

Is Co-Parenting Possible After Divorce?: A Scoping Review of the Effects on Children*

Demet AKARÇAY ULUTAŞ**

Miyase TAŞKIRAN***

ABSTRACT

Post-divorce adjustment efforts lead to significant changes in the roles and functions of parents and children. This study examines how parenting attitudes and the co-parenting process develop after divorce and their reflections on children. Articles published in English between 2018 and 2024 in the Web of Science Core Collection database were reviewed, focusing on relevant keywords related to post-divorce co-parenting attitudes. This scoping review examined articles focusing on co-parenting, the effects of divorce, and the importance of cooperation between parents. The studies included participants consisting of divorced parents and children from divorced families and did not require any intervention or comparison group criteria. Reviews, case studies, theses, conference papers, book chapters, and intervention-based studies were excluded from this review. A total of 51 articles were analyzed, and various themes were identified. The analysis revealed themes such as post-divorce adjustment, barriers, and facilitators in co-parenting. Parents' emotional challenges affect children's behavior and attitudes, while positive parental relationships support children's psychological well-being. Children who adapt better to divorce may feel the traumatic effects less intensely. Supporting parents' positive relationships with each other and allowing children to express their thoughts freely can contribute to reducing behavioral problems in children. These findings highlight the importance of special education programs for parents and children for post-divorce adjustment, the promotion of joint custody, and policies and legal regulations to enhance cooperation between parents.

Keywords: Divorce, Adaptation to Life after Divorce, Co-Parenting, Parenting Attitudes after Divorce.

Received / Accepted: 29 May 2024 / 02 September 2024

Atıf: Akarçay Ulutaş, D., Taşkiran, M. (2024). Is Co-Parenting Possible After Divorce?: A Scoping Review of the Effects on Children, *İmgelem*, 15, 27-60.

INTRODUCTION

The divorce process is a multifaceted structure that brings about multidimensional changes with the realization of the separation, which is a severe decision for family members. Adults may experience dilemmas in adapting to changes, such as childcare responsibilities, changes in

*Bu araştırma makalesinin verileri anket veya mülakat teknikleri kullanılarak elde edilmediğinden etik kurul izni gerekmemiştir. / In this research article, ethics committee permission was not required as the data were not obtained using survey or interview techniques.

**Assoc. Prof., KTO Karatay University, Faculty of Economics, Administrative and Social Sciences, Department of Social Work, Konya/Türkiye. E-mail: demet.akarcay@karatay.edu.tr, demetakarcay@gmail.com, ORCID Number: [0000-0001-5872-2549](https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5872-2549), ROR ID: <https://ror.org/054341q84>

***Graduate Student, KTO Karatay University, Institute of Graduate Studies, Department of Interdisciplinary Family Counseling Master's Program with Thesis, Konya/Türkiye. E-mail: 221300154@ogrenci.karatay.edu.tr, mystaskiran@gmail.com, ORCID Number: [0000-0003-3557-8649](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3557-8649), ROR ID: <https://ror.org/054341q84>



economic burdens, and managing ongoing responsibilities for emotional and social changes (Andrea & Awaliyah 2022; Azwar 2022). Factors influencing post-divorce adjustment include family and friend support, attitudes, religious beliefs, problem-solving skills, financial resource management, social relationships, attachment patterns, and psychological resilience (Nazarifar et al. 2018; Finkelstein & Grebelsky-Lichtman 2022; Khatibi & Alikhanypor 2022; Kolodziej-Zaleska & Przybyla-Basista 2020). The effects of divorce are not limited to the adjustment process alone; especially in contentious divorces, deeper and more complex issues can arise. In particular, conflicts during the divorce process can lead to significant disruptions in family dynamics (Apata et al. 2023). The divorce process negatively affects the psychological needs of family members and the fulfillment of marital expectations. Divorces often involve resource disputes, contentious divorce processes, and high levels of conflict resulting from psychological reactions to divorce (Hopper 2001). Divorced families experience hostile interactions post-divorce, which have adverse effects on children (Cline & Westman 1971). Divorce can have a destructive impact on children. However, the shared parenting model can significantly reduce these adverse effects and help children develop healthily.

Reflections of Divorce on Children and Parenting

How the divorce process is managed significantly influences children's emotional and behavioral outcomes. Divorce is associated with a risk of emotional and behavioral outcomes for children, such as depression, anxiety, alcohol and substance abuse, aggression, impulsivity, and low self-esteem, as well as various mental health issues, often associated with dropping out of school, while creating economic disadvantages, loneliness, and role ambiguity for parents (Auersperg et al. 2019; Damota 2019; Çaksen 2021; Meland et al. 2019; Brito & Arizaga 2019; Viršilaitė & Bukšnytė-Marmienė 2021). These effects can often weaken parent-child bonds (Meland et al. 2019; Kalmijn 2023; Lin et al. 2023). It is argued that facilitating family functioning, which emphasizes family members' interactions and communication and is based on resolving conflicts with shared solutions, can play a facilitating role, and crises may activate some family bonds (Mohammadi et al. 2018; Wijckmans & Bavel 2013; Karela & Petrogiannis 2020). Additionally, positive relationships with both parents underscore the importance of maintaining bonds with non-custodial parents (Hess & Camara 1979; Polak & Saini 2015). Maintaining a close and secure relationship with both parents, as long as there is no abuse or neglect, is crucial for minimizing emotional harm to children (Çaksen 2021). Working on children's and parents' levels of awareness, forgiveness, and resilience helps children cope with traumatic experiences associated with divorce and develop co-parenting

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(Lestari & Huwae 2023; Esmailian et al. 2018; Cox et al. 2021). Co-parenting programs significantly reduce parenting stress and anger while increasing parenting self-efficacy (Choi et al. 2019; Xiao & Loke 2021). Strong co-parenting relationships and empathy are positively associated with children's emotion regulation and play a significant role in behavior regulation within the family (Qian et al. 2020; Ren et al. 2020; Karberg & Cabrera 2020; Camisasca et al. 2018). Particularly for male children or families migrating from rural to urban areas, the quality of parental relationships mediates the relationship between parents' relationships and children's behavioral adjustment (Marchand-Reilly & Yaure 2019; Liu et al. 2019).

The ecological approach can explain post-divorce co-parenting. According to this theory, in human developmental processes, family functioning occurs within the framework of interactions between genetic and environmental, social-environmental dynamics (parents, children, work, school, etc.), transitions, and connections between other significant environments that affect development, such as neighborhoods and communities, within the framework of public policies affecting families and children (Bronfenbrenner 2013; Bronfenbrenner 1977). The theory's lowest subsystem, the microsystem, refers to the family, the closest environment in which the child directly interacts and socializes, and peers (Paat 2013). Post-divorce co-parenting can create a stable and supportive microsystem for children when it enables regular and quality time with both mother and father (Ferraro et al. 2016). Positive communication and collaboration between parents can support children's emotional and social development, explaining interactions between microsystems, expressed as the mesosystem (Gaias et al. 2018). Barger et al. (2019), Alcántara-Porcuna et al. (2021), and Demirtaş-Zorbaz and Ergene (2019) emphasize the positive impact of parents' involvement in children's school activities, establishing good relationships with teachers, and supporting children's social environment in the mesosystem. The exosystem encompasses environmental factors that individuals are indirectly affected by but do not directly interact with (Paat 2013). In post-divorce co-parenting, balancing parental work with childcare, support from the workplace, and assistance from extended family can affect the child's well-being through the exosystem (Lee et al. 2023; Buyukkececi & Leopold 2021; Suárez & Baker 1997; Buehler & Legg 1993). The macrosystem includes broad environmental factors such as cultural norms, values, and laws (Paat 2013). Co-parenting arrangements are influenced by macrosystem factors such as gender roles, legal regulations regarding divorce, and cultural expectations (Çiçek & Nazlı 2023; Pokharel et al. 2020). The chronosystem represents environmental

changes and significant events in an individual's life (Nazlı 2023). Post-divorce co-parenting evolves in interaction with changes experienced by parents and children over time (e.g., new marriages, relocations, school changes) (Hardesty & Ganong 2006; Laletas & Khasin 2021; Lavoie & Saint-Jacques 2020). This approach underscores the importance of parents, family members, teachers, and social systems working harmoniously for children's healthy development (Halford et al. 2018; Earls & Carlson 2001). With this motivation, it would be appropriate to address parents' experiences in comprehensively co-parenting processes post-divorce and the relationships between the systems (factors) influencing these experiences. With this in mind, this study aims to evaluate the reflections of post-divorce adjustment on parents and children and the implications of co-parenting for children's psychological well-being and emotional development. Our research focuses on understanding how parenting attitudes evolve after divorce, the development of the co-parenting process, and their influence on the psychosocial development of children through a scoping review of existing literature.

Method

Searching Strategy

In line with the study's aim, articles on post-divorce co-parenting attitudes published in English between January 2018 and February 2024 were searched in the Web of Science Core Collection database. This database includes numerous academic publishers such as EBSCOhost, Elsevier, ProQuest, Scopus, JSTOR, SAGE, Springer, Wiley-Blackwell, Taylor & Francis, and BMJ (Clarivate 2023). This allowed for identifying studies examining the effects of post-divorce parental attitudes on children from various disciplinary perspectives, including sociology, health, social work, psychology, and law.

The study design was meticulously based on the PICOS criteria (Centre for Reviews and Dissemination 2009; Liberati et al. 2009). Participants were defined as divorced parents and children from divorced families, with no intervention requirement. The comparison group criterion was deemed unnecessary for the study's purpose. Outcomes included co-parenting, the effects of divorce, and the importance of parental cooperation. Review articles, case studies, theses, conference papers, book chapters, and intervention studies were excluded. Only studies employing quantitative, qualitative, and mixed research methods were considered, ensuring the study's methodological rigor.

To ensure that our research accurately reflects its scope and purpose, we meticulously selected keywords, covering vital topics such as post-divorce parenting attitudes, the co-

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parenting process, and the psychosocial development of children. We took a thorough approach, diversifying our keyword selection by examining articles in the Web of Science Core Collection database, reviewing database-provided topic classifications, and utilizing suggestions from AI-assisted language development models to identify synonyms. Furthermore, we conducted trial searches to identify additional keywords from the retrieved articles, ensuring that our search strategy is comprehensive. The database search included the keywords "parental well-being/parental adaptation/parental satisfaction/parental relationships/parenting coordination/parental involvement" combined with "AND post/after divorce OR post/after separation," and articles with full-text access were included in the study. The searches were conducted between January and February 2024.

Study Selection

The PRISMA checklist was used for the article selection process (Page et al. 2021). Figure 1 illustrates the flowchart of the article selection process. In the first stage, inclusion criteria based on the titles and abstracts of the articles were as follows:

1. Post-divorce parenting attitudes and co-parenting process
2. Parental well-being and the psychosocial impacts of co-parenting on children
3. Studies conducted on divorced parents or children of divorced families
4. Articles published since January 2018

The search results were meticulously combined using Endnote 9, and any duplicate articles were promptly removed. Titles, keywords, and method details in the abstracts were scrutinized, and research articles using quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods were included. Systematic reviews, meta-analyses, case studies, theses, conference papers, book chapters, book reviews, intervention studies, and articles not meeting the criteria were all carefully excluded. In the second stage, the full texts of relevant articles were obtained, and the appropriateness and scope of the sample groups were re-evaluated. The full texts were reviewed by an independent researcher concerning the inclusion criteria.

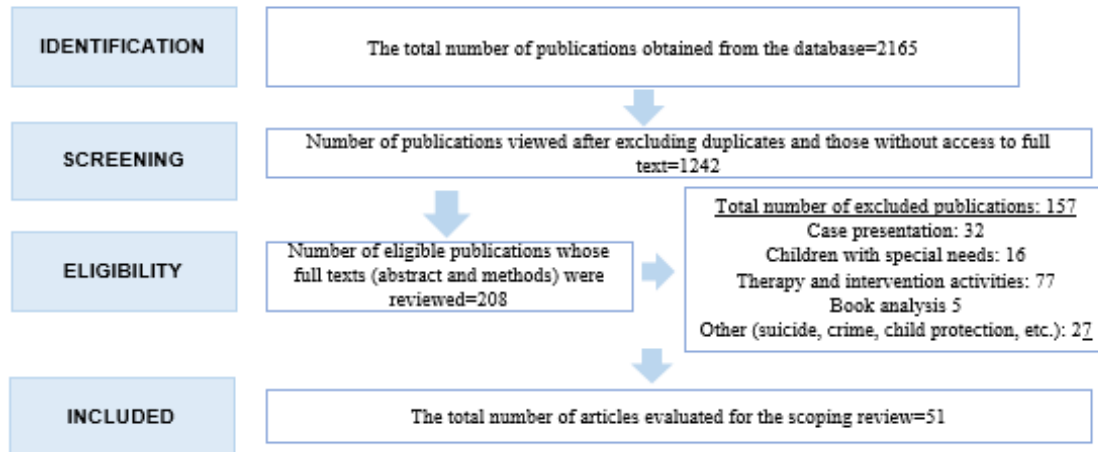


Figure: 1. PRISMA Flowchart

The methodological quality assessment scores of the articles were determined using the Mixed Method Appraisal Tool (MMAT) developed by Pluye et al. (2011), Pace et al. (2012), and Emari et al. (2022). MMAT is a critical appraisal tool that assesses the quality of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method studies across five categories: qualitative research, randomized controlled trials, non-randomized research, quantitative descriptive studies, and mixed-method studies. The MMAT consists of two main sections. The first section includes validity tests for all research methods. If a response of ‘No’ or ‘Cannot tell’ is given to one or both of these screening questions, it indicates that the study is not an empirical study and that the MMAT score cannot be calculated. The second section contains eleven questions, four for qualitative and quantitative studies and three for mixed-method studies. Each criterion’s presence is scored as “1,” while its absence or unknown status is scored as “0.” Consequently, if a study meets one criterion, it is scored at 25%; if it meets all criteria, it is scored at 100%.

As per the MMAT criteria, all included studies clearly outline their research questions or objectives. Moreover, the data collected in the studies perfectly aligns with the research questions or objectives. This alignment is particularly noteworthy in longitudinal studies, where the average follow-up period of approximately six years provides sufficient time to observe the reflections of co-parenting post-divorce. Additionally, using purposive sampling methods in qualitative studies indicates that the collected data aligns with the research objectives, further reinforcing the validity of the studies. It is important to clarify that the reason some studies did not achieve full scores on the MMAT criteria was not because of shortcomings in sampling or methodology. Instead, certain questions in the MMAT criteria were not directly addressed in the articles, requiring calculations based on available information. To ensure accuracy and

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properly reflect the study methodologies, we opted to mark ‘Cannot tell’ for these questions. However, the overall acceptable level of methodology and reporting in the reviewed studies still needs to be improved. Two-thirds of the studies met the criteria at 75% or higher, and the remaining studies met the criteria at 50%, with all studies providing complete answers to the first two MMAT questions, reinforcing the confidence in the research findings.

Data Extraction and Analysis

Information on the authors, publication dates, sample sizes, methods, and key findings of the articles is presented in Table 1. The study sought to answer specific research questions (Pollock & Berge 2018):

1. How do parenting attitudes change after divorce?
2. How does the co-parenting process develop post-divorce?
3. How is an adaptation in parenting achieved after divorce?
4. How does parental well-being evolve post-divorce?
5. What are the impacts of co-parenting on the psychosocial development of children?

Two researchers reviewed the articles to minimize errors and potential biases, and a social work academic independently evaluated the findings. Due to the heterogeneity of the study groups and designs, the results were reported through thematic analysis.

The articles were analyzed using MAXQDA 2022 (version 22.8.0), resulting in 190 codes. After the initial coding, the codes and memos were reviewed again, and 14 similar codes were merged (such as “effects of divorce-consequences of divorce,” “custody preferences-custody sharing,” “parental cooperation and communication-post-divorce cooperation”), reducing the total number of codes to 173. The theme with the most coding was factors facilitating co-parenting, with 42 codes. The most frequently used code within this theme was “parental cooperation and communication.” The second most frequently coded theme was the effects of divorce on family members, with 39 codes. The most frequently coded examples in this theme were “post-separation living conditions” and “conflict during divorce.” We want to reassure our audience that ethical approval is not required for this scoping review as the included articles were obtained from publicly accessible electronic databases, and proper citation standards were followed within the study.

Table: 1. Characteristics Overview of the Articles

Citation of the Article	Study Design	Participants in the Study	MMAT Score	Focus of Findings in the Study								
				Parenting skills	Parental cooperation and communication	Conflict after divorce	Adjustment after divorce	Adjusting to a new relationship after divorce	Psychosocial effects of divorce on children	Implications of custody	Support and counseling after divorce	
Martinez-Pampliega et al. (2021)	Quantitative	303 parents	75	X								
Kuhlemann & Krapf (2022)	Cohort Study	12511 children	100			X	X	X				
Stevenson et al. (2018)	Longitudinal Study	175 children	75					X				
Mei-Ching Wong et al. (2019)	Qualitative	40 parents, 10 children	75						X			X
Finkelstein & Grebelsky-Lichtman (2022)	Quantitative	230 children	50			X			X			
Bruijn et al. (2018)	Quantitative	2469 parents	75	X								
Herrero et al. (2020)	Quantitative	309 parents	50				X					
Becher et al. (2019)	Quantitative	451 parents	50	X		X			X			
Van Gasse & Mortelmans (2020)	Qualitative	30 parents	75	X			X		X			
Petren & Ferraro (2023)	Quantitative	116 fathers	50	X							X	
Van Schalkwyk & Gentz (2023)	Mixed method	24 children	75				X					
Goisis et al. (2019)	Longitudinal Study	7574 children	50				X		X			
Haux & Platt (2021)	Longitudinal Study	4559 children	75	X								
Bertoni et al. (2018)	Quantitative	318 parents	50	X	X		X		X			X
Hjern et al. (2021)	Longitudinal Study	31519 children	100	X			X	X				
Smith-Etxebarria et al. (2022)	Quantitative	173 children	50	X		X	X		X			
Emerson et al. (2020)	Qualitative	77 parents	100	X			X					X
Köppen et al. (2018)	Longitudinal Study	285 fathers	50								X	
Koster et al. (2021)	Quantitative	2778 parents	100	X				X				
Van Dijk et al. (2021)	Longitudinal Study	106 parents	50	X					X			
Marinho & Gouveia (2021)	Quantitative	996 adult children	50				X				X	
Steinbach & Augustijn (2021)	Quantitative	926 children	75	X			X					
Kleinschlomer & Krapf (2023)	Longitudinal Study	1958 children	100	X					X			
Langemeyer et al. (2022)	Quantitative	6355 parents	75	X					X			
Luthra & Haux (2022)	Qualitative	31 parents	50	X		X	X					

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Table: 1. Characteristics Overview of the Articles (continued)

Citation of the Article	Study Design	Participants in the Study	MMAT Score	Focus of Findings in the Study							
				Parenting skills	Parental cooperation and communication	Conflict after divorce	Adjustment after divorce	Adjusting to a new relationship after divorce	Psychosocial effects of divorce on children	Implications of custody	Support and counseling after divorce
Smyth et al. (2020)	Qualitative	68 parents	75			X	X				
Monostori et al. (2023)	Longitudinal Study	5862 mothers	75	X			X				
Moral et al. (2021)	Quantitative	84 parents	75			X	X		X		
Nikupeteri et al. (2023)	Qualitative	31 children	100	X		X	X				
Leanderz et al. (2021)	Longitudinal Study	918 parents	100				X				
O'Hara et al. (2019)	Quantitative	240 children	75	X		X			X		
Pronzato & Aassve (2019)	Quantitative	8991 children	75	X			X				
Til-Ogut et al. (2021)	Quantitative	244 children	100		X				X		
Rejaan et al. (2022a)	Quantitative	1227 children	75						X		
Rejaan et al. (2022b)	Quantitative	983 children	100		X	X					
Mikucki-Enyart et al. (2018)	Qualitative	25 children	75						X		
Jiménez-García et al. (2018)	Quantitative	449 children	50			X					
Lehtme & Toros (2022)	Qualitative	7 parents	50	X	X						
Spaan et al. (2022)	Quantitative	2017 adult children	100			X		X			
van der Wal et al. (2019)	Quantitative	142 children	75			X	X		X		
Ferraro et al. (2019)	Quantitative	246 parents	50		X		X				
Francia et al. (2019)	Qualitative	76 parents	100				X		X		
van Spijker et al. (2022)	Quantitative	2362 children	100	X							
Rix et al. (2022)	Qualitative	10 parents	50	X					X		X
Quigley & Cyr (2018)	Qualitative	14 parents, 10 children	50						X		X
Schrodt & Afifi (2019)	Quantitative	65 divorced, 173 married parents	75		X						
Merson et al. (2023)	Qualitative	12 adult children	75		X			X		X	
Zilincikova et al. (2023)	Quantitative	14975 children	75						X		
Kranz et al. (2021)	Quantitative	5045 parents, 7577 children	75				X			X	
Palmtag (2022)	Quantitative	6638 parents	100						X		
Forner (2023)	Quantitative	5264 children	50		X						

FINDINGS

In light of the findings from the 51 articles examined in this study, the obtained codes were grouped under themes identified considering the research questions. In naming the themes, the keywords and focal points of other articles reviewed in the literature search and those addressed in this study were utilized. The first author conducted the initial draft of the thematic analysis. This draft was then revised based on the feedback from the second author and an independent social work academic, and the proposed sub-themes were merged for reporting purposes. In its final form, the findings are presented with five main themes and their associated sub-themes. The first theme is "Reflections of changes after divorce," with sub-themes "Impacts of the new life order on parents," "Impacts of the new life order on children," and "Custody preferences." The second theme, "The importance of harmony after divorce," includes sub-themes "New parenting" and "The importance of adaptation for children." The third theme, "Barriers to co-parenting," comprises sub-themes "Violence between parents" and "Parenting roles." The fourth theme consists of sub-themes "Individual counseling and consultation," "Children sense of belonging," "Parental communication and cooperation," "Parental education level," and "Perceived social support," all falling under the central theme, "Co-parenting facilitators." The final theme is "Reflections of co-parenting on children," with sub-themes "Children's psychological well-being" and "Frequency of parental visitation."

Reflections of Changes after Divorce

The Impacts of the New Life Order on Parents

Negative emotions such as loneliness, anger, anxiety, fear, restlessness, and emptiness are prevalent during the divorce process and afterward, with continuing attachment issues with the former spouse (Van Gasse & Mortelmans 2020; Bertoni et al. 2018; Moral et al. 2021; Francia et al. 2019; Rix et al. 2022). Individuals may temporarily return to their own families' homes after divorce and take on parenting responsibilities alone (Petren & Ferraro 2023; Rix et al. 2022). Living with other relatives or the new partner's parents can positively or negatively affect children's behavioral outcomes (Stevenson et al. 2018; Pronzato & Aassve 2019). After divorce, there is a shift in traditional roles, with fathers learning and taking on tasks traditionally considered the domain of women, such as childcare, school-related matters, and holiday planning. Similarly, the role change experienced by women in the workforce, such as increased workload, leads to a redistribution of mental workload in post-divorce life (Luthra & Haux 2022). Financial difficulties after divorce, financial disputes between parents (Van Gasse &

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Mortelmans 2020; Jiménez-García et al. 2018; Rix et al. 2022), challenges in coordinating work life and difficulties at work while working, and the difficulty of organizing responsibility for daily expenses (housing, food, general care) contribute to financial worries and can lead to living with the original family, bringing difficulties (Rix et al. 2022), and anger and self-harm behaviors (Jiménez-García et al. 2018). The economic well-being of the family incredibly positively affects the psychological status of children, while a pattern of poverty reinforces emotional and behavioral problems in children (Bertoni et al. 2018; Hjern et al. 2021; Kleinschlomer & Krapf 2023; Pronzato & Aassve 2019).

Impacts of the New Life Order on Children

The impact of divorce on children varies depending on how the divorce process is managed. It is understood that children experience fewer adverse emotional and behavioral effects when the divorce process is navigated with minimal issues and without disputes, preserving the family structure (Kuhlemann & Krapf 2022; Bertoni et al. 2018; Hjern et al. 2021; Kleinschlomer & Krapf 2023; Pronzato & Aassve 2019; Jiménez-García et al. 2018; Van der Wal et al. 2019; Rix et al. 2022). As children grow older, it is observed that their emotional and behavioral problems decrease, especially following separations before the age of six and within two years after separation, where adverse effects such as anxiety and signs of depression are more intense (Stevenson et al. 2018; Goisis et al. 2019; Kleinschlomer & Krapf 2023; Pronzato & Aassve 2019; Rejaan et al. 2022a). Parental separation, conflict during the divorce process, exposure to violence, academic failure, aggression, anxiety, anger, low self-esteem, hyperactivity, solitary play, experience of bullying, self-harm behavior, tendency to be less helpful, eating disorders, weak sense of control, internalization of the divorce process, avoidance of expressing true thoughts, low mental well-being, and perception of social dysfunction (Herrero et al. 2020; Goisis et al. 2019; Smith-Etxeberria et al. 2022; Van Dijk et al. 2021; Moral et al. 2021; O'Hara et al. 2019; Pronzato & Aassve 2019; Jiménez-García et al. 2018; Van der Wal et al. 2019; Palmtag 2022) are some of the consequences. Constantly moving between the homes of the mother and father after divorce creates stress and feelings of worthlessness for children (Stevenson et al. 2018; Lehtme & Toros 2022), and parents in conflict using their children as communication channels (Smyth et al. 2020) lead to mental and physical health problems. Although girls tend to have better psychological health than boys, they are more emotionally affected, and older girls with sibling relationships have lower levels of self-esteem (Hjern et al. 2021; Van Dijk et al. 2021; Pronzato & Aassve 2019; Rejaan et al. 2022a). Children who

experience divorce emotionally and behaviorally negatively, with poor communication and cooperation attitudes, continue to experience these effects in their later years (O'Hara et al. 2019; Til-Ogut et al. 2021). Children may experience complex emotions regarding whether they influenced the divorce decision. They may feel emotional complexity between wanting to protect themselves from feelings of shame, vulnerability, or emotional pain caused by the reason for divorce while also experiencing curiosity about the reason, leading to seeking or avoiding information or feeling torn between relieving tension in their distressed parents (Smyth et al. 2020; Moral et al. 2021; Mikucki-Enyart et al. 2018; Van der Wal et al. 2019; Merson et al. 2023).

Custody Preferences

Women prefer equal childcare and shared custody, balancing motherhood with a career, while men prefer the child stay with a parent who can provide better conditions (Marinho & Gouveia 2021). However, unilateral custody creates a greater sense of responsibility in the parent (Petren & Ferraro 2023; Merson et al. 2023), whereas shared custody facilitates more frequent visits with both parents (Köppen et al. 2018). Unilateral custody expands the time spent with the children, compensating for the time spent with the other parent (Forner 2023). Women tend to believe custody should primarily be with the mother. However, as education levels rise and workloads increase in the workplace, this belief shifts towards the parent with better living conditions (Marinho & Gouveia 2021; Monostori et al. 2023).

The Importance of Harmony after Divorce

The Importance of Adaptation for Parents

Perceptions of adaptation following divorce can enhance coping mechanisms in parents, thereby reducing risky situations such as work stress, life dissatisfaction, and alcohol use (Leanderz et al. 2021; Ferraro et al. 2019). One of the fundamental components of the adaptation process is the clarity of the divorce decision, and another is the close relationships with the social environment, which have a soothing effect on couples (Van Gasse & Mortelmans 2020; Van Schalkwyk & Gentz 2023; Emerson et al. 2020). Positive changes in children's behaviors related to adapting to the new order mainly instill a sense of strength and confidence in parents (Rix et al. 2022). Parents often try to manage their stress by suppressing negative emotions instead of expressing them (Francia et al. 2019).

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New Parenting

Following divorce, some parents experience psychological effects such as feeling inadequate in their parenting skills and childcare efforts and blaming themselves while adapting to the new order. In contrast, others develop a more disciplined, routine-focused, and open communication-oriented parenting style. Despite being aware of the negative emotions resulting from the divorce, these parents strive to maintain their decision-making ability and exhibit a supportive and self-sacrificing approach to parenting (Koster et al. 2021; Francia et al. 2019; Rix et al. 2022). The new parenting style post-divorce is often integrated with pre-divorce roles. For instance, those with a more active fatherhood role before the divorce tend to have more frequent contact with their children after the divorce (Haux & Platt 2021).

The Importance of Adaptation for Children

It is understood that children who adapt better to the divorce process experience lower levels of its traumatic effects (Finkelstein & Grebelsky-Lichtman 2022; Kleinschlomer & Krapf 2023; Van der Wal et al. 2019). Positive relationships with friends, teachers, and parents (such as spending enjoyable time together, sharing, and respectful communication) play a significant role in achieving this adaptation (Van Schalkwyk & Gentz 2023; Kleinschlomer & Krapf 2023; Monostori et al. 2023; O'Hara et al. 2019; Rejaan et al. 2022a; Merson et al. 2023). Additionally, relationships with stepparents and stepsiblings and parents spending more time with stepsiblings after remarriages hold the potential for family harmony, leading to behavioral outcomes such as a reduction in conflictual relationships, withdrawal, delinquency, or hyperactivity issues (Stevenson et al. 2018; Hjern et al. 2021; Koster et al. 2021; Monostori et al. 2023; Pronzato & Aassve 2019; Spaan et al. 2022; Merson et al. 2023).

Living in distant places or moving after divorce (Stevenson et al. 2018; Van Schalkwyk & Gentz 2023; Steinbach & Augustijn 2021; Zilincikova et al. 2023), as well as the socioeconomic consequences of divorce (Herrero et al. 2020), can pose significant challenges to children's adaptation levels and the sustainability of parents' co-parenting practices (Langemeyer et al. 2022; Monostori et al. 2023; Spaan et al. 2022).

Barriers to Co-Parenting

Violence between Parents

Tension, conflict, dissatisfaction with the relationship, lack of communication, and infidelity lead couples to divorce (Van Gasse & Mortelmans 2020; Rix et al. 2022). When parents are

tense, criticize each other negatively, experience conflict, and fail to fulfill their parenting roles, children feel uncomfortable and stressed (Mei-Ching Wong et al. 2019; Herrero et al. 2020; Smith-Etxeberria et al. 2022; Jiménez-García et al., 2018; Spaan et al. 2022; Van der Wal et al. 2019; Ferraro et al. 2019; Merson et al. 2023). The high stress and anxiety created by constant court proceedings due to parents' disagreements (Francia et al. 2019) lead to a chaotic process in family relationships and result in adverse social and emotional outcomes such as not completing school assignments, lack of participation in sports activities, alcohol consumption, and life dissatisfaction (Van Gasse & Mortelmans 2020; Francia et al. 2019; Spaan et al. 2022).

Additionally, children may experience reluctance to maintain relationships with their parents, developmental issues, and a decrease in the frequency of contact with their parents due to the impact of violent behaviors (Smith-Etxeberria et al. 2022; Monostori et al. 2023; Nikupeteri et al. 2023; Spaan et al. 2022). It is understood that children of parents who frequently fight after divorce have less contact with them (Spaan et al. 2022).

Parenting Roles

The support for traditional parenting roles increases the likelihood of the child staying with the mother, and mothers bear a more intense mental load of childcare (Marinho & Gouveia 2021; Steinbach & Augustijn 2021; Luthra & Haux 2022). The frequency of the parent-child relationship is also a determinant of parenting roles. Factors that change the family structure, such as forming a blended family through remarriage or having siblings, are notable predictors of parenting roles (Haux & Platt 2021; Hjern et al. 2021; Köppen et al. 2018; Monostori et al. 2023; Pronzato & Aassve 2019; Merson et al. 2023). The importance parents place on their roles, such as the value a father places on his fatherhood role, indicates a greater focus on caring for the children (Petren & Ferraro 2023; Smith-Etxeberria et al. 2022).

Co-Parenting Facilitators

Individual Counseling and Consultation

It is understood that professional sessions with children help them feel comfortable and valued, making it easier for them to share their problems. This open communication allows children to learn how to express themselves and contribute to co-parenting (Mei-Ching Wong et al. 2019; Rix et al. 2022; Quigley & Cyr 2018). For some children, having sessions conducted solely with them without siblings or parents, and for others, having sessions with familiar people helps build a better trust relationship with the counselor (Mei-Ching Wong et al. 2019; Quigley & Cyr 2018). Counseling before and after divorce provides an appropriate environment for parents

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to express previously unspoken issues regarding their children, aiding them in making collaborative decisions and improving their communication (Mei-Ching Wong et al. 2019; Emerson et al. 2020; Rix et al. 2022). Through counseling, couples can gain clarity, communicate honestly, accept the divorce decision, and complete the divorce process collaboratively (Emerson et al. 2020; Leanderz et al. 2021). Counseling helps parents control their emotions, communicate better, resolve conflicts peacefully, set an excellent example for their children, and learn effective conflict-resolution methods (Mei-Ching Wong et al. 2019).

Children's Sense of Belonging

Children can feel belonging to their resident parent, social environment, or neighborhood. This sense of belonging can manifest in the parent-child relationship, aiding in their adaptation to daily activities and shielding them from the detrimental effects of divorce (Nikupeteri et al. 2023; Rejaan et al. 2022b; Lehtme & Toros 2022). Alongside the love they receive from their parents (Van Schalkwyk & Gentz 2023; Nikupeteri et al. 2023), children solidify their experiences of belonging and a sense of security. However, it is crucial to recognize that conflicts between parents can significantly and negatively impact children's sense of belonging (Rejaan et al. 2022b).

Parental Communication and Cooperation

Children of parents who get along well, are respectful and feel better, reduce the adverse effects of the divorce process, maintain psychological health, and improve the quality of their relationships (Martínez-Pampliega et al. 2021; Kuhlemann & Krapf 2022; Bertoni et al. 2018; Van Dijk et al. 2021; Til-Ogut et al. 2021; Rejaan et al. 2022a; Van der Wal et al. 2019; Ferraro et al. 2019; Schrodtt & Afifi 2019; Merson et al. 2023). Improved parental cooperation expands the opportunities for parents to engage with their children and feel loved (Bruijn et al. 2018; Petren & Ferraro 2023; Van Schalkwyk & Gentz 2023). The development of parenting skills, collaborative efforts, and the creation of solid bonds have a significant impact on the mental and behavioral well-being of both parents and children (Martínez-Pampliega et al. 2021; Becher et al. 2019; Van Schalkwyk & Gentz 2023; Bertoni et al. 2018; Emerson et al. 2020; Til-Ogut et al. 2021; Rejaan et al. 2022a; Merson et al. 2023). Positive communication and active listening that come with co-parenting support the understanding of children's needs and desires, reduce psychological issues enhance adaptation to family processes, and foster a strong sense of secure attachment (Finkelstein & Grebelsky-Lichtman, 2022; Herrero et al., 2020; Becher et

al. 2019; Monostori et al. 2023; Rix et al. 2022). Joint parenting by parents helps children to be in better psychological condition (Martínez-Pampliega et al. 2021; Kuhlemann & Krapf 2022; Bruijn et al. 2018; Jiménez-García et al. 2018).

Parental Education Level

As the education level of mothers and fathers increases, the likelihood of children experiencing psychological issues decreases. Higher education levels are associated with an increased frequency of interactions and a more egalitarian approach to childcare, rather than adhering to traditional gender roles, which facilitates co-parenting (Hjern et al. 2021; Köppen et al. 2018; Marinho & Gouveia 2021; Monostori et al. 2023; Van Spijker et al. 2022). Additionally, a higher education level positively affects the frequency of the child's visits with the non-custodial parent (Köppen et al. 2018; Marinho & Gouveia 2021; Langemeyer et al. 2022; Monostori et al. 2023; Van Spijker et al. 2022).

Perceived Social Support

Perceived support indicates satisfaction with relationships with children, friends, and family, enhancing relational well-being and strengthening co-parenting skills (Bertoni et al. 2018; Hjern et al. 2021). Individuals can benefit from social support networks during and after the divorce process, including religious support groups, coworkers, ex-spouses, or children (Francia et al. 2019; Rix et al. 2022). In this period, individuals may turn to religious practices, gain childcare knowledge from ex-spouses or friends who have had similar experiences, or consider the responsibility to meet their children's needs for love and other necessities as a source of strength (Rix et al. 2022). The importance of close relationships with extended family members, the immediate social circle, and friends in coping with divorce is emphasized (Van Schalkwyk & Gentz 2023).

Reflections of Co-Parenting on Children

Children's Psychological Well-being

The parenting roles of divorced individuals are determinants of children's behaviors and attitudes. Roles that support children's positive relationships with their other parents and create an environment where children can express their thoughts comfortably contribute to reducing children's shy behavior (Smith-Etxeberria et al. 2022). The experience of divorce can result in challenges in co-parenting and communication during childhood and adulthood, low self-esteem, quality of life issues, and expression problems (Smith-Etxeberria et al. 2022; Til-Ogut et al. 2021; Rejaan et al. 2022a; Van der Wal et al. 2019), highlighting the value of co-parenting.

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Frequency of Parental Visitation

Notably, children who primarily reside with their mothers tend to exhibit higher academic achievements, while those living with their fathers stand out (Zilincikova et al. 2023; Kranz et al. 2021). In single-parent families, children experience a therapeutic effect from spending time with grandparents. While spending time with step-parents enhances emotional bonds, it does not fully substitute for time spent with biological parents (Forner 2023). The collaborative aspect between parents stands out in the time spent with both mothers and fathers, and frequent visitation with the non-custodial parent indicates long-term positive implications for children (Smith-Etxeberria et al. 2022; Köppen et al. 2018; Spaan et al. 2022; Van Spijker et al. 2022). While there are opinions suggesting that joint custody limits visitation frequency with one parent (Kranz et al. 2021), joint custody enables cooperation between parents to mitigate the negative impacts and emotional effects of transitioning between households, support academic success, and facilitate getting to know both parents closely (Hjern et al. 2021; Marinho & Gouveia 2021; Jiménez-García et al. 2018; Merson et al. 2023).

DISCUSSION

This scoping review examines the reflections of changes in parental attitudes and the co-parenting process after divorce. By investigating how these changes affect children, it evaluates how divorce transforms family dynamics and its holistic impact on children's emotional, social, and behavioral development. The conducted assessment has yielded several key findings.

Firstly, it is observed that the changes experienced by parents after divorce have separate implications for both parents and children. Although these are presented as separate sub-themes, it is understood that factors indicating the reflections of divorce are interrelated with the parent-child relationship. The negative emotions experienced by parents after divorce, ongoing violence with the former spouse, economic changes, and coordinating work life with household responsibilities and childcare responsibilities lead to concerns about the sustainability of co-parenting (Koppejan-Luitze et al. 2020; Akpan & Ezeume 2020). Damota (2019) emphasizes that changes in housing arrangements after divorce, economic disadvantages, and loneliness lead to role strain for custodial parents, resulting in deterioration of physical and mental health. Similarly, divorce affects children with chronic stress, loneliness, anxiety, depression, low academic performance, and behavioral problems, similar to their parents (Schaan et al., 2019; Akpan & Ezeume 2020; Viršilaitė & Bukšnytė-Marmienė 2021; Çaksen 2021; Philemon 2023).

However, it is observed that these effects on children decrease with healthy parental cooperation.

The negative impact of divorce on children varies according to age. As emphasized in studies by Stevenson et al. (2018), Goisis et al. (2019), and Kleinschlömer and Krapf (2023), children under the age of six tend to be more negatively affected. Considering the legal processes carried out alongside divorce, it is understood that custody preferences and perspectives on joint parenting differ by gender (Mahrer et al. 2018). Articles examined by Köppen et al. (2018), Marinho & Gouveia (2021), and Monostori et al. (2023) indicate that women tend to live with their children, while men's decisions depend on the conditions created for the children. This situation can allow men to become equal partners in childcare, reducing the burden on women and enhancing their social skills (Hideg et al. 2023). Additionally, studies examined in our research by Petren & Ferraro (2023), Merson et al. (2023), and Le Forner (2023) also suggest that joint custody, as one of the custody preferences, facilitates children's emotional outcomes by facilitating communication and contact with both parents. It provides a better framework for shaping post-divorce parent-child relationships through open communication and support (Bastais & Pasteels 2019; Nielsen 2018; Steinbach 2023). However, it is a reality that joint custody creates anxiety in parents due to the sharing of responsibilities (Fritzell et al. 2019). Post-divorce parental attitudes and co-parenting processes create deep and complex effects on parents and children.

Secondly, parents' effective coping mechanisms and a supportive social environment facilitate stress management and provide stability for children. Particularly in the examined articles, it has been observed that the new parenting process is closely related to post-divorce adjustment, and children's adaptation to the new order enhances parents' coping skills with positive emotions. However, as Francia et al. (2019) mentioned, parents' preference for suppression overexpression in response to the challenges they face during the adjustment process is valuable information for understanding their emotional states. Therefore, promoting family-level harmony is the best for post-divorce parental and child well-being (DeAnda et al. 2021; Poortman 2018; Smith-Etxeberria et al. 2022). Since children's adaptation to life after divorce is supported by positive relationships they establish with parents, friends, and new family members, it is known that this adaptation plays a critical role in reducing the effects of divorce. In 16 of the examined articles (such as Van Schalkwyk & Gentz 2023; Kleinschlömer & Krapf 2023; Van der Wal et al. 2019; Zilincikova et al. 2023), it is emphasized that children's adaptation to the post-divorce process does not solely rely on the role of parents but also has

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holistic reflections of family and social environment subsystems such as teachers, friends, and siblings. This is an essential insight for interventions and practices with parents who often feel isolated during the adjustment process. This inference is supported by Mahony & Fenton (2021) and Yao (2023).

Thirdly, it is understood that factors hindering shared parenting after divorce are defined by violence and traditional parental role descriptions. High levels of conflict and violence between parents create a chaotic environment for children (Lawson et al. 2020). Parents' experiences of violence are significantly associated with the mental health, behavior, and adjustment problems of children and themselves (Leach et al. 2020; Noble et al. 2023; Laletas & Khasin 2021). Additionally, Van der Wal et al. (2019) indicate that children in high-conflict divorces are exposed to high levels of traumatic effects and have lower levels of sleep after divorce. Furthermore, by supporting traditional parental roles, fathers become caregivers, motivators, mentors, co-workers, and enforcers of child discipline, but mothers bear the main caregiving burden (Lestari & Amaliana 2020). Moreover, it is observed that the factors highlighted in the examined articles are essentially associated with the reflections of parents' unsuccessful adjustment processes after divorce, which hinder shared parenting. Conflict management, supportive interventions, and reconsidering traditional role definitions are necessary to overcome these barriers.

Our fourth focus is on individual counseling and therapy as a professional application area, perceived social support, and educational level as facilitators of individual coping mechanisms. A therapeutic intervention program for divorced parents can impact children's post-divorce adjustment by enhancing the connection between parents and the parent-child relationship (Dumitriu et al. 2022). Counseling and therapy help children process their emotions and strengthen coping skills, while mediation guides parents by prioritizing their children's best interests during separation or divorce (Nangia 2023). Wong et al. (2019) and Quigley and Cyr (2018) emphasize the effectiveness of sometimes conducting sessions with children alone and sometimes with familiar individuals to establish a trusting relationship with the counselor, which, although not new as field knowledge, serves as an essential reminder for assessing the specific dynamics of children. Additionally, co-parenting education can be a beneficial intervention focused on the child's best interests and facilitating communication (Zimmerman 2019).

On the other hand, divorce, along with adequate support and coping mechanisms, enhances parental self-efficacy over time (Rix et al. 2022; Sumari et al. 2020). Social support and close relationships with grandparents are positively associated with children's quality of life assessments during divorce (Sorek 2020; Gasse & Mortelmans 2020). It can protect children's attachment to their co-resident parents, social circles, or neighborhoods (Rejaän et al. 2022a). Another factor facilitating co-parenting is the educational level of parents. A higher level of parental education is associated with children experiencing fewer psychological problems and more frequent visits with non-custodial parents. This can be explained by the relationship between parents' education levels and awareness-building skills. The positive relationship between parents' higher education level and children's more significant positive affect and higher life satisfaction, as concluded by Sutin et al. (2018), is considered an important indicator. However, further examination is required, considering studies by Matti et al. (2022) and Mandemakers and Kalmijn (2014), which concluded that parents' education level is not associated with children's psychological well-being. While higher education level, on the one hand, can result in the "double burden" of work and childcare (Nilsen et al. 2020), on the other hand, it can be a factor that minimizes the risks and reflections of divorce on the parent-child relationship due to the higher socioeconomic level (Hogendoorn et al. 2020).

Finally, in our study, the reflections of co-parenting on children were explained through two factors. (a) Co-parenting, characterized by cooperation and effective communication between parents, enhances children's psychological well-being. Parents' open communication with their children, honest answers to their questions about divorce, and avoidance of negative comments about the other parent will alleviate negative reflections. (b) Another reflection of co-parenting on children is the frequency of contact with the non-custodial parent, which ensures emotional stability for children by supporting regular interaction with both parents through joint custody arrangements. Although spending time with a stepparent, as emphasized in the study by Le Forner (2023), may have beneficial and developmental reflections for children, it does not substitute for time spent with the biological parent. In this regard, comparing the results of studies conducted by Monostori et al. (2023), Houdt et al. (2019), and Yaure and Bartolic (2018) could reveal dimensions that support the conclusions reached in our study and those that are contrary to them. Therefore, the positive reflections of co-parenting on children's psychological well-being, frequency of contact with parents, and living arrangements are evident. Collaboration and communication between parents play a significant role in children's emotional and behavioral development.

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CONCLUSION

This scoping review examines how changes in parental attitudes and the co-parenting process after divorce affect children, evaluating how divorce transforms family dynamics and children's emotional, social, and behavioral development. This study contributes to various applied fields such as sociology, social work, child development, psychology, and law in four main aspects:

(1) By identifying the challenges children face after divorce and the problems parents encounter during this process, the study contributes to the development of targeted intervention programs. Social work organizations can create specialized programs to improve children's emotional regulation and coping skills. Collaboration with schools can help integrate these programs into counseling services. Community centers could offer workshops for divorced parents on managing conflict and supporting their children's emotional needs. The outcomes of these programs can inform policymakers on developing more effective policies for divorced families, specifically for children's well-being.

(2) Considering the positive effects of co-parenting practices on children, the importance of educational programs for parents becomes evident. Consider implementing specific interventions, such as mandatory co-parenting classes before finalizing a divorce, to teach essential communication, conflict management, and cooperation skills. These programs can be run in collaboration with family courts, where attendance could be mandated during divorce. These programs can increase children's welfare by providing parents with training in effective communication, conflict management, and cooperation.

(3) The study's findings strengthen legal support services for parents and children during divorce, enabling parties to protect their rights and ensure a fair process. Legal systems could introduce a requirement for divorce mediation with a child psychologist present to focus on child-centered outcomes in custody decisions. Furthermore, subsidized or free legal aid services for low-income families could ensure equitable access to fair divorce proceedings. Notably, it can facilitate the adoption of more equitable and child-centered custody and visitation rights decisions. Consequently, the inference can be made for the widespread implementation of legal mediation services.

(4) Providing crucial psychological counseling services for parents and children during and after divorce is essential for helping them manage emotional and psychological challenges. Introducing accessible, low-cost, or school-based family therapy services can significantly aid

families in navigating this period more smoothly. Schools should consider collaborating with mental health professionals to establish peer support groups for children of divorced parents, with a focus on peer support and emotional resilience training. Strengthening psychological counseling services in schools can play a vital role in minimizing the adverse effects of divorce on children's academic performance and social relationships.

In conclusion, successful co-parenting will be a significant initiative in reducing the emotional and psychological tension associated with divorce by providing children with continuity and a sense of security.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Researches

While this study provides valuable insights into the changes in parental attitudes and the implications of co-parenting dynamics for children following divorce, it has several limitations. Considering these limitations is crucial for shaping future research and gaining a deeper understanding of co-parenting dynamics:

(1) The articles and sources examined in the study are limited to a specific period and geographic region. Parenting and child development after divorce may vary in cultural and socioeconomic contexts. Therefore, future research should examine families and divorce experiences from diverse cultural and social contexts through cultural comparisons. To gain a deep understanding of the diversity of family structures and experiences of divorce within different cultural and social contexts, it is crucial to construct comprehensive datasets through qualitative and quantitative research methods. These datasets should explore marriage patterns, the number of children, pre-marital emotional exchanges, and the dynamics of origin families.

(2) Methodological differences among the studies reviewed may hinder a comprehensive evaluation of the findings. Comparisons of findings from longitudinal studies evaluating the effectiveness of interventions and support programs developed for divorced families or providing comprehensive information would provide a roadmap for interventions.

(3) The inability to clearly distinguish the effects of conflict levels during the divorce process created a superficiality in addressing its negative implications. Since high-conflict divorces may have different effects on children and parents compared to low-conflict divorces, synthesizing specific findings would contribute to identifying post-divorce adjustment strategies.

(4) While the study acknowledges that perspectives on the divorce process, aftermath, co-parenting, and dynamics vary according to maternal and paternal roles, gaining more insight

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into how parents' genders affect their relationships with their children and their custody preferences would be beneficial.

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Makale Bilgisi/Article Information

<i>Etik Beyan:</i>	Bu çalışmanın hazırlanma sürecinde bilimsel ve etik ilkelere uyulduğu ve yararlanılan tüm çalışmaların kaynakçada belirtildiği beyan edilir.	<i>Ethical Statement:</i>	It is declared that scientific and ethical principles have been followed while carrying out and writing this study and that all the sources used have been properly cited.
<i>Çıkar Çatışması:</i>	Çalışmada kişiler veya kurumlar arası çıkar çatışması bulunmamaktadır.	<i>Conflict of Interest:</i>	The authors declare that declare no conflict of interest.
<i>Yazar Katkı Beyanı:</i>	Birinci yazarın makaleye katkısı %50, ikinci yazarın makaleye katkısı %50' dir.	<i>Author Contribution Declaration:</i>	The contribution of the first author to the article is 50% and the contribution of the second author to the article is 50%.
<i>Mali Destek:</i>	Çalışma için herhangi bir kurum veya projeden mali destek alınmamıştır.	<i>Financial Support:</i>	The study received no financial support from any institution or project.