



Effects of Marital Divorce on Children's Well-being in Iringa Municipality, Tanzania

**Augustino A. Malema^{a*}, Given Msomba^a
and Frank Phillip^a**

^a *Department of Community Development, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, University of Iringa, P.O. Box-200, Iringa, Tanzania.*

Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. Author AAM wrote the paper, analysed and discussed the findings and drafted the manuscript. The editor read and edited the manuscript while the two authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Article Information

DOI: 10.9734/ARJASS/2023/v21i3480

Open Peer Review History:

This journal follows the Advanced Open Peer Review policy. Identity of the Reviewers, Editor(s) and additional Reviewers, peer review comments, different versions of the manuscript, comments of the editors, etc are available here: <https://www.sdiarticle5.com/review-history/108555>

Original Research Article

Received: 21/08/2023
Accepted: 28/10/2023
Published: 02/11/2023

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the effects of marital divorce on children's well-being in Iringa Municipality under the specific objective named; to assess the psychological effects on children's well-being. The study used a Qualitative approach and descriptive research design. Data was collected through interviews and focus group discussions. Data were analyzed through a thematic approach. The findings indicated that there are direct relationship between the style of life the parents were living before divorce and the style their children live after divorce which in turn affects them and they may cause another divorce to their child in the future. Moreover, divorced marriages were found to have negative psychological effects on children either mentally or physically, misconduct behaviour, social interaction and becoming street children. The study recommends that parents must rethink critical before deciding to divorce on the future development of their children.

*Corresponding author: Email: agustinomalema@gmail.com;

Keywords: Marital divorce; children; children well-being; cultural; social and psychological.

1. INTRODUCTION

Marital divorce is increasing across the world since marriage today is not committed to being the lifetime it once was. Parents appear to get married in the instant based on their emotions and feelings, not for the precious covenant that marriage represents before God. Marital divorce seems to be influenced by the structure and marriage practices which enhance the increment of the growing population of children experiencing marital divorce. However, following the adoption of the new Divorce Act in 1968, which made divorces more accessible in all provinces and allowed marriage breakdown as grounds for separation, the number of divorces increased dramatically [1], between the end of 2010 and the mid-2015, the divorce rate increased worldwide. Parental separation is common in Tanzania rather than legal divorces followed by a great number of marital dissolution complaints in social welfare departments increasing day-to-day up to 405 divorces in ten years RITA Report, 2016 [2].

According to [3] describes that emotional divorce passes through several stages, beginning with the loss of affection and love and then partial abandonment of the emotional practices of all types gradually, to complete abandonment. It also involves sexual relationships, living outside the home, neglecting maintenance and care with the prevailing situation of the wife being neither divorced nor married [4]. The process of divorce includes destabilization, loss of confidence, loss of love, selfishness, marital silence and emotional Divorce [5].

Pamela et al. [6] state that children from divorced families their parents use violence more frequently to resolve conflict and are more likely to be stressed, aggressive and physically violent to solve marital. (ibid) add that later on, the child in their own marriages will be unhappy in their marriages consequence of practising the same system as their parents did. Probing the effects of marital divorce on the development of the child [7] found that, children of divorced parents may have a lower sense of psychological well-being than children who grew up with intact families. [8] confirm that, children of divorced parents may experience problems such as loneliness and depression. When parents divorce, children frequently face the loss of one parent's persistent presence and economic instability; as a result,

stress may take a tremendous toll on the children.

Conger J. [9] conducted research on the effects of parental marital divorce on adolescents in China the result revealed that high emotional clarity could reduce the influence of life stress on depressive symptoms in adolescents. Both emotional abuse and neglect in childhood trauma were the most predictive factors for the development of severe, early onset, drug-resistant depression, suicidal ideation, and non-suicidal self-injury (ibid) The study [10] on the effects of family breakdown in Bangladesh reported that children of different ages vary developmental levels of cognitive and emotional resources that may influence how they react to parental separation and divorce. Actually, divorce can have a significant effect on the child but the loss of the parent-child relationship seems to be the most detrimental to the child as it can affect the child emotionally, behaviorally, and socially Czapiewski (2014) cited in [11]. However, the stress of divorce tends to weaken and even damage the parent-child relation for divorced mothers Fagan [12]. The children from divorced families live unhappy lives and are uncomfortable because community and relatives view parent separation as sinful and against God's commandments. Even the children from those families are neglected and abused as homeless families.

Both divorced men and women in Ethiopia suffer from extreme emotional liability in the period leading up to separation and for the two-year post-separation period [13]. An awareness of the opportunities for a new way of life and escape from the emotional pain of chronic marital discord both lead to periods of elation. [14] states that many of them blame themselves for their parent's divorce, which can create sadness and guilt. Contrary [15] has different opinions on divorce as he pointed out that divorce allows women to interact with society freely and to raise their children in their own ways without being dictated to by their husbands; the consequence of divorce, women are less occupied to their husbands" disposition and needs and they got the freedom to spend time alone in their own space.

Angi et al. [16] states that family conflict predicts that adolescents have difficulties in solving adaptive problems in the family, including

behavioural problems and depressive moods. Family conflict also affects the prognosis of depression in adolescents, which reduces the clinical remission rate significantly. Another study conducted by Feng [17] found children from divorced or widowed families and reorganized families were significantly worse than those from stable families in behavioural problems, emotional problems, self-concept as well as their overall mental health status.

Damato PR. [13] conducted research on the effects of divorce on family life in Ethiopia where the study realized that divorce leads custodial parents to experience major changes in their lives including a change in residential arrangements, economic disadvantage, the loneliness associated with social network changes, and role strain associated with the task overload that results from having to care for children and work outside the home. Nicholas et al. as cited in [18] explain the worst troublemaker in school, the child who engages in fighting and stealing, is far more likely to come from a broken home than the well-behaved.

Parents in a stressful marriage are less likely to have close relationships with their children, whereas parents who are satisfied with their marriage are more likely to have quality relationships with their offspring. Gerald [19] explains that children of divorced or separated parents' sex habit increased behavioural problems and the marital conflict that accompanies the parents' divorce place the child's social competence at risk. Even in intact families that have low to medium levels of conflict, children still have fewer behaviour problems than those in high-conflict, disrupted families.

During divorce, conflict between parents is often accompanied by less affection, responsiveness, and more inclination to punish their children, which leaves their children feeling emotionally insecure. Boys whose parents divorced while they were in elementary school tend to develop problems in the years following their parents' separation [20]. However, the problem behaviour increases immediately following the divorce among boys whose parents divorced while they were in middle school, their problem behaviour steadily decreases in the year after the divorce [ibid].

According to Conger et al. (2010) as cited in [21] study believed that divorce diminishes the capacity of children to handle conflict. The

difference between marriages that stay intact and those that end in divorce lies primarily in the couple's ability to handle marital conflict and move towards agreement. Conger et al, (2010). Uphold that Children of divorced parents acquire the same incapacity through the modelling of their parents. The marital conflict that accompanies parents' divorce places this competence at risk. When parents are divorcing the conflict between them is often accompanied by less love, less responsiveness and more love towards their children, and leaves their children feeling emotionally insecure, and more likely to believe that their social setting is unpredictable and uncontrollable.

Street children could be considered as an indicator of the family breakdown [22] states that the structural breakdown of families and the breakdown of relationships in the families may make children go to the streets after the family conflicts and result in divorce. The study further explained that street children were pushed by different factors including family breakdown, death of parents or guardians, peer pressure, abuses of stepfather or mother family conflict and labour exploitation in the family, where poverty and facility were the leading factors by 58% of the respondents (ibid).

Sofiya and Galata [23] conducted a study in Ethiopia on the effects of street children. The findings revealed that changes in family structure and relationships as marriages for one of the parents, and family disintegration brought about by separation of parents- seem to create problems of adjustment and anxiety for the children. Leaving home or being away from relatives/family, most of the time then becomes an attractive option for these children - despite the harsh conditions that street life presents them with. Moreover [24] on factors contributing to the increase of street children in Meru-Arusha study revealed that socio-economic factors contributing to the increase of street children range from poverty, lawlessness, alcohol and drug abuse, social permissiveness family breakup and child abuse.

The combination of social, economic, and psychological challenges which faces families affects the well-being of their children. The parents who fail to solve these challenges peaceful and in harmony way result in conflict consequence of divorce if not well handled with wisdom [25] confirms multiple contributory factors to experiences of youth homelessness,

including family breakdown, influenced by behaviors of both parents and, economic problems, and residential instability. [26] write that the push factors such as situations of abuse, domestic violence or poor family relationships are common among street children.

Tuttle and Davis [27] argued that street children are always not attached to cultural, moral and traditional, they are usually not concerned about cultural morals because of being away from family since childhood. The literature shows street children result from differences in multiple problems in society. These problems affect the mental and psychosocial of the affected children. The children can be affected by family conflicts, child neglect either through parent divorce or death and other factors.

Damota (2019) argues that a divorced couple's residential arrangements, economic status, social networks and role demands lead to deterioration in physical and mental health for the majority of individuals immediately following separation. Children's approval of premarital sex, cohabitation, and divorce rises intensely, while their authorization of marriage and childbearing falls [28]. According to [29] children from divorced families are also more likely to believe that marriage is not important prior to having children and are more likely to have a child out of wedlock. Gililand [30] explains that growing up in an unsupported, neglectful or violent home is also associated with poor physical health and development. The negative health behaviour identified by scientists after marital break-up includes the increased risk of alcohol intake as well as tobacco use among men. Also, Such children may experience more externalizing problems such as conduct disorders, delinquency and impulsive behaviour than kids from 2 parent families. Despite the reviewed literature, there are limited studies on the effects of marital divorce on children. This study intended to fill the existing knowledge gap by justifying to parents and the community at large on how marital divorce affects children's well-being in terms of social, psychological and cultural aspects in Iringa Municipal Council Tanzania.

1.1 Specific Objective

The specific objectives for this study were;

To assess psychological effects of marital divorce on children well-being in Iringa Municipal Council

1.2 Significance of the Study

The study greatly contributed to children, families, the government and relevant institutions in Tanzania in understanding the effect of marital divorce on children. The study helps parents and the community to know the position and responsibilities to their children and also to know the challenges facing their children after marital divorce. The results enhance government and other institutions to understand the proper ways of handling children from divorced families. Further, the findings will help the government to review laws, policies and regulations pertaining to children's welfare and procedures of parent's divorce.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 The Study Area

The study was conducted in the Iringa region with a special focus on Iringa Municipality. Iringa region is among the regions in Tanzania, The region is bordered by the Morogoro region to the east, the Njombe region to the south, the Mbeya region is bordered to the west and Dodoma and Singind to the north. The Iringa region comprises four districts namely: Mufindi Town Council, Kilolo, Mufindi District Council Iringa Rural and Iringa Municipal Council. The Iringa Municipal has been chosen as the area of the study following the Iringa District Court statistics of the year 2022 up to 2023 June show that Iringa Municipal has 156 marital divorces (Resident Magistrate Iringa, 2023). Contrary, to other districts where the rate of divorce is lower, for example, Iringa Rural has 106 marital divorces (refer to Appendix I). The higher prevalence has prompted the researcher to examine what could affect the children's well-being from these massive marital divorces.

2.2 Research Approach

The study employed a qualitative research approach. The approach helped the researcher to collect detailed information from the participants and provided explanations of findings from objectives. The approach provided clear comprehensive in-depth data collection and analysis on the practice of marital divorced children in Iringa municipal.

2.3 Research Design

The study employed a descriptive study design using only a qualitative research approach. The

design was used because the study requires a description of the characteristics of the information and respondents involved in this study without the operation of variables.

2.4 Population

Participants of the study were children whose parents were divorced and divorcee parents, social affairs officers, community development officers, ward executive officers, Police gender desk officers and magistrate officers from Iringa Municipal were included as key informants.

2.5 Sample Size

The purpose sampling techniques were used to obtain two social affairs officers, three community development officers, one magistrate officer, three ward executive officers, and two police gender desk officers' six children from divorced families and six divorced parents which make a total of twenty-four participants. These participants were involved in this study because they have experiences and knowledge of the violence occurring in the community. For example, the social worker community and police gender desk deal with day-to-day receiving and solving the community violence issues from the community.

2.6 Data Collection Methods and Instruments

2.6.1 Interview

For the seek of collecting reliable data, different methods of data collection were used. Sem-structured interview was used to collect data from social affairs officer, community development officer, magistrate officer, ward executive officer, and police gender desk officers. The instrument was developed in English, and later on was translated into Kiswahili because the key informants were used Kiswahili to ensure understanding and draw insight, and experience information on the effect of marital divorce on children well-being in Iringa Municipality.

2.6.2 Focus group discussion

The focus group discussion method was used to collect data from children with divorced parents and divorced parents. The methods were used to gain in-depth understanding of the effects of marital divorce on children with divorced parents

and divorced parents. The researcher used two groups during the discussion. The first group was for divorced parents and the second was for children from divorced families.

2.7 Data Analysis

The study used content analysis to analyse the collected data. The qualitative data was analysed by using content data analysis. Five steps were involved during data analysis namely; data collection and organisation from interviews and focus group discussion in a systematic manner and translation data from Kiswahili to English, The next step was to analyse data according to themes in relationship with research-specific objectives where each data emerged including coding of data and theme transcription. The researcher interpreted the data in a meaningful relationship between the data and the objective and what the participants reported during the interview and focus group discussion. Finally, summarizing the data and writing a report that communicates the results of the analysis. Data were presented in the form of word text narration.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Psychological Effects of Marital Divorce on Children's Well-being

3.1.1 Mental health

The findings revealed that the life of children from divorced parents becomes very difficult as adults lead them to be emotionally and mentally unfit which causes children's deterioration of physical health. Generally, children of divorced parents tend to develop mental health problems because they think their life are meaningless and full of frustration, hearing their fellow's stories about their parents make children from divorced parents unhappy and lonely For example one respondent said that:

"My parents divorced when I was in standard six but two years later I and my father shifted to another region where I started a day secondary school education. But in our street, most of my friends used to tell stories about their mothers which caused my mental illness because of missing my mother's love. One day I got malaria which caused me to be admitted to hospital for three days, my friends used to frequently visit me and kept talking about their mothers who took care of them when they fell sick. The stories disturbed my health and increased stress to me

and made me mentally disturbed and this caused my illness to take a long time to be cured because of the thoughts of missing one parent.” (Focus Group discussion with children 15th March, 2023).

In addition one of the parents has the same opinion that she has following in health problems due to her divorce from her husband as she said;

“...after the divorce from my former husband, I didn't sleep at night, I was full of stress which caused me to have High blood pressure and Heart problems. Now am attending a clinic at Iringa government hospital” Focus Group discussion with divorced parents 18th March, 2023)

The findings also showed that most of the children from divorced families suffer from mental problems which harm their health and social well-being. One of the children said that during group discussions;

‘... since my parent' divorced, I am not happy always.. my health and mind are not well stable. I have been attending hospital but no problem was realized finally the doctor advised me to reduce stress.

3.1.2 Misconduct behaviour

Children of divorced or separated parents' sex habit increase behavioural problems and the marital conflict that accompanies parents' divorce place the child's social competence at risk. This is a psychological problem that develops once the parents get divorced because the child is now free to do what he or she needs to do. One of the children responded that:

“...when we were living together with my both parents, mother used to control me in every step I were making. She knew everything about me while my father was very busy with his own business like he never knew even that I had started undergoing a menstrual period. But after the divorce, I remained with my father while my siblings went with my mother which made me very free to do whatever I wanted and this made me enter into sexual activities with different boys in our street. The behaviour which I went with it up to the completion of my secondary school education but during those periods my father never discovered that I have started engaging in love affairs but my mother did...” (Focus Group discussion with children 15th March, 2023).

This shows that after divorce parental care for the children always decreases which makes the children now to develop behaviours which are not acceptable to society like the one narrated above. Another respondent said he entered into drug usage immediately after the divorce because there was no one to control him and he said:

“...my father used to control me on every step which I was making and he was always cruel and brutal on me to the extent that I used to be afraid of him very much but after the divorce with my mother in which we children all went to our mother I started engaging on some bad company who transformed me into drug addiction in which I used to use them as well as supply (sell drugs to the Mateja) them but this occurred because my mother was very fair to me and I was not afraid of her...” Focus Group discussion with divorced parent 18th March, 2023)

The finding was reported by the social worker officer during the interview: “In Iringa Municipal we have street children who come from divorced families and they engage in drug abuse and robbery” More findings were revealed during the interview when the community development offer said that, “The number of children in Makorongo ward who are engaged in drug abuse, and sexual practice. (Interview with social worker 24th March,2023

Children from divorced families are also more likely to believe that marriage is not important prior to having children and are more likely to engage themselves in sexual intercourse for leisure because they are affected by the divorce their parents took. For instance, most of the children said that they wish not to get married because they don't like to be heartbroken like their parents respondents. They added that they will not entertain marriage but they will involve themselves sexually because of leisure or getting children because of different reasons.

During data collection, it was revealed that misconduct among married couples contributed to some of the family divorces. One of the families come into divorce because the husband had a child with another mother outside their couple's bond and is kept a secret from his beloved wife. When the wife realized, she failed to tolerate she went and fought with her co-wife. This information was reported by one mother during a focus group discussion saying;

“... I lived with my husband for ten years without knowing that he had a baby with another woman.,....after knowing, I decided to go the house of the mother who has shared with my husband and beat him heavily. My husband chased me and blamed me of insulting him to the community...” ” Focus Group discussion with divorced parent 18th March, 2023).

3.1.3 Street children

The research finding indicates that marital divorce leads to street children. The children from divorced parents had the habit of quitting their caregiver at started living in the street for different reasons. Some of the relatives have a parenting system while others do not care at all and just set them free. The community development officers and the ward executive officer explained that there is a rapid increase of street children in their working area. One of the reasons is to parent divorce which causes children to lack parenting care. For example, the executive wars office from Kihesa said;

‘In my ward, we have street children who have abandoned their home lives due to has treatment of their stepmother after their parents’ divorce. The same finding was reported by the police gender desk who said; .(Interview with social worker 24th March,2023

Similar information was revealed by the police gender desk officer who explained the day-to-day experiences of the marital cases and how children are suffering because of their parent's marital divorce as follows;

“In our gender desk, we usually receive cases of street children who are under 18 from social workers or from the community that they have found committing offences in the street’.(Interview with police gender desk officer 24th March 2023

In light of the finding above, one of the children from the focus group discussion explained that;

I am living as a street child because I have no one to take care of my life. I decided to join a life of this nature due to my friend who joined street life after the death of his parents. To me the divorce of my parent, the hard life and, hash life system and treatment of my stepmother which I had not experienced before caused me to run away from home because even my father was busy with the children of my stepmother only”

..(Focus Group discussion with children 15th March,2023).

3.1.4 Stress and Emotion

The finding indicates that the style of life of children and divorced parents was occupied with stress and emotion which were the results of conflicts during married life and after divorce. The divorced parents said that some of the parents after divorce they have been stressed to the maximum as a result they enter a sexual relationship with young boys who seem to be like their children. One of the parents explained the effect of marital divorce as follows,

“.....there are some of us who have been divorced, and we are living in a stressful life.. You can come across with older mother but married to a young boy as a way of reducing stress as a result forgetting to take care of our children:’ ..(Focus Group discussion with parent 18th March,2023)

Similar information was provided by the community development officer who had similar answers that marital divorce leads to stress and emotion among the divorced parents as reported during the interview session;

“We are receiving conflict from divorced parent especially the mother having conflict with neighbours or husband's relatives because of being responsible to their children. When trying to resolve the problem we come to know she is just full of stress and string emotion with the husband's relative thus they become into unnecessary conflict all the time with their neighbours and irresponsible”.(Interview with community development officer 24th March 2023

The marital divorce had effect on the lifestyle of the children of the divorced pared. The children who had exercised a life of parental divorce have been affected emotionally due to the habit practised by their parents inform of them. One of the children said that during a group discussion:

“...my father used to beat my mother whenever they got into arguments. That habit affects my life and I am always emotional when I find somebody beating his wife in the street. On the other side, I am so stressed because I miss my mother's love as she left us with our grandmother and went to Musoma to her parent to be free from stress and my father's harassment. ..(Focus Group discussion with children 15th March, 2023).

The findings from the respondent revealed that there were a direct relationship between the styles of life the parents were living before divorce and the style their kids will live after divorce which in turn affects them in terms of feelings and emotional

4. DISCUSSION

The marital divorce between married parents revealed to have mental problems to both divorced parents and their children because of experiencing a new system of life hardship. This affected the health of children and their parents either mentally or physically. Similarly [31] findings justify mental health. The findings of this study bode well with the findings of the study by [32] children need to transition from living with both parents to living with only one parent which always causes frustration hence it concluded that children from divorced parents develop strong depression which make them develops mental disorders to some extents. Many families from divorced families suffer from mental illness. The finding also, revealed that children from single mothers were like to be affected by mental health due to depression and brain thinking disorders. Some mothers suffer a lot because their husbands are the source of income. It became difficult for such mothers to start struggling for children's food and other requirements.

Damota [12] argues that divorced couples face challenges of economic status, social networks and role demands which lead to deterioration in physical and mental health for the majority of individuals immediately following separation. With regard to Damota's study, the current study, findings rerate in the way that the well-being mind of parents influences the mental health of their children while poor and distributed mental status of the parents causes family instability which internally and externally affects the mental health of their children and growing up in an unsupported, neglectful or violent home is also associated with poor physical health and development. The same observation has been realized in this study where children from divorced parents suffered more from poor physical and health support. The unfriendly life situation leads them not to sleep at night due to depression. Also, loneliness and lack of parent's care and love which they used to, affected their mental health well-being.

In addition, the study found that some of the children from divorced developed negative

behaviour attitudes towards sex and remained unmarried because of the pain of their parents' divorce. Similar findings were found [ibid] who concluded that most children whose parents divorced vowed not to marry rather they would only participate in sexual interactions. Children from divorced parents develop habits of dislike getting married fearing being divorced as their parents. Some of these children engage in misconduct behaviour like sexual relations and robbery as comforting zones.

Furthermore. Gager et al. [33] agrees that children from divorced parents always develop internalizing behaviour which they learn from the parent they are living with after divorce or externalizing behaviour which they learn outside their parent because their parents can no longer control them. Children from divorced families need closer care and education on how to live without their beloved parents. If the children remain with one of the parents after the divorce, they still need affection and moral support. The findings revealed that most of the misconduct behaviours were the outcome of hard living conditions. In addition, children from divorced parents were found involved in drug abuse, sexual relations, drop out from school and theft. Some of the children turned into this misbehaviour while struggling for survival while other children practised this bad behaviour as a way of coping with their stress.

As revealed in this study, children from divorced families enter more into behavioural problems rather than finding ways of recurring the destination of their future life. They decided to do that because in their childhood they had experienced parental conflicts which psychologically affected their mind's way of critical thinking and judgment. Children from a divorced parent need great care because family conflict affects the prognosis of life and lead children into depression and misconduct behaviour.

Moreover, the findings revealed that there was a direct relationship between the styles of life the parents lived before divorce and the lifestyle their kids who live after the divorce which are full of stress, feelings and emotions. Similarly, The results are in line with [34] state that children always copy the lifestyle of their parents which in turn affects their emotions and feelings of their children as they grow up concerning married and their way of living. Children value their parent as role model in their life. If their parents' lives

become occupied with conflicts and quarrels possibly the children's life in their adulthood will possess similar character. It is observed that in this study children have conflicted with stepmother since fighting was not a new phenomenon in their lives, while the main source was stress and emotions of being placed with a new stepmother and living in the house which they lived with their mother before.

Abbasi and Al-Obeid [5] argued that children from divorced families who were used to violence more frequently to resolve the conflict were more likely to be stressed, aggressive and subjected to physical violence. The study finding shows that there was a close relationship between the lives of the parents and the future life of their children especially on controlling and fighting against stress and emotions. The parent's decision on their divorce has both negative and positive effects on their children. The [29] research on the effects of divorce on women and children in Nigeria revealed that divorce has psychological and emotional effects on women; the divorced women and children experience more social isolation, which makes them end up producing greater feelings of loneliness, unhappiness, and lower self-esteem. The children who were occupied with stress and emotions were found to be risk takers. They have engaged in any activities regarded as good or harmful to them.

Actual findings found children affected their mental ability to think due to stress and anger. Thus [8] supports that emotional, abuse and neglect in childhood trauma were the most predictive factors for the development of severe, early onset, and drug-resistant depression, suicidal ideation, and non-suicidal self-injury. The study finding found children engaged in smoking, drunkenness and child labour business so as to reduce their internal and external psychological pain.

5. CONCLUSIONS

It was found that divorce creates a gap between children and the parents knowingly or unknowingly and in many cases it weakens their relationship especially if one of the divorced parents decides to remarry and becomes busy with stepparent and newly born children. When the stepparent hates the children, then automatically the relationship between children and parent deteriorates. Also, children from divorced parents develop mental health problems

because they think their life is over and when they meet their peers whose parents are still living together feels guilty about themselves, Furthermore, after divorce the parental care for the children always decreases which makes the children develop behaviours which are not acceptable to the society. Those behaviors include sexual relations. Early marriage, drug abuse and robbery.

Based on the findings it is recommended that divorced parents must build strong relationships with their children after divorce to make them not develop a negative sense of femininity or masculinity. Also, divorced parents should show love to their children in order to create mental health which will rescue them from not being affected by psychological problems. If possible divorced parents should not remarry until their children reach a certain age of being independent. Parents should support their children in social security, financial and moral to reach their vision and life destiny. In addition, this study was limited to the effects of marital divorce on children's well-being in Iringa Municipal. The researcher recommends another study to be conducted on the causes of marital divorce in families for more understanding of marital divorce.

CONSENT AND ETHICAL APPROVAL

The researcher adhered to all issues of ethical consideration the University of Iringa and the Dean through the Directorate of Postgraduate Studies Research and Consultancy who gave the researcher the warrant to seek permission from the Iringa Administrative Secretary (RAS). In light of that, the researcher ensured security to the participants to avoid any harm in any case. The researcher observed the participants' rights, consent, norms and cultural ethics. The researcher ensured the provided information was protected from anyone and was used for research purposes only. To ensure the confidentiality of the respondents' information, all data collected was stored carefully to protect them from unauthorized persons. The researcher was careful when recording data to ensure the identity of the respondents for example names of the participants were not recorded.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

REFERENCES

1. Clarke-Stewart, A. & Brentano, C. *Divorce Causes and Consequences*. USA: Yale University Press; 2016.
2. Malinda, S. *Assessment of divorce child development in Tanzania. A case study of Kinondoni Municipality*. Dissertation; 2017. Available:<http://respository.out.ac.tz> Retrieved January 24,2023.
3. Mohammed SS, Mahnaz K. The effects of spiritual religious intervention on anxiety, depression adjustment to parental divorce in female high school students. *Health, Spirituality and Medical Ethics*. 2020; 7(2):2-8.
4. Al-Hakbani S. *Family guidance guide*. Dar Twawaiq for publication and distribution; 2013.
5. Abbasi R, Al-Obeid K. Emotional divorce among marriage couples. *Journal of Faculty of Arts*, 51.1-18.Bagdad University of Muslansinya; 2010.
6. Pamela S Webster, Terri L Orbuch, James S House, *Effects of Childhood. Family Background on Adult Marital Quality and Perceived Stability*; 2015.
7. Vander Valk I, Spruijt E, Goede M, Maas C, Meeus W. Family structure and problem behavior of adolescents and young adults: A growth-curve study. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*. 2005;34(6):553-546
8. Emery R, D'Onofrio B. Parental divorce or separation and children's mental health. *World Psychiatry*. 2019;18(1):100-104.
9. Conger J. The effects of parental marital status on depressive symptoms in Chines adolescent; the mediating roles of emotion abuse and neglecting. *Journal of Psychology and Psychiatry*. 2023;7(4): 1181-99.
10. Aktar S. *Effects of Family Breakup on Children: A Study in Khulna City; Bangladesh e-Journal of Sociology*. 2013; 10:1-1011.
11. Rosa A, Veela C..Case study of High school students family value formation. *International Journal of Environmental and Science Education*. 2016;11(7):1641-1649.
12. Fagan, P.F. *The effects of divorce on children*; 2012. Available:<https://www.frc.org/EF/EFIZA22p df> Cited 22 February, 2023.
13. Damato PR. *Estimating the effects of parental divorce and death wih fixed effects model*. 2014;76(2). Available:Journal of marriage and family.doi:10111/jomf.1210.
14. Mustapha MLA, Odediran D. Impact of parents separation on the self-esteem of school adolescent in Niger. *International Journal of Instruction*. 2019;12(1):1281-129
15. Anderson J. *The impact of family structure on the health of children: Effects of divorce*; 2018.
16. Angi AL, Suzaily W, Fairuz N, Helm H. Depression symptoms in adolescent in Kuching Malaysia, prevalence and associated factors. *Pediatriclut*. 2019;64: 404-410.
17. Feng T, Xiyuan J, Lucy P, Xiajun Z. Academic performance and the link depressive symptoms among rural Han and minority Chinese adolescent. *Int.J.Environmentl Res Pub Health*. 2022;19:60-26.
18. Mushara SVB. *Impact of family environment on academic achievement of secondary school students in science*. *International Journal of Research in Education and Social Sciences*. 2012;42-47.
19. Mwenika MI. *Impact of Family Conflicts on the Academic Performance and Interpersonal Relationships of Pupils in Public Primary Schools in Iringa Municipality*.Unpublished; 2020.
20. Lioyd YM. *Assessment of the Children of Divorce Intervention*. Cape Town: Macmillan Publishing Company; 2017.
21. Anderson, J. *The impact of family structure on the death of children: Effected of divorce*. *Linacre quarterly*. 2014;8(4):378-387. DOI: 10:17779/00243639142.00000000 087 Retrieved January 25, 2023 from.4
22. Diriba T. *Family as a contributing factors for street children; the case of Nekela Town*. *IJRSI*. 2011;II(IX):2321-2705.
23. Sofiya EGS. *Causes and consequences of streetism among street children in Harar city Ethiopia*. *International Journal of Educational and Literacy Studies*. 2019; 7(2):94-99.
24. Susan N. *Factors contributing to increase of street children in Meru municipal-Arusha*. Dissertation. University of Nairobi; 2015.
25. Edidin JP. *The mental and physical health of lone less youth; a literature review*. *Child*

- psychiatry and Human development. 2023;43(3):354-375.
26. Ward CL, Seager J. South Africa street children: A survey and recommendation of services. 2020;27(2). Available:<http://web.ebscohost.com/bibl.proxy.hj.se/ehost/pdfriewer/pdfriewe?sid=fce96dd9-021446bc-9975>.
 27. Tuttle JD, Davis SN. Religion infidelity and divorce reexamining the effects of religious behavior on divorce among long-married couples. *Journal of Divorce and Remarriage*. 2015;5(6):475-489.
 28. Fagan P, Churchill A. *The Effects of Divorce on Children*. Marriage & Religion Research Institute; 2015
 29. Odis P. Effects of divorce on women and children-texile. *International Journal of Health*. 2013;2520-3134. Available:doi:10.21522/TIJP.2013.09.01. Art001. Cited January 16, 2023.
 30. Gililand, M.K. *Family and marriage*; 2018. Available:https://courses.humenlearning.com/suny-esculturalanthoropology/chapter/family_and_marriage Cited January 16, 2023
 31. D'Onofrio B, Emery R. Parental divorce or separation and children's mental health. *World Psychiatry*. 2019;18(1):100.
 32. Wambura MM, Otieno R, Ichuloi A. Effects of parental divorce and separation on psychosocial well-beng of adolescents in Kajiacho North-sub-country- Kenya; 2021.
 33. Gager CT, Yabiku ST. Conflict or divorce? Does parental conflict and/or divorce increase the likelihood of adult children's cohabiting and marital dissolution? *Marriage & Family Review*. 2016;52(3): 243-261.
 34. Darling N, Steinberg L. *Parenting style as context: An integrative model Interpersonal development* 161-Routledge. 2017; 161-170.

APPENDIX I

DISTRICT COURT OF IRINGA

DIVORCE CASES REPORTED FOR SIX MONTHS - YEAR 2023

COURT	URBAN IRINGA MUNICIPAL	BOMANI IRINGA MUNICIPAL	KALENGA IRINGA RURAL	MTERA IRINGA RURAL	MLOLO IRINGA RURAL	IDODI IRINGA RURAL	ISIMANI IRINGA RURAL	KIPONZELO IRINGA RURAL
January	8	6	1	1	0	3	3	1
February	7	3	0	0	1	2	1	1
March	5	1	0	1	0	1	3	1
April	1	4	0	1	0	0	0	0
May	2	5	0	0	0	1	3	0
June	2	2	1	0	0	2	1	0
TOTAL	25	21	2	3	1	9	11	3


RESIDENT MAGISTRATE
IRINGA
DISTRICT COURT OF IRINGA

© 2023 Malema et al.; This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Peer-review history:
The peer review history for this paper can be accessed here:
<https://www.sdiarticle5.com/review-history/108555>