

# The lived experiences of children in parental divorce: A call for trauma-informed approach to divorce support in Singapore

A qualitative study on the long-term impact of divorce on children

**Sample size**  
N = 14 adults (21 to 33 years old)

**Recruitment criteria**  
Experienced divorce during childhood (> 5 years)  
Age (> 21 years old)  
English speaking

**Recruitment method**  
Purposive sampling and snowball sampling

**Methodology**  
One-to-one Interview with participants via Zoom  
Transcribed data analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006) and Nvivo

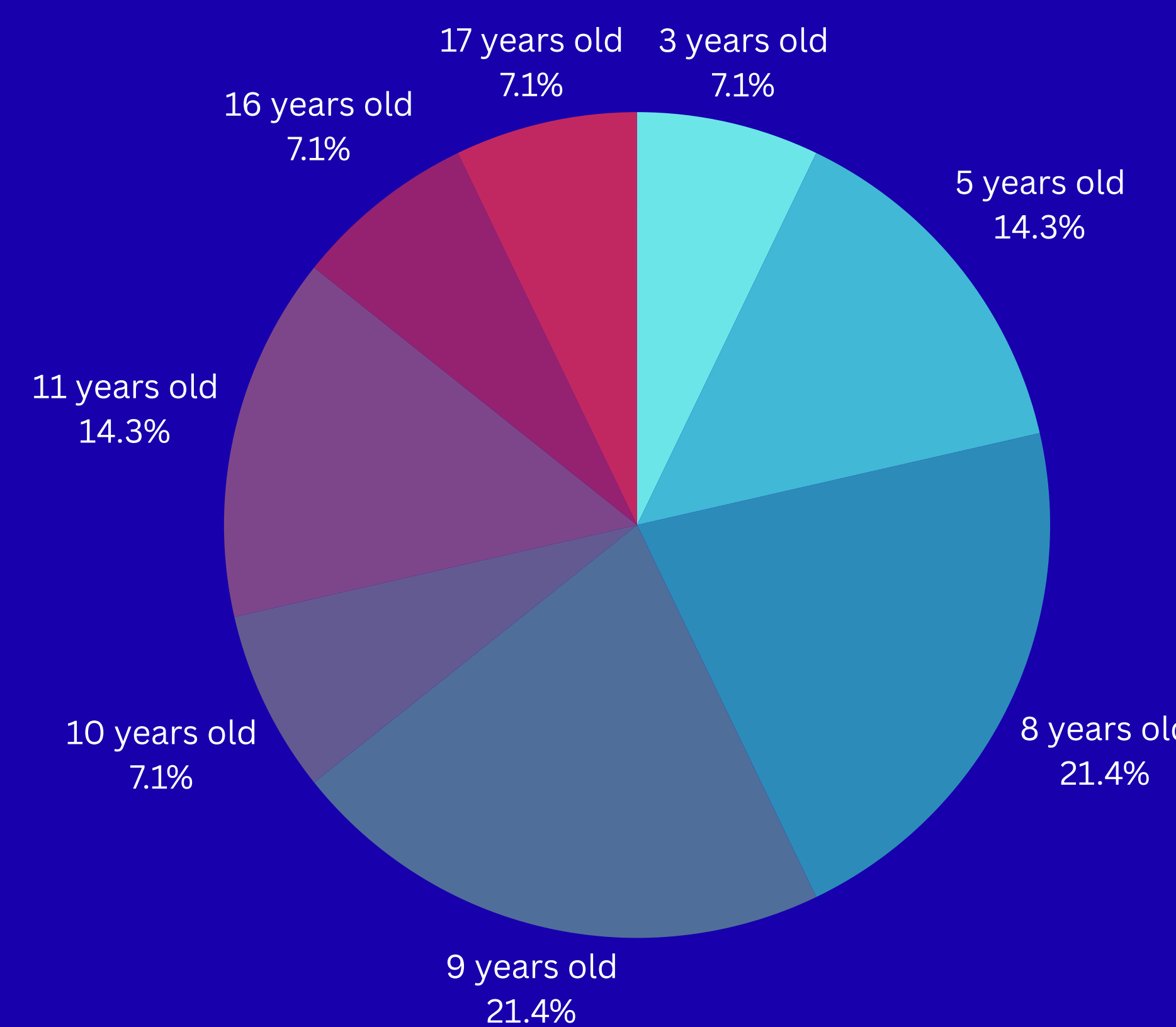
Initial coding frame was established by randomly double-coding two interviews by at least 2 coders

Finalised coding frame was established after discussing discrepancies and reaching consensus (Cohen's Kappa > 0.8)

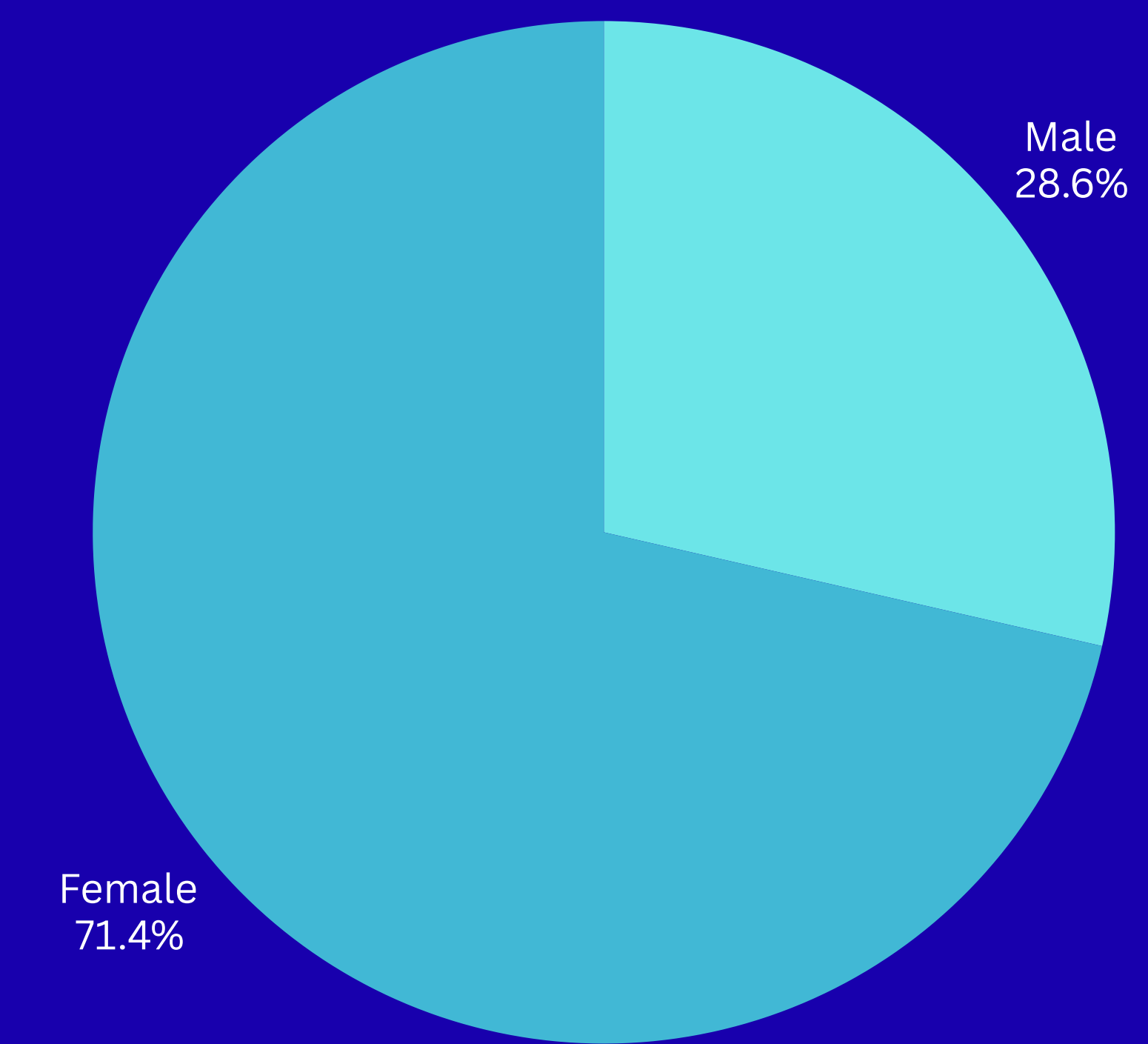
Other transcripts were coded

Codes and themes were organised using the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) framework

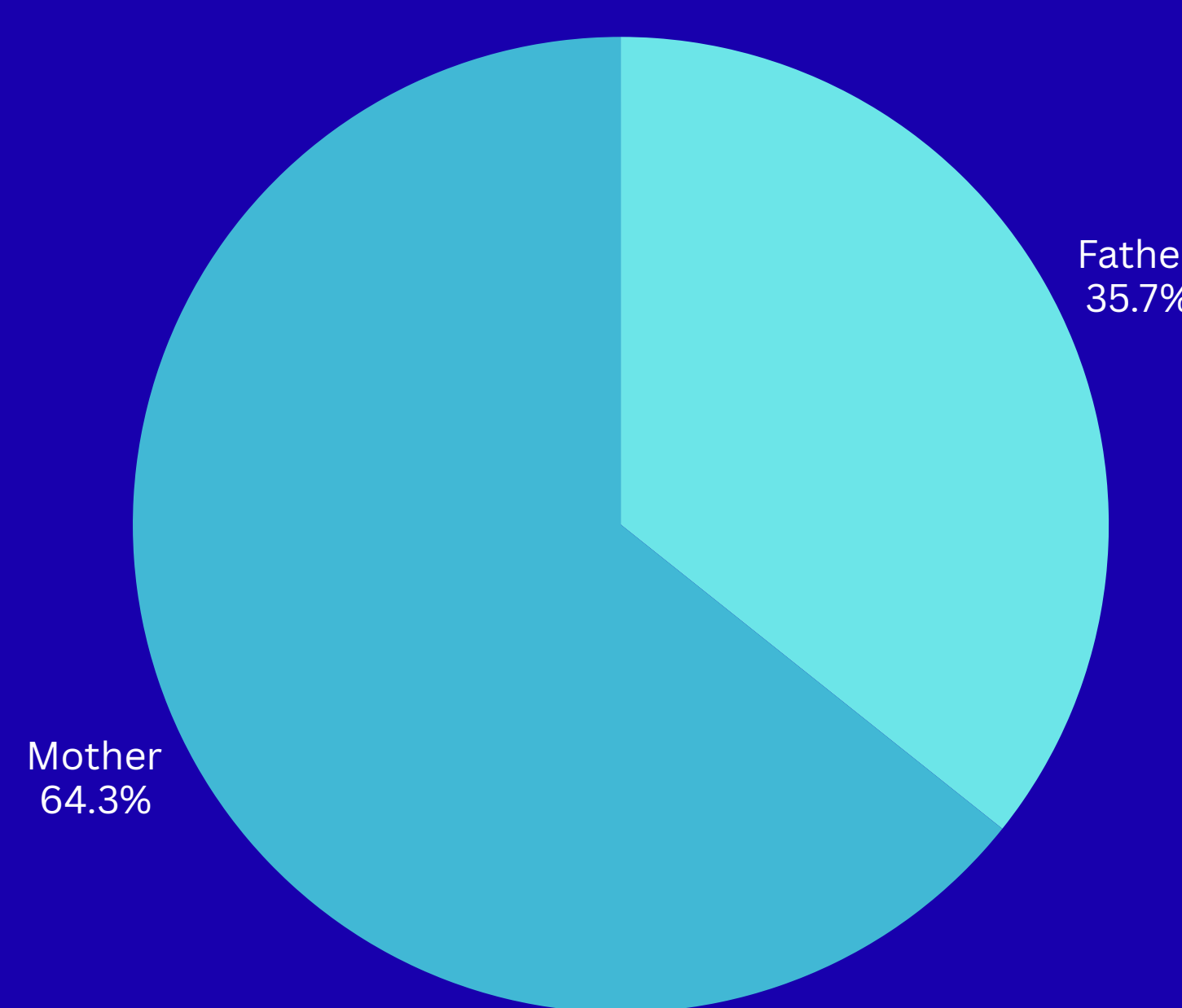
**Participant's age when parental divorce occurred**



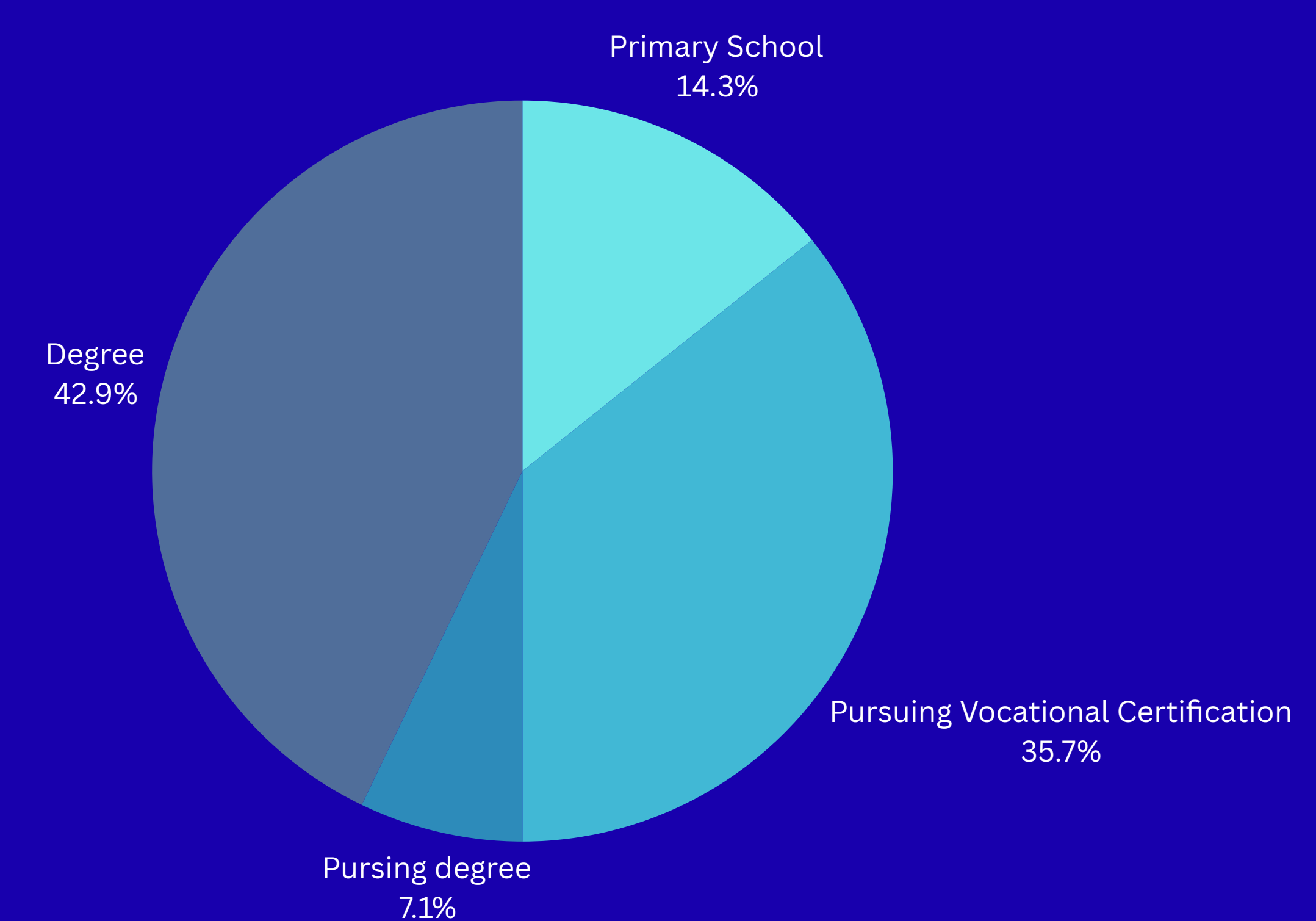
**Gender**



**Care Parent**



**Highest Education Level**



## Research Question | How did children respond to parental divorce from adolescence to adulthood?

Thematic Visualisation of Interview Findings Using the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Framework

### EARLY CHILDHOOD TO SCHOOL AGE

### ADOLESCENCE

### YOUNG ADULTHOOD

#### CHILD EXPERIENCES ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

Parental Divorce  
Family Violence

Care Parent's Psychological Issues

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

##### 1) Provision of Child-Centred and Trauma-Informed Practice

###### Child-centred practice

- Working for and together with the child
- Acknowledged the child's rights to provision, protection, and participation

###### Trauma-informed practice

- Findings revealed that many participants experienced psychosocial difficulties upon exposure to parental divorce and other trauma-related events
- Highlighting the importance of adopting a trauma-informed approach to divorce support services

#### IMPAIRMENT ARISES

##### EMOTIONAL

Anger  
Confusion  
Guilt  
Loneliness  
Anxiety and Depressive Symptoms

##### COGNITIVE

Denial and Avoidance

Lack of Awareness and Trust for Professional Support

##### SOCIAL

School Absenteeism  
Lack of Social Support at School  
Strained Relationships at Home  
Ineffective Parenting Styles  
Parental Projection  
Parental alienation and Triangulation

##### 2) Enhance Access to Professional Support

Increase awareness about available divorce support programmes

- Collaborations with news media platforms to raise awareness of divorce-related community resources for children and youths
- Social service agencies to set up a helpline specifically for families facing divorce
- Use of other media platforms such as podcasts, to enable dialogue about parental divorce

#### ADOPTION OF HEALTH BEHAVIOURS

##### Risky Behaviours

Suicide Ideation  
Suicide Attempt  
Leaving Home  
Substance Use and Sexual Behaviours

##### Protective Behaviours

Positive Social Support  
Self-Agency  
Professional Support in Late adolescence / Early Adulthood

##### Aspirations

Self-Reliance  
Altruistic Career Aspirations  
Ambivalence on Committed Relationships