

**PARENTAL DIVORCE AND THE SIBLINGS' RELATIONSHIP IN NYAKAMBU  
VILLAGE SOUTHERN DIVISION KABALE DISTRICT**

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**UGANDA CHRISTIAN  
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**DECLARATION**

I KUKUNDAKWE COMFORT hereby declare that the information given here is my original and has never at any time been submitted to any university or institution whether academic or otherwise.

Sign Kukundakwe Comfort .....

Date 10th/09/2024 .....

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**APPROVAL**

This study entitled "*Parental divorce and sibling relationship in Nyakambu village, Kabale Municipality*" has been carried out by Kukundakwe Comfort, J22B15/159 under my supervision.

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Signature.....*[Handwritten Signature]*.....

Date.....*9th/09/2024*.....

## **DEDICATION**

This report is a special dedication to my beloved parents Mr. Kukunda Willy, Mrs. Kenyonyozi Betty and Mrs. Tukamuhabwa Peace, my spiritual parents Mrs. Tamar. K. Ssembiro and Rev. Canon. Eng. Paul Ssembiro, friends, brothers Emmy, Daniel, and sisters Confidence, Sylvia, Pretty, Gift, Faith, Mercy and Nickson for their support towards my studies and I also dedicate this report to the community of Nyakambu village for accepting to participate in the study so that we can learn together and the leaders for allowing me to carry out this study in their community.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

In a special way I would like to acknowledge all my lecturers who equipped me with the social work knowledge from my year one to my final semester at Uganda Christian University Mukono not forgetting in a special way and with gratitude to acknowledge my Research Supervisor Madam .Doreen for her hard work and dedication to make sure that apart from completing my report am able to go with the skill and learn something new to help me in my next life in the work world or education journey also I appreciate her for being such a patient lecturer and for not giving up on me plus my fellow students may God continue to bless you and everyone around you Madam. I also acknowledge my fellow students and friends.

## ABSTRACT

This study focused on the topic “parental divorce and sibling relationship in Nyakambu village, Southern division Kabale municipality and it was guide by three main objectives which included to explore the nature of sibling relationships after divorce of parents, to determine the coping strategies employed by siblings to navigate emotional challenges and to examine the connection between parental divorce and quality of sibling relationship. The study was carried out using the cross-sectional research design where the quantitative research approach was utilized. Questionnaires were used to collect data from siblings whereas interviews were conducted with the parents regarding the topic. The study found that most of the siblings whose parents have gone through divorce or are going through divorce offer emotional support to each other which has brought them closer than even before, improved their communication and that siblings can now share their challenges. It was also discovered that in some families were the parents have divorced or are going through divorce, there is increased conflicts am siblings as they compete for attention from parents. It was also discovered that some siblings have been able to navigate challenges that come with parental divorce due to the support from their parents and through the interviews we found out that siblings who had more attention from parents their relationship was less affected by parental divorce compared to those who didn’t have support from parents.

Some recommendations were made where I encouraged all the parents to always work together and be available in the lives of their children even after divorce to provide emotional support and stability even if they are not together as well I call upon all the parents to create a safe space for the children to express their emotions and concerns which helps them to process their feelings and build stronger bonds with their siblings and encouraged parents to help these children access professionals like counselors, therapists, and social workers for counseling services to support children struggling to cope with parental divorce to help them develop healthy emotional regulation strategies hence helping them navigate the different stress that come with divorce then ended my dissertation with a conclusion.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## 1.0 Introduction

This chapter introduces the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose and objectives, research questions, scope of the study justification, significance and conceptual framework.

## 1.1 Background

Although parental divorce is a popular area of study, few research studies have focused on the impact of divorce on the siblings' relationship. Fiona (2024) defines divorce as the permanent ending of a formal/legally recognized marriage. According to the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (1995), "Men and women of the age of eighteen years and above have the right to marry and to find a family and are entitled to equal rights in marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution(divorce). Center of Faith Family and Justice (2023) says that in Uganda poor, uneducated and rural women and their children are the most vulnerable when a marriage falls apart.

Hill user friendly justice (2020) in the article divorce and separation in Uganda under the subtopic impact of divorce or separation says that the impact of divorce or separation on people's lives has been proven to be greater than the impact of other forms of legal problems. Also reports how 7% of the population of Uganda has experienced divorce in the past four years ,8.5% seek legal divorce.87% seek legal action and 32% of the divorce are left without a proper solution.

Kibirige (2024) says that in Uganda 7% experience divorce and separation every 4yrs which translates to roughly 370,000 people every year. Globally, (Doung, Man, et al,2023) with evidence divorce has emerged to evidence divorce those with many versus few siblings. In China, each additional sibling is associated with 11% probability of divorce and 2% in decline in Europe. According to divorce.com staff (2024) based on the 2022 data; the average divorce rate worldwide is expected to decrease. In 2021, using the available data on marriage and divorce the rate is 1.8. And also continues to tell us how many countries' data on the number of divorces for 2022 is pending but basing on the collected data for 56 countries the average crude divorce rate in the world was about 1.6 in 2022. According to Esteban and Max (2020) inform us that across the world, marriage rates have been declining. For instance, in the United States, marriage rates have fallen by almost 50% since 1972, reaching the lowest point in recorded history.

According to Adekunle (2024) informs us of the Africa countries with the highest divorce rate which include Libya, Egypt, Mauritius, Algeria, Seychelles, Sudan, and South Africa. Miles (2024) informs us that according to the 2024 Divorce Trend, divorce rates by years of marriage will continue at or below current rates of 20% ending in first 5 years, 32% ending in first 10 years, 48% ending in 10 years when married before age 18, and 25% ending in 10 years when married after age 25.

One Family Wizard (2024) informs us that sibling from divorce-stricken families tend to have conflicts among each other because of them feeling that they must compete for their parents' attention as during the divorce process, parents are more focused on navigating new roles and adjusting to shifting responsibilities thus find it hard to give the amount of time to each child as an individual. Siblings tend to have heartbreaks blaming themselves for their parents' separation therefore parents must find it important to emphasize to their children that they are not the cause of their divorce. Also tells us that when family goes through divorce every member must adapt to the changing flow of everyday life hence stress and anxiety will find new ways of presenting themselves in children which may be an increase in conflict with their brothers and sisters as adds that sibling relationships will never be conflict free ,separated parents or no but sibling conflicts should not cause a long term damage to your children or their relationships instead arguments between siblings should be constructive helping them from learn how to manage disagreements, deal with anger and process their emotions.

Bae (2021) informs us that divorce can be traumatic for all involved, however siblings can sometimes strengthen their relationship by going through this shared experience. When a couple gets a divorce, it is often a stressful and difficult time and can be particularly painful for the children as it can have a negative impact on children since they witness their family fall apart for example uncertainty about the future can be an inherent part of divorce, with siblings often having to travel back and forth between their parents and/or stepparents. Children appreciate routine so any sudden changes can cause additional stress thus in all these siblings can act as one of the few constant forms of stability throughout this difficult time. Jessica (2020) says that children often develop split loyalties when their parents separate. They may feel torn between supporting one parent over the other, which can create tension among siblings.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

Whereas there are some studies carried out about parental divorce and sibling relationships, most studies have not been exhaustive (Howe,Recchia, Kinsley, 2023; Bufton, 2023). Research done has focused on sibling development rather than quality and nature of relationships (Pickering, Crane, Hon, Ann, Cary, and Sanders 2022). On the other hand, most research has happened in different geographical contexts rather than Kabale district. More to this some other researchers have focused on how parents can help children to cope with separation /divorce (JoAnne, 2023, Kelly,2015 and Emery,2016) have left out the coping strategies employed by siblings themselves to navigate emotional challenges and these studies were carried out in the western world thus a need to do it in Uganda particularly in Kabale district as every child has the way they react to things. Several studies have been made about divorce but have not focused on the connection between parental divorce and quality of sibling relationship (Mclanahan and Sandefur,2018, Drexler,2020, Hetherington and Kelly,2017)

## **1.3 Objectives**

### **1.3.1 General objective**

The purpose of the study was to investigate divorce in the siblings' relationship in Nyakambu Kabale district.

### **1.3.2 Specific objectives**

- I. To explore the nature of sibling relationships after divorce of parents.
- II. To determine the coping strategies employed by siblings to navigate emotional challenges.
- III. To examine the connection between parental divorce and quality of sibling relationship.

### **1.3.3 Research questions**

- I. What coping strategies are employed by siblings to navigate emotional challenges during divorce?
- II. What is the nature of sibling relationships after divorce of parents?
- III. What is the connection between divorce and the quality of sibling relation?
- IV.

## **1.4 Scope of the study**

### **1.4.1 Geographical scope**

The study on the parental divorce and siblings' relationship was conducted in Nyakambu Village, Southern Division, Kabale district. Horble,(2002) says that as many other regions in Uganda, Kabale District faces various social,economic challenges that can impact family stability hence divorce which made me decide to do a study in Nyakambu to see how this divorce has affected the sibling's relationship.

### **1.4.2 Time scope**

The focus was on any family that has gone through divorce regardless of how long or is going through divorce.

### **1.4.3 Content scope/subject**

This study concentrated on parental divorce and the sibling's relationship and my target are siblings in or from divorced families of 16 years to 20 years and parents.

## **1.5 Justification**

The justification for this study lies in the urgent need to address the impacts of divorce on the siblings' relationship. Parental divorce can have a profound impact on sibling relationships, yet this aspect is often overlooked in research. As divorce rates continue to rise, understanding the effects on sibling dynamics is very important. Sibling relationships are a source of support, but parental divorce can at times affect this bond. This study aims to explore the nature of sibling relationships post-divorce including the emotional challenges and coping strategies employed as by examining the connection between parental divorce and sibling relationship quality this research seeks to fill a gap in existing literature. This study's results will inform strategies to support siblings through the divorce process Furthermore, this research will contribute to a deeper understanding of family dynamics and relationships and intersection of parental divorce and sibling relationships.

## **1.6 Significance**

This study helps future researchers as it provides a foundation for future research on sibling relationships and coping strategies during and post-divorce. Future researchers will be able to use this knowledge to investigate new research questions and explore new methods to deeply understand sibling relationships.

This study helps community members as it raises awareness about the impact of parental divorce on sibling relationships hence encouraging community members to offer support and resources to help these children to navigate difficulties.

This study helps fellow scholars as it gives more knowledge on family dynamics and relationships especially giving more insights on sibling relationships post-divorce as this guides their practices in case, they encounter related cases and also enhances their quality of services.

The study helps the policy makers as it informs policy decisions related to family support services and the interventions supporting sibling relationships. This study's findings inform policy decisions and the development of programs supporting siblings and families.

This study helps parents as it offers guidance to parents on how to support their children overcome the emotional challenges during and after divorce, educates them of how sibling relationships are important as well as offers necessary support and resources to help siblings navigate difficulties. This study's findings inform parenting practices and the development of support services for siblings and families.

The study is of great importance to siblings as it highlights the experiences and emotions of siblings affected by parental divorce helping them to understand what they are going through and what challenges they are prone to encounter, thus offering a sense of understanding and support.

This study will be of great importance to the social work as it will provide guidance for social work students during their practice, giving them the different changes of sibling relationships post-divorce thus students acquiring skills and knowledge to support clients navigating difficulties. The study will be of help to the social workers as it will inform their practice with families and siblings experiencing divorce. This study's findings will guide the social work practices and the development of supportive services for siblings and families as social workers will be able to help their clients in case, they encounter related cases and also enhance their quality of services.

### **1.7 Conceptual framework**

The conceptual framework outlines the key independent and dependent variables and their relationships in the study and the intervening variables as illustrated below.

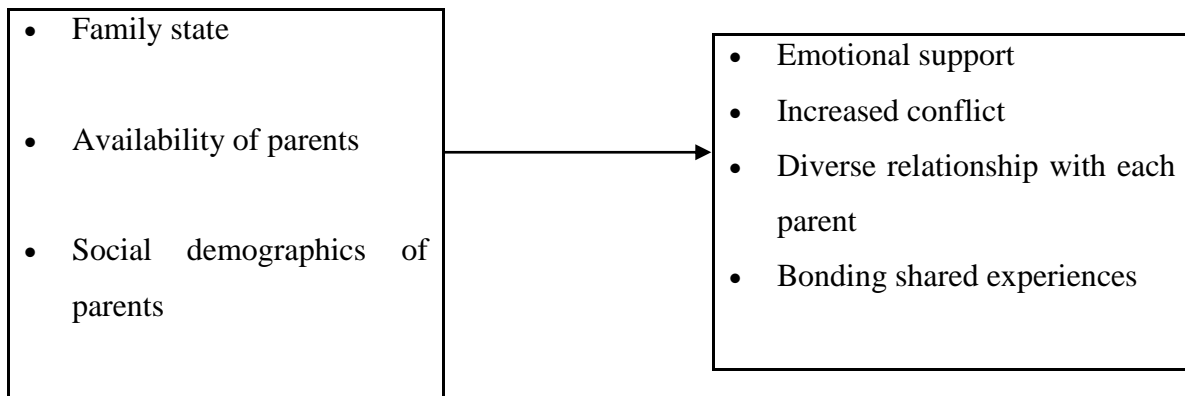
**Figure 1: Conceptual framework**

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

DEPENDENT VARIABLE

Parental divorce

Siblings' relationship



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents an in-depth review of work done by different scholars in relation to parental divorce and sibling relationship and the emphasis was put on the nature of sibling relationship after divorce of parents, coping strategies employed by siblings to navigate emotional challenges during divorce and the connection between divorce and the quality of sibling relationships.

#### **2.1 To explore the nature of sibling relationship after divorce of parents.**

Research suggests that siblings may experience increased closeness after parental divorce hence depending on each other for emotional support and bonding over shared experiences and stress (Whelan,2015, Hetherington & Kelly,2017). This increased closeness can be as a result of reduced parental conflict and tension (Taylor & Conger, 2017), improved communication and empathy (Amato& Anthony, 2019) and on each other for emotional support (Solomun& Kuhns, 2020). Also, siblings may develop a stronger sense of unity and harmony, leading to increased closeness (Shear, 2017). Older siblings may also take on caregiving roles for younger siblings hence strengthening their bond (King, 2016). Although individual personality traits and coping mechanisms can influence the degree of increased closeness among siblings (. Fabricius & Hall, 2016). Above all increased closeness among siblings after parental divorce can have a positive impact on their emotional well-being and relationships.

According to Hetherington & Kelly, et al, (2017) siblings may experience increased conflict and competition after parental divorce especially if they have different relationships with each parent. This conflict can result from competition for parental attention and affection (Taylor & Conger, 2017), disparate parenting styles and discipline (Amato & Anthony, 2019), loyalty conflicts and guilt (Solomun, & Kuhns, 2020) and increased stress and tension (King, 2016). Furthermore, siblings may experience conflicting emotions such as anger, sadness, and guilt, which can manifest as competition and conflict (Fabricius & Hall, 2016). The absence of a togetherness of parental lead can lead to a lack of clear boundaries and rules, worsening sibling conflict (Whelan, 2015). More so, individual personality traits, age differences, and coping mechanisms can influence the degree of conflict and rivalry among siblings. Research suggests that siblings who experience parental divorce may engage in more frequent and intense conflict, particularly during the early stages of divorce.

Maripedia (n.d) states that children of divorce are more likely to have hostile relationships with siblings than children from married families which can last even into adulthood. Fern (2022) stresses that anxiety, depression, and anger typically occur as brothers and sisters are forced to contend with the great challenges during their parents' divorces potentially including rearranged living situations, relocation to a different neighborhood or town, a change of schools and new family members, stepparents, and step siblings. The siblings whose parents have gone through divorce experience greater closeness because of undergoing their parents' divorce together. These may also adjust better to parental divorce than only one child according to the article "Presence of a sibling as a potential buffer following parental divorce: An examination of young adolescents" by Kempton Armistead, Wierson and Forehand published in the journal of Clinical child and adolescent psychology.

Older siblings may assume caregiving roles for younger siblings after parental divorce, leading to a complex mix of benefits and challenges (Taylor & Conger, 2017, Whelan, 2015). On one hand, caregiving can foster a sense of responsibility and empathy in older siblings, strengthening their bond with younger siblings (Whelan, 2015, Amato & Anthony, 2019). This caregiving role can also provide a sense of purpose and control in a chaotic post-divorce environment (Solomon & Kuhns, 2020). But it can also lead to increased stress, anxiety, and feelings of burden — especially if the older siblings are to assume excessive responsibility (King, 2016, Fabricius & Hall, 2016). Moreover, caregiving roles can impact the emotional and social development of older siblings on their own account. The influence of caregiving roles on sibling relationships after divorce according to this research is subject to such factors as age differences, individual personality traits, and quality in the parent-child relationship (Hetherington & Kelly, 2017).

According to Solomon and Kuhns note, the quality of sibling relationships post parental divorce may impact longer-term mental health development, social relationships, and romantic relationships. Amato and Anthony have gone on to suggest that positive sibling relationships can provide one avenue of emotional support, reducing risks for mental health problems, including depression and anxiety. On the other hand, conflicted sibling relationships lead to social difficulties, attachment problems, and relationship problems in adulthood, according to Shear 2017. In fact, Taylor and Conger 2017 found that sibling relationships could influence attachment styles, conflict resolution skills, and emotional regulation, thus shaping long-term outcomes. Whelan, 2015 also enumerates that grown-ups who experienced parental divorce and poor sibling relationships are known to face relationship challenges and problems with mental health. Moreover, King, 2016 states that

sibling relationships can affect even romantic relationships, where people experiencing friendly sibling relationships are expected to have healthy love relationships.

According to Amato and Anthony (2019), siblings may develop different relationships with each parent following divorce and thus create feelings of loyalty conflicts and guilt. According to Shear (2017), siblings receive different levels of involvement, communication, and emotional support from each parent; therefore, there is a difference in relationships. Siblings may experience different parenting by each parent, one being very permissive and the other more authoritarian. This can also create mixed feelings and a loyalty conflict. Whelan (2015), the sibling may feel conflicted in their love and loyalty to each parent, creating emotional distress and conflict. Apart from this, King draws a line under the fact that siblings may feel divided: the feeling of loyalty to one parent may make them feel abandoned by the other, which guilt and anxiety develop from. Solomun and Kuhns (2020) also underpin that due to different relationships with parents, differences in relationships are considered between siblings. So, these sibling relationships become more conflictive, with less emotional support because of these changes.

## **2.2 Coping strategies employed by siblings to navigate emotional challenges.**

Encouraging of children to adopt a positive thinking can help them develop effective coping mechanisms that can help them to navigate the emotional challenges of divorce. Hart, (2018) states that research has shown that children who are enlightened on how to assess situations basing on the matter of fact and avoid destructive thinking influence that tend to indicate lower levels of anxiety and depression. According to Seligman, (2016) positive thinking has been associated to increased resilience and post-traumatic growth in children experiencing parental divorce. Also, by encouraging children to rethink the negative thoughts and focus on the positive aspects of their circumstances parents and caregivers can help them create more adaptive coping strategies. For instance, a study by Buchanan and Heiges (2017) found that children who participated in a program focused on developing positive thinking skills displayed improved emotional well-being and reduced behavioral problems compared to those that did not participate. More so, a longitudinal study by Lansford (2017) found that children who maintained a positive thinking over time displayed better adaption outcomes following parental divorce.

As stated by Hetherington & Kelly (2017), it has constantly been evidenced that a safe as well as stable parenting style at the time of divorce plays a notable role in protecting the

emotional health of children. Regarding this aspect, collaborative communication along with consistent rules in both homes is notably essential for attaining stability; this would provide a sense of security and consistency to children. Therefore, Gonzalez-Mena (2017) has provided his views accordingly. Katz & Finkelstein 2015 posit that the research has also dwelled on the importance of the determination of coping styles utilized by siblings in order to overcome emotional difficulties that accompany divorce, such as active listening, empathy, and problem-solving. More to that, from the point of view of stability and persistency, the research studies have documented that with the children, siblings are likely to develop flexibility and adaptability that yields better long-term outcomes, Hines, (2018) and Schrodt, (2020). Keeping this in mind, parents can actively do something to help their children by knowing the reality about stability and consistency, which are important repairing mechanisms for emotional resilience.

Amato (2018) agrees that good parental involvement would enable siblings to negotiate emotional turmoil from the divorce, and as such, he goes ahead to point out that other studies have revealed that children are more emotionally adapted and resilient when they are associated with positive involvement and continuous participation from both parents. As explained by Hines, children who receive emotional support, assistance with daily problems, and consistent discipline from both parents are more likely to develop healthy coping mechanisms and be able to adapt to divorce in a positive way. According to a study by Lansford, children who maintained a good relationship with both their mother and father after divorce manifested better social and emotional development compared to those who did not. A longitudinal study conducted by Buchanan and Heiges (2017) over time showed that children with positive parental involvement manifested better emotional functioning and fewer behavioral problems. It is, thus, significant that both parents continue to be positively involved in their children's lives by offering emotional support, guidance, and consistent discipline to help them overcome the emotional challenges created by divorce.

### **2.3 To establish the connection between divorce and the quality of sibling relationships.**

According to Gonzalez-Mena (2017), divorce may also be a catalyst for increasing sibling conflict and competition because often the relationships with each parent will differ. Competing loyalty demands, wherein siblings feel torn between their love and loyalty for each parent, can easily cause sibling conflict. ((Braithwaite & Baxter, 2016) Furthermore, siblings might be brought up in different ways because one parent may be open-minded while

the other parent is more disciplinarian; this will cause a conflicting feeling within them, and thus this accounts for increased competition (Fosco & Grych 2018). For example, divorce modifies family dynamics, and this makes the siblings adjust their relationship with themselves, parents, or even others; this trigger increased conflict and rivalry among siblings (Hines, 2018). This increased conflict and rivalry between siblings after divorce can have longer-lasting impacts on their relationships and emotional well-being accordingly.

According to findings, siblings' relationships may act as a protector for one another against the negative effect divorce has on the wellbeing of children. Good sibling relationships reduce the sense of loneliness and responsibility that may follow the divorce of parents since they offer companionship, emotional support, and practical help. As Whelan & Hochschild (2016) note, support from parents and caregivers and fostering relationships between siblings can cushion the negative impacts of divorce and present better child outcomes. Thus, as noted by Hines et al. (2020). On the other hand, studies have also indicated that siblings may offer a sense of predictability and stability during a transition period within the family, particularly among children whose parents are divorced. Secondly, good sibling relationships enable a child to be resilient and cope better with the challenges that come with divorce. Still, other studies indicate that siblings can support one another in their adjustment to changed family structures, such as stepfamilies or single-parent households (Gonzalez-Mena, 20217). Other studies reveal that the quality of relationships with their siblings can also impact children's emotional and behavioral adjustment following divorce; positive sibling relationships are associated with better adjustment outcomes (Fosco & Grych, 2018). Studies highlight that sibling relationships help develop positive outcomes.

Amato and Anthony,(2017) explain that the value of post-divorce relationships between parents and children has an important impact on sibling relationships. According to a study conducted by Kramer & Conger, (2017), warm and supportive relationships between divorced parents and their children can promote positive sibling relationships while distant or conflictive relations enhance the negative effects. For instance, research showed that parents can help minimize sibling conflict and enhance cooperation if they continue having a positive relationship with the children, Hines et al., (2020) added. Moreover, Gonzalez-Mena, (2017) shared that parents who are able to communicate well and engaged in co-parenting more likely ensure healthy sibling relations as well. Parents who believe in the importance of quality time with each child may also strengthen sibling relationships Sobolewski and Amato, (2017). Besides, Braithwaite and Baxter (2016) assert that parents who serve as good

examples in resolving conflicts themselves have the potential to offer supportive sibling relationships. Overall, what the current review indicates is that parent-child interactions are an influential ingredient in the post-divorce development of sibling relationship and a need for parents to regard the relationship with each of their children as important.

Research has indicated that the parental divorce might be experienced differently by siblings in attachment style and interaction with each parent, which could impact emotional health in a great way (Gonzalez-Mena, 2017). According to Hines, (2018) "Sibling relationships can be a source of comfort, support, and stability during times of family transition and, at the same time, serve as a source of conflict and stress.". Besides, Fosco and Grych (2018) say that "parental divorce may impact the quality of parent-child relationships, which in turn may influence the quality of sibling ones.". More to that, "siblings who experience parental divorce may develop different attachment styles, such as anxious or avoidant attachment, that affects their emotional well-being," Braithwaite and Baxter say. According to the study by O'Connor in 2019, siblings who experience parental divorce may develop unique attachment styles and relationships with each parent, potentially leading to a host of emotional varied outcomes.

Working through such challenges of divorce, the siblings can get closer to one another and develop a more resilient bond as an outcome of divorce. According to Amato and Anthony (2017), "they may have a stronger bond because they tend to provide emotional support and companionship to each other to help them through that stressful moment and uncertainty of divorce". According to Sobolewski and Amato (2017), "those who grow intimate with their siblings are more resilient and open to adapting in times of adversity, and that can serve them well in the long run". According to Gonzalez-Mena (2017), "a closer bond will enhance relations with each other, communicating, empathizing, and developing their conflict resolution abilities after a divorce". According to Braithwaite and Baxter (2016), "brothers and sisters who go through parental divorce may witness and develop a closer feeling between each other and, in turn, help them to deal with divorce obstacles". Most of the evidence supports the argument that, in the sibling relationship, divorce benefits them; it exposes closeness, flexibility, and resilience in them (O'Connor, 2019). According to Fosco and Grych (2018), "those who grow close to their siblings are more likely to develop strong identity and self-esteem, which will benefit them in the long term".

Divorce can reinforce siblings through the process of navigating divorce, and such reinforcement strengthens their siblingship. As Amato and Anthony note, "Siblings may have a close bond because they learn to look to each other for support and companionship as they struggle with the pressures and insecurities of divorce". Furthermore, Sobolewski and Amato (2017) determined that "siblings who develop increased closeness after divorce are most likely to develop resilience and adaptability in the face of adversity that may serve them well in the long run". On the contrary, Gonzalez-Mena (2017) writes that "the increased closeness among siblings after divorce can also provide them with an opportunity to develop communication, empathy, and conflict resolution skills, thus strengthening their relationship". Braithwaite and Baxter add that "siblings experiencing parental divorce may adopt a greater sense of loyalty and commitment to each other in order to get through the difficulties associated with divorce". On the whole, studies have suggested that divorce tends to make siblings within such families closer, resilient, and adaptable (O'Connor, 2019). Fosco and Grych also found that "siblings who experience increased closeness after divorce are more likely to develop a stronger sense of identity and self-esteem, which could be beneficial for them in the long run".

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter covers the study design, the study population, the choice of the sample size, sampling methodologies, study variables, data collection tools, validity and reliability of data collection tools, data analysis, ethical consideration, data processing and limitations.

#### **3.1 Research design**

This study was conducted using a mixed methods approach using a cross-sectional survey research design. A cross-sectional study survey research design consists of collecting data from a diverse group of individuals at a single moment in a time allowing researchers observe and analyze the characteristics, behaviors, and outcomes of the participants at the specific point (Lauren, 2020 and Kendra, 2024). In the context of this study on parental divorce and siblings' relationship, this design allowed the researcher to gather both quantitative and qualitative data.

#### **3.2 Study area and population**

The study was conducted in Nyakambu Southern Division located in Kabale Municipality. Horble,(2002) says that as many other regions in Uganda, Kabale District faces various social,economic challenges that can impact family stability hence divorce which made me decide to do a study in Nyakambu to see how this divorce has affected the sibling's relationship. Therefore, the study population included include households in Kabale Municipality with siblings and parents going through divorce particularly those located in Nyakambu and there are 30 households which will be included in the study as the target population. The study population included respondents who are the siblings whose parents have gone or are going through divorce and the parents who have gone through divorce.

### 3.3 Sample size determination

Sample size, as defined by Course staff (2023), is the number of observations or individuals included in a study or experiment. It is the number of individuals, items, or data points selected from a larger population to represent it statistically. The following formula developed by Taro Yamane in 1970 will be used to calculate the sample size:

“n” is sample size, “N” is population, “e” is error (0.05) or level of confidence 95%

N” (population) = 30 Households with siblings and parents going through divorce

$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$  authored by (Charlee, 2023)

$n = \frac{30}{1 + 30(0.05)^2}$

$n = \frac{30}{1 + 30(0.0025)}$

$n = \frac{30}{1 + 0.075}$

$n = \frac{30}{1.075}$

n=28 selected respondents

Therefore, from the sample size calculation above, 28 respondents participated in the study who were siblings whose parents have divorced or going through a divorce and parents who have gone through a divorce and those who are going through divorce in Nyakambu Kabale Municipality. This therefore means that the unit of analysis in this study is the households, whereas the unit of inquiry is the household heads from each of these selected households. This implies that each household will be represented by one person.

### 3.4 Sampling techniques and procedure

A total of 28 households with siblings whose parents have divorced or going through a divorce and parents who have gone through a divorce and those who are going through divorce will be selected using simple random sampling where samples will be randomly selected. Simple random sampling will be used because it ensures fairness and minimizes bias in the selection process.

Furthermore, a total of 28 respondents, 20 siblings and 8 parents will be selected using purposive sampling. Therefore, purposive sampling will be used to select this category of

people because they are few in number and they have the expertise and the knowledge concerning this study since they are the ones going through this and understand it more.

### **3.5 Data collection tools and methods.**

The research utilized two distinct types of data gathering instruments, which include interview guides and questionnaire guides. A questionnaire guide is a research tool that consists of a set of questions, scales, and prompts designed to elicit specific information from participants during self-report measures (Creswell, 2014). A thorough and organized approach to gathering data will be ensured by the use of the interview and questionnaire guides. While the interview guide will help me get in-depth qualitative data using probing tactics and open-ended questions, the questionnaire guide will offer a systematic framework for gathering quantitative data by enabling me to ask a series of questions to a large number of participants.

### **3.7 Validity and reliability**

When evaluating whether the results are stable and consistent across various testing settings, observers, and time, reliability refers to the consistency and dependability of a study measurement or instrument (Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2014). Validity, as defined by (Creswell, 2014; Cohen et al., 2013) refers to the extent to which a research measurement or instrument accurately measures what it claims to measure, evaluating whether the research tool is measuring the intended concept or construct. These will help to ensure the quality and accuracy of measurements as reliability is about consistency while validity is about accuracy (Saunders et al, 2016).

Respondents will be given a self-administered English questionnaire. The various respondents will be surveyed using both structured and open-ended questions. For the purpose of interviewing respondents, an interview schedule will be created. The interview guide will be administered in order to obtain sufficient information from the participants. An interview schedule will facilitate more in-depth conversation and help elicit more private and sensitive information. The data collected will be used to support or validate conclusions drawn from the questionnaire or from observation.

Data reliability is crucial to ensuring the accuracy, reliability, and validity of the results. The participants shall be provided with an English self-administered questionnaire. An interview schedule will be made in order to interview responders. A semi-structured interview guide

will be used to ensure that participants provide enough information. A structured interview schedule will encourage deeper discussion and assist extract more sensitive and confidential information. The information gathered will be utilized to validate or supplement inferences made from observation or the questionnaire.

### **3.8 Procedure of data collection**

After receiving an introduction letter from Uganda Christian University's School of Social Sciences, the researcher will approach the LC1 Chairman to request permission to conduct study in their community. After the respondents have given their agreement, the researcher will approach different respondents to conduct interviews and distribute the surveys.

### **3.9 Data analysis and management**

According to Harris, et al. (2017) and Khan, et al. (2019), data analysis is the process of drawing conclusions and meaning from data using a variety of methods, including statistical modeling, data mining, and visualization. In order to answer research questions or test hypotheses, it entails using a variety of techniques to find patterns, trends, and correlations within the data (Creswell, 2014; Bryman, 2012). This calls for a combination of technical skills, like knowledge of programming and statistics, and critical thinking abilities, like problem-solving and interpretation (Saunders et al, 2016). To ensure that outcomes are accurate, dependable, and understandable, proper data management and analysis are important so I will carefully organize, label, and store the acquired data in order to preserve its security and integrity. Data management is the term for this procedure. This will entail documenting the approaches and decisions made during the study process in addition to sanitizing the data to identify and correct errors or discrepancies. Data analysis is the systematic investigation of both qualitative and quantitative data using appropriate techniques like content analysis, statistical analysis, or theme analysis. Researchers will be able to make significant inferences regarding the ethical dilemmas highlighted by the data by identifying patterns, themes, and relationships within it.

### **3.10 Ethical considerations**

The researcher will seek ethical clearance from the School of Social Sciences. Informed consent will be obtained from respondents after explaining the aim, procedures, and anticipated benefits of the study. It will also be explained to the study participants that their participation will be voluntary with no payment involved and they will be free to withdraw consent at any time during the study. Finally, confidentiality where the information got from the field will only be used for academic purposes.

### **3.11 Anticipated limitations and delimitation**

First and foremost, not every questionnaire will be finished or even returned because of respondents' circumstances like travel, hospitalization, and refusal or withdrawal from participation. The researcher will set aside additional responders by using a larger sample size in anticipation of this. In addition, the replies will be reminded not to leave any questions unanswered, and the date of retrieval will be strictly monitored.

It is possible that the research tools developed by the researcher may not be standard. Hence, in order to create a reliable assessment of the research variables, a validity and reliability test will be performed.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents, analyses, and interprets the study findings. It specifically presents the response rate, social demographic characteristics and findings of the study objective by objective about the topic parental divorce and sibling relationship conducted in Nyakambu village Southern division Kabale Municipality .Out of 28 respondents expected to participate in the study, 19 out of 20 sibling respondents returned completely filled questionnaires and 8 parents were interviewed making the total of 27 respondents thus a response rate of 96.43%.Interviews conducted.

#### 4.1 Response Rate

A total of 20 questionnaires were issued to the respondents and 19 were returned, indicating that 1 person didn't return the questionnaire, as shown in table 4.1 below.

**Table 1: Response Rate**

	Questionnaires	Questionnaires	Response rate
Category	Issued	returned	(%)
Siblings	20	19	95
Overall response rate	20	19	95

**Table 2: Showing interview participants**

	Interviews	Interviews	Response rate
Category	prepared	Conducted	(%)
Parents	8	8	100%
Overall response rate	8	8	100%

Source: Primary data, August 2024

The table 2 above indicates that 8 parents were invited to participate in the interview for this study and all the 8 parents consented and appeared for the interview.

#### 4.2 Social demographic characteristics.

**Table 3: Social demographic characteristics**

Item	Description	Frequency
Age bracket	16-17 years	5
	18-20 years	14
	31-40 years	1
	41-50 years	3
	Above 50 years	4
Gender	Female	14
	Male	13
Level of education	Primary	0
	Secondary	6
	Tertiary	5
	University	3
	No education	5
Religion	Catholic	5
	Anglican	11
	Born again	5
	Seventh-day Adventist	2
	Muslim	4
Occupation	Employed	3
	Self-employed	5
	Student	14
	Others	5

From the study it was noted that, majority of the respondents (70%) were of the age range between 20-18 years who were 14 sibling respondents out of 20 were 8 were male and 6 females followed by (25%) who were between 16-17 years where 2 were male and 3 were female then the parents who were interviewed it was noted that the majority 37.5% were of the age group 41-50 where 2 were female and 1 male followed by 25% and 25% who were between the age of 51-60 and 61-70 were 2 were female and 2 male respectively and lastly (12.5%) who were between the age of 31-40 years and this was a female. Also, results indicated that more females were registered than male respondents where 14 were females and 13 were male however the respondents were supposed to be 20 but 1 participant didn't return the questionnaire.

The researcher also inquired about the education level of the respondents. This variable was also found worth investigating because the understanding of the effect of parental divorce and sibling relationship would entirely be determined by the respondent's ability to distinguish different family aspects. Therefore, it was discovered that the majority of the people who participated in the study were mainly of secondary level which is 6 respondents which

included 4 males and 2 females. The next group was tertiary level and no education that had 5 participants which included 4 males and 1 female then 2 male and 3 females respectively. Followed by university level that had 3 participants who were all females and then one from the primary level participated.

The researcher also investigated the age of the respondents. This inquiry was of great value to the study because as a matter of fact, the age of the respondents determines the level of actual understanding. The results on the age of the respondents as presented show that siblings of age bracket 18-20 who are 14 respondents participate more than those of age bracket 16-17 who were only 5 respondents who participated and for the parents who participated in the interviews

It was also found that most of the respondents were students(14), followed by 5 who are employed, 3 who are self-employed and 5 who were in others apart from the above. As well regarding religion most of the respondents were Anglicans who are 11, 5 who are Catholics, 5 who are Born again, 4 who are Muslims and 2 who are Seventh-day Adventist.

### **4.3. Research findings**

These research findings will be presented basing on every objective which include to explore the nature of sibling relationships after divorce of parents, to determine the coping strategies employed by siblings to navigate emotional challenges and to examine the connection between parental divorce and quality of sibling relationship respectively. In the presentation we may meet statements basing on the objective for example were the siblings respond to statements like “I seek support from my siblings and try to maintain a strong bond despite the changes” where respondents SA=strongly agree, A=agree, NS=not sure, D =disagree, SD=strongly agree to different statements.

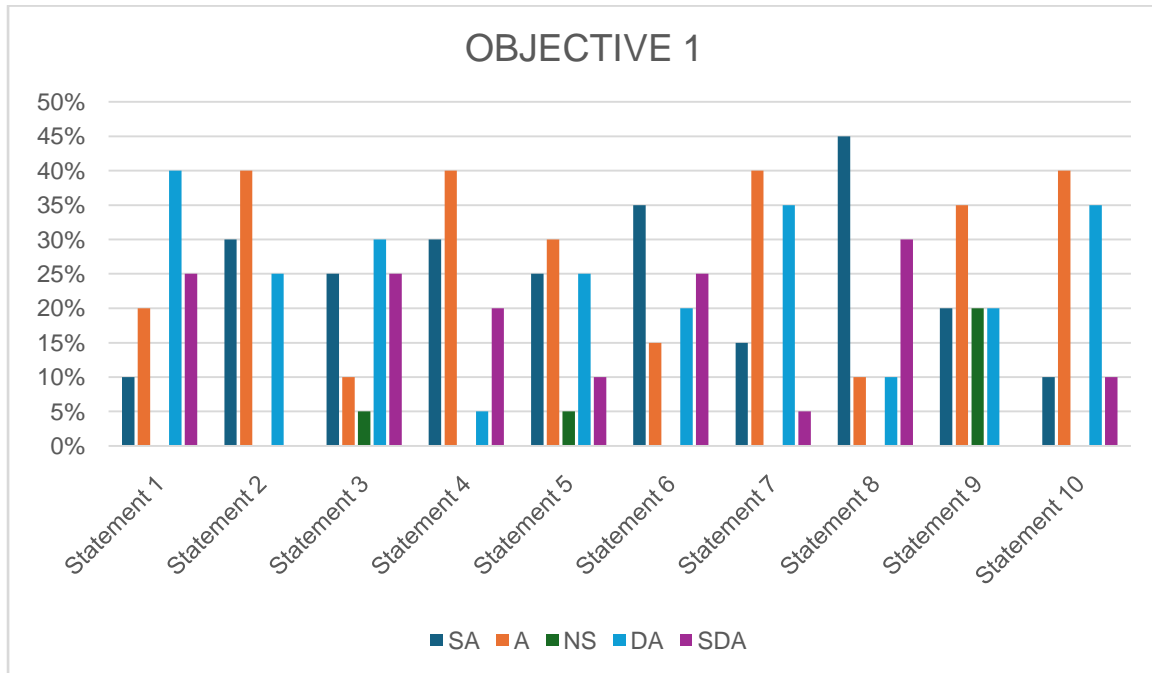
### 4.3.1 To explore the nature of sibling relationships after divorce of parents.

**Table 4: To explore the nature of sibling relationships after divorce of parents.**

(SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, NS=NotSure, DA =Disagree, SDA=Strongly Disagree)

Scale	SA	A	NS	DA	SDA
<i>Nature of sibling relationship</i>					
1. Since the divorce, my siblings and I see each other less often than we did before.	2 10%	4 20%	0 0%	8 40%	5 25%
2. My siblings provide me with emotional support during difficult times since our parents' divorce.	6 30%	8 40%	0 0%	5 25%	0 0%
3. The number of conflicts between me and my siblings has increased since our parents' divorce.	5 25%	2 10%	1 5%	6 30%	5 25%
4. I feel as close to my siblings now as I did before our parents got divorced.	6 35%	8 40%	0 0%	1 5%	4 20%
5. My siblings and I participate in shared activities together as frequently as we did before our parents' divorce.	5 25%	6 30%	1 5%	5 25%	2 10%
6. The quality of communication between me and my siblings has improved since our parents' divorce.	7 35%	3 15%	0 0%	4 20%	5 25%
7. Since our parents' divorce, my siblings and I have developed stronger support networks outside of the immediate family.	3 15%	8 40%	0 0%	7 35%	1 5%
8. My emotional well-being has been positively affected by the support from my siblings since our parents' divorce.	9 45%	2 10%	0 0%	2 10%	6 30%
9. The relationship I have with my siblings has been significantly influenced by how our parents have interacted with us since the divorce.	4 20%	7 35%	4 20%	4 20%	0 0%
10. The roles and responsibilities within our family have changed since our parents' divorce, affecting how I interact with my siblings.	2 10%	8 40%	0 0%	7 35%	2 10%

**Figure 2: To explore the nature of sibling relationships after divorce of parents.**



From the study, it was noted that 65% of the siblings disagreed with the statement that ‘Since the divorce, my siblings and I see each other less often than we did before’ but the 30% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, 60% strongly agreed or agreed to the statement ‘my siblings provide me with emotional support during difficult times since our parents’ divorce’ as 25% disagreed. Also, 35% agreed or strongly agreed to the statement that ‘the number of conflicts between me and my siblings has increased since our parents’ divorce’ whereas 55% disagreed or strongly disagreed to the statement as 5% was not sure about their feeling about the statement.

More so, to the statement that ‘I feel as close to my siblings now as I did before our parents got divorced’ 75% strongly agreed or agreed as 25% disagreed or strongly disagreed to the statement. 55% agreed or strongly agreed to the statement that ‘my siblings and I participate in shared activities together as frequently as we did before our parents’ divorce’ though 35% strongly disagreed or disagreed as 5% were not sure of their answer. 50% strongly agreed or agreed that the quality of communication between them and their siblings has improved since their parents’ divorce while 45% disagreed or strongly disagreed to the statement. 55% agreed or strongly agreed that since their parents’ divorce as siblings have developed stronger support networks outside of the immediate family.

Furthermore, 55% agreed or strongly agreed that their emotional well-being has been positively affected by the support from their siblings since their parents’ divorce as 40% disagreed or strongly disagreed to the statement. 55% agreed or strongly agreed that their

relationship has been significantly influenced by how their parents have interacted with us since the divorce then 50% agreed and strongly agreed that the roles and responsibilities within their family have changed since their parents' divorce which has affected how they interact with their siblings.

Conclusively, 80% of the siblings agreed or strongly agreed that they provide emotional support to each other, have been close to their siblings, their communication has improved, and their parents support has helped them to navigate their challenges however the smallest percentage agreed about the increase of siblings.

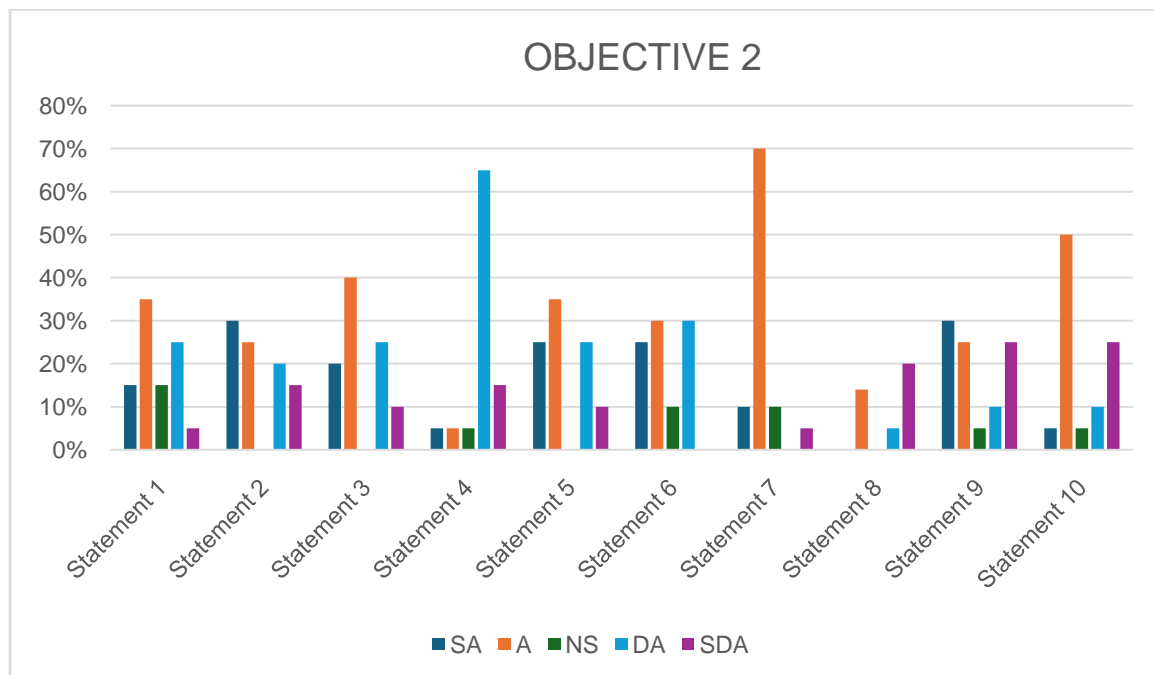
**4.3.2 To determine the coping strategies employed by siblings to navigate emotional challenges during divorce.**

**Table 5: To determine the coping strategies employed by siblings to navigate emotional challenges during divorce.**

(SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, NS=Not Sure, DA =Disagree, SDA=Strongly Disagree)

	SA	A	NS	DA	SDA
<i>Coping mechanisms</i>					
1. I find comfort in maintaining routines and familiar spaces in both homes	3 15%	7 35%	3 15%	5 25%	1 5%
2. I adapt to changes in caregiving responsibilities by supporting my siblings and parents.	6 30%	5 25%	0 0%	4 20%	3 15%
3. I seek support from my siblings and try to maintain a strong bond despite the changes	4 20%	8 40%	0 0%	5 25%	2 10%
4. I reach out to extended family members for emotional support and guidance	1 5%	1 5%	1 5%	13 65%	3 15%
5. I adapt to changes in my relationship with each parent and seek to maintain a positive connection.	5 25%	7 35%	0 0%	5 25%	2 10%
6. I understand the financial changes and adjust my expectations and spending accordingly	5 25%	6 30%	2 10%	6 30%	0 0%
7. I focus on creating a sense of stability and security in my current living situation.	2 10%	14 70%	2 10%	0 0%	1 5%
8. I stay involved in school activities and seek support from teachers or counselors.	0 0%	14 70%	0 0%	1 5%	4 20%
9. I adhere to custody schedules and use them as opportunities to bond with each parent.	6 30%	5 25%	1 5%	2 10%	5 25%
10. I cherish and adapt existing family rituals to maintain a sense of continuity and connection."	1 5%	10 50%	1 5%	2 10%	5 25%

**Figure 3: To determine the coping strategies employed by siblings to navigate emotional challenges during divorce.**



It was noted that 50% agreed or strongly agreed that they found comfort in maintaining routines and familiar spaces in both homes, 5% were not sure about the response to the statement as 30% disagreed or strongly disagreed. 55% strongly agreed or agreed that they adapted to changes in caregiving responsibilities by supporting their siblings and parents as 35% disagreed or strongly disagreed then 50% agreed or strongly agreed that they sought support from their siblings and try to maintain a strong bond despite the changes while 45% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Also, 10% agreed or strongly agreed that they reached out to extended family members for emotional support and guidance, 5% was not sure about the statement as 80% disagreed or strongly disagreed to the statement. 60% agreed that they adapted to changes in their relationship with each parent and seek to maintain a positive connection though 35% disagreed or strongly disagreed then 55% agreed or strongly agreed that they understood the financial changes and adjusted their expectations and spending accordingly, 10% were not sure about their response as 30% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

More so, 80% agreed or strongly agreed that they focused on creating a sense of stability and security in their current living situation, 10% were not sure and 5% strongly disagreed to the statement. 70% agreed to that they stayed involved in school activities and sought support from teachers or counselors however 25% strongly disagreed or disagreed to the statement then 55% agreed or strongly agreed that they adhered to custody schedules and used them as

opportunities to bond with each parent, 5% were not sure as 35% disagreed or strongly disagreed. 55% agreed or strongly that they cherished and adapted to existing family rituals to maintain a sense of continuity and connection, 5% were not sure about their response as 35% strongly disagreed or disagreed to the statement.

Generally, most of the siblings agreed that they offered support to each other and maintained a strong bond, for those who stayed in school sought support from teachers or counselors and adapted to the changes in the relationship with each parent but most of them strongly disagreed or disagreed to seeking support from extended family members.

### 4.3.3 To examine the connection between divorce and the quality of sibling relationships.

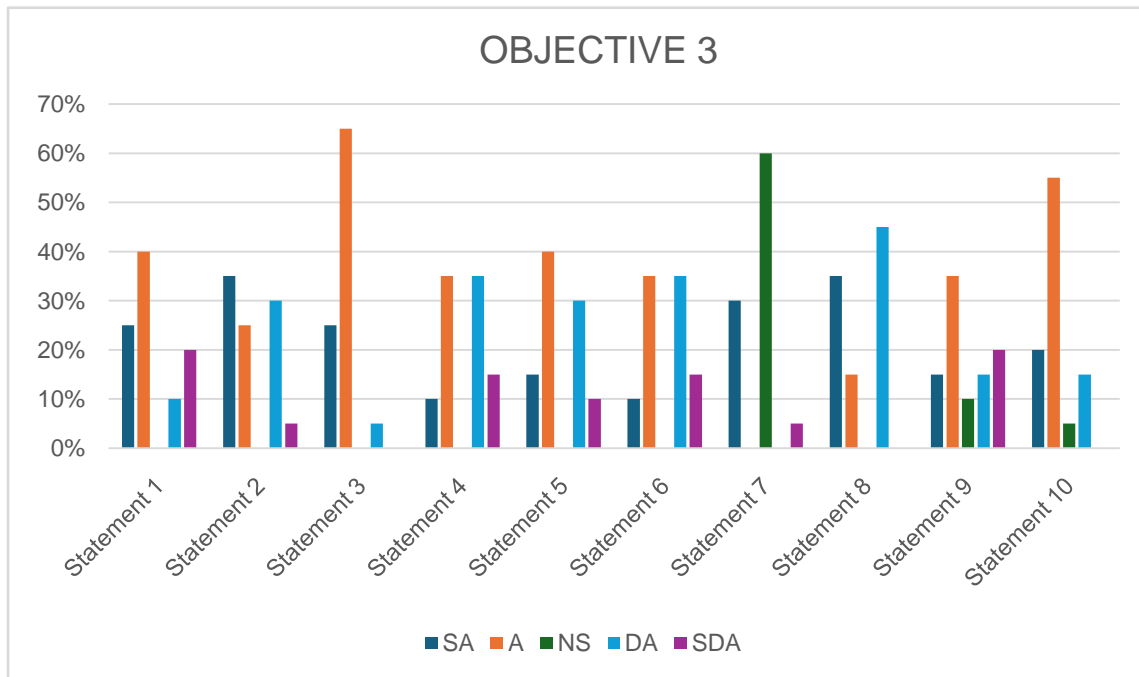
**Table 6: To examine the connection between divorce and the quality of sibling relationships.**

(SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, NS=Not Sure, D =Disagree, SDA=Strongly Disagree)

Scale	SA	A	NS	DA	SDA
<i>Connection between divorce and the quality of sibling relationship</i>					
1. The way my siblings and I communicate has changed since our parents' divorce, affecting our relationship quality.	5 25%	8 40%	0 0%	2 10%	4 20%
2. My siblings provide emotional support now compared to before the divorce, influencing the quality of our relationship.	7 35%	5 25%	0 0%	6 30%	1 5%
3. Since the divorce, my siblings and I have had to develop new strategies for resolving conflicts, which has impacted our relationship.	5 25%	13 65%	0 0%	1 5%	0 0%
4. The amount of time my siblings and I spend doing activities together has changed since our parents' divorce, which affects how we relate to each other.	2 10%	7 35%	0 0%	7 35%	3 15%
5. The way we express affection towards each other has evolved after the divorce, impacting our overall sibling relationship.	3 15%	8 40%	0 0%	6 30%	2 10%
6. I feel that my siblings' reliability and dependability have changed since the divorce, which has influenced the quality of our relationship.	2 10%	7 35%	0 0%	7 35%	3 15%
7. My perception of fairness in how my siblings and I are treated has shifted since our parents' divorce, affecting our relationship.	6 30%	0 0%	12 60%	0 0%	1 5%
8. The behavioral changes in my siblings and myself following the divorce have affected how we relate to one another.	7 35%	3 15%	0 0%	9 45%	0 0%

9. Our ability to understand each other has been affected by the divorce, influencing the depth and quality of our sibling relationship.	3 15%	7 35%	2 10%	3 15%	4 20%
10. The level of support we receive from our parents has influenced our sibling relationship quality since the divorce.	4 20%	11 55%	1 5%	3 15%	0 0%

**Figure 4: 4.3.3 To examine the connection between divorce and the quality of sibling relationships.**



From the findings, 65% agreed or strongly agreed that the way they communicate with their siblings since their parents' divorce affected their relationship quality while 30% disagreed or strongly disagreed, 60 strongly agreed or agreed that their siblings provide emotional support now compared to before the divorce which has influenced their quality of relationship as 35% disagreed or strongly disagreed and 90% has strongly agreed or agreed that since the parents' divorce, they have had to develop new strategies for resolving conflicts which has impacted their relationship.

Furthermore, 45% agreed or strongly agreed that the amount of time they spend doing activities together has changed since their parents' divorce which has affected how they relate to each other though 50% disagreed or strongly disagreed, 55% agreed or strongly agreed that the way they express affection towards each other has evolved after the divorce hence impacting their overall sibling relationship however, 40% disagreed or strongly disagreed and 45% strongly agreed or agreed that they feel that their siblings' reliability and

dependability have changed since their parents' divorce which has influenced the quality of our relationship though 55% strongly disagreed or disagreed then 30% strongly agreed that their perception of fairness in how they are treated has shifted since their parents' divorce which has affected their relationship though, 60% was not sure of their response towards the statement and 5% strongly disagreed.

More to that, 50% strongly agreed or agreed that there has been behavioral changes among them as siblings following their parents' divorce which has affected how they relate to one another while 45% disagreed or strongly disagreed, 50% strongly agreed or agreed, 10% were not sure and 35% strongly disagreed or disagreed that their ability to understand each other has been affected by their parents' divorce which has influenced the depth and quality of their sibling relationship then 75% agreed or strongly agreed or agreed, 10% were not sure and 15% disagreed that the level of support they receive from their parents has influenced their sibling relationship quality since the parents' divorce.

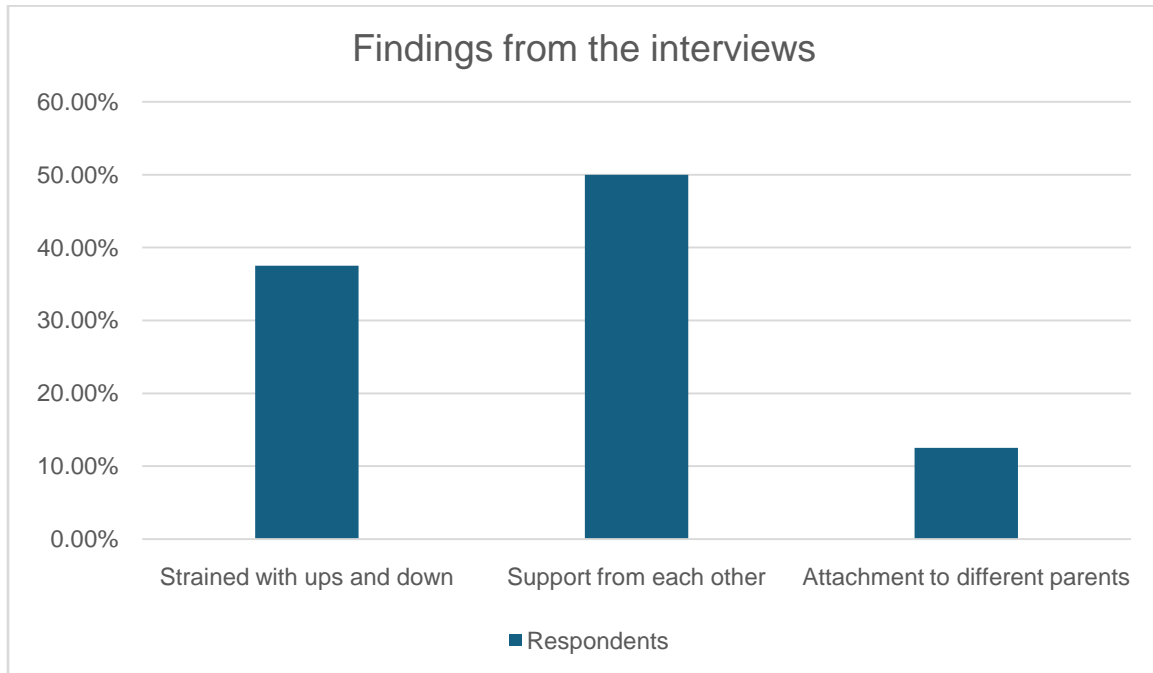
#### **4.4 Findings from the interviews**

The researcher conducted interviews on parents who have divorced to get they say about the nature of sibling relationships after divorce of parents, the coping strategies employed by siblings to navigate emotional challenges and the connection between parental divorce and quality of sibling relationship following the interview guide and below are the findings.

**Table 7: Findings from the interviews**

Category	Number of respondents	Percentage
Strained with ups and downs	3	37.5%
Support from each other	4	50%
Attachment to different parents	1	12.5%

**Figure 5: Findings from the interviews**



#### **4.4.1 The nature of sibling relationships after divorce of parents.**

During the interviews, (37.5%) 3 of the parents said that the children have a strong bond and look out for each other, but the divorce introduced some underlying tension where they are navigating their new family dynamics which sometimes leads to disagreements but also demonstrates their commitment to each other and the relationship between the children is somewhat challenged in that they are more distant and less patient with each other than they were before the divorce. Additionally, the children still care about each other, but their interactions are often marked by the emotional challenges they have been facing. Therefore, I would say that their relationship is characterized by a lot of ups and downs where they often have moments of connection, but these might often be overshadowed by underlying tension and conflict although they are working on rebuilding their closeness.

#### **4.4.2 The coping strategies employed by siblings to navigate emotional challenges.**

Also, during the interviews, (50%) 4 of the parents said that they created developed their own ways of supporting each other and the older siblings took on a more protective role with the younger ones often comforting them and offering advice where they created a sort of support system among themselves, which has been really heartwarming to see. Additionally, they added that they often check in on each other especially during tough times where they always have little routines like watching movies together or sharing meals to create a sense of uniformity which always seems like they are actively trying to be there for one another.

Furthermore, they also continued by saying that their children tried to support each other in their own ways, though it's not always perfect where they started to share their feelings more openly with each other and offer comfort as the older ones tried to help the younger ones with schoolwork or just spend time playing games together among others.

#### **4.4.3 The connection between parental divorce and the quality of sibling relationships.**

From the interviews, (12.5%) 1 said that the quality of the relationship they maintained with the children post-divorce is important that children became closer to them as remained more consistently available and emotionally supportive and also said that children who had regular and meaningful contact with both parents maintained better relationships than those who had limited contact. However, they also added that parenting styles between the two parents determined how the children felt about each parent for instance, if one parent was perceived as more nurturing and the other more disciplinarian children developed different attachments based on their experiences and needs.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

#### 5.0 Introduction.

This chapter deals with discussion of the findings objectively in relation to the study on parental divorce and sibling relationship that was conducted in Nyakambu village Southern division, Kabale municipality. This brings out findings from the study for example we shall see if the siblings become closer after and during parental, if they experience conflict and what the researchers say about these findings. The discussion will be based on what finds were got following the following objectives which include to explore the nature of sibling relationships after divorce of parents, to determine the coping strategies employed by siblings to navigate emotional challenges and to examine the connection between parental divorce and quality of sibling relationship.

#### 5.1 Discussion of findings

Whereas divorce brings an impact on both genders, from the findings of this research carried out in Nyakambu village Southern division Kabale Municipality females were more vulnerable than the male which is in line with what Center of Faith Family and Justice (2023) says where it states that in Uganda poor, uneducated and rural women and their children are the most vulnerable when a marriage falls apart. Though this focuses on women, it confirms the findings of this research that show the female siblings being affected by parental divorce more than male siblings.

From the study, the researcher found out that 80% siblings strongly agreed Or agreed that they depend on support from each other ,support from parents to navigate the family dynamics which brings them closer which align with what (Whelan,2015, Hetherington & Kelly,2017) in their research were they say that siblings may experience increased closeness after parental divorce hence depending on each other for emotional support and bonding over shared experiences and stress than even before as the study accompanied by the improved quality of communication between the siblings

However, it was also discovered that sometimes divorce increases the conflicts between the siblings which aligns with what Hetherington& Kelly, et al, (2017) when they state that siblings may experience increased conflict and competition after parental divorce especially if they have different relationships with each parent. It was also found that parenting styles

between the two parents determined how the children felt about each parent for instance, if one parent was perceived as more nurturing and the other more disciplinarian children developed different attachments based on their experiences and needs which explains what the different scholars say for example Taylor and Conger say that conflicts can result from competition for parental attention and affection, disparate parenting styles and discipline (Amato & Anthony, 2019), loyalty conflicts and guilt (Solomun, & Kuhns, 2020) and increased stress and tension (King, 2016). Furthermore, siblings may experience conflicting emotions such as anger, sadness, and guilt, which can manifest as competition and conflict (Fabricius & Hall, 2016). However, they also added that parenting styles between the two parents determined how the children felt about each parent for instance, if one parent was perceived as more nurturing and the other more disciplinarian children developed different attachments based on their experiences and needs which lines with what Whelan (2015)) says when he states that the absence of a togetherness of parental lead can lead to a lack of clear boundaries and rules, worsening sibling conflict (Whelan, 2015). More so, individual personality traits, age differences, and coping mechanisms can influence the degree of conflict and rivalry among siblings. Research suggests that siblings who experience parental divorce may engage in more frequent and intense conflict, particularly during the early stages of divorce.

More so, it was also discovered that siblings have a strong bond and look out for each other, but the divorce introduced some underlying tension where they are navigating their new family dynamics which sometimes leads to disagreements but also demonstrates their commitment to each other and the relationship between the children is somewhat challenged in that they are more distant and less patient with each other than they were before the divorce. This is in line with what different researchers say in chapter two which is the literature review for example (Hetherington & Kelly, et al,2017) state that siblings may experience increased conflict and competition after parental divorce especially if they have different relationships with each parent and increased stress and tension (King, 2016). Furthermore Fabricius & Hall (2016) state that siblings may experience conflicting emotions such as anger, sadness, and guilt, which can manifest as competition and conflict though they add that the children still care about each other.

From the study ,it is noted that that most of the siblings seek support from each other 63% as 21% strongly agreed and 42% agreed that they navigate their emotional challenge by adapting to the different coping mechanisms to navigate the emotional challenges for instance 63% agreed or strongly agreed to adapting to changes between their parents which aligns with what( Lansford,2017) says in his longitudinal study where he talks about the children adjusting to the outcomes of the parental divorce,85% focused on creating a stability and security amidst the situation. Whereas most of the siblings 79% strongly disagreed and disagreed with seeking support from extended family.

Also, from the study that the siblings developed their own ways of supporting each other and the older siblings took on a more protective role with the younger ones often comforting them and offering advice where they created a sort of support system among themselves, which has been really heartwarming to see which was confirmed by parents during interviews. It was also discovered that siblings tried to support each other in their own ways, though it's not always perfect where they started to share their feelings more openly with each other and offer comfort as the older ones tried to help the younger ones with schoolwork or just spend time playing games together among others as well as often check in on each other especially during tough times where they always have little routines like watching movies together or sharing meals to create a sense of uniformity which always seems like they are actively trying to be there for one another as also they did their part as parents to support them which is related with what is said in a study by Lansford (2017) where he found out that children who maintained a positive relationship with both parents after divorce exhibited better social and emotional development compared to those who did not as well as a longitudinal study by Buchanan and Heiges (2017) where he found that children who experienced positive parental involvement over time exhibited improved emotional well-being and reduced behavioral problems hence showing the importance for both parents to remain positively involved in their children's lives, providing emotional support, guidance, and consistent discipline to help them navigate the emotional challenges of divorce.

From the study ,it was noted that the quality of the relationship they maintained with the children post-divorce is important that children became closer to them as remained more consistently available and emotionally supportive as said by 12.5% of the interviewed parents which is in line with what (Whelan & Hochschild ,2016) and the quality of parent-child relationships after divorce plays a significant role in shaping sibling relationships, as noted by Amato and Anthony (2017) when they state that positive sibling relationships can provide

emotional support, practical help, and companionship, reducing the sense of isolation and vulnerability that can accompany parental divorce.

Also, from the findings it was discovered from the interviews with parents that children who had regular and meaningful contact with both parents maintained better relationships than those who had limited contact which aligns with what (Kramer & Conger, 2017) state when they say that warm and supportive parent-child relationships can promote positive sibling relationships however the absence of a togetherness of parental lead can lead to a lack of clear boundaries and rules, worsening sibling conflict (Whelan, 2015) who also adds that individual personality traits, age differences, and coping mechanisms can influence the degree of conflict and rivalry among siblings supporting the finding that was made where it was also discovered that some of the siblings find new coping strategies after parental divorce which will depend on an individual and at times affects the way they react towards each other.

From the study it has been noted that most the siblings who have gone through parental divorce or are currently going through it their connection has become more closer than before as their communication has improved and the time they spend doing the activities changed after divorce where they tell each other their challenges, provide emotional support to each other which relates with what Amato and Anthony (2017) says when they state that siblings may have a stronger bond because they tend to provide emotional support and companionship to each other to help them through that stressful moment and uncertainty of divorce. Then Sobolewski and Amato (2017) add that the siblings who grow intimate with their siblings are more resilient and open to adapting in times of adversity, and that can serve them well in the long run. Gonzalez-Mena (2017) continues to say that closer bond will enhance relations with each other, communicating, empathizing, and developing their conflict resolution abilities after going through parental divorce.

## CHAPTER SIX

### RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

#### 6.0 Introduction

The study on parental divorce and sibling relationships has been conducted in Nyakambu Village, Southern Division Kabale Municipality and different findings have been made, therefore this chapter introduces the recommendation and conclusions in relation to the study.

#### 6.1. Recommendations

From this study, I encouraged all the parents to always work together and be available in the lives of their children even after divorce to provide emotional support and stability even if they are not together as well I call upon all the parents to create a safe space for the children to express their emotions and concerns which helps them to process their feelings and build stronger bonds with their siblings.

In addition, I encouraged parents to help these children access professionals like counselors, therapists, and social workers for counseling services to support children struggling to cope with parental divorce to help them develop healthy emotional regulation strategies hence helping them navigate the different stress that come with divorce.

There is need for the Local Council chairperson to always make sure that all the things that are going on in the community are published so as the people are able to know what is happening in their communities hence the foundation for their research.

#### 6.2 Conclusion

The study showed that parental divorce affects siblings differently, but the majority of the siblings said that the parental divorce brought them closer more than before as they depended on each other for emotional support. Still the same study has shown that parental divorce led to increased conflicts among some siblings basing on the fact of the different attention given to them by the parents though from the interview this study showed that even if some of the siblings' conflict they still care about each other and that they always avail themselves when they need each other. Finally, this study has shown that both genders are affected by the parental divorce but the most affected are women as it also highlighted on the importance of the parents staying part of their Children's lives to help them navigate the different changes brought about by parental divorce even though most of these siblings develop their coping mechanisms to survive the challenge. As the study has shown that most of the siblings have

made it sure that they don't seek support from the extended family members. Therefore, I concluded by saying that parental divorce affects siblings differently as discussed above as it may affect them positively or negatively.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE & INTERVIEW GUIDE

#### QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear respondent;

My name is Comfort Kukundakwe, a student at Uganda Christian University, conducting research on the topic of "Parental Divorce and the Siblings' Relationship". The questionnaire is designed to acquire relevant information, and hereby request you to participate by responding to some of the questions that shall be put to you. Please do not write your name.

Thank you.

#### SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION (Tick what is appropriate)

##### 1. Gender

a) Male

b) Female

##### 2. Age group

10-20

21-30

31-40

41-50

51-above

##### 3. Level of education

Primary

Secondary

Tertiary

University

None

##### 3. Religion

Catholic

Anglican

Born again

Seventh-day Adventist

Muslim

##### 3. Occupation

Employed

Self Employed

Student

Other

#### SECTION B: 1. To explore the nature of sibling relationships after divorce of parents.

*(Tick where appropriate in the boxes)*

(SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, NS=Not Sure, DA =Disagree, SDA=Strongly Disagree)

<b>Scale</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>NS</b>	<b>D</b> <b>A</b>	<b>SD</b> <b>A</b>
<i>Nature of sibling relationship</i>					
11. Since the divorce, my siblings and I see each other less often than we did before.					
12. My siblings provide me with emotional support during difficult times since our parents' divorce.					
13. The number of conflicts between me and my siblings has increased since our parents' divorce.					
14. I feel as close to my siblings now as I did before our parents got divorced.					
15. My siblings and I participate in shared activities together as frequently as we did before our parents' divorce.					
16. The quality of communication between me and my siblings has improved since our parents' divorce.					
17. Since our parents' divorce, my siblings and I have developed stronger support networks outside of the immediate family.					
18. My emotional well-being has been positively affected by the support from my siblings since our parents' divorce.					
19. The relationship I have with my siblings has been significantly influenced by how our parents have interacted with us since the divorce.					
20. The roles and responsibilities within our family have changed since our parents' divorce, affecting how I interact with my siblings.					

**SECTION B: 2. To determine the coping strategies employed by siblings to navigate emotional challenges during divorce.**

*(Tick where appropriate in the boxes)*

(SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, NS=Not Sure, DA =Disagree, SDA=Strongly Disagree)

	SA	A	NS	DA	SDA
<i>Coping mechanisms</i>					
11. I find comfort in maintaining routines and familiar spaces in both homes					
12. I adapt to changes in caregiving responsibilities by supporting my siblings and parents.					
13. I seek support from my siblings and try to maintain a strong bond despite the changes					
14. I reach out to extended family members for emotional support and guidance					
15. I adapt to changes in my relationship with each parent and seek to maintain a positive connection.					
16. I understand the financial changes and adjust my expectations and spending accordingly					
17. I focus on creating a sense of stability and security in my current living situation.					
18. I stay involved in school activities and seek support from teachers or counselors.					
19. I adhere to custody schedules and use them as opportunities to bond with each parent.					
20. I cherish and adapt existing family rituals to maintain a sense of continuity and connection."					

**SECTION B: 3. To examine the connection between divorce and the quality of sibling relationships.**

*(Tick where appropriate in the boxes)*

(SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, NS=Not Sure, DA =Disagree, SDA=Strongly Disagree)

Scale	SA	A	NS	D A	SD A
<b><i>Connection between divorce and the quality of sibling relationship</i></b>					
1. The way my siblings and I communicate has changed since our parents' divorce, affecting our relationship quality.					
2. My siblings provide emotional support now compared to before the divorce, influencing the quality of our relationship.					
3. Since the divorce, my siblings and I have had to develop new strategies for resolving conflicts, which has impacted our relationship.					
4. The amount of time my siblings and I spend doing activities together has changed since our parents' divorce, which affects how we relate to each other.					
5. The way we express affection towards each other has evolved after the divorce, impacting our overall sibling relationship.					
6. I feel that my siblings' reliability and dependability have changed since the divorce, which has influenced the quality of our relationship.					
7. My perception of fairness in how my siblings and I are treated has shifted since our parents' divorce, affecting our relationship.					
8. The behavioral changes in my siblings and myself following the divorce have affected how we relate to one another.					
9. Our ability to understand each other has been affected by the divorce, influencing the depth and quality of our sibling relationship.					
10. The level of support we receive from our parents has influenced our sibling relationship quality since the divorce.					

***Thank you for your participation***

## **INTERVIEW GUIDE**

Dear Respondent, I am Kukundakwe Comfort, a student at Uganda Christian University doing bachelors in social work and social administration; and thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak to you. This interview bases the effects of divorce on sibling relationship. This interview is part of the study into the impact of divorce on sibling relationships. The aim, in this light, is to ascertain how divorce among parents influences the nature of sibling relationships, the coping mechanisms that siblings adopt, and the quality of relationships in the wake of such drastic family change. Please be assured that all information today will be treated in confidence. The information will be used strictly for research purposes only, and any presentation will be done in such a way that cannot identify you personally in any way. May I have your permission before I proceed to conduct this interview and record our conversation accurately?

Thank you for participating again.

### **Section 1: Background Information**

1. Can you please tell me a little about your family structure before and after the divorce? I.e., number of children, spacing between the children, level of education, and age.

### **Section 2: Children's Relationships After Divorce**

1. How is the relationship between your children after the divorce?
2. How has the divorce affected the relationship between your children?
3. Have there been changes in how your children relate to one another after divorce

### **Section 3: Coping Strategies**

1. How have the children coped with the emotional challenges following the divorce?
2. What are some things your children have done to help each other through the divorce?
3. As a parent, what is essential in helping your children maintain their relationships?

### **Section 4: The Relationship Between Parental Divorce and children's Relationship Quality**

1. How has the divorce has affected the Children's relationship?
2. Are there specific incidents that gave you an idea of how divorce might have influenced their sibling relationship?
3. Have you experienced any long-term effects of the divorce on the children?

*Thank you for participating*

Appendix 2



July 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: **INTRODUCTORY LETTER FOR RESEARCH**

This is to introduce to you **KUKUNDAKWE** Comfort Registration number **J22B15/159**, a student of Uganda Christian University, pursuing Bachelor's degree in Social Work. She is expected to carry out research in the final year under the guidance of a university supervisor in partial fulfillment for the requirements of the above mentioned award.

Topic: **"The Impact of Divorce on Siblings Relationship."**

The purpose of this communication is to request your office to allow her collect data from your organization. Any assistance rendered to her will be highly appreciated.



**Doreen Kukugiza**  
Coordinator, Research & Fieldwork Programmes  
Tel: 0773395349  
Email: dkukugiza@ucu.ac.ug

*Recommended & Forwarded by*  
*TUMWAISESON NATAK*  
L. CHAIRMAN  
KASALE SOUTHERN DIVISION  
Date: 10/5/2024  
0772457129