THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF RESILIENCE AMONG NAMIBIAN CHILDREN IN MIDDLE CHILDHOOD WHO HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO PARENTAL DIVORCE

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ABSTRACT

Divorce remains a primary contributor to family instability within Africa, hence, increasing amounts of children are exposed to the impacts thereof. Given that the family unit has been identified as central to the development and healthy adjustment of children, the mere presence of its breakdown constitutes as a risk to the Namibian youth. However, research shows that not all children react uniformly to the impact of parental divorce and are able to thrive. Therefore, this study aimed to understand how some children are capable of resilience amidst the risks associated with the exposure to parental divorce. Consequently, this study focused primarily on identifying and understanding positive factors that nurture the capacity for resilience, among children aged 9-12 years, post parental divorce. A non-experimental, mixed-methods approach with a multiple case-study design was employed to acquire comprehensive information on the lived experiences of 24 children within middle childhood. Purposeful sampling were used to ensure the assembly of relevant data required for this study. The Children and Youth Resilience Measurement scale was administered to all 24 participants in order to test each participant for resiliency. To eliminate some of the challenges associated with gathering qualitative data from younger children, QMethodology, with visual material, was utilised and administered to all 24 participants. The data of 12 participants were used for analysis who measured high on resiliency during the CYRM scale administration. For data analysis, the PQ Method 2.35 software program, was used to conduct by-person factor analysis. Four factors emerged from the analysis process as statistically significant in fostering resilience, namely Quality Parent-Child Relationships, Healthy School Attachment, Strong Community Attachment as well as Effective Parent Conflict Resolution and Relationships. These results highlighted the multisystemic nature of resilience, emphasising the importance of individual, familial and environmental/community protective factors when considering resources which nurture resilience within children exposed to parental divorce. Therefore, it becomes critical for support to extend beyond the perimeters of the nuclear family and include efforts to nurture stable relationships with extended family members, peer groups, the school system and the wider community. Furthermore, among some methodological

recommendations for future studies include exploring the complex dynamic and resultant impact of siblings and stepparents on children's capacity for resilience.

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DEDICATIONS

I wish to dedicate this thesis to my beloved husband. Thank you for the immeasurable sacrifice, support and patience you have so lovingly exhibited throughout this journey. I also dedicate this thesis to my parents. Thank you for every sacrifice and word of encouragement throughout my academic endeavours over the years, it truly does take a village. Thank you all for motivating me to push forward in the pursuit of a dream. I love you.

DECLARATIONS

I, Janine van Schalkwyk, hereby declare that this study is my own work and is a true reflection of my research, and that this work, or any part thereof has not been submitted for a degree at any other institution.

Name of Student	Signature	Date
Janine van Schalkwyk		April 2022

CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW

This chapter provides both an orientation to and an elaboration of the purpose of the study. The significance of the study and its objectives are also discussed. Finally, the limitations and delimitation of the study is clearly defined and justified.

1.1. Introduction

Divorce remains a primary force behind family instability within Africa (Clark & Brauner-Otto, 2015). Hence, the mere presence of divorce within Namibia constitutes as a risk to its youth, as the family unit remains central to the optimal development of children. However, not all children react uniformly to the effects of divorce (Brand et al., 2019) and many have been able to thrive (Kelly & Emery,2003; Rushena, Prior, Sanson, & Smart, 2005).

Although there has been a post-modernistic shift in research focusing on the development of individual and familial strengths, few studies investigate positive outcomes as well as normal development in individuals living in alternative familial structures such as those created by the dissolution of a marriage. As a consequence, limited studies are available from which to adduce positive features of divorced families (Chavez, 2010). Therefore, there is a need to explore processes that enable positive adjustment to multiple transitions amidst marital dissolution. The concept of resilience refers to the process characterized by the exposure to a significant risk and a subsequent positive developmental outcome amidst that exposure (Rutter, 2006). Adopting such a resilience focus will highlight both intra- and interpersonal resources that increase the capacity for positive adjustment post parental divorce.

The majority of resilience studies among children are framed within a developmental and ecological perspective (Windle, 2011; Downes, 2017), emphasizing the reciprocal transaction between children and their ecologies in order to access resilience-enabling resources (Masten & Wright, 2010; Lerner, 2006; Ungar, 2011). Resilient children tend to partake in activities that assist in the promotion of positive adjustment behaviors to which these unique ecologies provide the necessary support in a culturally-specific manner (Ungar, 2011). Both intra- and interpersonal resources, located within various ecosystems, contribute to resilience (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2006; Howard & Johnson, 2004; Waller, 2001).

Hence, researchers have called for resilience research to be more culturally sensitive if any attempts of expanding our understanding of the resilience process is to be achieved

(Clauss-Ehlers, 2008; Glantz & Sloboda, 1999; Masten & Wright, 2010; Phasha, 2014; Theron & Theron, 2010; Ungar, 2011). The process of resilience includes attempts to make sense of life events from a specific cultural framework and set of beliefs, which often influences the process of meaning making (Luthar, 2006; Masten & Wright, 2010). Therefore, it becomes imperative to explore the culturally meaningful contexts which impacts the process of resilience among the Namibian youth which may be specific and unique to the Namibian context.

1.2. Statement of the problem

The phenomenon of resilience among children amidst parental divorce is of social and clinical importance due to the fact that it has been identified as a precursor of emotional, academic and social development in children. Instances of divorce continued to increase since the 1970's with rates reaching 50% worldwide (Anderson, 2014). Though this trend has experienced a decline in recent years (Wang, 2020), it is estimated that 41% of all first time marriages continue to end in divorce (Wilkinson & Finkbeiner, 2020). Evidently, a large amount of children annually experience a disruption in their familial system. Even though divorce has become a norm in today's society, it still takes a toll on the affected children and the associated trauma remains as real as ever. This study does not aim to highlight the harmful effects of parental divorce on children, but rather to understand how some children are able to adjust and even thrive amidst the trauma of divorce.

1.3. Objectives of the study

The objectives this study seeks to address include:

1. To explore the lived experiences of resilience in children, within middle childhood, post parental divorce;
2. To identify and understand the protective factors, that nurture the capacity to adjust and thrive, post parental divorce.

Summatively, the focal ground of the study is aimed at exploring the protective factors embedded in the resilient capacities of school-aged children who experienced parental divorce.

1.4. Significance of the study

The lived experiences of children aged between nine- and twelve-years displaying instances of resilience post-divorce as well as the contributing factors within the

Namibian context remain vastly understudied. Therefore, this study seeks to address the gap in local research by collecting Namibian specific data on lived experiences of Namibian children exposed to parental divorce.

Research on the experiences of children is often conducted from adult perspectives (Christensen & James, 2008). However, the ability to comprehend their own emotional states and be able to adjust socially and emotionally are vital contributors to children's development (Condly, 2006). It is important for children to have the opportunity to express their emotions and experiences. Children's subjective perspectives could foster awareness on both the impact and complex processes of resilience among the population of interest. Children should have the ability to provide an opinion on situations that impact on their lives (UN Convention Article 12, 1998). Also, research has shown children to be capable of providing reliable data with regards to their own lives (Ben-Arieh, 2005). Therefore, this study will explore the child's unique perspective on their experiences of resilience amidst parental divorce using qmethodology.

It is envisaged that this study will theoretically contribute to the growing field of resilience-related research and expand the understanding of the various contributing factors that foster resilience in children post parental divorce. Furthermore, this study strives to yield useful data and subsequent recommendations, for both professionals and parents, on the aspects required to ensure a smoother transition and hence, a higher probability for resilience, during and after parental divorce.

1.5. Delimitation of the study

The majority of resilience research conducted continue to be approached from an adult perspective. Hence, this research will be conducted from a child-perspective to obtain first hand perspectives into the lived experiences of resilience among children, aged between nine and twelve years, amidst experiencing parental divorce. Furthermore, limited research on resilience and divorce exist within the Namibian context. Therefore, this study will focus on conducting research within the Khomas region and will solely direct its focus on divorce and no other forms of adversities. Laslty, limited Namibian research has specifically focused on resilience among children within middle childhood. This is an important developmental phase for children, especially with regards to the development of constructive social relationships and self-esteem.

Evidently, family plays a crucial role in the socialization of the child during middle childhood. Therefore, this study will collect data from participants within middle childhood.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter serves as a summary of research published on divorce, its impacts on affected children as well as their capacity for resilience amidst the stress of experiencing parental divorce. The literature review aims to provide the reader with comprehensive insight into the topic as well as establish a theoretical basis which will inform subsequent conclusions and recommendations relevant to the study.

2.1. Divorce

2.1.1. Introduction

The incidence of divorce has become a global phenomenon, significantly affecting all lives connected to the breakdown of a marriage. According to Solis and Gasteazoro (1992), divorce refers to the legal dissolution of a marriage relation or the suspension of cohabitation of both parties involved, granted by the decree of a court. Namibia's current divorce law is inherited from an outdated South African system after independence. Within the South African law, a divorce refers to the termination of a marriage, the canceling of all related responsibilities and the dissolution of matrimony between married couples. Furthermore, a divorce requires the sanction of a court and this process may also address issues pertaining to child custody, support and the distribution of debt and property (Divorce Act No. 70 of 1979).

Though accurate divorce rates have proven to be difficult to calculate (Amato, 2010; Kennedy & Ruggles, 2014), an estimated 50% of all marriages are expected to lead to a divorce (National Center for Health Statistics, 2006; Anderson, 2014). High estimations have been reported in European nations, including Belgium and Portugal. Furthermore, the most recent data published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2013), indicated that more than half of the minor children residing in the United States will experience parental divorce before they turn 18 years old. South Africa has experienced similar trends as the divorce rate continues to mushroom amongst the South African population. According to Statistics South Africa (2016), divorce rates increased by 0.3 percent, since 2016 in South Africa. Of most concern is the fact that 55,6% of these divorces involved children younger than 18 years.

In Namibia, the majority of marital unions and divorce occurrences are still conducted within African customary laws (Republic of Namibia Annotated Statutes, 2009). Hence, civil registration of marriages and divorces are limited, making statistical deductions and comparisons regarding divorce challenging. However, in 2015, The Namibian newspaper reported that divorce remained one of the primary societal problems within Namibia (Nekomba, 2016). As precise statistics on the Namibian divorce rate remain vague due to the predominance of customary unions and hence dissolutions, the impact of parental divorce on children tend to be underestimated. However, the mere presence of divorce within our society suggest that Namibian

children are also confronted with similar accompanying developmental challenges, which in itself warrant further exploration and intervention.

2.1.2. Theories on the Impact of Divorce on Children

The dissolution of a marriage inevitably leads to a series of changes that ultimately modify various aspects of the lives of both parents and their children including their lifestyle, emotional well-being as well as the interrelations between them (Chavez, 2010).

Though polarized opinions surrounding the impact of divorce on children still remain, the majority of existing research continue to portray a conservative perspective by focusing on the detrimental influences of parental divorce on children's capacity for normal development and healthy adjustment (Oppawsky, 2008; Arkes, 2014; Bernardi & Radl, 2014). The implication however, is a general notion that divorce will inevitably bring permanent harm to all parties involved without exploring the possibility that positive consequences and the ability to thrive may follow parental divorce (Mohi, 2014). According to the absolutist notion of Wallerstein (1991), all incidences of marital dissolution negatively affect children with no condition under which a child could benefit from experiencing parental divorce.

Apart from Wallerstein's notion, a number of theoretical explanations have been proposed to support the notion that marital dissolution hold various implications for children's normal development (Kulka & Weingarten, 1979; Amato, 2010; Kouros, Merrilees, & Cummings, 2008) which far exceeds any possible positive outcomes divorce might hold for children. One such theory is the parental absence perspective, which highlights a family as the fundamental institution through which the socialization of children occurs (Perrino, 2000; Rodgers & Rose, 2002; Cabrera & Routledge, 2014). Conservatively, researchers have maintained that a two-household family remain the most efficient environment in which the development of children takes place, hence any negative impacts of divorce tend to be associated with socialization deficits that occur as a result of growing up in a single-parent family (Emery, 1999; Wallerstein et al., 2000). This perspective has been under scrutiny for placing emphasis on the family structure without regard for family processes when exploring the impacts of divorce (Marotz-Baden, Adams, Buech, & Munro, 1979). Nonetheless, Amato (1987), Furstenberg and Nord (1985) and White, Brinkerhoff and

Booth (1985) all highlight the fact that divorce significantly reduce the quality and the frequency of contact with both custodial and noncustodial parents which consequently lead to diminished parental supervision, attention and guidance (Amato & Booth, 1997; Wallerstein, 2000). The absence of quality supervision and guidance in children have been linked to an increased likelihood of scholastic and behavioral difficulties (Neher & Short, 1998). Furthermore, the absence of one parent significantly diminishes opportunities for the child to model necessary skills such as negotiating and compromising (Segrin, Taylor & Altman, 2005). Conclusively, this perspective proposes that the effects of divorce are largely mitigated if both parents are able to maintain a close relationship with their children amidst a divorce. More particularly, it hypothesizes that the quality and quantity of contact between the noncustodial parent and the child significantly influence the extent of the child's ability to adjust postdivorce (Amato, 1991).

More recent studies have aimed to investigate the post-divorce relationship between children and their non-custodial father in an attempt to determine the influence thereof on the child's well-being. Among these, Amato and his colleagues (2011) found that a cooperative post-divorce relationship between parents tend to allow for closer relationships between the non-custodial father and their child. Additionally, Carlson (2006) reported paternal involvement significantly mediated the impact of familial structures, namely single parent households, on the affected child's developmental outcomes. Furthermore, Carlson (2006) also reported that this high-quality paternal involvement provided equal benefits to both girls and boys.

Bowlby's Ethological theory can also provide an insightful perspective on the impact of parental divorce on children as the dissolution of a marriage inevitably accompanies the disruption of significant attachment bonds (Feeny & Monin, 2008). Even though limited research, focusing on divorce, has been done in relation to attachment theory, extensive literature does exist on the impact of separation from – and the infringement of an attachment bond, of which both are the result of marital dissolution (Bowlby, 1973, 1980). A fundamental proposition of this theory rests on the notion that children build working models which acts as a secure base from which they form a set of expectations about the reliability and availability of an attachment figure. This will

ultimately shape how children approach stressful life events and forms the foundation of attachment security versus insecurity (Bowlby, 1973, 1980).

During the process of divorce, children's confidence in their attachment figures related to their perceived availability, accessibility and emotional responsiveness become tainted. The sheer fact that parents no longer share the same house and hence, accessibility to both become challenging, carries the potential to greatly influence a child's sense of security (Bretherton et al., 2012). Furthermore, Bretherton and his colleagues (2012) stated that not only does the divorce itself pose challenges related to attachment for children, but also interfere with parental styles and the ability to be emotionally responsive to a child's need for a sense of safety and security as well as both the consistency and efficiency thereof. This proposes that the quality of postdivorce parent-child relationship greatly influence a child's sense of attachment security. According to Nair and Murray (2005), there is a greater likelihood for mothers from intact families to display an authoritative parenting style, which involves emotional responsiveness to the needs of their children. Therefore, children's attachment security can be promoted given the situations in which custodial mothers are able to function as a secure base as well as provide psychological support for their children in relation to overnight visitations with the father (Solomon & George, 1999). Taking into account the limited research on the effects of divorce on young children's attachment styles, various researchers have found that children were less secure having experienced parental divorce (Clarke-Stewart, Vandell, McCartney, Owen, & Booth, 2000; Nair & Murray, 2005). However, research done by Solomon and George (1999) support a context-sensitive perspective in which the impact of separation, and the possibility of detachment, can be moderated by conditions that promote security such as a familiar environment that encompasses responsive caretaking.

Moreover, previous investigations into the impact of parental divorce, based their findings of negative impacts on the correlation between the marital status of the parents and various indicators of a child's well-being. Since then, more recent examination of these correlations reported that such indicators exist independent of the marital status of the parents (Bernstein et al., 2012). According to a study done by Bernstein and colleagues (2012), there is no causal relationship between parental divorce and factors such as attachment insecurity and low self-esteem; rather, the beliefs surrounding the

divorce that increased the likelihood for insecure attachments post-divorce. This finding suggests that individual experiences and perception of parental divorce influence the nature of post-divorce outcomes in children as opposed to previous beliefs that the divorce itself impacted a child's capacity for adjustment and development after experiencing parental divorce (Bernstein et al, 2012).

Another theoretical consideration is that of the family conflict perspective. According to this perspective, pre- and post-divorce conflict between parents has a significant impact on the bearing that parental divorce has on children. Macoby and Martin (1983) suggests that such an unhealthy environment as the one created through inter-parental conflict, is less than constructive for the optimal development of affected children. Such an environment cause extreme stress, anxiety and insecurity in children as well as have a negative effect on parenting abilities (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980) and tend to include instances where children get caught in the middle of conflict between parents, which in turn has a detrimental effect on the quality of the relationship between the parent and the child (Amato, 1986; Johnston, Kline & Tschaan, 1989). Ultimately, this theory ascribes problematic behavior observed in children affected by divorce tend to stem from parental conflict, rather than alterations to the family structure. Therefore, it suggests that post-divorce adjustment increases with the passage of time since parental conflict tend to subside after the divorce has been finalized (Amato, 1991). This notion is supported by Amato (1991) whose research concluded that children who live in amicable single-parent families tend to have increased levels of well-being and adjustment compared to children from intact families who experience frequent and intense parental conflict. Therefore, children's adjustment is inversely correlated with the level of pre- and post-divorce parental conflict experienced by the child.

Although various studies (Amato & Keith, 1991; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980; Wallerstein, 1991) have reported on the negative impact of parental divorce on the children involved, there are several reasons to suggest that these findings hold some limitations. Firstly, these studies have neglected to explore the influence of factors such as the quality of parenting on the subsequent post-divorce developmental outcomes and adjustment of children. Also, literature emphasizes the possibility that

similar negative outcomes would have been experienced by children had their parents not divorced (Leon, 2003).

The past decade has brought about a budding interest into the positive aspects of human functioning and adaptability, especially in the context of an adversity such as marital dissolution (Seligman & Csikszenymihalyi, 2000). Furthermore, scholars have been exploring the notion of beneficial parental divorce as children from high-conflict households were more inclined to experience behavioral and psychological problems (Amato & Kane, 2011). Moreover, conservative notions of divorce have led many parents to remain in unhealthy, high-conflict marriages out of fear of the detrimental impact of exposing children to a single-parent family might have, disregarding that this could pose more harm than good (Gadoua, 2008) in terms of family interrelations, the development of the child's capacity for social interactions as well as their sense of security (Lindsey, Caldera, & Tankersley 2009). Hence, it has been argued that a divorce may become an avenue for peace of mind, growth as well as a chance for more thriving living conditions for children (Chavez, 2010). Furthermore, Amato and colleagues (2011) support this notion when stating that parental divorce may potentially provide a child with environmental circumstances characterized by less stressors which in turn will facilitate normal development and adjustment. Such a shift in research focus emphasizes the significance of exploring the family pre-divorce in determining any impact that a divorce will have on affected children, therefore, calling for divorce research to be more context-sensitive (Chavez, 2010).

This shift in research focus runs parallel to a post-modernistic view of the adaptive aspects of the personality of both the individual and the family as a whole (Nichols & Schwartz, 1997). Though Whiteman (2000) stated that interviews with children from divorced families all indicated that parental divorce is painful and heart-breaking, they also had the capacity to identify positive characteristics that resulted from their experience of parental divorce. Among some of the most common themes, Whiteman (2000) reported that children from divorce displayed more sensitivity to their peers' problems. They also tend to be more mature and responsible as opposed to children from intact families and report to be better able to place subsequent experiences into an appropriate perspective.

As opposed to the modernist perspective which tend to advocate marital dissolution as a lamentable life event negatively affecting the family structure's ability to provide the emotional, behavioral and social characteristics imperative to the optimal development of children involved (Blechman, 1982; Aquilano, 1994; Barber & Eccles, 1992), contemporary researchers tend to propose multiple family structures as viable contexts for adequate parenting and hence, the optimal development of children (Boney, 2003). This strength-based philosophy is grounded in the notion that all familial structures have underlying strengths, including adaptability, which enables and motivates the development of its members (Otto, 1975). As a result, such research is not exclusively guided by the deficit view associated with single-parent family structures resulting from marital dissolution. Instead, research has broadened to include the investigation of specific interpersonal and intra-familial processes that motivate essential development of its individual members as well as a unit (Trivette, Dunst, Deal, Hamer, & Propst, 1990).

2.1.3. Gaps in research

Despite this post-modernistic shift in perspective that guide research on various aspects of individual and familial development and inherent strengths, there has been minimum utilization of such an alternative focus to investigate positive outcomes as well as normal development in individuals living in alternative familial structures created by the dissolution of a marriage. Resultantly, limited studies are available from which to adduce positive features of divorced families (Boney, 2003; Chavez, 2010, Amato et al., 2011). Therefore, a continued need exists for the exploration of processes that enable positive adjustment to multiple transitions amidst marital dissolution as well as various types of familial structure's ability to influence normal development and positive outcomes in children affected by parental divorce (Amato et al., 2011). Furthermore, variations within groups have been increasingly highlighted among individuals who have been affected by parental divorce from which evidence of favorable development and adaptation, in multiple post-divorce families, stemmed (Amato et al., 2011). However, despite such growing evidence, very few studies have aimed to investigate specific interactional and contextual variables that motivate positive adjustment in children who experience parental divorce (Boney, 2003, Amato

et al., 2011). The notion of resilience will henceforth be discussed as a possible avenue to address these gaps.

2.2. Resilience

2.2.1. Introduction

Children are forced to grow up and function in an increasingly stressful world. It therefore becomes unrealistic to argue that children can be protected from experiencing negative events. Over the last fifty years, resilience research involving children and families have aimed to investigate the health-enhancing capacities, the presence of resources within an individual, familial or societal context as well as the specific developmental pathways of those most vulnerable (Ungar, 2012; Theron, 2011; Kelly & Emery, 2003; Pedro-Carrol, 2011; Thomas, 2009).

Numerous research findings have established that children who are exposed to stressful life events tend to display an increased risk of developing both externalizing (such as delinquency, oppositionality, violent tendencies and problems with attention) and internalizing (such as the development of a low self-esteem, anxiety, depression and psychosomatic complaints) behaviors (Farrington et al., 1990; Hawkins, Catalano & Miller, 1992; Loeber, 1990; Rutter & Giller, 1983).

Parental divorce constitutes as a significant life stressor for both parents and children. Some of the risk factors associated with this includes the period after parental separation, parental conflict and the breakdown of significant relationships. Even though research findings often report a strong correlation between experiencing an adversity and subsequent negative outcomes, this relationship has not been proven to be deterministic in nature. Furthermore, despite associated stressors, nearly 75 percent of children exposed to parental divorce do not display long term adjustment problems amidst experiencing an adversity (Kelly & Emery, 2003; Garmezy, 1971; Rutter & Madge, 1976; Werner & Smith, 1992) and tend to exhibit great resilience and in some cases even benefit from their new circumstances (Hetherington & Elmore, 2003; Ungar et al., 2012). According to Rutter (1981), exposure to stressors and challenges, in moderation, have the potential to nurture effective coping mechanisms and hence, resilience in children.

2.2.2. Resilience defined

Resilience research has been met with a few obstacles, primarily rooted in discrepancies concerning the definition and conceptualization of resilience. Such debates are imperative as the nature and direction of any research are informed by the definition attached to the concept being studied.

Resilience is rooted in the Latin word *resilire*, which broadly refers to the capacity to bounce back after experiencing a stressful event (Agnes, 2013; Smith et al., 2008; Masten, 1994). Even though scholars have come to define resilience in a variety of ways (Carle & Chassin, 2004), the concept is commonly explained as twodimensional, namely the exposure to adversity and subsequent positive adaptation (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000). Masten and Powell (2003) emphasized this notion in their conceptualization by stating that the construct refers to patterns marked by positive adjustment within the context of substantial adversity. This definition also places emphasis on the notion that individuals change in order to accommodate a traumatic experience – contrary to the notion that an individual merely survives an adversity (Masten, 2001; Masten et al., 2009). Similarly, Rutter (2006) contended that resilience refers to an interactive process characterized by a combination of experiencing a significant risk along with relatively positive outcomes amidst experiencing the risk.

Furthermore, contrary to earlier belief that regarded resilience as a fixed trait, researchers have come to conceptualize resilience as a "dynamic developmental process" which is observable in a wide range of systems, including the individual, the family as well as the broader community (Masten, 2014). Conclusively, resilience research concur that all humans have a distinctive capacity for resilience which operates optimally when resiliency-building conditions are active in their lives (Benard, 1995). Within this context, Ungar (2005) proposed that resiliency encompass much more than mere individual sets of characteristics. In 2008, Ungar expanded this definition by stating that within the context of experiencing an adversity, resilience refers to the human capacity to navigate their way to necessary protective resources and opportunities which fosters a sense of wellbeing within the individual.

Furthermore, he stated that resilience also includes the ability of each individuals' unique family, community and cultural conditions to provide the relevant resources and experiences in a way that deems culturally meaningful to the individual (Ungar,

2008). This definition aims to emphasize that both individual and environmental factors are required for resilience to be enabled (Ungar, 2013). Similarly, Rutter (2006) emphasized that resiliency is not solely due to individual set of characteristics or a superior functioning, but rather positive adaptation made possible when given corresponding resources. Moreover, Rutter (2006; 2007; 2012) maintained that environmental variances are responsible for individual differences in the capacity to be resilient.

As mentioned above, resilience is increasingly conceptualized as an interactive process – between the individual and their environment as well as amongst protective factors and potential risk factors, and not as a fixed individual attribute. Consequently, the ecological systems theory was constructed to explore the interrelationship between the individual and their unique environments in order to determine possible developmental impacts thereof on the child (Bronfenbrenner, 1989; Garmezy, 1991; Garabino, 1995). Garmezy's triadic model of resilience (1991) explained the dynamic interaction between protective and risk factors on three levels, namely the individual, the family and the environment. Furthermore, the model continues to highlight resilience as a means of empowering individuals to shape and be shaped by their environment. Similarly, the interactive ecological-transactional model of development emphasizes how development and adaptation is influenced by the interaction among different contexts, such as culture, neighborhoods and family (Cicchetti & Lynch, 1993). Furthermore, the capacity to be resilient is not solely embedded in a set of individual traits (Luthar, Cicchetti & Bekker, 2000), but is rather a quality that stems from continuous exchange between the individual and the constructive features of that individual's environment (Gilligan, 2004). Thus, the degree of resilient features in an individual depends on the extent to which environmental features are able to nurture the capacity for resilience. This notion boils down to the fact that resilience can be seen as context dependent. Elements in the child's surroundings need to support and nurture resilience for the child to experience improvements in their well-being.

Imbedded in the understanding of resilience as dynamic in nature is the notion that the capacity to be resilient can fluctuate over time depending on interactive processes experienced between the individual and their environment (Werner & Smith, 1992; Borman & Rachuba, 2001). Thus, an individual may portray resilient capacities in

certain situations but not in others (Winfield, 1991). For instance, previous exposure to adversity may protect an individual against subsequent stressors as they cultivate resources and relationships necessary for change and adaptation (Graber, Pichon & Carabine, 2015).

While resilience is commonly conceptualized as a capacity to bounce back in the face of adversity, there is an increased interest among resilience researchers to delineate domain-specific tendencies when conceptualizing resilience, for the simple reason that resilience in the face of exposure to violence is surprisingly different than resilience in the face of family separation. Therefore, contemporary models used to explain resilience and the processes that underlie it, propose that instances of resilience are unique across different levels of inquiry and cultures. Similarly, Arrington and Wilson (2000) hypothesized that the capacity for a child to be resilient is related to their unique cultural context. It therefore becomes imperative to consider the different contexts in which resources nurture the capacity for resilience as different communities with different cultural identities are able to provide very different resources required to sustain the well-being of the child (Ungar, 2008). The International Resilience Project (IRP) is a mixed methods investigation of resilience which aimed to address current cultural shortcomings surrounding resilience research. Findings have indicated that there remains great cultural as well as global variation in how children cope, even when faced with similar negative life events (Ungar, 2006). Furthermore, findings also highlight the multidimensionality of resilience as well as the proposition that different features of resilience produce different degrees of influence on the child's well-being depending on both the cultural and contextual conditions in which resilience was nurtured (Ungar, 2008).

However, mainstream resilience research continue to stem from a Eurocentric epistemology, placing emphasis on factors of resilience, characteristic of the mainstream population and their accompanying definition of healthy adjustment (Ungar, 2004, 2005; Boyden & Mann, 2005). As a result, limited investigation has been done into the relevance of resilience to non-western world cultures in which the necessary resources required for survival may vary compared to those available to western populations (Ungar, 2005). Similarly, Masten (2014) emphasized the need to understand what happiness and wellbeing means among different contexts and

experiences. Cowen (1994) highlighted this fact when stating that pathways to resilience are differentially important in different situations and times throughout life. While some features of healthy adjustment might be relevant to various populations, the significance of each varies when the cultural and contextual differences are considered, hence emphasizing the idiosyncratic nature of various survival processes (Ungar, 2008).

2.2.3. Historical Development

Examining resilience from an evolutionary perspective provides a more detailed exploration into the contextual and cultural variations within resilience as well as place emphasis on the dynamic nature and interrelationships that are present within the concept (Rodgers, 1989).

The concept of resilience originated from the physical sciences and used to explain characteristics of non-living things. The term has since evolved to incorporate properties of biological sciences and the dynamic process of adjustment since living organisms do not simply bounce back (Kirmayer, 2011). Dissatisfaction with the emphasis on disease and psychopathology lead to the emergence of positive psychology and hence, resilience research in biological sciences (Cowen & Work, 1988; Windle et al., 2011). In contrast to the medical model of health care, health promotion places emphasis on promoting human thriving. Therefore, resilience is a vital component for the promotion of health and provides a balanced perspective on child adjustment post-parental divorce, which the medical model of health care is unable to provide fully (Allen, 2011; Wild et al., 2013).

The growth of health promotion was expedited by the definition of health by the World Health Organization. According to the WHO (1948), health is defined as “a state of physical, mental and social well-being” and hence, does not merely constitute an absence of illness or psychopathology. Despite this definition, resilience research only began about 20 years later. Initially, invulnerability was used to describe situations in which positive adjustment was observed in contrast to the expected negative outcomes. However, since invulnerability suggested that the ability to experience positive outcomes despite trauma exposure was a fixed attribute, the term was replaced by resilience, since the concept of resilience is context-dependent (Luthar et al., 2000). It is imperative to note that resilience is not perceived opposite to vulnerability but rather

becomes present after the experience of a vulnerability (Felten & Hall, 2001). This evolution of resilience can be described in four waves of research (Masten, 2007).

The first wave of research was descriptive in nature and sought to identify numerous characteristics unique to individuals, particularly young people, in an attempt to compare possible differences between individuals who are able to cope in the face of adversity opposed to those who were not able to adaptively cope (Moore, 2013; Garmezy, Masten, & Tellegan, 1984; Luthar, 1991, 2003; Masten, 2001; Rutter, Harrington, Quinton, & Pickles, 1994; Werner & Smith, 1982, 1992, 2001). These characteristics were termed protective factors and resources (Luthar et al., 2000; Masten, 2001). Among these characteristics imperative to a child's capacity to cope with adversity, intellectual ability (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Rutter, 1987; Wright & Masten, 1997), an easy temperament (Luthar & Zigler, 1991, 1992; Wright & Masten, 1997; Rutter, 1987), a sense of self-reliance (Polk, 1997), sociability (Luthar & Zigler, 1991), effective coping strategies (Luthar & Zigler, 1991) and communication skills (Werner & Smith, 1982) were identified. Furthermore, factors that pertain to a child's social environment include aspects of the family, namely family warmth, cohesion, structure, emotional supportiveness, positive attachment styles and a close bond with at least one caregiver (Baldwin et al., 1993; Brooks, 1994; Garmezy, 1991; Luthar & Zigler, 1991; Rutter, 1987; Wright & Masten, 1997). Even though these individual traits have been able to provide valuable avenues from which to enhance resilience, it has been unable to describe how these resources are accessed or utilized, nor how interactions between these individual resources and the environment promote resilience (Liepold & Grave, 2009).

Since then, resilience research has witnessed a considerable shift away from the identification of protective factors to investigating the adaptive processes through which resilience is facilitated (Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000). The focus on resilience processes expanded the significance of environmental factors which include the interactive relationship between an individual and their environment (Wild et al., 2013). This shift in focus has encouraged an eco-systemic approach which emphasizes the interdependence between systemic levels (Stokols, 1992). During this wave the role of developmental systems in causality were identified whilst researchers were investigating the extent to which various protective factors were able to influence

adaptation (Cicchetti, 2010; Cicchetti & Curtis, 2007; Masten, 2007, 2011). This initiated an emphasis on relationships and systems that extended beyond that of the immediate family (Cicchetti, 2010; Cicchetti & Curtis, 2007; Masten, 2007, 2011), and included factors such as positive school experiences (Rutter, 1987; Wright & Masten, 1997), good peer relations (Wright & Masten, 1997) and positive relationships with unrelated adults (Garmezy, 1991, Wright & Masten, 1997). Resultantly, resilience was defined as either a trait or a process (Wild et al., 2013).

In the third wave of resilience research, previous findings on protective factors and resources were combined with findings that pertained to prevention strategies in an attempt to improve the capacity for resilience by altering developmental pathways (Masten, Burt, & Coatsworth, 2006; Masten, 2007; Weissberg, Kumpfer, & Seligman, 2003). Subsequent findings supported this notion as a number of common adaptive systems were found to be associated with resilience during a variety of adversities. Furthermore, individual resilience is increasingly likely when adaptive systems such as attachment, self-regulation, family, school and peer relationships, are available and functional (Masten & Obradovic, 2006). In an event where these vital adaptive systems are damaged or altered as a result of adversity, individual resilience becomes increasingly challenging. The fourth wave of research were initiated in 2006 as part of a larger movement that aimed to incorporate aspects of genes, and brain functioning and development (Cicchetti, 2010; Feder, Nestler & Charney, 2009). By combining research findings from these various fields of science, the fourth wave of resilience research have contributed to the birth of – and implementation of new intervention techniques concerning resilience (Lester, Masten, & McEwen, 2006). The fourth wave of resilience research attempts to focus on multilevel analysis and broadening the understanding of adaptation (Masten, 2007). According to Rutter (2006), the fourth wave attempts to develop a bridge between resilience as a trait and resilience as a process.

2.2.4. Theoretical Influences

The study of resilience has continued to incorporate developmental and positive psychology (Masten, 2001; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Furthermore, as research into this area continue to expand, there is an increasing inclusion of

socioecological perspectives which are necessary for a multi-level analysis of resilience (Greve & Staudinger, 2015).

The concept of resilience was first established through investigations surrounding psychopathology, trauma and poverty. Researchers discovered that some children who experienced adversity did not develop the anticipated negative developmental outcomes as other children in the same cohort. These unanticipated findings set the foundation for all subsequent research into factors and processes that fostered resilient capacities in children and youth exposed to some form of adversity (Garmezy, 1971; Rutter, 1979; Werner & Smith, 1992). This shift in focus from mental illness to mental health has provided significant findings on what is working for individuals, instead of earlier preoccupation with that is wrong with individuals. Importantly, inquiry into the concept of resilience has continued to provide findings with the potential to substantially improve psychological, social and educational developmental outcomes in young people, which not only influence their current functioning, but also their subsequent functioning as adults in society. Consequently, youth resilience research provides insight into promotive factors for both the individual and the society.

Garmezy (1971) conducted a seminal study on children of Schizophrenic parents which later proved to lay the foundation for resilience research. Project competence focused on exploring and identifying competency in children instead of psychopathology. He initiated the idea of "protective factors" which fostered within an individual the capacity to ameliorate any subsequent negative developmental consequences as a result of exposure to stressors. Among many, Garmezy (1971) specified that family stability (number of family moves and marriages) and family cohesion (level of affection, presence of discipline and effective communication) modified resilient capacities and stress. Children living in families characterized by high levels of family stability and cohesion were better able to adapt resiliently to stressors, were more intelligent and less likely to develop delinquent behavioral tendencies in response to stressors (Garmezy, 1971). Findings from his seminal study suggested that almost 90% of children who participated in the study did not develop this schizophrenia, despite having an increased vulnerability to develop this disorder. His findings encouraged the paradigm shift from mainly focusing on the investigation

of risk factors to including studies of protective factors and processes which enables vulnerable children to thrive amidst exposure to an adversity (Garmezy, 1971).

A similar phenomenon was established through a study on children born to mentally ill parents conducted by Rutter (1979). Through extensive interviews, Rutter (1979) discovered that more than half of all the children in the study who grew up in unfavorable circumstances displayed positive developmental outcomes and an absence of maladaptive behaviors. This study also set out to explore parent-child relationships in order to investigate the impact these relationships had on psychopathology. Findings from Rutter's (1979) study that suggested positive parent-child relationships as having a significant impact on children's developmental outcomes has become a recurring theme throughout research surrounding resilience. Rutter (2012) further elaborates by highlighting social relationships as a vital protective factor in resilient children, which includes factors such as maternal warmth and positive familial atmosphere. Furthermore, Rutter (1979) introduced the concept of educational resilience by referring to educational settings as an essential protective factor against the harmful effects of experiencing an adversity by fostering a sense of achievement within the child, contributing to a sense of growth in various domains, including personal and social.

Rutter established numerous principles pertaining to resilience theory through his extensive research on the concept (Rutter, 2006; Rutter, 2007; Rutter, 2012). He highlights the environment, and not the child, as the catalyst for individual differences in resilience. Furthermore, Rutter (2007) applies a lifespan approach to resilience research by stating that different stressors and environmental alterations can influence a child's capacity for or lack of resilience at different points in time. For instance, a child may exhibit a capacity for resilience during parental divorce but not during academic failure. It therefore becomes unlikely that individuals would be capable of resilience in all situations throughout their lives. Furthermore, Rutter (2012) suggests that variance in responses to stressors as well as protective factors are created by individual differences. It therefore becomes imperative to explore individual needs in specific situations, instead of relying on the assumption that all stressors and protective factors have similar impacts on all people in all situations (Rutter, 2012). Moreover, Rutter (2012) draws attention to the importance of broadening our understanding of

causal, mediating and moderating risk factors, as not all generally considered risk factors represent an actual risk in all situations. For instance, while it is argued that divorce constitutes a risk, it actually only becomes a risk when it is accompanied by parental conflict during and post-divorce. Consequently, the parental-conflict becomes the actual causal risk factor which contributes to an increased likelihood for stress, rather than the parental divorce in itself.

Werner and Smith (1982) conducted a four-decade longitudinal study on 698 children residing in Hawaii. From those children who participated in the study, one third displayed four or more risk factors. However, one third of these children identified, displayed positive outcomes by the time they reached adolescence. Moreover, twothirds of the at-risk adolescents were able to lead successful lives by the time they reached their thirties (Werner & Smith, 1982). Through their longitudinal study, Werner and Smith (1982) were able to conclude that both internal and external protective factors are present within a resilient child. These included access to primary caregivers, consistency in discipline, family cohesion and external environmental support in terms of peers and unrelated adults. Furthermore, Werner described resilient children as more active, alert and autonomous with an increased tendency to seek novel experiences as well as a positive social orientation, encompassing better communication and self-help skills (Werner & Smith, 1982). Werner and Smith (1982) encourages the promotion of a sense of coherence in children, which foster the "confidence that one's internal and external environment is predictable and that things will work out as expected". Furthermore, Werner and Smith (1982) also emphasized the value of grandparents as protective factor, identifying them as an effective means of fostering social values in children.

Werner and Smith (1982) applied an ecological lens to resilience research by stating that protective factors should be addressed at the individual, family and community level. These protective factors included unique characteristics of the individual (sociability and child's level of activity), affectional familial bonds which fosters emotional support for the child as well as external sources of support (church and school). According to Werner and Smith (1982) increased experiences of stressors require increased amounts of protective processes within the child. Furthermore, Werner and Smith (1982) argued that these protective factors have both a direct and

indirect influence on resilient capacity within a child. For instance, external sources of support, such as the church, may provide a single mother with the necessary support to enable her to provide efficient support to her child. Therefore, Werner and Smith (1982) argued that individuals are capable of adaptation given the appropriate resources.

Liebenberg and Ungar (2008) conducted a mixed methods study in order to identify aspects of resilience through culturally and contextually sensitive lenses. This study included 1500 children originating from five continents. Findings suggested that children were only able to overcome stressors if the necessary resources were available to them (Liebenberg & Ungar, 2008). Furthermore, findings also indicated that children chose to resolve stressors which presented them with the highest possibility for positive outcomes. Ungar (2011) placed emphasis on four principles related to resilience including decentrality, complexity, atypicality and cultural relativity. Decentrality refers to the argument that focus should shift from the child to include greater emphasis on their unique environments. Ungar (2011) argues that earlier subject-centered approaches unfairly placed responsibility on children, measuring resilience by how well the child was individually able to resolve stressors. Decentering the child provides a more accurate perception of the interactive nature of resilience processes in which the locus of change, amidst exposure to an adversity, does not lie solely in either the child or their environment, but rather in the processes through which the environment provides relevant resources to the child (Ungar, 2011). Therefore, Ungar (2011) propose that the primary focus of resilience research should be on the child's social ecologies, then on interactive processes between the child and their environment, and lastly on the child.

Earlier efforts to conceptualize resilience in terms of simple relationships have motivated a call for complexity in resilience research. Attempts to simplify resilience processes has undermined research in this field. Firstly, it has neglected to take into consideration the capacity of the child to use available opportunities and for the environment to provide the necessary growth. Secondly, it has not placed sufficient attention on the interactional patterns between the child and their unique social ecologies as well as changes within the larger society which, in its entirety, may provide a more comprehensive description of resilience (Ungar, 2011).

Atypicality refers to the need for considering unexplored processes within children which fosters resilient capacity. Ungar (2011) argued that less focus should be invested into predetermined outcomes when determining resilience in an individual and more into the complex functioning of human behavior within the context of resilience.

A call for cultural relativity was supported by Ungar's (2011) argument that positive adaptation is rooted in cultural and historical contexts. He therefore suggested an increased awareness into the facilitative capacity of each environment and incorporating a social ecological perspective to resilience research (Ungar, 2013). According to Ungar (2013), individuals are more likely to display resilience when their environment is able to provide them with meaningful resources. Furthermore, Ungar (2013) proposes that individual characteristics such as temperament, motivation and predisposed behavioral tendencies, such as anxiety, are either enforced or suppressed by the social ecologies of a child. Additionally, changes made by the child in response to an adversity, tend to encompass changes in their environment and not in the child themselves. Consequently, the ability of the environment to provide meaningful resources have the capacity to either broaden or limit the spectrum of choices available to a child and hence, Ungar (2013) calls for increased emphasis on those systems which controls these resources, instead of placing sole responsibility on the child.

These seminal studies provide a foundation from which researchers support the argument that a variety of factors contribute to an individuals' capacity to thrive amidst exposure to an adversity, and hence provide significant evidence that resiliency is possible despite experiencing traumatic life events.

2.2.5. Attributes of resilience

The defining attributes of resilience is comprised of achieving positive outcomes amidst exposure to an adversity (Harris, 2008). Defining these components of resilience have proven to be challenging throughout the literature (Harris, 2008; Masten, 2007). The challenge in defining adversity lies in its diversity and severity (Luthar et al., 2000). Similarly, agreed-upon constituents of positive outcomes have been contentious throughout the literature. Briefly, positive outcomes include conditions that indicate consequences of resilience, namely wellness, growth and development. For example, positive adaptation (Leipold & Greve, 2009) and

subjective well-being (Beutel et al., 2010) have been identified as positive psychological indicators of resilience.

When exploring the various definitions and theoretical influences of resilience, the concept is best described as a constellation of interactive factors (Leipold & Greve, 2009), including individual personality characteristics, social and environmental resources and protective processes. Resilience encompasses three fundamental factors, namely the individual, their unique context and the specific adversity being experienced. These attributes highlight the multifaceted, multidimensional nature of resilience.

According to Harris (2008), the constellation of factors can be described as an equation, whereby positive outcomes are the consequence of a dynamic interaction between adversity, risk factors, resources and individual abilities. Furthermore, competence, which refers to the individual use of available internal and external resources, needs to outweigh the risk in order to maintain well-being (Richardson, 2002). Once changes to these variables occur, a disruption in the balance triggers resilient processes in order to restore equilibrium within the individual (Richardson, 2002).

Antecedents

Preceding conditions required for the activation of resilience include the experience of an adversity (Luthar et al., 2000) and the activation of necessary resources. According to Jopp and Rott (2006) resources provide the building blocks required for positive adaptation amidst adversity exposure.

Adversity

Adversity can be described as a negative occurrence with the potential to disrupt normal functioning (Harris, 2008) including their behaviors, assumptions and explanatory systems, which in turn restricts the individual's capacity for optimal development and well-being (Hildon et al., 2009).

Furthermore, adversity can also be operationalized as a self-defined negative life event in which the experience of such a stressor is determined by an individual's selfperception regarding the adversity as well as the child's evaluative awareness of the adversity and how adequately they are able to adress it (Goldstein & Brooks,

2005).This either leads to the activation of coping strategies in an attempt to reduce the impact of an adversity like parental divorce or change their current perception surrounding their circumstances (Leipold & Greve, 2009). Lastly, the type and severity of an adversity have been directly correlated with resilient outcomes. Similarly, the total number of adversities experienced by an individual negatively influence the capacity for resilient outcomes. This support the notion that resilience does not indicate an invulnerability to adverse life events.

On this note, Bezuidenhout (2008) described parental divorce as a form of adversity experienced within the family that increasingly places children at risk for maladaptive developmental outcomes.

Risk factors

In turn, Masten (1994) contended that risk factors are those characteristics common to a group of people, in this case children, which increases their chances of poorer developmental outcomes. Similarly, Kirby and Fraser (1997) continued by referring to risk factors as influences that tend to initiate, regress or maintain a problematic state or condition. As discussed, ecological theories have had an increasingly significant influence on contemporary resilience research (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). From the perspective of Bronfenbrenner (1986), children develop within a complex system of interrelationships between multiple levels of their unique environment. This environment is conceptualized as a series of interrelated structures which consists of the microsystem (child's immediate environment), the mesosystem (interactions between the child's microsystems), the exosystems (the wider community) and finally the macrosystem (which includes the values, laws and customs related to the child). Researchers suggest that risk factors closest to the child (proximal risk factors) are more influential on the child's development than distal risk factors. Furthermore, risk factors should be investigated as a dynamic process, and hence subsequent response to risk will be contextually unique for every child (Cowan, Cowan & Shulz, 1996). Proximal risk factors associated with divorce include individual predispositions such as depression (Brooks, 2003) as well as associations with delinquent peers, inadequate parenting and witnessing frequent parental conflict (Masten, 2011). Moreover, Masten (2011) stated that responses to similar stressors are uniquely different and dependent on multiple processes which could possibly influence the response to a stressor.

2.2.6. Activation of Resources

The process of resilience is initiated once resources are activated in response to an adversity. This activation requires an innate drive or motivation (Resnick et al., 2011). Richardson (2002) refers to this drive as a force that motivates an individual to seek harmony and self-actualization. This innate drive needs to interact with the resources which are available and accessible to the individual in order for resilience to be activated. Ungar (2006) emphasized this notion in his definition of resilience, which explains that an individual needs to negotiate resources in order to achieve well-being. According to the resource theory, resources provide all necessary prerequisites needed by the individual to ultimately achieve their relevant developmental goals (Jopp & Rott, 2006).

Resources are considered antecedent factors of resilience because they are contextual, situational and individual and therefore may not be equally beneficial for all individuals exhibiting resilience. Moreover, Ungar (2011) highlights the fact that the precise combination of resources necessary for effective adaptation will vary depending on the severity and type of adversity as well as the cultural and contextual factors of each individual. Since the first wave of resilience research, extensive focus has been centered on the identification of resources, often also referred to as protective factors and assets (Ungar, 2006). The difference between protective factors or processes and assets is the fact that protective factors are only activated in response to an exposure to adversity or high risk, whereas assets are engaged during both low and high levels of risk (Harris, 2008).

2.2.7. Protective factors

Amato (2000) compared protective factors to shock absorbers that function to weaken effects of divorce and the extent of subsequent negative outcomes. Researchers generally tend to categorize protective factors into three groups. For the purpose of this research, protective factors will be characterized into the groups of individual, family and community factors, as concentric circles that ranges in proximity from the individual. Additionally, Ungar (2013) incorporated the unique culture of each child as another level from which to explore protective factors.

2.2.7.1. Individual protective factors

Factors which are classified within the individual domain are mainly associated with the first wave of resilience research that centered its focus on individual strengths and personality traits (Fry & Debats, 2010). Individual protective factors can be subdivided into psychological, social and cognitive resources.

Psychological resources

Skodol (2010) referred to personality as a construct able of providing protection amidst exposure to a stressor. Furthermore, Skodol (2010) categorized resilient children as having personality traits that display a strong sense of self and promote reciprocal interpersonal relationships. A strong sense of self is characterized by a sense of selfesteem, self-efficacy, a positive outlook on life, a trusting nature in other people as well as the ability to regulate negative emotions. A sense of self-efficacy refers to the belief in oneself to successfully complete a task (Greve & Staudinger, 2006). Resnick and Inguito (2011) found self-efficacy to be highly correlated with instances of resilience. This can be explained through the social cognitive theory, which states that a sense of self-efficacy has the ability to motivate the activation of both resources and social support which in turn promotes resilient outcomes (Fry & Debats, 2010; Jopp & Rott, 2006).

Furthermore, conscientiousness and extraversion constitute two of the big five personalities which have been associated with an increased tendency for resilient outcomes (Fayombo, 2010). Conscientiousness refers to the tendency of an individual to aim for achievement and display self-discipline (Fayombo, 2010) as well as a tendency for structured behavior and a high sense of self-control (Fayombo, 2010). On the other hand, extraversion refers to an outgoing personality which is generally associated with positive affect such as enthusiasm and vivacity (McHugh & Lawlor, 2012). Positive affect contributes to the success of some cognitive processes, including increased cognitive flexibility (Schmeichel & Tang, 2015) and therefore will be better equipped to adapt to different situations in a constructive manner. Furthermore, Lu and colleagues (2020) have stated that affect is positively related to the capacity for resilience and hence, the more positive affect a child experiences, the higher their level of resilience is likely to be. Children who display extraverted tendencies also tend to exert more energy from a social setting and engaging in physical activities which in

turn nurtures a more positive outlook towards stressors as well as enjoying increased motivation and essential support from their social groups (Lu et al., 2020).

The final psychological factor include a sense of humor and has been identified as a personality trait associated with resilience, significantly influencing the ability to moderate the intensity of adversity and accompanying emotional reactions (Garmezy, 1991; Masten, 1994; Richardson, 2002; Rutter, 1987; Werner & Smith, 1992; Masten, Cutuli, Herbers, & Reed, 2009). Moreover, it influences an individual's experience of positive affect which helps to put stressful life events into perspective (EarvolinoRamirez, 2007).

Cognitive resources

The concept of cognitive flexibility have also surfaced in numerous studies associated with personality traits (Garmezy, 1991; Luthar & Cicchetti 2000; Masten, 1994; Richardson, 2002; Rutter, 1987; Werner & Smith, 1992) and constitutes the ability to shift or adjust one's pattern of thinking in order to avoid unproductive mental states or inhibit any intrusion of irrelevant thoughts and information (Genet & Siemer, 2011). When faced with adversity, cognitively flexible children are better able to focus on adaptive mental patterns instead of solely focusing on the obstacle presented by an adversity which increases their ability to generate alternative strategies and perspectives (Genet & Siemer, 2011). Children who are less cognitively flexible experience increased difficulties in their ability to inhibit negative thoughts and hence often find themselves in the same negative pattern of thought. For example, if a student is asked to work on their handwriting for the first hour and is then instructed to begin with their math work, a cognitively flexible child will be better equipped to switch between these tasks than a child who has a lower capacity for cognitive flexibility. Furthermore, children who have been identified as resilient and displaying overall well-being despite exposure to an adversity, tend to display signs of cognitive flexibility (Genet & Siemer, 2011). It therefore seems likely that resilient thinking encompasses flexibility.

Social resources

Social integration is a resource which links an individual to the available social resources. Furthermore, it also encompasses the degree to which an individual engages

in both social activities and relationships (Janicki-Deverts & Cohen, 2011). Individuals who display signs of high social integration tend to have an increased capacity to access social resources. Moreover, Rutter (2006) and Helgeson and Lopez (2010) stated that social support remains a significant protective factor across ages, cultures and risk factors and that a lack of sufficient social support tends to predict maladaptive responses to an adversity (Helgeson & Lopez, 2010). Generally, perceived social support have been found to be more strongly correlated with healthy adjustment than actual support. What matters more is whether the child perceives themselves as having meaningful interrelationships to lean on when the need arises (Ungar, 2006).

According to Mills and Dombeck (2005) effective communication skills are essential for the promotion of resilience due to the fact that it fosters positive affect instead of negative affect. Assertiveness is a personality trait which encompasses the ability to express thoughts, emotions and personal beliefs in a direct and appropriate manner.

The skill of assertiveness is a valuable asset for establishing effective interpersonal relationships as it focuses on nurturing confidence in communicating personal needs and wants, while respecting those of others.

2.2.7.2. Familial protective factors

A safe, stable and loving environment have been identified as one of the most effective ways to promote resilience in children exposed to an adversity such as parental divorce (Southwick, Bonanno, Masten, Panther-Brick & Yehuda, 2014). Researchers have found an increased capacity for resilience in children whose lives are rich in protective resources ranging from a high-quality supportive parent-child relationship to an environment that is not characterized by chronic stress and conflict (Southwick, Bonanno, Masten, Panther-Brick & Yehuda, 2014).

According to the socialization theory, parenting plays a vital role in the adjustment of children and in the development of both externalizing and internalizing behaviors (Rodgers & Rose, 2002) as well as higher levels of social competence (Bornstein, 2010). Studies have reported that an authoritative parenting style provide the optimal environment for protecting a child from exposure to risk factors as well as securing the healthy development of the child. Authoritative parenting encompasses a warm, supportive and communicative response to the needs of the child. Parental support has

been linked to overall better outcomes for children which also support the notion by Fergus and Zimmerman (2005) that secure attachment to either one or both parents tend to mitigate the subsequent effects of exposure to family adversity and hence, promote resilience in the child. Ungar (2011) investigated a range of challenges that children who experienced an adversity deal with, including those who have been separated from a caregiver and those who witnessed violent incidents. Findings indicated that children exposed to violence exhibited less damage than those who have been separated from a key caregiver, emphasizing once again the crucial role of secure attachment and positive relationships for the optimal development of a child. However, an authoritative parenting style also includes the firm and consistent execution of control, discipline and close supervision. Parental monitoring especially becomes important for children who are exposed to high conflict environments or subjected to lower socioeconomic wellbeing, which are both consequences of parental divorce (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2010). Also, longitudinal studies have reported that a secure relationship with at least one parent have an increased tendency to promote resilience in children dealing with socioeconomic hardship (Werner, 2013).

Divorce as well as the timing thereof contributes significantly to a child's development (Rutter, 2012). Children have to become accustomed to a single parent household and consequently also dividing the time they used to spend with both parents, which tend to evoke strong emotional and behavioral reactions as the family attempt to transition into what constitutes as their new normal. Researchers have emphasized that it becomes crucial to strengthen family relationships during this fragile period in order to maintain as much harmony as the situation will allow. Moreover, parents should commit to maintaining as much routine as possible and strive to be open and honest with their children about any anticipated changes and challenges that the family is about to face as a result of the divorce (Roehlkepartain & Syvertsen 2014). According to Spagnola and Fiese (2007) maintaining family routines becomes an imperative protective factor due to its ability to maintain and promote relationship coherence. Furthermore, family stability has been identified to constantly increase and nurture the child's perception of their new family dynamic as normal (Regev & Ethrenberg, 2012). Ultimately, social support and translucent communication is crucial for adapting to change and generating optimal outcomes amidst important life transitions such as the one caused by parental divorce (Zambianchi & Bitti, 2014).

Furthermore, though children ideally benefit from regular contact with both parents, involvement of noncustodial fathers and mothers with their children tend to differ significantly after divorce. Noncustodial mothers generally provide greater emotional support to their children, whereas noncustodial fathers usually have a more distant relationship consisting of recreational activities instead of responding to their children's emotional needs. It is critical for non-custodial fathers to realize that their new nonresidential status also plays a vital role in the adjustment of their children (Lowenstein, 2010). According to Lowenstein (2010), father-child attachment is as important as the mother-child attachment and ultimately also leads to healthy behavioral and emotional adjustment. Moreover, Lowenstein (2010) proposed joint custody as the best solution for healthy adjustment when parental conflict is low.

One of the most important factors to consider when evaluating child adjustment after a divorce is parental conflict styles and levels. Parental conflict during and after divorce serves as a detrimental source of stress for children and can hamper their chances for adequate adjustment. Children whose parents refrain from involving their children in their conflict have demonstrated the same capacity for adjustment as children from low-level conflict families (Buchanan & Jahromi, 2008). Also, a tendency for verbal coercion and aggression in children often stems from the attacking style of conflict resolution observed by their parents (Noller et al., 2008). Therefore, it becomes imperative for parents to model effective conflict resolution strategies as well as attempt to reduce and exclude children from conflict after their divorce in order to increase chances for resilient capacities in their children.

2.2.7.3. Community protective factors

Findings from studies have reported that caring, non-parental adults who act as a role model, allow children to cope better with experiences, especially when there is insufficient parental support at home during the process of divorce (Bernstein et al., 2012).

Mentors play a significant role in the promotion of resilience among children exposed to parental divorce (Bernstein et al., 2011). Non-parental adults who function as mentors are able to provide the necessary support, communication of values and skills as well as aid to enhance interpersonal relatedness and self-esteem within vulnerable children. Research have found fewer behavioral problems, more positive attitudes and

greater sense of self-efficacy as well as fewer instances of reported anxiety and depression among children who have a positive mentor in their lives whilst dealing with exposure to parental divorce. Mentoring provides optimal support when interaction with the child is frequent, prolonged and energetic (Bernstein et al., 2011). Furthermore, relationships between grandparents and their grandchildren have been reported to have a significant influence in the positive adjustment of children after experiencing a parental divorce (Bernstein et al., 2011). Grandparents contribute to the overall well-being of children by fulfilling the role of a caregiver and confidant with their affectionate and communicative nature (Bernstein et al., 2011).

Children with secure attachments to their schools tend to cope more effectively with their post-divorce circumstances. Authoritative schooling provides routine, regulations and use warm and consistent discipline which are all resilience enhancing factors as well as necessary to promote social and cognitive development in children who have been exposed to parental divorce (Hetherington & Elmore, 2003). Furthermore, informal social support networks such as relationships with peers are imperative for healthy adjustment since it provides communication and support amidst parental divorce (Helgeson & Lopez, 2010). Moreover, children can tap into other youth groups and pro-social initiatives such as church group for additional social support (Hetherington & Elmore, 2003). Ultimately, studies tend to place emphasis on the importance of having high-quality social relationships in fostering resilient capacities within children.

However, Rutter (1987) raised caution when arguing that investigation into protective processes would be of greater significance when exploring resilience-enhancing approaches. Johnson and Wiechelt (2004) elaborated on the distinction between factors and processes by stating that protective factors are contextually and situationally sensitive and therefore lead to differential outcomes. For instance, protective factors beneficial to one child and situation may not hold the same beneficial properties for a similar child experiencing a different situation. With the conceptualization of resilience as a process, Richardson (2002) described resilience as a process by which an individual cope with adversity or change in such a manner that it may result in the identification and enrichment of protective factors. By conceiving resilience as a process, emphasis is drawn to the dynamic and interactional nature of resilience which

cannot fully be described using approaches which advocates for resilience as a trait or an outcome (Luthar, Cicchetti & Becker, 2000).

Moreover, conceptualizing resilience as a process highlights the capacity of resiliency to develop over time, which alters the impact future risk exposure may have on an individual (Richardson, 2002) and hence, ultimately increasing the capacity of an individual to maintain their level of functioning amidst further risk exposure (Carver, 2010). Luthar et al. (2000) refers to resilience as a dynamic process which comprises of positive adjustment within the context of adversity. Through this reference, they emphasize the importance that the contextual nature of the adversity has on the individuals' response. Furthermore, Fletcher and Sarkar (2012) have defined resilience by highlighting the role of an individuals' mental processes and behaviors in encouraging the stimulation of personal assets in an attempt to protect the individual from the negative effects produces by an adversity. This conceptualization incorporates the trait approach of resilience by encapsulating the personal characteristics of both mental processes and behavior. However, by considering their significance in the promotion of personal characteristics, their importance become emphasized beyond their ordinary existence and rather points to their functional significance and interaction in the process of resilience (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013). It is imperative to exercise caution in the use of relevant terminology surrounding resilience, by clearly indicating that the research is aligned with the conceptualization of resilience as a process and not a personality trait.

2.2.8. Gaps in Resilience Research Concerning Divorce

One of the most pressing limitations for resilience research lies in the expansion of knowledge surrounding the interactive processes of resilient resources across domains as well as between systemic levels. It therefore becomes imperative to increase attempts to investigate the relevant contributors to resilience, in order to establish whether a hierarchical structure to resources is plausible. According to Masten (2007) this requires longitudinal, mixed method approaches in order to adequately investigate the relevant dynamic and complex processes associated with resilience. Longitudinal studies on resilience and divorce has been attempted (Wallerstein & Johnston, 1990; Werner, 1993; Zhou, 2008; Wolchik et al., 2009;) but prospective longitudinal studies on resilience in divorce remains limited and hence urgently needed (Lindert et al.,

2018). Resilience is not a mere individual trait but rather a developmental process that is not irreversible (Cicchetti, 2010). Therefore, it will be advantageous to continue to conduct longitudinal studies which explore the elements of resilient functioning. Furthermore, studies of this nature should not solely focus on the assessment of the stability of the construct throughout development, but also explore the ability of resilient individuals to return to their previous positive state after being exposed to subsequent stressors in order to recover their ability for resilient adaptation (Cicchetti, 2010). Research of this nature will also be effective in exploring the possibility of multiple pathways and stages to the resilience process.

A historical lifespan approach could also be beneficial in order to account for any previous influences on current reactions to stressors (Sippel & Pietrzak, 2015). According to Theron and Theron (2013) researchers have yet to delve into a lifespan understanding of resilience within an African context, which also calls for longitudinal studies to be initiated. The variation in historical and individual influences are indicative of the complexity of antecedent factors that still require further investigation within resilience research (Rutter, 2006; Cicchetti, 2010). It has been hypothesized that previous experiences of resilience have the capacity to positively influence subsequent resilience competencies (Windle, 2010). Such an approach would confirm the presence of a correlation between resilience at varying periods in time as well as the stability thereof over time (Cicchetti, 2010). In this lies a limitation of this research study as it is conducted cross-sectionally.

Furthermore, a number of researchers have called for increased inclusion of qualitative methods when investigating the complexity of the resilience process (Hildon et al., 2009). Patterns of resilience will become more meaningful as contextual and situational factors are accounted for in the research, enabling the clarification of the most common cultural, social and environmental circumstances within which resilience is empowered.

Moreover, even though the majority of literature report on children's experiences and adaptation during this crisis period (Cherlin, 2010) based on interviews with parents and assessments of clinical notes, qualitative inquiry into children's own point of view have been increasingly considered (Sommer, Samuelsson & Hundeide, 2009). According to Broström (2012), asking children about their emotions and experiences

concerning parental divorce provides them with the opportunity to speak on behalf of their own lived experiences and hence, elicit a more comprehensive understanding that could otherwise have been easily overlooked had researchers solely rely on reconstructions of the parents (Ellingsen, Thorsen & Storksen, 2014). Therefore, this study incorporated Q methodology in order to breach this gap in current research. Q methodology presents the necessary child-friendly approach required to elicit the subjective emotions and perspectives among children who experienced a parental divorce (Ellingsen, Thorsen & Storksen, 2014).

The sociocultural context from which an individual operate is often overlooked during resilience research (Theron, 2013). Ungar (2011) has also advocated for increased focus on the social determinants of resilience, and noted that individuals become less able to tap into their personal resources as their exposure to adversity increases, therefore, their dependency on social and environmental resources increase. A continued need for further research is therefore emphasized, especially within the African context, not simply due to its culturally diverse status (Theron & Theron, 2010) but also because of the fluidity of culture and context (Donald et al., 2010). Ungar and colleagues (2011) pointed to the fact that the majority of resilience research continue to adapt a westernized epistemology, placing emphasis on individual and relational factors. Such emphasis lacks cultural and contextual sensitivity in how resilience and related antecedents are defined and experienced (Ungar & Liebenberg, 2011). Therefore, an emic perspective, whereby resilience research is conducted from different non-western cultures and countries, is suggested to be a more ecologically sensitive and constructive approach. This will in turn raise important questions for future African resilience researchers, such as whether pathways to resilience differ for children from different ethnicities as well as how alterations to ecosystems will influence the positive adjustment of the African youth in the future.

2.3. Middle childhood

During middle childhood, children are on the brink of adolescence. After the age of seven years, children take a giant leap towards adulthood both intellectually and socially (Louw, Ede & Louw, 1998). Piaget referred to this period as the concrete operational stage. It typically includes the years from nine to twelve (Louw, Ede & Louw, 1998). This is an important developmental phase for children cognitively,

socially, emotionally and for the development of their self-concept (Louw, Ede & Louw, 1998). Children in this developmental phase may be especially vulnerable to the effects of parental divorce due to the fact that the development of constructive social relationships and self-esteem occur during this stage in their life. Hence, family plays a crucial role in the socialization of the child during middle childhood.

According to Erik Erikson (Erikson, 1993), middle childhood is challenged with the crisis of industry versus inferiority. This stage of life is identified by the child's need to be recognized as being efficient at tasks in order to be able to successfully move on to the next developmental stage. Various circumstances relating to the resultant stress of divorce can foster the feelings of inferiority within an affected child, including a lack of proper communication and positive reinforcement from parents.

Divorce undoubtedly have an impact on children of all ages, however, according to Coleman (2017), the trauma of parental divorce is likely to be nominal under the age of three years old. This is largely connected to their developing cognitive abilities. The potential for emotional trauma tends to peak at the age of eleven years. This is mainly due to the fact that attachments, to both parents and the family as a whole, has been established by this age. Also, although these children's cognitive developmental level allows them to increasingly understand causal relationships, they still tend to lack the capacity to comprehend how things work in the grand scheme of things. Also, their egocentrism tends to cause these children to internalize the breakdown of their parent's marriage and experience subsequent guilt (Coleman, 2017). The focus on middle childhood is thus warranted by the sensitivity of their specific developmental milestones to parental divorce (Karuppaswamy & Myers-Walls, 2010; Coleman, 2017).

Furthermore, research on parental divorce continue to be predominantly conducted from the perspective of adolescents and adults, which emphasizes the need for studies to delineate younger children's perspectives on their experiences of parental divorce (Maes, De Mol, & Buysse, 2011). This is especially important since post-divorce adjustment tends to be mediated primarily by their perceptions and experiences of the divorce event (Maes et al., 2011). This further emphasizes the need for research that focuses on middle childhood children's perspectives when investigating adjustment post parental divorce.

2.4. Conclusion of Chapter Two

This chapter discussed literature in terms of previous research findings regarding resilience among children affected by parental divorce, focusing on middle childhood. Divorce refers to the legal ending of a marriage between a couple (Benokraitis, 2004) and includes a complex process which requires a series of adjustments for all parties involved. Divorce remains a primary force behind family instability within Africa (Clark & Brauner-Otto, 2015).

Though it is well known that divorce is traumatic for children involved, various studies have determined that more than 75 percent of children affected by parental divorce do not display long term adjustment problems amidst experiencing an adversity (Kelly & Emery, 2003; Garmezy, 1971; Rutter & Madge, 1976; Werner & Smith, 1992) and tend to exhibit great resilience and in some cases even benefit from their new circumstances (Hetherington & Elmore, 2003; Ungar et al., 2012). Resilience, therefore, refers to the ability to bounce back after experiencing a stressful event (Smith et al., 2008; Masten, 1994). Though the majority of existing resilience research continue to depict parental divorce in terms of the detrimental impact it has on children (Bernardi & Radl, 2014), the past decade have increasingly focused on the positive aspects of human adaptability, especially within this context (Seligman & Csikszenymihalyi, 2000). Contemporary research increasingly include a socioecological perspective when focusing on resilience. Furthermore, research into resilience provides an opportunity to gain insight into promotive factors for children influenced by divorce. Among these promotive factors, family stability and family cohesion have been identified as modifying resilient capacities within children involved in divorce (Garmezy, 1971). Furthermore, Rutter (1979) identified positive parent-child relationships, maternal warmth, a positive familial atmosphere and an educational setting as significant contributors to a child's developmental outcomes post parental-divorce. Additionally, Werner and Smith (1982) identified consistency in discipline as well as external environmental support as protective fastors for nurturing resilience in children.

Through Rutter's (Rutter, 2006; Rutter, 2007; Rutter, 2012) extensive research on resilience, he has placed emphasis on the environment, and not the child, as the catalyst for individual differences in resilience. Hence, cautioning against the assumption that

all stressors and protective factors similarly impact all people in all situations. Furthermore, Werner and Smith (1982) stated that protective factors should be addressed at the individual, familial and community level.

Some psychologists are of the opinion that parental divorce is more challenging for children in middle childhood than for their younger and older counterparts (Hooper, 2005). This is primarily because they are developmentally able to comprehend the fact that they are in emotional pain due to parental divorce but too young to be able to understand or control the emotional reactions to their pain (Hooper, 2005). This, together with the fact that the majority of research on parental divorce continue to be predominantly conducted from the perspective of adolescents and adults, explain the need for research that focuses on middle childhood children's perspectives when investigating adjustment post parental divorce.

Conclusively, this study used a positive, adjustment perspective in investigating the impact of parental divorce on children in their middle childhood. Furthermore, this research focused on the unique perspectives of the children exposed to parental divorce – deviating from the common notion of divorce research to focus on adult and adolescent perspectives.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research methods used in this study, including the research design as well as the population and the sampling methods. Furthermore, the research instruments will be introduced and discussed. Within this chapter, the procedure to be followed will also be delineated followed by the rationale behind the data analysis in order to facilitate a comprehensive understanding of how the results were obtained. Finally, the relevant ethical considerations will be discussed.

3.1. Research design

A non-experimental, mixed-methods approach was employed to acquire comprehensive information on the lived experiences of 24 children within middle childhood. (Akhtar-Danesh et al., 2008). During a Q-study, subjective viewpoints are explored in a qualitative way but the data collected is analysed statistically, which forms part of a quantitative approach (Elingsen et al., 2010). A multiple case study design is proposed to explore the phenomenon from a variety of lenses, providing a more in-depth comprehension of the multiple facets involved and a better understanding of the differences and similarities between participants.

3.2. Population

According to the age group divisions set out by the latest Namibian Statistics Agency (2016) there are 64861 children in the Khomas Region between the ages of 5-14 years.

Unfortunately, the exact number of children between the ages of 9 and 12 are not available. Furthermore, there are no statistics on the number of children that are in divorced households or have been defined as resilient amidst parental divorce.

3.3. Sample

Purposeful sampling were used to ensure the assembly of relevant data required for this study (Yin, 2010). Initially, 24 children (between the ages of 9 and 12 years) whose parents have been divorced for two to four years participated in the study. All 24 participants participated in the data collection procedure, but onlythe data of 12 participants, who scored high on resiliency, were used in the final data analysis procedure. Half of the sample (n=6) were males and the remaining half (n=6) were females. This was not intentionally selected but rather as s result of the availability of participants from the schools who were willing to cooperate. These children were recruited from schools in Windhoek. The names of the participating schools will remain confidential in an attempt to further ensure the identities of all participants. Children undergoing therapy and exposed to multiple parental divorces were excluded from the sample. Furthermore, as the study was dependent on the willingness of the approached schools to cooperate, especially within the COVID pandemic, only two schools agreed to participate.

School aged children fall within the concrete operational stage, marked by rapid cognitive development (Wadsworth, 2004) and rely heavily on their parents for stability. Therefore, parental divorce during this phase can potentially undermine a child's ability to master the unique developmental tasks (Erikson, 1994).

3.4. Research instruments

The researcher made use of a short socio-demographic questionnaire, which was completed by each participant at the start of the data collection process (Appendix F). This questionnaire inquired into characteristics such as the age, gender and home language of each participant.

The Children and Youth Resilience Measurement (CYRM-12) scale was then administered to all 24 participant to screen for resiliency (Ungar & Liebenberg, 2011). The CYRM-12 is a measure of individual, relational and communal resources available to individuals that may enhance resilience. The CYRM-12 demonstrated a good fit to the Rasch model, $\alpha = 0.82$ and is applicable across diverse cultures and contexts,

including children from South Africa (van Rensburg, Theron & Ungar, 2017). The CYRM-12 took approximately 15 minutes to administer and had 17-items that were rated using a 3-point Likert scale and divided into two subscales. For the three-point scale, the minimum score is 17 and the maximum score is 51. Furthermore, the two subscales include personal resilience and caregiver/relational resilience. In order to derive at the personal resilience subscale score, items 1, 2, 3, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 16 were added. For the three-point measure used in this study, the minimum subscale score is 10 and the maximum subscale score is 30. To derive at the caregiver/relational subscale score, items 4, 5, 6, 8, 11, 15, 17 were added together. The minimum subscale score is 7 and the maximum score is 21.

The higher the total score, the more these resilience components were present in the lives of the participant. As resilience varies between contexts, analysis within the study's own sample was done to determine those who have scored high and low on the measure by incorporating upper half and lower half scores.

To resolve some challenges of gathering qualitative data from younger children, Qmethodology (Brown, 1980) with visual material was utilised. Participants who partake in a Q-Study are exposed to a set of cards containing either subjective statements or visual images related to the research topic.

Figure 1: An example of a card with visual material used during the study.

Q-methodology is a hybrid method and contains elements of interviewing, thematic analysis, and factor analysis (Storksen et al., 2012). Q-methodology was primarily designed for the purpose of investigating and categorizing patterns of individual perspectives and lived experiences related to a specific topic by conducting rigorous quantitative analysis (McKeown, 2013). Moreover, by analyzing these individual

responses, the researcher is able to extract rich qualitative data. In this manner it becomes possible to explore subjectivity in a quantitative way.

Furthermore, Q methodology also allows researchers to cluster groups of categorizations from these individual inquiries together from those having similar as well as differing viewpoints (McKeown, 2013). This is a vital function of Q methodology as one of its core assumptions centers around the argument that there are only a limited number of distinct opinions surrounding a topic (van Exel & de Graaf, 2015). Therefore, instead of focusing on generating generalizable results, Q methodology seek to explore and interpret various viewpoints that exist within the target population (Ward, 2010). Various researchers have successfully used this method with younger children in multiple studies on divorce and related aspects (Storksen et al., 2012; Storksen & Thorsen, 2008).

3.5. Development of Q-sample

A Q study is commonly arranged into five steps (Brown, 1980; Van Exel & de Graaf, 2005). The first step is to identify the concourse of the study. This refers to all possible subjective perspectives/literature surrounding the topic. For this particular study, the concourse was developed based on extensive literature reviews surrounding various possible indicators of resilience among children who have been exposed to parental divorce.

Concurrently, a Q-sample (a set of statements) was generated from the concourse (see Appendix E). For the purpose of this study, statements were created from the concourse based on literature reviews concerning parental divorce and instances of resilience among children. Also, it remains vital that all statements identified be representative of the different aspects of the broader concourse so that there are statements with which participants could agree as well as disagree (Coogan & Herrington, 2011) which made a thorough literature review imperative.

Once the Q sample is generated, it is generally known as a Q set and is placed on cards in order for participants to effectively sort through the statements. As mentioned above, visual statements were used for this study to provide children with guidance to verbally express their emotions (see Appendix E). The complexity and number of statements depends on the cognitive and developmental level of the participants, but the sample of statements normally consists of between 40 to 80 (Alderson et al., 2018).

Considering both the age and developmental level of participants, this study consisted of 40 statements to ensure that children had the mental capacity to maintain focus throughout the sorting process. 2018).

3.6. Pilot Study

Before the Q-sorting procedure was initiated, a pilot study was conducted on six ethnically diverse participants in order to test the clarity and general comparability of the visual statements to the participants within the context of the research question. The pilot study was conducted in the form of a focus group. Focus groups are beneficial as the setting generally allow participants to stimulate each other to discuss topics, allowing for a wide range of information to be retrieved (Morgan, 1997). It is generally recommended that the younger the participants, the smaller the group size should be. Hence, a group size of six was deemed optimal (de Leeuw, 2011).

Furthermore, the pilot study consisted of participants who were nine years of age, to ensure that the youngest set of participants will be able to comprehend the statements provided. Before the age of ten, gender homogeneity within a focus group is not deemed necessary, hence, the pilot study consisted of participants from both genders (Greig & Taylor, 1999). With regards to the session duration, shorter sessions for younger participants are recommended (de Leeuw, 2011). Therefore, the duration of the pilot study did not exceed thirty minutes after which a break was offered. Feedback from the pilot study was positive, with all participants communicating a clear understanding of both the instructions and the content of each statement, hence, no major alterations were made to the set of statements.

3.7. Procedure

As the organizations used in the recruitment process (i.e. schools within the community) were not ethically allowed to provide the researcher with personal details of possible participants, all recruitment were done via invitations on the part of the schools. The researcher provided the schools with all the necessary study information. Upon willingness to participate contact between the legal guardian of participants and the researcher was initiated. All required documentation, including information leaflet; parental consent and participant assent forms were provided and completed before the initiation of the data collection process. Each school assigned a vacant classroom as well as a suitable time at which the data collection was done by the researcher.

Before the Q-sorting procedure was undertaken by each participant, the CYRM-12 was administered to each participant individually. This administration took no longer than 15 minutes and was conducted in an assigned classroom of each participating school.

Subsequently, the Q-sorting procedure was initiated and conducted from the assigned classroom of each participating school. During this step, the children were individually presented with the Q-set (set of statements) on individual cards (see Appendix E) and a predesigned quasi-normal shaped distribution grid developed for the sorting of the cards (see Appendix H). Participants were instructed to sort each card according to specific instructions, for example "please sort the cards in accordance with what is most like or unlike your everyday feelings". The distribution grid placed the most agreeable statements (most like) on one side and the most disagreeable statements (most unlike) on the other side. If the statement was found more to the right of the grid, the participant's sorting "agreed" more with the statement and vice versa for statements found more to the left side.

In order to make the sorting process easier for the participants, they were advised to create three piles of statements, namely those statements they agreed with, those statements they mostly disagreed with as well as the statements they felt mostly neutral about (Coogan & Herrington, 2011). Thereafter, participants were instructed to place each pile of statements on the grid according to their level of agreement, working to fill the columns representing all the agreed with statements until they are depleted. The same principle was applied for statements that were most disagreed with, but these were placed under the -3 column. The subsequent open spaces in the center of the distribution grid were then filled by all the statements the participant felt mostly neutral or uncertain about. Once all statements were placed on the Q-grid and the participant was satisfied with their sorting, it formed what is referred to as the Q-sort, which reflected each participants' perspective and experiences surrounding the topic and was recorded by photograph for later quantitative analysis (McKeown, 2013). The duration of the Q-sorting procedure was no longer than an hour and was conducted in English for all the participants.

The statements that were placed at the ends of the distribution grid were most valuable to the study (that is, -5 referring to strongly disagreed upon statements and +5 strongly agreed upon statements). Additionally, each participant were given the opportunity to

elaborate on the positioning of their statements, which were recorded as an additional source of data. Each participants' Q-sort was then correlated with those sorted by the other participants. Ranking these statements ultimately made it easier to conduct factor analysis, which enabled the researcher to determine similar orders of ranking between the participants (Coogan & Herrington, 2011).

3.8. Data analysis

Descriptive statistics of the data gathered from the socio-demographic questionnaires were run using the IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, version 21.0. All Q-sorts were plotted into the PQ Method 2.35 software program (Schmolck, 2014) and analyzed using by-person factor analysis (Watts & Stenner, 2005). Factor analysis is performed by person, instead of by variable or statement. Hence, participants correlate to others who displays similar perspectives based on their Q-sorts (Valenta & Wigger, 1997). This resulted in the identification of factors representing clusters of participants who share the same perspectives or experiences in relation to the topic – in this case parental divorce and displays of resilience (Akhtar-Danesh, Baumann & Cordingley, 2008; Van Exel & de Graaf, 2005).

3.9. Research Ethics

Permission for the study was obtained from the University Research and Ethics Committee (UREC) of the University of Namibia and the Khomas Regional Council (Directorate of Education, Arts and Culture). The participants and their parents were informed on the purpose of the study. The primary caregiver provided written informed consent and written assent was sought from each participant. Participants were continuously reminded of their right to withdraw from the study with no resulting negative consequences. Specific signs indicative of the child's wishes to withdraw were agreed upon. Personal information remained confidential unless there were risk of harm. Anonymity was ensured by assigning each participant with a participant code on all questionnaires and answering sheets to replace their names in order to keep their personal identity private. To minimize harm, the researcher was mindful of possible effects on the child throughout the process. The participants and their parents had access to counselling services if it was required. Data obtained from participants will be stored for five years within a lockable cabinet to which only the researcher will have access.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The purpose of this Q-Method study is to gain an understanding of the perceptions and lived experiences of resilience among children who have been exposed to parental divorce by exploring the protective factors that nurture the capacity to adjust, and even thrive post parental divorce. In order to answer these research objectives, this chapter provides a presentation of the results obtained from the data analysis process.

4.1. Descriptive Statistics

All the Q-Sort data was entered into the PQMethod statistical software, which then analyzed these Q-Sorts using algorithms designed specifically for Q-Data (Schmolck, 2014). This software computes factors, variances as well as correlations among groups from the data entered. The socio-demographic information of the participants, who have been exposed to parental divorce, are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Socio-demographic data

	n	**%**
Age (years)		
9	2	16.7
10	3	25.0
11	5	41.7
12	2	16.7
Gender		
Male	6	50.0
Female	6	50.0
Grade		
Grade 3	2	16.7
Grade 4	3	25.0
Grade 5	5	41.7

Grade 6	2	16.7
Custodial Parent		
Mother	12	100.0
Home Language		
Oshiwambo	2	16.7
Afrikaans	3	25.0
Nama/Damara	3	25.0
English	4	33.3
Race		
Black	5	41.7
White	7	58.3
Time since parental divorce		
2 years	7	58.3
3 years	4	33.3
4 years	1	8.3

Of the total participants, (n = 12), 50% were male and 50% were female. The participants in this study had a mean age of 11 years. 2 participants were 9 years old, 3 participants were 10 years old, 5 participants were 11 years old and 2 participants were 12 years old. The majority of the participants (41.7%) were in grade 5, while the remaining participants were in grade 3, 4 and 6. The home languages reported by the participants were mainly English (33.3 %), with a few of the participants speaking Afrikaans, Nama/Damara and Oshiwambo. Lastly, the majority of the participants (58.3%) were of white race and the remaining participants (41.7%) of black african race. The average years since parental divorce for participants in this study was 3 years.

4.2. The Children and Youth Resilience Measurement

The CYRM questionnaire was administered to all 24 participants as a screening tool for resilience (Ungar & Liebenberg, 2011). The higher the total score, the more resilience components were present within the participant. By incorporating upper and lower half scoring, 12 participants were identified with having more resilience components than their counterparts. The maximum score, within the upper half grouping, was 51 and the minimum score was 43. This group had a mean score of 47. The lower half group of participants had a maximum score of 35 and a minimum score of 26 with a mean score of 30. Though all 24 participants went through the entire data collection process, only the data of the group of participants with the highest resilience scores (upper half=12 participants) were used in the data analysis process.

4.3. Q Factor Analysis

The first step after the data has been entered into the PQMethod software is to determine intercorrelations between each individual Q-Sort by computing a correlation matrix (Brown, 1980) using Principal Component Analysis (Militello & Benham, 2010). The next step in the analysis process included factor analysis. By using the correlation matrix, different sorts were grouped into eight unrotated 'factor' groups of participants who share similar viewpoints, which is the maximum number of factors that can be extracted using the PQMethod program. In contrast to the R-method analysis, Q-Method factor analysis groups participants instead of questions or tests (McKeown & Thomas, 1988).

Table 2: Extracted Eight Unrotated Factors

Q-Sort ID*	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6	Factor 7	Factor 8
P1	0.8107	-0.0573	-0.3775	0.0044	-0.323	-0.212	0.0417	-0.1287
P2	0.8067	0.1953	0.3541	-0.3031	-0.0163	-0.1045	0.1198	-0.1426
P3	0.7397	0.1598	0.1749	-0.558	0.1309	0.087	0.0759	0.0302
P4	0.8572	-0.0114	-0.3934	0.1087	-0.0512	0.1304	-0.0536	-0.1182
P5	0.7126	0.1884	0.5018	-0.0331	-0.1449	0.3529	-0.1827	-0.0269
P6	0.742	-0.0527	-0.4907	0.1133	0.2381	0.2361	0.2377	0.0801
P7	0.573	-0.4112	0.5305	0.3769	0.174	-0.0415	-0.0099	0.042
P8	0.0353	0.876	0.1665	0.2561	-0.2833	0.01	0.1445	0.1746
P9	0.145	0.8309	-0.0736	0.3655	0.3206	-0.0818	-0.0858	-0.1587
P10	0.8604	0.1391	0.0311	-0.189	0.1432	-0.3292	-0.1119	0.1754
P11	0.8325	-0.0992	-0.4139	0.1246	-0.0765	0.0303	-0.1901	0.1378
P12	0.6601	-0.4051	0.3839	0.4254	-0.0712	-0.0809	0.1222	-0.0223
Eigenvalues	**5.8678***	**1.9256***	**1.58***	**1.0025***	**0.4467**	**0.385**	**0.2065**	**0.1666**
% Explained Variance	**49***	**16***	**13***	**8***	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**

Note. The first column indicates the participant codes which was assigned to maintain anonymity.

* significant at $p < .01$

Table 2 presents the eight extracted factors with the unrotated 'loadings' (correlation) of each Q-sort with that specific factor as well as the eigenvalues and percentage of variance explained by each factor. An eigenvalue represents the amount of variance accounted for by each factor. Factors which have eigenvalues greater than 1.00 are

deemed significant and hence, explaining a significant amount of the variability within the data. Eigenvalues less than 1.00 are considered too weak and not explaining a significant amount of the variance within the data. From table 7 it is evident that four factors (factor one, factor two, factor three and factor four) have eigenvalues greater than 1.00 and hence, warrant further exploration.

4.4. Factor Loadings

The PQMethod software was used to determine which factors warranted further consideration. According to Watts and Stenner (2005), there are two standard requirements to consider when determining the final factors to be extracted:

1. The factor must have an eigenvalue of 1.00 or more. Eigenvalues provide information on the communality that exist in relation to the factors instead of to each Q sort (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Factors below this standard explain less of the overall study variance than any individual Q-sort item does and hence, incapable of providing any data-reductive quality. Factors with eigenvalues of one or more were extracted for this study (highlighted in table 7 above) and include factor 1, factor 2, factor 3 and factor 4. From table 2 above it is clear that factors five to eight have eigenvalues less than 1.00 and will thus not be included in further analysis.
2. The factor must have a minimum of two significant participant loadings.

The equation used to determine the significance of a Q-sort is 2.58 x (1/√no. of items in Q-set). A forced-choice, normal distribution grid was used during the q-sorting process, with each q-sort having a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1.854. After the correlation matrix was generated, the correlation coefficients were calculated.

McKeown and Thomas (1998) stated that "The standard error for a zero-order factor loading is given by the expression SE = 1/√N, where N refers to the number of items in the Q-sample". The Q-Sample included 40 statements, therefore SE = 1/√40 or SE = 0.16. According to McKeown and Thomas (1998), statistical significance is specified by loadings in excess of 2.58 of the standard error. Thus, for a correlation coefficient to be statistically significant at $p < .01$ level, it should be 0.41, deduced from 1/√40 x 2.58 = 0.41, which is indicated in table 3 below.

Table 3 below, represents the results of the four-factor rotation conducted using the Varimax technique. As mentioned above, the rotation process produced a four-factor

solution, which all satisfied the eigenvalue standard of more than 1.00 and all had at least two significant participant loadings. In addition, the four factors combined explained 88% of the total study variance.

Table 3: Four Factor Solution Following Varimax Rotation

Q-Sort ID	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
P1	0.8348*	-0.0231	0.1266	0.2993
P2	0.2595	0.1192	0.2772	0.8648*
P3	0.2975	-0.0438	0.0069	0.9078*
P4	0.8917*	0.0661	0.1805	0.2633
P5	0.1355	0.2379	0.4893*	0.6941*
P6	0.8816*	0.0164	0.0956	0.1422
P7	0.1287	-0.1204	0.9197*	0.2100
P8	-0.1147	0.9083*	-0.0657	0.1394
P9	0.1488	0.9062*	-0.0809	0.0211
P10	0.5423*	0.0994	0.1978	0.6732*
P11	0.8977*	-0.0082	0.2011	0.2084
P12	0.2982	-0.0985	0.8949*	0.1697
% explained variance	**31**	**15**	**18**	**24**
Number of participants loading	**4**	**2**	**2**	**4**

***** *significance at p<.01*

From table 3, it can be deduced that the rotated factors comprise of 88% of the total variance of the study, where factor 1 represents 31%, factor 2 represents 15%, factor three represents 18% and factor four represents 24%. For factor 1, four participants loaded onto the factor with a significance level of $p < .01$. On factor 2, two participants loaded at a significance level of $p < .01$. Factor 3 also comprised of two participants with a loading at a $p < .01$ significance level and factor 4 had four participants with a loading at a significance level of $p < .01$. No participant loaded on more than one factor.

Table 4: Correlation between factor scores

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Factor 1	1.0000	0.0381	0.3973	0.5591
Factor 2	0.0381	1.0000	-0.1601	0.1366
Factor 3	0.3973	-0.1601	1.0000	0.4259
Factor 4	0.5591	0.1366	0.4259	1.0000

Table 4 above shows the correlation between the final four factors that were extracted. Factor one and factor four presented the highest correlation (0.56), without any participants loading on both factors.

The section below is arranged according to the four factors that were extracted. The unique statement composition of each factor was investigated after which each factor was given titles based on the statement loadings of participants on each factor. Factor One is named "Quality Parent-Child Relationships", Factor Two is named "Healthy School Attachment", Factor Three is named "Strong Community Attachment" and Factor Four is named "Effective Parent Conflict Resolution and Relationships".

4.5. Description of Factors

The following section will describe each factor individually. Moreover, the discussion of the factors will not follow a normal numerical pattern as the factor 1 and factor 4 share the highest correlation (0.56), with numerous statements sorted similarly.

4.5.1. Factor 1: Quality Parent-Child Relationships

Table 5 (see Appendix I) details the arrangement of statements for participants who significantly loaded on factor one. For factor one, statements ranged from agree (zscore of 1.748) to disagree (z-score of -1.748) showing the degree and direction of a statement from the distribution's mean.

Table 6 below presents the highest positive set of statements for the participants that are loaded on factor one.

Table 6: Factor 1 Most Agreed Statements

Number of Statement	Statement	zscore	Grid Position
1	I feel close to my mother	1.748	3
2	I feel close to my father	1.748	3
3	My family loves me	1.601	3
16	I feel safe and loved at home	1.544	3
7	I see my father regularly	1.415	2
8	I felt close to my father before their divorce	1.166	2
9	I felt close to my mother before their divorce	1.166	2
17	I feel comfortable talking to my parents	1.166	2
20	My parents always talk to me and explain things I do not understand	1.166	2
19	My parents explained their decision to divorce to me	1.019	2

Participants who loaded onto factor one in this manner were classified as children who have identified the quality of the relationship with their parents as an important protective factor that has nurtured their capacity to be resilient post parental divorce.

Four of the 12 participants (33%) significantly loaded on factor one. Half (n=2) of participants (50%) who loaded significantly on Factor One were white, Afrikaans speaking children. 25% of the participants (n=1) who also loaded significantly on Factor One were Oshiwambo speaking children and the remaining 25% speaks Nama/Damara (n=1). 3 participants were males and the other participant was a female. These significant loadings are most representative of participants who placed emphasis on the quality of the relationship with both parents pre- and post-divorce. Furthermore, they also identified transparency and effective communication within those relationships as well as frequent contact with their father as important contributors to their capacity for resilience after the divorce of their parents.

The two strongest agreed with statements by the participants who loaded onto Factor One (z-score = 1.748) “I feel close to my mother” and “I feel close to my father” showed that these participants indicated to have a close, secure relationship with both their parents. While the next two highest ranked statements “My family loves me” and “I feel safe and loved at home” showed these participants to view their familial environment as overall safe, stable and loving. Statement seven was also among the top ranked statements (z-score = 1.415), indicates that these participants have regular contact with their non-custodial parent (their father). Combined with a close relationship with their father (statement two) it becomes suggestive of a healthy fatherchild attachment. Also listed among the highest ranked statements are statement 17 and 20 (both with z-scores of 1.166) and statement 19 (z-score = 1.019). These placements speak of the participants’ perspective on the quality of the parent-child communication with their parents as well as the level of parental support available to them.

Table 7 below presents the highest negative set of statements for the participants that are loaded on factor one, hence, the statements with which these participants disagreed with most strongly.

Table 7: Factor 1 Most Disagree Statements

Number of Statement	Statement	zscore	Grid Position
33	We stayed in the same home after the divorce	-1.748	-3
32	I remained in the same school after the divorce	-1.748	-3
34	We stayed in the same neighborhood after the divorce	-1.748	-3

The participants who loaded onto factor one sorted statements 33, 32 and 34 in the high negative range of the sort. The prevalent idea that these specific statements, collectively, hold is that maintaining as much stability and familiarity as possible, amidst the changes that inevitably accompany a divorce, is important for post parental divorce adjustment as well as nurturing resilience. These participants however, did not perceive this notion as an important contributor to their capacity for resilience.

4.5.2. Factor 4: Effective Parent Conflict Resolution and Relationships

Four of the 12 participants (33.3%) significantly loaded at the $p < 0.01$ level on factor four. Of the participants who loaded significantly on Factor Four, 50% were white, English-speaking children (n=2), 25% were white, Afrikaans speaking children (n=1), and 25% were Oshiwambo speaking children (n=1). Hence, 75% of participants who significantly loaded on this factor grouping consist of the white population group. Furthermore, factor one and factor four presented with the highest correlation (0.56), without participant loadings on both factors. Participants who significantly loaded onto this factor held a similar perspective concerning their parents' ability to effectively resolve conflict and maintain a civil relationship despite having gone through a divorce. Table 8 (see Appendix I) shows the statement ranking of the participants who loaded onto factor four. These rankings range from agree (z-score of 1.77) to disagree (-1.77).

Table 9 details the highest placed statements in the sorts for this factor. These statements are most representative of factor four as well as the perspectives of the participants that loaded onto this factor.

Table 9: Factor 4 Most Agree Statements

Number of Statement	Statement	z-score	Grid Position
4	My parents get along well	1.770	3

11	My mother does not speak badly of my father in front of me	1.770	3
12	My father does not speak badly of my mother in front of me	1.77	3
13	My parents fight less now than before the divorce	1.524	3
10	My mother is happy to allow visits with my father	1.427	2
5	I feel close with my grandmother	1.180	2
3	My family loves me	1.044	2

On the opposite end, table 10 below, lists the lowest placed statements by participants who significantly loaded on factor four.

Table 10: Factor 4 Most Disagree Statements

Number of Statement	Statement	zscore	Grid Position
31	I feel close to my coach	-1.033	-2
24	I have fun at school	-1.136	-2
29	I feel close to my friends' parents	-1.18	-2
15	I see my grandfather often	-1.361	-3
25	I am happy to go to school	-1.499	-3
34	We stayed in the same neighbourhood after the divorce	-1.77	-3
33	We stayed in the same home after the divorce	-1.77	-3

Children who loaded significantly on this factor, rated statements highly which emphasized effective parental conflict resolution as well as their ability to maintain a civil and cooperative relationship post-divorce as important contributors to these participants' capacity for resilience after their parents' divorce. Among the highest sorted statements, is statement four "My parents get along well", statement 13 "My parents fight less now than before the divorce" as well as statements eleven and twelve which refers to the parents' ability to refrain from speaking negatively about each other in front of their children. These statements highlight the participants' shared belief that their parents' ability to resolve arising conflict in a civil and cooperative manner has contributed to the children's capacity to adjust to – and even thrive amidst the changing circumstances and dynamics associated with a parental divorce.

Furthermore, participants who loaded significantly on factor four, highly rated statement ten "My mother is happy to allow visits with my father" ($z = 1.427$). As all participants identified their mother as the custodial parent, this result indicates that this group of children are able to see their non-custodial parent (their father) on a regular basis, with cooperation from their mother.

Noteworthy, is the fact that participants who loaded on factor four sorted statements 33 “We stayed in the same home” and statement 34 “We stayed in the same neighborhood after the divorce” among the lowest positions (-3), much like those participants in the factor one group. As mentioned above, factor one and factor four share the highest correlation (0.56). To analyze the differences between factor one and factor four, the position of each item for the factor array of factor one and four were compared in table 11 (see Appendix I).

As detailed in table 11, numerous statements were similarly sorted among factor one and factor four. However, some distinct differences between the two groups occurred. The table below details the statements that were most in disagreement between factor one and factor four. The statements listed below are all three or more columns apart on the distribution grid. The remaining statements fell within two or fewer columns on the distribution grid.

Table 12: Differing Statements between Factor One and Factor Four

Number of Statement	Statement	Factor One Values	Factor Two Values
20	My parents always talk to me and explain things that I do not understand	2	-1
32	I remained in the same school after the divorce	-3	1
26	I am happy and satisfied most of the time	-2	1
19	My parents explained their decision to divorce to me	2	-2

From table 12, it is noticeable that participants who loaded on factor one identified statement 20 “My parents always talk to me and explain things that I do not understand” and statement 19 “My parents explained their decision to divorce to me” as important compared to participants who loaded on factor four. This sorting ties into their shared perspective which identified quality familial/parental-child relationship and transparent communication among the most important protective factors in nurturing their resilient capacities and ability to adjust after the divorce of their parents. As opposed to factor one, participants in factor four rated statement 32 “I remained in the same school after the divorce” higher on the distribution grid (+1).

4.5.3. Factor 2: Healthy School Attachment

Two of the 12 participants (0.17%) significantly loaded at the $p < 0.01$ level on factor two. 50% of these participants were Nama/Damara speaking children (n=1) and the remaining 50% was white, English-speaking children (n=1). Table 18 (see Appendix I) presents the arrangement of statements by the participants who loaded significantly on factor two. For this factor, statements ranged from agree (z-score of 1.766) to disagree (z-score of -1.766). Participants who loaded onto this factor were classified as children who identified a healthy school attachment as a protective factor in adjusting and thriving post parental divorce.

Table 14 below presents the highest placed statements in the sorts for factor two. These statements are most representative of factor two and the common belief share by the participants that loaded onto this factor.

Table 14: Factor 2 Most Agree Statements

Number of Statement	Statement	z-score	Grid Position
28	I feel close to my teacher	1.766	3
31	I feel close to my coach	1.766	3
32	I remained in the same school after the divorce	1.766	3
22	Teachers at my school help and support me	1.475	3
39	I feel safe and happy at school	1.468	2
24	I have fun at school	1.178	2
25	I am happy to go to school	1.178	2
30	I participate in activities after school	1.178	2

Table 15 below, details the lowest placed statements by participants who significantly loaded on factor two.

Table 15: Factor 2 Most Disagree Statements

Number of Statement	Statement	z-score	Grid Position
37	My friends and I follow the rules	-1.178	-2
29	I feel close to my friends' parents	-1.178	-2
36	I have enough food to eat every day	-1.475	-2
34	We stayed in the same neighbourhood after the divorce	-1.766	-3
15	I see my grandfather often	-1.766	-3
35	I feel safe in my neighbourhood	-1.766	-3

Participants who significantly loaded on factor two, highly ranked statements which identified with a strong school attachment and hence, an important protective factor of resilience for this group of children. Participants highly ranked statement 28 and statement 31 which signals to a close relationship with their teacher and coach. Furthermore, a high ranking on statement 22 “Teachers at my school help and support me”, statement 39 “I feel safe and happy at school”, statement 24 “I have fun at school” and statement 25 “I am happy to go to school” further indicates a secure attachment to their school.

Among the lowest ranked statements, as detailed in table 15, are statements that touch on socioeconomic conditions such as a satisfactory amount of food to eat every day (statement 36) and conditions surrounding the neighborhood within which the participants reside (statement 35 and statement 14). This result indicates that this group of children regarded these conditions as least contributive to their ability to adjust and thrive after their parents’ divorce.

4.5.4 Factor 3: Strong Community Attachment

Table 16 (see Appendix I) shows the rating of statements for participants who loaded on factor three. The rankings ranged from agree (z-score of 1.678) to disagree (z-score of -1.678). Two of the twelve participants (0.17%) loaded significantly on Factor Three. Participants within this factor grouping were 50% Nama/Damara speaking and 50% white, Afrikaans-speaking children. Participants who loaded onto this factor identified a strong attachment to their community, including a strong attachment to their grandparents, peers as well as their friends’ parents, as an important contributive factor to their ability to adjust and cope with the circumstances associated with their parents’ divorce.

Table 17 below details the highest placed statements for factor three. These statements are most representative of this factor and the associated perspective held by the participants that loaded significantly on factor three.

Table 17: Factor 3 Most Agree Statements

Number of Statement	Statement	z-score	Grid Position
5	I feel close with my grandmother	1.678	3
23	I have close friends	1.678	3

29	I feel close to my friends' parents	1.678	3
6	I feel close with my grandfather	1.438	3
14	I see my grandmother often	1.359	2
1	I feel close to my mother	1.119	2
15	I see my grandfather often	1.119	2
16	I feel safe and loved at home	1.119	2

Table 18 lists the lowest ranked statements in the sort for factor three which further represents factor three and the participants that loaded on this factor.

Table 18: Factor 3 Most Disagree Statements

Number of Statement	Statement	z-score	Grid Position
26	I am happy and satisfied most of the time	-1.119	-2
31	I feel close to my coach	-1.119	-2
33	We stayed in the same home after the divorce	-1.359	-2
34	We stayed in the same neighbourhood after the divorce	-1.359	-2
25	I am happy to go to school	-1.359	-2
19	My parents explained their decision to divorce to me	-1.438	-3
20	My parents always talk to me and explain things that I do not understand	-1.438	-3
32	I remained in the same school after the divorce	-1.678	-3

Statements ranked highly by participants in this factor identified a close relationship with members of the community and extended family members as an influential factor in nurturing their capacity for resilience in dealing with the divorce of their parents.

Among the highest ranked statements was statement 5 and statement 6 which indicated a close relationship between the participants and their grandparents as well as statement 29 “I feel close with my friends’ parents”. Statement 23 “I have close friends” was also among the highest placed statements and indicated that participants in this group identified an attachment to their peers as important in nurturing their resilience.

Children who loaded on factor three sorted statements 19 “My parents explained their decision to divorce to me” and statement 20 “My parents always talk to me and explain things that I do not understand” on the lowest/least agreed range of the sort. The placement of these statements indicate the participants’ shared perspective that transparent communication has not been an important factor when considering resources that nurtured their resilience.

4.6. Distinguishing Statements

Distinguishing statements refer to the statements that are highly ranked on a specific factor in comparison to its rank on the other factors. Distinguishing statements further enable the researcher to understand all the extracted factors and the ways in which they are unique. Factor one had five distinguishing statements, Factor Two had thirteen distinguishing statements, Factor Three had six distinguishing statements and Factor Four had six distinguishing statements. Tables 19, 20, 21 and 22 below presents the distinguishing statements for each factor. A short description of each factor's distinguishing statements will follow below each table.

Table 19 below lists the distinguishing statements for Factor One.

Table 19: Distinguishing Statements for Factor One

		Factor One		Factor Two		Factor Three		Factor Four	
Statement No.	**Distinguishing Statement**	**Q-Sort Value**	**zscore**	**Q-Sort Value**	**zscore**	**Q-Sort Value**	**zscore**	**Q-Sort Value**	**zscore**
2	I feel close to my father	3	1.75	1	0.29	2	0.88	2	0.84
17	I feel comfortable talking to my parents	2	1.17*	-1	-0.3	0	0.00	0	-0.14
20	My parents always talk to me and explain things that I do not understand	2	1.17*	0	0.00	-3	-1.44	-1	-0.50
19	My parents explained their decision to divorce to me	2	1.02	0	0.00	-3	-1.44	-2	-0.87
18	I have rules set by my parents and they hold me to it	1	0.83	-2	0.59	-2	-0.96	0	0.00

**significance at p<.01*

Factor one contained two statements which were significant at the $p < .01$ level and three statements that were significant at the $p < .05$ level. The four highest ranked distinguishing statements (statements 2, 17, 20 and statement 19) for factor one indicate the shared opinion of participants in this group that a close attachment to either one or both parents, characterized by transparent and supportive communication, have significantly contributed to their ability to cope and even thrive amidst exposure to parental divorce.

Table 20 below represents the distinguishing statements for Factor Two.

Table 20: Distinguishing Statements for Factor Two

	Factor One	Factor Two	Factor Three	Factor Four

Statement No.	Distinguishing Statement	Q-Sort Value	zscore	Q-Sort Value	zscore	Q-Sort Value	zscore	Q-Sort Value	zscore
28	I feel close to my teacher	-2	-0.81	3	1.77*	0	-0.08	0	-0.21
31	I feel close to my coach	-1	-0.48	3	1.77*	-2	-1.12	-2	-1.03
32	I remained in the same school after the divorce	-3	-1.75	3	1.77*	-3	-1.68	1	0.18
22	Teachers at my school help and support me	0	-0.33	3	1.48*	0	0.00	0	-0.18
39	I feel safe and happy at school	-1	-0.54	2	1.47*	-1	-0.56	-1	-0.66
24	I have fun at school	-2	-0.89	2	1.18*	-1	-0.24	-2	-1.14
25	I am happy to go to school	-3	-1.06	2	1.18*	-3	-1.36	-3	-1.50
30	I participate in activities after school	0	-0.27	2	1.18*	-1	-0.56	-1	-0.51
33	We stayed in the same home after the divorce	-3	-1.75	1	0.30*	-3	-1.36	-3	-1.77
19	My parents explained their decision to divorce to me	2	1.02	0	0.00	-3	-1.44	-2	-0.87
5	I feel close with my grandmother	1	0.58	-1	-0.30	3	1.68	2	1.18
16	I feel safe and loved at home	3	1.54	-2	0.88*	2	1.12	1	0.75
35	I feel safe in my neighbourhood	-2	-0.75	-3	-1.77	-1	-0.56	-2	-0.91

**significance at p<.01*

Factor Two had ten statements which were significant at the p < .01 level and the remaining three distinguishing statements were significant at the p < .05 level. The highest ranked statements (statement 28, 31, 32, 22 and 39) for this factor indicated that children who loaded on this factor reported a close attachment with their school and its personnel as a protective factor for adjustment and eventual resilience after the divorce of their parents. This group of participants did not agree to feeling safe in their current neighborhood or a close relationship with non-parental adults such as a grandmother as having an important contribution towards their capacity for resilience. Furthermore, these children neither agreed nor disagreed with the need to have been explained their parents' decision to divorce in order to be able to adjust and cope with their divorce, as shown by the score for statement 19.

Table 21: Distinguishing Statements for Factor Three

		Factor One		Factor Two		Factor Three		Factor Four	
Statement No.	Distinguishing Statement	Q-Sort Value	zscore	Q-Sort Value	zscore	Q-Sort Value	zscore	Q-Sort Value	z-score

23	I have close friends	0	-0.36	0	-0.29	3	1.68*	1	0.17
29	I feel close to my friends' parents	-2	-0.86	-2	-1.18	3	1.68*	-2	-1.18
6	I feel close with my grandfather	1	0.48	-1	-0.3	3	1.44	-1	-0.67
14	I see my grandmother often	-1	-0.72	-1	-0.57	2	1.36*	-1	-0.53
15	I see my grandfather often	-1	-0.72	-3	-1.77	2	1.12*	-3	-1.36
20	My parents always talk to me and explain things that I do not understand	2	1.17	0	0.00	-3	-1.44	-1	-0.50

**significance at p<.01*

For Factor Three, four statements were significant at the p < .01 level, whereas two distinguishing statements were significant at p < .05. Participants in this group highly ranked statements that signaled to the importance of having a close relationship with peers and other non–parental adults in attempting to adjust and cope with a changing familial dynamic. Furthermore, they ranked statement 20 negatively which indicated a disagreement with the statement that emphasizes the importance of having a transparent and supportive channel of communication between parents and the child in order to foster resilience.

Table 22: Distinguishing Statements for Factor Four

		Factor One		Factor Two		Factor Three		Factor Four	
Statement No.	**Distinguishing Statement**	**Q-Sort Value**	**zscore**	**Q-Sort Value**	**zscore**	**Q-Sort Value**	**zscore**	**Q-Sort Value**	**z-score**
4	My parents get along well	1	0.58	1	0.01	1	0.32	3	1.77*
11	My mother does not speak badly about my father in front of me	1	0.29	1	0.59	1	0.56	3	1.77*
12	My father does not speak badly about my mother in front of me	1	0.29	1	0.59	1	0.56	3	1.77*
27	I enjoy playing and having fun	0	-0.21	-2	-0.59	-1	-0.80	2	0.79*
26	I am happy and satisfied most of the time	-2	-0.80	-2	-0.88	-2	-1.12	1	0.66*
32	I remained in the same school after the divorce	-3	-1.75	3	1.77	-3	-1.68	1	0.18*

**significance at p<.01*

For Factor Four, all six distinguishing statements proved to be significant at the p < .01 level. As expected of participants who loaded significantly on this factor, they ranked statement 4, 11 and 12 highest. These distinguishing statements discuss effective

parental conflict styles and its importance in nurturing resilience within this group of children. Not only does the distinguishing statements of this factor emphasize effective conflict resolution strategies, but it also reports a strong agreement that parents' ability to refrain from involving children in conflict situations have greatly aided children's capacity to adjust to their new normal.

4.7. Consensus Statements

Consensus statements refer to statements found among participants loading on all four of the emerged factors. Hence, these statements do not distinguish between the different factors but shows commonalities.

Table 23 below lists the consensus statements.

Table 23: Consensus Statements

		Factor One		Factor Two		Factor Three		Factor Four	
Statement No.	**Consensus Statement**	**Q-Sort Value**	**zscore**	**Q-Sort Value**	**zscore**	**Q-Sort Value**	**zscore**	**Q-Sort Value**	**zscore**
3	My family loves me	3	1.6	2	0.6	1	0.56	2	1.04
7	I see my father regularly	2	1.41	1	0.59	1	0.8	1	0.58
21*	I believe I am able to achieve tasks at home and at school	-1	-0.44	0	-0.29	0	0	0	0.07
34*	We stayed in the same neighbourhood after the divorce	-3	-1.75	-3	-1.77	-3	-1.36	-3	1.77
35	I feel safe in my neighbourhood	-2	-0.75	-3	-1.77	-1	-0.56	-2	-0.91
37*	My friends and I follow the rules	-2	-0.93	-2	-1.18	-2	-0.88	-2	-0.91
38*	I mostly have happy thoughts	-1	-0.69	-2	-0.89	-1	-0.8	-1	-0.23
40*	I enjoy laughing with friends and family	0	-0.03	-1	-0.3	-1	-0.56	-1	-0.53

*Note. All listed statements are non-significant at p>.01, and those flagged with an * are also non-significant at p>.05.*

Participants across the four factors agreed with statement three "My family loves me" and statement seven "I see my father regularly", which indicates a stable, loving familial environment and frequent visitation with the noncustodial father as highly

valued by all participants who participated in this study, irrespective of their ethnicity or age.

On the other hand, statements which was most highly disagreed with across all four factors included statement 34 “We stayed in the same neighborhood after the divorce” as well as statement 35 “I feel safe in my neighborhood”.

4.8. Summary

The data analysis process employed for this study consisted of the scoring of the CYRM questionnaire as well as an analysis of the correlation matrix, factor analysis and emergent factors. The PQ-Method software (Schmolck, 2014) created a 12 × 12 array correlation matrix which presented the manner in which each participant’s Q-Sort correlated with the other participants’ sort. The results of this correlation matrix were then used in the factoring process.

The process of factor analysis included the construction of an unrotated factor matrix consisting of a set of eigenvalues. Furthermore, Varimax rotation was used to provide further clarification surrounding the defining sorts, the correlation between factor scores as well as all factors that emerged. Resultantly, four factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.00 and significant loadings represented 88% of the total study variance. Valid and reliable results were verified by the observation of standard errors and factor characteristics.

The four extracted factors aided in elucidating the main research objective that shaped this study – exploring and identifying protective factors of resilience in children post parental divorce. The four factors included i) Quality Parent-Child Relationships, ii) Effective Parent Conflict Resolution and Relationships, iii) Healthy School Attachment and iv) Strong Community Attachment. Furthermore, specific characteristics of each emergent factor was presented by discussing the distinguishing statements of each factor as well as the consensus statements shared among participants across all four factors. The distinguishing statements of each factor provided insightful information regarding the most impactful protective resources which nurtured resilience according to the participants. These protective factors included a close attachment to either one or both parents as well as supportive and transparent communication between the child and their parents; a secure attachment to their school environment and its personnel; a close relationship to peers as well as

nonparental adults including grandparents and lastly effective conflict resolution styles between parents and their ability to refrain from involving the children in their conflict. Participants across all factors emphasized two main protective factors as contributive to their resilient capacity, including a healthy and secure familial environment and a secure relationship with the noncustodial father.

The following chapter will discuss the findings and develop some conclusions about the results of the study. Thereafter, chapter six will address limitations and recommendations with regards to this study and future research regarding resilience among children exposed to parental divorce.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Guided by the objectives of the study, the discussion of the findings will explore how children aged 9-12 experience parental divorce by identifying the protective factors which contributed to their capacity for resilience. This discussion synthesizes the results from the study with that from the literature in order to create a contextualized understanding and comprehensive discussion of the results. Ultimately, the aim of this chapter is to interpret the findings presented in chapter four and provide a discussion on how these results postulate answers to the research objective of this study.

Resilience forms part of an ordinary characteristic of individuals and not an extraordinary one, as previously believed (American Psychological Association, 2002). Numerous protective factors contribute to a capacity for resilience within an individual which are both inherent to the child and from their environment or support network. The defining attributes of resilience requires the attainment of positive outcomes despite exposure to an adversity (Harris, 2008; Ungar, 2021). These positive outcomes include conditions indicative of resilience and has been identified as a constellation of interactive factors (Leipold & Greve, 2009) comprising of individual personality characteristics, as well as familial and community protective resources. These attributes emphasize the multisystemic nature of resilience in which the capacity for resilience of an individual depends on various interconnected and interactive systems (Ungar, 2021). According to findings by Masten and Cicchetti (2016), the capacity for resilience of a child largely depends on other systems and their individual capacity for resilience, especially within proximal systems such as the family unit and extended family members, the school, friends and the wider community. Hence, resilience cannot be limited to being defined as a trait but rather as interactive processes between different systems. Multiple unique interactions can contribute to the development and adjustment of an individual. Also, individuals all have unique experiences. As a result, trauma exposure tend to create diverging developmental pathways and outcomes as individuals are evidently likely to differ in their efforts to adapt to the exposed trauma (Masten, 2020). Hence, the study of resilience is context dependent.

As outlined in chapter four, the Q-sort study produced four factors that emerged from the q-analysis and factor reduction process. The factors were each given descriptive titles in accordance to the specific perceptions held by the participants regarding protective factors of resilience. The children who participated in this study fell into one of the following four factor groupings (i) Quality Parent-Child Relationships; (ii) Effective Parent Conflict Resolution and Relationship; (iii) Healthy School Attachment and (iv) Strong Community Attachment.

5.1. Factor 1: Quality Parent-Child Relationships

The largest proportion of the participants (33.3%), who participated in this study, significantly loaded onto Factor One. Participants who loaded on Factor One agreed more with statements which highlighted familial resources as protective factors of resilience. More specifically, these children's rankings indicated that they have a close, secure relationship with either one or both parents before and after the divorce; they viewed their family environment as safe, stable and loving and reported to have regular visitation with their noncustodial parent. Half of the participants (50%) who loaded significantly on Factor One were Afrikaans speaking children, whereas 25% of the participants were Oshiwambo speaking children and the remaining 25% speaks Nama/Damara. Within the Namibian context, this points to the cultural differences in terms of individualism and collectivism. The white population of Namibia tend to adapt the westernized notion of individualism and personal responsibility, which focuses primarily on the self and immediate family members. This stands in contrast to some of the collectivist cultures in Namibia, who tend to emphasise interconnectedness, interdependence, familial relationships as well as social conformity (Santos & Grossmann, 2017).

According to findings by Fleming (2002), parents play an important role in the development of children as the family context provides the first avenue of social experiences. The research findings by Masten (2014) supports these findings by stating that children who live in environments rich in protective resources such as highquality, supportive and loving parent-child relationships tend to have an increased capacity for resilience. According to the socialization theory, the quality of parenting plays the most crucial role in the adjustment and development of externalizing and internalizing behaviors among children who are attempting to cope with a parental divorce (Rodgers

& Rose, 2002). The findings by Fergus and Zimmerman (2005) as well as Lowenstein (2010) contest to this by emphasizing a secure attachment to either one or both parents as a mitigating, resilience enhancing factor amidst exposure to a trauma, such as parental divorce. It becomes apparent that the quality of parenting and support from attachment relationships play a pivotal role in nurturing resilience in children (Masten, 2020). Given that systems are embedded and interconnected within each other, as discussed above, the capacity for resilience within a child might be reflective of the resilience capacity of the caregiving or family system (Masten & Palmer, 2019). It therefore becomes vital to ensure that both the parents' and the children's acute distress responses to the divorce do not merge and become chronic (Wallerstein, 1991) which will become more complicated and challenging to recover from later on. Hence, enhanced support is pivotal for both the parents and the children.

Parents may receive valuable support from therapy in order to deal with their own sense of grief over the marriage as well as gaining some valuable coping strategies and alternative, healthier communication patterns between them as parents. Another valuable avenue of support for parents include access to alternative means of resolving disputes, including the process of mediation and post-divorce counselling. These types of post-divorce interventions is necessary in restructuring the family system. By creating a healthy, productive post-divorce environment, characterized by reduced parental conflict, parents can continue to meet the needs of their children more effectively and allow children to feel free to continue building a loving relationship with both parents (Carter, 2002). Furthermore, therapy aimed at challenging views and beliefs about divorce, in both parents and their family members might be beneficial in situations where conservative views of divorce cause shame or guilt as well as reduced support from family and other community members.

Furthermore, the findings indicated that the children who loaded on Factor One highlighted effective parent-child communication styles and quality parental support as being available to them during their attempts to adjust to the divorce. a supportive parent-child relationship characterized by translucent and consistent communication is vital for resilience within a child, especially in adjusting to transitions caused by parental divorce (Zambianchi & Bitti, 2013; Gentz et al., 2021).

According to research findings by Roehlkepartain & Syvertsen (2014), parents should commit to maintaining as much routine and familiarity as possible in order to combat effects of the associated changes brought on by their divorce. However, participants in this factor did not perceive this as an important contributor to resilience. Children who loaded on this factor may feel that familial stability and quality parent-child relationships have been more influential in nurturing their ability to adjust and even thrive amidst the exposure to parental divorce and might have been a sufficient protective resource to combat the impact of a changed environment (whether it be a change in school, home or neighborhood) which naturally tend to accompany a divorce.

5.2. Factor 4: Effective Parent Conflict Resolution and Relationships

Participants within the Factor Four grouping tended to agree more with statements that emphasized effective conflict resolution between parents, their ability to refrain from involving the child in conflict situations as well as maintaining a cooperative and civil relationship post-divorce.

An increasing body of literature confirms that parental conflict after divorce increases the risk of poorer outcomes for the children involved. These poorer outcomes may include regression, acting out fear or even parentification (faster, incomplete development). Findings by Greenstone & Leviton (2010) identified prolonged exposure to parental conflict both before and after a divorce as a potential threat to the well-being of children who are exposed to a parental divorce. Furthermore, children whose parental relationship remains characterized as hostile and aggressive are more inclined to present behavioral, emotional and social difficulties (Johnston, 1994). Furthermore, such ongoing conditions might cause children to resort to aligning with one parent against the other, feel compelled to sever the relationship with one parent and tend to experience subjective feelings of abandonment, heightened anxiety and feeling “caught in the middle” (Kelly & Johnston, 2005). Feeling caught in the middle tend to be exasperated by frequent requests by one parent for the child to send messages to the other parent, asking intrusive questions about the other parent or indirectly causing the child to feel that they have to align with one parent against the other (Kelly & Emery, 2003). Buchanan & Jahromi (2008) also supports this result in their findings which indicate that children whose parents cautioned not to involve the children in their conflict, demonstrated the same capacity for adjustment as children who are

exposed to a low-conflict environment. Therefore, it becomes imperative for parents to employ appropriate conflict resolution strategies in which children remain excluded from parental conflict as a means to increase their chances for resilience post parental divorce.

However, longitudinal studies have indicated that some of these difficulties in children may have pre-dated the divorce (Elliott & Richards, 1991). Hence, though parental conflict before, during and after a divorce is stressful for the children involved, there is conflicting evidence surrounding whether potential maladjustment resulting from parental conflict should be attributed to conflict during the marriage or only after its dissolution (Rodgers & Pryor, 2001).

These participants also indicated that their mothers are supportive and cooperative of visitations with their father (noncustodial parent). This not only speaks to the cooperative nature of the relationship between the parents of participants who loaded on factor four, but also highlights a common perspective among these participants that regular contact with their father has contributed to their ability to adjust to the new familial dynamic as a result of the divorce. This is supported by children who participated in studies by Lamb et al., (1997) who referred to the loss of regular contact with the noncustodial father as one of the saddest consequences of the divorce and desire more time with their father. Lowenstein (2010) supports this result in their findings by stating that the father-child relationship is just as important for emotional and behavioral adjustment as the mother-child relationship. Thus, it remains important for both parents to realize the importance of the father's nonresidential role for the children involved and hence strive to be as accommodative and encouraging of this relationship as possible.

5.3. Factor 2: Healthy School Attachment

On the other hand, participants who loaded on Factor Two focused on statements that tapped more into their wider community. These children tended to agree with statements that portrayed a healthy attachment to both their school and its personnel and hence, believed this to be a major contributive factor in nurturing their ability to adjust and even thrive amidst their new circumstances.

Numerous resilience-focused literature supports this notion by identifying schools as a mesosystemic resource contributory to resilience (Goldstein & Brooks, 2005; Masten

& Reed, 2005; Harvey, 2007; Gentz et al., 2021). Findings from Hetherington and Elmore (2003) further corrobates with our findings by indicating that a secure attachment to their school, tend to enable children affected by parental divorce to better cope with their new life circumstances. School environments defined by schedules and routine, along with the use of warm and consistent discipline have been strongly associated with emotional and cognitive adjustment post parental divorce (Hetherington & Elmore, 2003). Hence, children from unstable family circumstances greatly benefit from supportive school systems, its teachers and coaches (Hetherington & Elmore, 2003). Findings by Masten (2016) argues that an effective school environment has similar qualities to that of a family by nurturing resilience in children through modeling and developing supportive, caring relationships, problem-solving skills and a sense of belonging. According to Gentz, Zeng and Ruiz-Casares's (2021) research findings conducted within Namibia, positive familial and school relationships have a higher influence on the well-being of children compared to factors such as individual child characteristics and poverty. Hence, their study found that family and school relationships play a vital role in nurturing resilient capacities within children (Gentz et al., 2021).

Teachers play an integral part in promoting resilience among children coping with an adversity such as parental divorce (Theron & Engelbrecht, 2012). This acknowledgement of teachers' active role in promoting positive outcomes among affected children is embedded in their daily presence within the childs' microsystem, placing them in a favourable position to be able to impactful influence the process of resilience within these children (Theron & Engelbrecht, 2012). According to Rhodes and Roffman (2003) teachers and coaches form the second most influential and caring adult for children, second to their parents. Supportive and caring teachers is correlated with positive behavioural adjustment and academic success (Downey, 2008). Caring teachers that adapt an authoritative and consistant style of discipline as well as communicates and encourages attainable behavioral and scholastic expectations, have been found to promote positive adjustment in children coping with parental divorce (Hetherington & Elmore, 2003).

5.4. Factor 3: Strong Community Attachment

Similarly, participants within the Factor Three grouping's rankings were focused more on their community, however, the statements they agreed too most referred to healthy relationships with their grandparents, friends and friends' parents as important protective factors.

Graber et al. (2015) found that caring, non-parental adults and mentors play a significant role in promoting resilience among children exposed to parental divorce. These adults are able to provide these children with needed support during this vulnerable period. Furthermore, findings from Akhtar et al. (201) emphasize the quality of a close relationship between a child and their grandparents. Grandparents have the potential to positively influence the overall well-being of children by providing them with an affectionate and supportive environment during a time characterized by emotional turmoil (Akhtar et al., 201). Furthermore, rankings by participants who loaded on this factor indicated a strong attachment to their peers as another important protective factor in nurturing their resilience which supports the increasing focus and importance placed on peer friendships and acceptance that starts to form during middle childhood. Informal social support networks such as relationships with peers provide the necessary communication and support imperative for healthy adjustment amidst parental divorce (Helgeson & Lopez, 2010).

The children within this factor grouping did not agree that having a transparent and supportive channel of communication between them and their parents have been a significant protective factor in their attempts to cope with the divorce. This is not surprising, since some post-divorce households remain characterized by insufficient parental support and communication during and after the divorce process as the adult struggle to navigate and cope with the impact thereof themselves. In such instances, Graber et al., (2015) found that caring, nonparental adults and a secure social network equip children with the necessary protective resources to cope with their experiences.

5.5. Discussion of Consensus Statements

A common protective factor that was identified and deemed important by all participants across the four factors were a stable, loving familial environment as well as frequent visitation with the noncustodial father, irrespective of the age and ethnicity of the children who took part in this study. Family structure is influential, but the most

impactful characteristic of a family is how each member cares for the other, which refers to the family functioning (Turner et al., 2012). A well-functioning family structure exhibits the ability to meet specific needs presented during middle childhood. Among these are physical needs, such as food and shelter and the need for positive peer and nonparental adult relationships which is aided by parents choosing a good school and neighborhood and allowing frequent visitation with grandparents, friends and the noncustodial parent. Also, it is imperative that children experience a sense of safety, stability and peace within their family structure (Turner et al., 2012). Within a divorced family, peace and stability might include restricted exposure to parental conflict, cooperative and civil parental relationships as well as frequent, encouraged visitation with the noncustodial parent. Hence, if a divorced family is able to function well and provide and facilitate these core familial tasks, it holds the capacity to buffer against the impact of a reduced standard of living as well as facilitate the necessary emotional and social support in cases where parents need to take on more work and therefore less physically and emotionally available to the needs of their children (Berger, 2002). It also holds the capacity to provide the necessary feeling of safety and security which might explain why participants who took part in this study did not regard feeling safe in their neighborhood (statement 35) as an important factor in itself when considering resources that nurture their capacity to adjust to the emotional and physical transitions characteristic of a divorce.

Furthermore, participants across all four factors strongly disagreed and did not find remaining in the same neighborhood after the divorce as an important contributing factor to their attempts to adjust. Since these participants have all identified a strong attachment to either their parents, non-parental adults or fellow peers it can be deduced that having a healthy social and emotional attachment contributes more significantly to the capacity for resilience than retaining familiarity within the child's physical environment post-divorce. This indicates that the presence of healthy attachments has the added capacity to nurture the ability of these children to adjust to the physical transitions of a divorce – whether it be a change of neighborhood, home or school.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Conclusions

Some conclusions are apparent from the findings discussed above. Emphasis is directed to specific protective factors of resilience which emerged from the study.

Firstly, the findings emphasized the notion that resilience is not inherent to certain individuals and absent in others but rather involves thoughts, actions and environmental resources that can be developed and utilized by anyone, even children (American Psychological Association, 2002). Furthermore, the findings highlighted the multisystemic nature of resilience by proving that the capacity for resilience depends on multiple systems and resources not only within the individual, but also within their significant relationships with other systems within their unique environment (Masten, 2020).

A safe, stable and secure family environment has been identified by all participants across all four factors, regardless of age and ethnicity, as one of the most important contributing factors to healthy child adjustment and development. In this, it is evident that parents continue to play a critical role in nurturing resiliency in children. Another commonly shared perspective among all participants referred to regular visitations with their noncustodial father. It therefore is evident that it remains pivotal for both parents to establish a consistent, non-conflicted arrangement for transporting children between homes in order to facilitate adjustment to these new circumstances.

Factors with the highest number of participant loadings were Factor One and Factor Four, namely the factors which referred to a quality parent-child attachment as well as effective parental conflict resolution and relationships. Hence, the parent system remains pivotal in promoting resilience capacity in children. Therefore, the capacity for resilience can be enhanced when children are granted the freedom from exposure to parental conflict and the privilege to witness a cooperative and civil understanding

between their parents. Parents therefore need to focus on enhancing the parenting relationship to their children, while navigating a new relationship between themselves that remains civil and cooperative. In light of this it remains vital for parents to have access to support systems, in the form of therapeutic support, education, family members and the wider community as well as access to alternative means of resolving conflict.

The other two factors, with significant loadings, were Factor Two and Factor Three. Both of these factor groupings encompassed more environmental resources as enhancing the capacity for resilience among children exposed to parental divorce. These findings reinforce the importance of contact with extended family support systems, schools, peers as well as the wider community. These extra-familial individuals can potentially provide a source of stability and safety for children. Furthermore, parents and nonparental adults can be positive forces in enhancing resilience in children by continuously ensuring them that they are loved and not to be blamed for the divorce. These findings also point to the importance of ensuring children's time with friends and encouragement to continue with extra-curricular activities.

It becomes evident that exposure to an adversity has the potential to alter the course of children's development, this certainly is not limited to only negative outcomes. Posttraumatic growth becomes possible when stress nurtures plasticity within the development of children exposed to trauma that produces positive consequences (McEwen, 2016). Therefore, some of the most effective interventions have resulted from focusing on altering the course of development among vulnerable children in order to instigate opportunities and learning experiences that may create lasting positive effects (Masten, 2020). Multiple ways have been suggested to enhance resilience capacity among children of divorce. Support needs to extend beyond that of the nuclear family to include social and emotional support from extended family members, peer groups and the wider community and school in order to accomplish adjustment and eventual resilience post-divorce.

6.2. Limitations

Statistical data regarding divorce within the Namibian context remains greatly limited which deemed it challenging to make adequate comparisons nationally and

internationally. This further caused difficulty in demystifying the true scale of divorce within Namibia as well as being able to identify which population group and age group of children are mostly exposed and affected by divorce within Namibia. Local literature on resilience post parental divorce remains limited. The researcher therefore had to consult with literature from both neighbouring countries as well as internationally. Furthermore, the study aims to focus only on the small population of legally divorced couples. Within the Namibian context, this poses as a limitation due to the fact that other forms of unions, including customary marriages and consensual unions exist, which will inadvertently have an impact on child adjustment and development should dissolution take place (Legal Assistance Centre, 2005).

Moreover, results obtained from this study will lack in generalisability due to its small sample size. The majority of participants (33%) reported English as their home language, with a few speaking Afrikaans (25%), Nama/Damara (25%) and Oshiwambo (17%). Moreover, 7 of the 12 participants were white. This negatively affects the generalizability of the research findings. Furthermore, the study was unable to incorporate individuals from the wide spectrum of socioeconomic backgrounds and was mostly limited to the middle class. Also, participants were only employed from within the Khomas Region and did not include other regions within Namibia. Hence, the generalizability and representativeness of the study remains limited.

This study was conducted cross-sectionally, which limits the researchers' capacity to adequately explore the complex interaction between the identified protective factors as well as the impact of time and pre-divorce conditions on both the identified protective factors as well as the children's capacity for resilience. Although this study aims to recognize multivariate explanations of children's post-divorce adjustment, a limitation of such approach is the inability to investigate the comprehensive effect of each of these factors, independently.

Lastly, the outbreak of COVID-19 greatly influenced institutions and individuals' willingness to participate in the data collection process. Furthermore, the emotional impact and social restrictions which accompanied the pandemic might have greatly influenced how the participants sorted the q-statements and hence, influencing the final results of the study.

Nonetheless, these findings significantly contribute to the existing body of divorce and resilience research among children in that very little contemporary research explore divorce through a positive lens and even less so focus on the perspective of the child as the participant. Furthermore, very little resilience research in general exist within the Namibian context. This study is also among the few that incorporated QMethodology in exploring the perspectives of children on positive factors that nurture their resilience amidst parental divorce.

Hopefully, the results of this study raise awareness on important protective factors to be focused on by all parties involved and impacted by a divorce in order to improve children's capacity to thrive amidst experiencing the inevitable impacts of divorce. As limited research within the Namibian context exist, this study has the potential to provide the foundation for further exploration as well as consideration when implementing post-divorce interventions and attempting future research endeavors on the subject matter.

6.3. Recommendations

It is critical for support to extend beyond the perimeters of the nuclear family and include efforts to nurture stable relationships with extended family members, peer groups, school and the wider community. Hence, as a recommendation for practitioners, therapeutic interventions which are directed towards both the child, the parents and the wider social support network will go a long way in promoting the necessary support required to promote healing and resilience. (Masten, 2020).

Findings by O'Dougherty, Masten and Narayan (2013) also reported that successful intervention strategies focus on ecological systems approach and are culturally appropriate. Ultimately, intervention strategies would be most beneficial if it focuses on supporting or enhancing key protective factors.

Interventions concerning parents should primarily be centered around promoting good parenting practices as they evidently present the most significant influence on children's capacity to adjust and thrive amidst exposure to parental divorce (Masten & Palmer, 2019). This is inclusive of a cooperative and supportive relationship between the parents with regards to visitations with the father (non-custodial parent). Parenting workshops and weekly support groups for divorced parents would greatly benefit

attempts at equipping parents with the necessary tools to provide their children with an environment that nurtures their capacity for resilience.

School based interventions also have the potential to nurture resilience in children exposed to adversity (Cefai et al., 2021). Such school-based resilience enhancing initiatives are most successful when it encourages connectivity, learning and is sensitive to diversity (Cefai et al., 2021). Rutter (2015) explains that exposure to learning opportunities might provide these children with the required competencies to better equip them to deal with adversity and ultimately function better despite such challenges. Furthermore, parents play a crucial role in promoting resilience within school children, hence, school-based interventions become more effective when supported by complementary home-based interventions (Weare & Nind, 2011). Participation by parents not only reinforce resilience competencies fostered at school, but also helps to transfer these competencies into other contexts as well, including the home, peer groups and the wider community. It is recommended that schools utilize life skills classes to provide effective support for, and provide tools which will nurture resilience in children faced by parental divorce. Counselling sessions within the school setting would be able to provide children who have been affected by parental divorce with access to the necessary therapeutic support to both deal with the associated stressors and to nurture adjustment and eventual resilience.

Moreover, it becomes important for teachers to be acknowledged and receive the necessary training to develop into caring adults in order to be better equipped to engage with youth in an attempt to promote resilience amidst exposure to adversity (Theron & Engelbrecht, 2012). Teacher preparation programs need to focus on instilling a Rogerian mentality of unconditional positive regard among teachers as well as developing vital skills such as listening and counseling proficiencies (Theron & Engelbrecht, 2012). Furthermore, it is important for teachers to be sensitized to the contextual uniqueness of resilience in order for them to be able to understand and utilize the coping strategies of each child within their unique context (Theron & Engelbrecht, 2012), especially within a culturally diverse country such as Namibia. The understanding that resilience exists within a social ecology, will better equip teachers to realize that their efforts alone will not instill resilience within youth but

require the aid of referral networks and the ability to map local and culturally relevant resources (Kretzmann & Mc Knight, 1993). Finally, Cefai, Downes and Cavioni (2021) emphasized the importance of ensuring that teacher's interpersonal needs and resilience is addressed in order to enable them to be emotionally, psychologically and socially able to effectively attend to the social and emotional needs of their students. Therapeutically facilitated support groups for teachers of each school could provide a useful platform within which teachers could receive the necessary professional and peer support as well as necessary coping techniques to adequately be able to attend to the emotional needs of distressed children.

Some methodological recommendations are suggested for future studies. Firstly, the population should include more participants from a wider socioeconomic demographic in order to improve the study's representativeness and generalizability. These findings may aid in the establishment of intervention programs tailored to the unique characteristics of each family in an attempt to confront the continued supremacy of Western research concerning resilience in order to decolonize knowledge surrounding this construct as well as remove discourses that privilege a certain socioeconomic profile (Ungar, 2006) but rather incorporate cultural practices and processes that nurture resilience within unique contexts (Masten, 2020).

Furthermore, future research may benefit from exploring the complex dynamic and resultant impact of siblings and stepparents on children's capacity for resilience. Also, comparing the child and both parents' perspective on protective factors of resilience might provide significant insight into how these perspectives differ and influence how the divorce as well as parenting is handled.

The findings of this study should be corroborated by similar studies in the future, especially longitudinal, pre-post-divorce studies in order to be able to assess the impact of circumstances before the divorce on children's post-divorce adjustment and capacity for resilience. According to Kalisch et al., (2017), longitudinal studies need to incorporate a challenging period (divorce procedure) in the lives of child participants in order to explore the impact thereof on their mental health and to be able to determine the factors that enable the affected children to remain healthy despite exposure to a stressor.

It is evident that divorce has become a norm within society, even within the Namibian context, therefore it remains crucial that conservative Namibian views surrounding divorce be challenged in order to maximize familial and community support for both the parents and the children affected by the divorce. Furthermore, adequate awareness should be brought to the various protective factors that stand to nurture and increase the children of our society's ability to not only adjust to their new familial structure, but eventually thrive amidst the risk factors associated with such a big life transition.

Conclusively, though divorce will continue to be a traumatic life transition for many Namibian children, it is evident that our children have the potential to adjust and even thrive after such an experience given that individual protective factors are present and they have access to valuable support, cohesion and routine from both their family and the wider community. It therefore falls upon us, as a community, to identify and nurture these protective factors within our children in contribute to the healthy adjustment and mental health of each child impacted by a parental divorce. As Eric Greitens once said "No one escapes pain, fear and suffering. Yet from pain comes wisdom, from fear comes courage and from suffering can come strength – if we have the virtue of resilience".

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Appendix A: Ethical Clearance Certificate

Ethical Clearance Reference Number: HREC-NH/01/09/2020 **Date:** 24-09-

UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

2020

This Ethical Clearance Certificate is issued by the University of Namibia Research- Ethics Committee (UREC) in accordance with the University of Namibia's Research Ethics Policy and Guidelines. Ethical approval is given in respect of undertakings contained in the Research Project outlined below. This Certificate is issued on the recommendations of the ethical evaluation done by the Faculty/Centre/Campus Research & Publications Committee sitting with the Postgraduate Studies Committee.

Title of Project: EXPLORING THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF RESILIENCE AMONG NAMIBIAN CHILDREN IN MIDDLE CHILDHOOD WHO HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO PARENTAL DIVORCE

Nature/Level of Project: M.A. (NON-HEALTH) (NQF9)

Researcher: JANINE OOSTHUIZEN

Student Number: 201208557

Faculty: HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Supervisor(s): DR S. GENTZ

Take note of the following:

(a) Any significant changes in the conditions or undertakings outlined in the approved Proposal must be communicated to the UREC. An application to make amendments may be necessary.

(b) Any breaches of ethical undertakings or practices that have an impact on ethical conduct of the research must be reported to the UREC.

(c) The Principal Researcher must report issues of ethical compliance to the UREC (through the Chairperson of the Faculty/Centre/Campus Research & Publications Committee) at the end of the Project or as may be requested by UREC.

(d) The UREC retains the right to:

(i) Withdraw or amend this Ethical Clearance if any unethical practices (as outlined in the Research Ethics Policy) have been detected or suspected,

(ii) Request for an ethical compliance report at any point during the course of the research.

REC wishes you the best in your research.

Prof. H.L. Beyer, Deputy Chair: HREC-NH
pp Chair: HREC-NH

Appendix B: Caregiver Informed Consent

UNAM
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EXPLORING THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF RESILIENCE AMONG NAMIBIAN CHILDREN EXPOSED TO PARENTAL DIVORCE

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: JANINE OOSTHUIZEN

ADDRESS: UNAM, 340 MANDUME NDEMUFAYO AVE, PIONEERSPARK, WINDHOEK

CONTACT NUMBER: 0811283908

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Your child is being invited to participate in a research study conducted by Janine Oosthuizen from the University of Namibia. This study will contribute to the researcher's completion of her master's thesis.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study will be to explore and describe the unique reactions, perspectives and experiences of resilience among children who have been affected by parental divorce.

Participation and Withdrawal

Your child is regarded as a key informant based on their first-hand experience of parental divorce as well as resilience-enabling resources. Your child will therefore be able to purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem of the study.

Should you decide to allow your child to participate in this research you will be asked to sign this consent form once all your questions have been answered to your satisfaction. This study consists of a semi-structured interview that will be administered to individual participants in Bloemfontein. Your child will be asked to sort a number of cards (representing visual statements) in accordance with a specific instruction into a pre-designed matrix, which has one area to place statements that are most agreeable on the one side, and another area for most disagreeable statements. Additionally, your child will be given the opportunity to elaborate on the positioning of their statements, which will be recorded as an additional source of data. Participation in this study will require a maximum of one hour of your child's time. The researcher does not perceive more than minimal risks from your child's involvement in this study (that is, no risk beyond the risk associated with everyday life). However, in order to prevent harm and secure beneficence, the researcher will be mindful of personal histories and possible effects on the child throughout the process and continuously monitor the wellbeing of the child.

Your child's participation is entirely voluntary and they are under no obligation to participate in this study. Your child will not suffer any consequences or loss for choosing not to participate. Participants will also not be rewarded for participating. It is also the right of your child to withdraw at any time with no repercussions.

Confidentiality

All steps will be taken to uphold confidentiality during this study. There is one exception to confidentiality that we need to make you aware of. In certain research studies, it is our ethical responsibility to report situations of child abuse, child neglect, or any life-threatening situation to appropriate authorities. However, we are not seeking this type of information in our study nor will your child be asked questions about these issues.

Questions about the Study

If you have any questions or concerns during the time of your child's participation in this study, or after its completion or you would like to receive a copy of the final aggregate results of this study, please contact either the researcher or her research supervisor.

Declaration by guardian

By signing below, I ……..……. agree that my child can take part in a research study entitled *Exploring the Lived Experiences of Resilience among Namibian Children Exposed to Parental Divorce*.

I declare that:

a) I have read or had read to me this information and consent form and it is written in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.

b) I have had a chance to ask questions and all my questions have been adequately answered.

c) I understand that taking part in this study is **voluntary** and I have not been pressurised to take part.

d) I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.

e) I may be asked to leave the study before it has finished, if the study doctor or researcher feels it is in my best interests, or if I do not follow the study plan, as agreed to.

Signed at (*place*) .....…..…….. on (*date*) ……...…….. 2019.

.....	.....
Signature of participant	Signature of witness

Declaration by investigator

I *(name)* ……. declare that:

- I explained the information in this document to ……..

- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above
- I did/did not use a interpreter. (*If a interpreter is used then the interpreter must sign the declaration below.*

Signed at (*place*) .....…..…….. on (*date*) ……...…….. 2019.

....

Signature of investigator Signature of witness

You can contact the Centre for Research and Publications **at +264 061 2063061; pclaassen@unam.na** *if you have any concerns or complaints that have not been adequately addressed by the investigator. You will receive a copy of this information and consent form for your own records.*

Appendix C: Child Assent Form

UNAM
UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

EXPLORING THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF RESILIENCE AMONG NAMIBIAN CHILDREN EXPOSED TO PARENTAL DIVORCE

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: JANINE OOSTHUIZEN

ADDRESS: UNAM, 340 MANDUME NDEMUFAYO AVE, PIONEERSPARK, WINDHOEK

CONTACT NUMBER: 0811283908

ASSENT FORM

What is research?

Research is something we do to find new knowledge about the way things and people work. We use research projects or studies to help find out more about children and the things that affect their lives, their school, their families and their health. Research also helps us to find better ways of helping or treating children who are unhappy. We do this to try and make the world a better place!

Who is doing the research?

Miss Janine will be doing this study. She will answer any questions that you have about the study.

What is this research project all about?

When parents decide that they no longer want to be married, it could be a very difficult time for the whole family, including the children. However, some children are able to bounce back from this difficult time and become happy again. Miss Janine is doing this study to find out how children are able to bounce back and become happy again, even though their parents are no longer married and living together.

Why have I been invited to take part in this research?

You have parents who are no longer married. Even though this was a sad time for you, you were able to bounce back again and be happy. There are many other children whose parents are also not married anymore, but who are not able to bounce back to being happy as you have. This study is trying to find out why some children are able to be happy again after their parents are no longer married so that Miss Janine can use the results to help other children who have not been able to bounce back and be happy after their parents are no longer married. **What will happen to me in this study?**

If you agree to be part of this study and your parents give their permission, Miss Janine will ask you a question and you may answer the question by sorting some cards that have a picture on them. Miss Janine may also ask you to explain the way you are sorting the cards. You can also tell Miss Janine anything else that you are thinking off while you sort the cards.

Can anything bad happen to me?

No harm can come to you from participating in this study. However, the meeting with Miss Janine might make you tired. You may then decide that you do not want to finish the meeting

with Miss Janine. If so, you may tell her that you want to stop. Some of the cards might make you sad or uncomfortable. If so, you may also tell Miss Janine to stop if you do not want to continue anymore. To ensure that you are protected, you may ask to speak to a professional person that helps people who feel sad.

Can anything good happen to me?

You will not receive anything for taking part in the study. But Miss Janine does hope that the results of the study may help other children who are sad because their parents are not married anymore.

Will anyone know I am in the study?

Only Miss Janine and your parents will know you are in the study. When the study is finished, Miss Janine will write a report about what was learned from the study. This report will not say your name or that you were in the study. You and your parents do not have to tell anyone you are in the study if you don't want to.

Who can I talk to about the study?

You can ask Miss Janine any questions that you might have about the study. You can also talk to your parents about any questions that you have if you do not want to ask Miss Janine yourself.

What if I do not want to do this?

It is completely up to you, even if your parents have agreed to your participation. Miss Janine only wants you to take part if you voluntarily decide to do so. If you would like to take part and then change your mind it will be OK to withdraw from the study. You can stop at any time and don't have to say why you want to stop. Nothing bad will happen to you if you choose to withdraw from the study.

Do you understand this research study and are you willing to take part in it?

 .  .

Has the researcher answered all your questions?

 .  .

Do you understand that you can pull out of the study at any time?

 .  .

Thank you for your participation.

Schalkwyk.

Janine van Schalkwyk

Signature of Child: _____ Date: _____

Appendix D: Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture Research Approval

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE

Tel: +264 61 -2933202
Fax: +264 61- 2933922
Enquiries: G. Munene
Email: gm 12munene@yahoo.co.uk File no: 13/2/9/1

Luther Street, Govt. Office Park
Private Bag 13186
Windhoek
Namibia

Ms Janine Oosthuizen
Khomas
Email: janineoosthuizen21@gmail.com

Dear Ms Oosthuizen,

SUBJECT: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT AN ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN KIIOMAS REGION

The Ministry wishes to acknowledge receipt of your email seeking permission to conduct an academic research at schools Tor your Master's Degree study which is focussing on: "Exploring the Lived Experiences of Resilience among Namibian Children in Middle Childhood who have been Exposed to Parental Divorce " at Schools in the Khomas Region.

Permission is hereby granted to you provided you seek for further clearance from the Regional Director of Education, Arts and Culture at the Khomas Region where you wish to conduct your research to ensure that:

- That permission is sought from the school principals and parents;
- Should not interrupt teaching and learning;
- That participation is voluntary.

Furthermore, you are kindly requested to share your research findings with the Ministry after completion of the research project. You may contact Mr G. Munene at the Directorate: Programmes and Quality Assurance (PQA) for submission of your research findings at the above indicated details.

We wish you the best in conducting your research and the Ministry looks forward to hearing from you upon completion of your study.

Yours Sincerely,

Sanet L. Steenkamp
EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR

Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture
Office of the
Executive Director
03 DEC 2020
03/12/2020
Date
Tel: 061-293 3111
Fax: 061-253671
Private Bag 13186, Windhoek, Namibia

All official correspondences must be addressed to the Executive Director.

Appendix E: Q-Statements

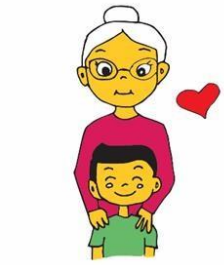
I feel close with my mother.

I feel close with my father.

My parents get along well.

I feel close with my grandmother.

My family loves me. I feel close with my grandfather.



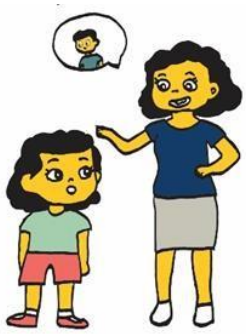
I see my father regularly.

I felt close to my father before their divorce.

I felt close to my mother before their divorce.

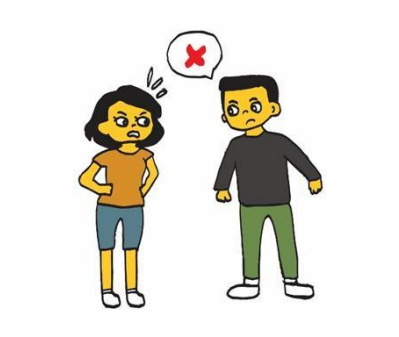
My mother is happy to allow visits badly with my father.

My mother does not speak about my father in front of me.

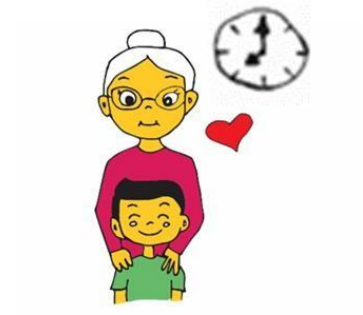


My father does not speak badly about my father in front of me.

My parents fight less now than



I see my grandmother a lot.

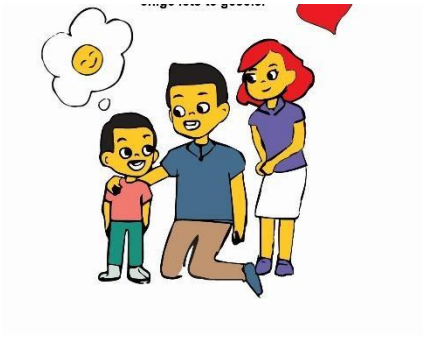


I see my grandfather a lot. before the

divorce.

I feel safe and loved at home.

I feel comfortable talking to



I have rules at home that I have to follow.

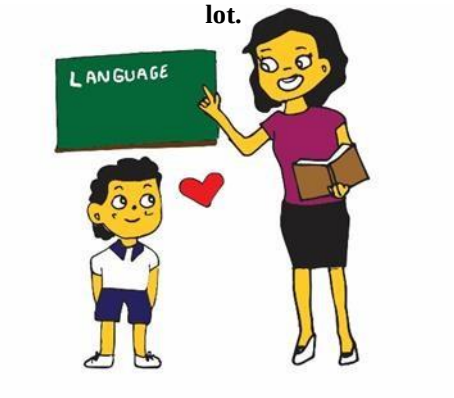
my parents about anything.

My parents explained their decision to divorce to me.

I believe I am able to achieve tasks things that I do not understand.

My parents always talk to me and explain at home and at school.

Teachers at my school help me a lot.



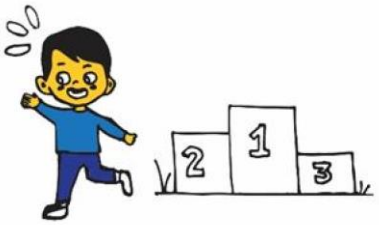
I have close friends.

I have fun at school.

I am happy to go to school. and satisfied most of

I am happy the time.

I enjoy playing and having fun. activities.



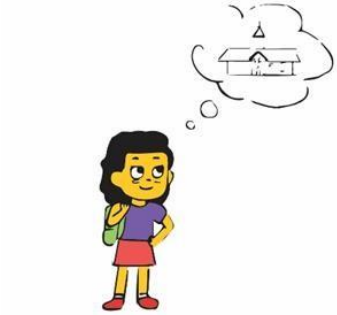
I feel close to my teacher.

I feel close to my friend's parents.

I participate in after school

I feel close to my coach.

I remained in the same school after the divorce.



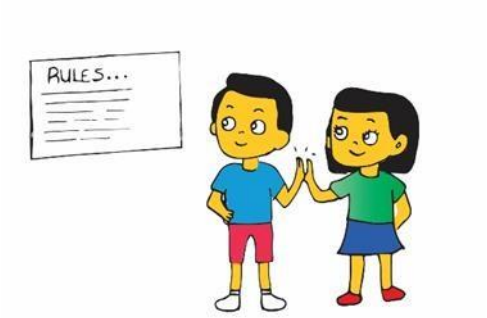
We stayed in the same house after the divorce.

We stayed in the same neighbourhood after the divorce.

I feel safe in my neighbourhood.

I have enough to eat every day.

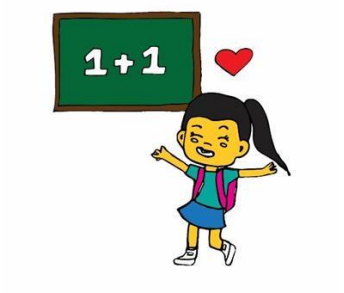
My friends and I follow the rules.



I enjoy laughing with my friends and family.

I mostly have happy thoughts.

I feel happy and safe at school.



Appendix F: CYRM Research Instruments

Child & Youth Resilience Measure-Revised (CYRM-R)

CYRM-R (child)				
Please choose one answer for each question. There are no right or wrong answers.		No [1]	Sometimes [2]	Yes [3]
1	Do you share with people around you?			
2	Is doing well in school important to you?			
3	Do you know how to behave/act in different situations (such as school, home, holy places)?			
4	Do you feel that your parent(s)/caregiver(s) know where you are and what you are doing all of the time?			
5	Do you feel that your parent(s)/caregiver(s) know a lot about you (for example, what makes you happy, what makes you scared)?			
6	Is there enough to eat in your home when you are hungry?			
7	Do other children like to play with you?			
8	Do you talk to your family/caregiver(s) about how you feel (for example when you are hurt or feeling scared)?			
9	Do you have friends that care about you?			
10	Do you feel you fit in with other children?			

11	Do you think your family/caregiver(s) cares about you when times are hard (for example, if you are sick or have done something wrong)?			
12	Do you think your friends care about you when times are hard (for example if you are sick or have done something wrong)?			
13	Are you treated fairly?			
14	Do you have chances to show others that you are growing up and can do things by yourself?			
15	Do you feel safe when you are with your family/caregiver(s)?			
16	Do you have chances to learn things that will be useful when you are older (like cooking, working, and helping others)?			
17	Do you like the way your family/caregiver(s) celebrates things (like holidays or learning about your culture)?			

CYRM-R (youth)

To what extent do the following statements apply to you?
There are no right or wrong answers.

		No [1]	Sometimes [2]	Yes [3]
1	I get along with people around me	1	2	3
2	Getting an education is important to me	1	2	3
3	I know how to behave/act in different situations (such as school, home and church)	1	2	3
4	My parent(s)/caregiver(s) really look out for me	1	2	3
5	My parent(s)/caregiver(s) know a lot about me (for example, who my friends are, what I like to do)	1	2	3
6	If I am hungry, there is enough to eat	1	2	3
7	People like to spend time with me	1	2	3
8	I talk to my family/caregiver(s) about how I feel (for example when I am hurt or sad)	1	2	3
9	I feel supported by my friends	1	2	3
10	I feel that I belong/belonged at my school	1	2	3

11	My family/caregiver(s) care about me when times are hard (for example if I am sick or have done something wrong)	1	2	3
12	My friends care about me when times are hard (for example if I am sick or have done something wrong)	1	2	3
13	I am treated fairly in my community	1	2	3
14	I have chances to show others that I am growing up and can do things by myself	1	2	3
15	I feel safe when I am with my family/caregiver(s)	1	2	3
16	I have chances to learn things that will be useful when I am older (like cooking, working, and helping others)	1	2	3
17	I like the way my family/caregiver(s) celebrates things (like holidays or learning about my culture)	1	2	3

APPENDIX G: Socio-Demographic Questionnaire

Socio-demographic Questionnaire

Code: ☐

For every question, please tick [√] the box with the answer that describes you.

1. What is your age?

☐ 9
☐ 10
☐ 11
☐ 12

2. What is your gender?

☐ Male
☐ Female

3. In what grade are you?

- [ ] Grade 1
- [ ] Grade 2
- [ ] Grade 3
- [ ] Grade 4
- [ ] Grade 5
- [ ] Grade 6

4. Please tick all of the people who live in your home?

- [ ] Mother
- [ ] Father
- [ ] Grandmother
- [ ] Grandfather
- [ ] Brother
- [ ] Sister
- [ ] Aunt
- [ ] Uncle
- [ ] Cousin

5. What language do you speak at home most of the time (please mark one)?

- [ ] Oshiwanbo
- [ ] Otjiherero
- [ ] Afrikaans
- [ ] Nama/Damara
- [ ] English
- [ ] Nyemba
- [ ] Silozi
- [ ] Rukwangali
- [ ] Portuguese
- [ ] Another language, tell us which: _____

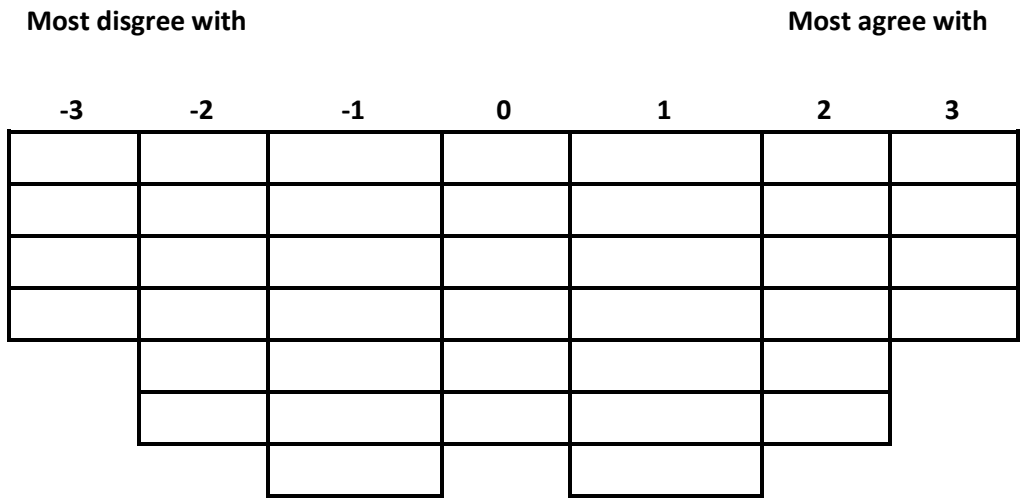
6. What is your race?

☐ Coloured

☐ Black African White

☐ **APPENDIX H:**

Distribution Grid



APPENDIX I: Tables

Table 5: Factor 1 Normalized Factor Scores

Number of Statement	Statement	z-score
1	I feel close to my mother	1.748
2	I feel close to my father	1.748
3	My family loves me	1.601
16	I feel safe and loved at home	1.544
7	I see my father regularly	1.415
8	I felt close to my father before their divorce	1.166
9	I felt close to my mother before their divorce	1.166
17	I feel comfortable talking to my parents	1.166
20	My parents always talk to me and explain things that I do not understand	1.166
19	My parents explained their decision to divorce to me	1.019
18	I have rules set by my parents and they hold me to it	0.832
4	My parents get along well	0.583
5	I feel close with my grandmother	0.583
6	I feel close with my grandfather	0.48
12	My father does not speak badly of my mother in front of me	0.289
11	My mother does not speak badly of my father in front of me	0.289
10	My mother is happy to allow visits with my father	0.147
40	I enjoy laughing with friends and family	-0.033
13	My parents fight less now than before	-0.068
27	I enjoy playing and having fun	-0.206
30	I participate in extramural activities	-0.274
22	Teachers at my school help and support me	-0.333
23	I have close friends	-0.364
21	I believe I am able to achieve tasks at home and at school	-0.441
31	I feel close to my coach	-0.479
39	I feel safe and happy at school	-0.538
38	I mostly have happy thoughts	-0.69
14	I see my grandmother often	-0.72
15	I see my grandfather often	-0.72
36	I have enough food to eat every day	-0.724

35	I feel safe in my neighborhood	-0.755
26	I am happy and satisfied most of the time	-0.799
28	I feel close to my teacher	-0.814
29	I feel close to my friends' parents	-0.857
24	I have fun at school	-0.891
37	My friends and I follow the rules	-0.926
25	I am happy to go to school	-1.063
33	We stayed in the same home after the divorce	-1.748
32	I remained in the same school after the divorce	-1.748
34	We stayed in the same neighborhood after the divorce	-1.748

Table 8: Factor 4 Normalized Factor Scores

Number of Statement	Statement	z-score
4	My parents get along well	1.77
11	My mother does not speak badly of my father in front of me	1.77
12	My father does not speak badly of my mother in front of me	1.77
13	My parents fight less now than before	1.524
10	My mother is happy to allow visits with my father	1.427
5	I feel close with my grandmother	1.18
3	My family loves me	1.044
2	I feel close to my father	0.836
1	I feel close to my mother	0.836
27	I enjoy playing and having fun	0.792
16	I feel safe and loved at home	0.752
26	I am happy and satisfied most of the time	0.662
9	I felt close to my mother before their divorce	0.59
8	I felt close to my father before their divorce	0.59
7	I see my father regularly	0.584
32	I remained in the same school after the divorce	0.177
23	I have close friends	0.166
21	I believe I am able to achieve tasks at home and at school	0.071
36	I have enough food to eat every day	0.045
18	I have rules set by my parents and they hold me to it	0.000
17	I feel comfortable talking to my parents	-0.142
22	Teachers at my school help and support me	-0.181
28	I feel close to my teacher	-0.208
38	I mostly have happy thoughts	-0.226
20	My parents always talk to me and explain things that I do not understand	-0.504
30	I participate in extramural activities	-0.508
40	I enjoy laughing with friends and family	-0.525
14	I see my grandmother often	-0.534

39	I feel safe and happy at school	-0.655
6	I feel close with my grandfather	-0.668
19	My parents explained their decision to divorce to me	-0.874
35	I feel safe in my neighborhood	-0.907
37	My friends and I follow the rules	-0.907
31	I feel close to my coach	-1.033
24	I have fun at school	-1.136
29	I feel close to my friends' parents	-1.18
15	I see my grandfather often	-1.361
25	I am happy to go to school	-1.499
34	We stayed in the same neighborhood after the divorce	-1.77
33	We stayed in the same home after the divorce	-1.77

Table 11: Position of each item between Factor One and Factor Four factor arrays

	Factor	
	1	**4**
1. I feel close to my mother	3	2
2. I feel close to my father	3	2
3. My family loves me	3	2
4. My parents get along well	1	3
5. I feel close with my grandmother	1	2
6. I feel close with my grandfather	1	-1
7. I see my father regularly	2	1
8. I felt close to my father before their divorce	2	1
9. I felt close to my mother before their divorce	2	1
10. My mother is happy to allow visits with my father	1	2
11. My mother does not speak badly of my father in front of me	1	3
12. My father does not speak badly of my mother in front of me	1	3
13. My parents fight less now than before	0	3
14. I see my grandmother often	-1	-1
15. I see my grandfather often	-1	-3
16. I feel safe and loved at home	3	1
17. I feel comfortable talking to my parents	2	0
18. I have rules set by my parents and they hold me to it	1	0
19. My parents explained their decision to divorce to me	2	-2
20. My parents always talk to me and explain things that I do not understand	2	-1
21. I believe I am able to achieve tasks at home and at school	-1	0
22. Teachers at my school help and support me	0	0
23. I have close friends	0	1
24. I have fun at school	-2	-2
25. I am happy to go to school	-3	-3

26. I am happy and satisfied most of the time	-2	1
27. I enjoy playing and having fun	0	2
28. I feel close to my teacher	-2	0
29. I feel close to my friends' parents	-2	-2
30. I participate in extramural activities	0	-1
31. I feel close to my coach	-1	-2
32. I remained in the same school after the divorce	-3	1
33. We stayed in the same home after the divorce	-3	-3
34. We stayed in the same neighbourhood after the divorce	-3	-3
35. I feel safe in my neighbourhood	-2	-2
36. I have enough food to eat every day	-1	0
37. My friends and I follow the rules	-2	-2
38. I mostly have happy thoughts	-1	-1
39. I feel safe and happy at school	-1	-1
40. I enjoy laughing with friends and family	0	-1

Table 13: Factor 2 Normalized Factor Scores

Number of Statement	Statement	z-score
28	I feel close to my teacher	1.766
31	I feel close to my coach	1.766
32	I remained in the same school after the divorce	1.766
22	Teachers at my school help and support me	1.475
39	I feel safe and happy at school	1.468
24	I have fun at school	1.178
25	I am happy to go to school	1.178
30	I participate in extramural activities	1.178
13	My parents fight less now than before	0.880
3	My family loves me	0.596
11	My mother does not speak badly of my father in front of me	0.589
12	My father does not speak badly of my mother in front of me	0.589
7	I see my father regularly	0.589
1	I feel close to my mother	0.582
33	We stayed in the same home after the divorce	0.305
2	I feel close to my father	0.291
4	My parents get along well	0.007
19	My parents explained their decision to divorce to me	0.000
20	My parents always talk to me and explain things that I do not understand	0.000
10	My mother is happy to allow visits with my father	-0.284
21	I believe I am able to achieve tasks at home and at school	-0.291
23	I have close friends	-0.291

17	I feel comfortable talking to my parents	-0.298
9	I felt close to my mother before their divorce	-0.298
8	I felt close to my father before their divorce	-0.298
6	I feel close with my grandfather	-0.305
5	I feel close with my grandmother	-0.305
40	I enjoy laughing with friends and family	-0.305
14	I see my grandmother often	-0.575
18	I have rules set by my parents and they hold me to it	-0.589
27	I enjoy playing and having fun	-0.589
26	I am happy and satisfied most of the time	-0.880
16	I feel safe and loved at home	-0.880
38	I mostly have happy thoughts	-0.887
37	My friends and I follow the rules	-1.178
29	I feel close to my friends' parents	-1.178
36	I have enough food to eat every day	-1.475
34	We stayed in the same neighbourhood after the divorce	-1.766
15	I see my grandfather often	-1.766
35	I feel safe in my neighbourhood	-1.766

Table 16: Factor 3 Normalized Factor Scores

Number of Statement	Statement	z-score
5	I feel close with my grandmother	1.678
23	I have close friends	1.678
29	I feel close to my friends' parents	1.678
6	I feel close with my grandfather	1.438
14	I see my grandmother often	1.359
1	I feel close to my mother	1.119
15	I see my grandfather often	1.119
16	I feel safe and loved at home	1.119
2	I feel close to my father	0.878
10	My mother is happy to allow visits with my father	0.800
7	I see my father regularly	0.800
13	My parents fight less now than before	0.638
12	My father does not speak badly of my mother in front of me	0.559
11	My mother does not speak badly of my father in front of me	0.559
3	My family loves me	0.559
4	My parents get along well	0.319
9	I felt close to my mother before their divorce	0.240
8	I felt close to my father before their divorce	0.240
36	I have enough food to eat every day	0.079

21	I believe I am able to achieve tasks at home and at school	0.000
22	Teachers at my school help and support me	0.000
17	I feel comfortable talking to my parents	0.000
28	I feel close to my teacher	-0.079
24	I have fun at school	-0.240
30	I participate in extramural activities	-0.559
35	I feel safe in my neighborhood	-0.559
39	I feel safe and happy at school	-0.559
40	I enjoy laughing with friends and family	-0.559
38	I mostly have happy thoughts	-0.800
27	I enjoy playing and having fun	-0.800
37	My friends and I follow the rules	-0.878
18	I have rules set by my parents and they hold me to it	-0.957
26	I am happy and satisfied most of the time	-1.119
31	I feel close to my coach	-1.119
33	We stayed in the same home after the divorce	-1.359
34	We stayed in the same neighborhood after the divorce	-1.359
25	I am happy to go to school	-1.359
19	My parents explained their decision to divorce to me	-1.438
20	My parents always talk to me and explain things that I do not understand	-1.438
32	I remained in the same school after the divorce	-1.678