey which will not take more than 15 minutes of your time. Participation in this survey is completely voluntary and you can choose not to participate in this survey or you can withdraw from this study at any time. You can also choose not to respond to any question(s) that you do not feel comfortable to answer. The data will be collected anonymously and results will be reported in aggregate. Any information that you provide will remain confidential.

If you have any queries, you can email the researcher at

221438824@formanite.fccollege.edu.pk.

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey.

Appendix B: IRB Certificate



FORMAN CHRISTIAN COLLEGE
(A CHARTERED UNIVERSITY)

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

IRB Ref: IRB-497/6-2023

Date: 22-06-2023

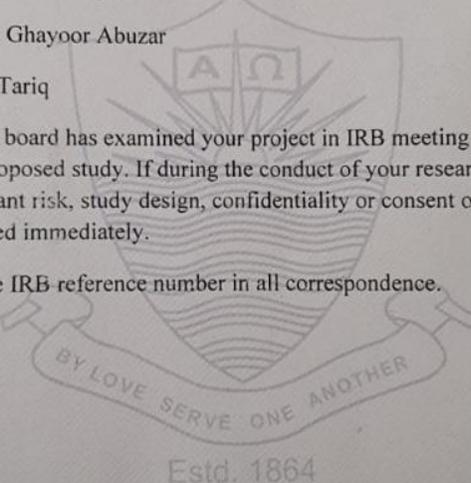
Project Title: Experiences and perceptions of children (now adults) in Broken Families due to Parental Divorce in Central Punjab, Pakistan

Principal Investigator: Ghayoor Abuzar

Supervisor: Dr. Jawad Tariq

The Institutional review board has examined your project in IRB meeting held on 22-06-2023 and has approved the proposed study. If during the conduct of your research any changes occur related to participant risk, study design, confidentiality or consent or any other change then IRB must be notified immediately.

Please be sure to include IRB reference number in all correspondence.



Estd. 1864

Sharon Hanook

Dr. Sharon Hanook
Convener - IRB
Chairperson, Department of Statistics
Forman Christian College
(A Chartered University)
Lahore

Appendix C: Questionnaire

1. When and how did you get the news of your parents' divorce? Were you familiar at that time with the word "divorce"?
2. Can you tell me how you felt when you found out that your parents were getting a divorce?
3. Have you noticed any changes in your behavior or emotions since your parents' divorce? If so, could you describe these changes?
4. How have your relationships with your parents changed since the divorce?
5. Have you noticed any changes in your relationships with your siblings or other family members since the divorce?
6. Have you received any support or resources to help you cope with the divorce? If so, what kind of support was it and how helpful was it to you?
7. What would you say has been the most difficult part of your parent's divorce for you?
8. Have you noticed any differences in the way you feel about marriage or relationships since your parents' divorce?
9. What advice would you give to other children who are going through a similar experience to yours?