

**EFFECTS OF BROKEN MARRIAGE ON PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS’  
ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN ILALA MUNICIPALITY**

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
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**2014**

**CERTIFICATION**

I, the undersigned certify that I have read and hereby recommend to the Senate for acceptance of a dissertation titled: *Effects of Broken Marriage on Primary School Pupils' Academic Performance in Ilala Municipality* in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Education Administration, Planning and Policy Studies (MED-APPS) of The Open University of Tanzania.

.....

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.....

Date

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## DECLARATION

I, **Cornel D. Bubelwa**, declare that this dissertation is my own original work and it has not been presented to any other university or academic institution for similar or other degree award.

.....

Signature

.....

Date

## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents as a token of appreciation for their tender and loving care and for having labored to raise me morally upright which served as a fountain of inspiration in my life.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

In a dissertation of this nature it is almost impossible to recognise and mention each and every individual who made invaluable contribution to this work. However I wish to thank my Supervisor, Dr. Swai E., who supervised me throughout the writing process of this dissertation to its completion. She made diligent effort to support the transformation of this report from the draft stage to completion.

I am thankful and deeply indebted to all my friends, for their encouragement and moral support. Last, but not least, I am grateful to my family for their patience and understanding throughout the long hours I spent while writing and re-writing this dissertation. However, any shortcoming of this work remains my own responsibility.

.

## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of the study was to investigate the effects of broken marriage on academic performance of primary school pupils and the role of teachers and community members in minimizing those effects. The study employed qualitative and quantitative research approach. The sample includes pupils from the selected primary schools in Ilala Municipality, head teachers, and community members. The research instruments used to collect information were interviews, observations, and documentary reviews. The study findings showed that broken marriages contribute a lot to student's poor academic performance, psychological problems academic performance and delinquent behavior among students. Community members were aware that broken marriages have effects on children's academic performance and that broken marriages contribute much to negative perception. The researcher recommends that parents should be responsible to their children by helping to make their marriages work in order to ensure the good welfare of their children. The community members, including teachers, neighbors and all who love children should make it their responsibility regardless being their biological parents or otherwise. Schools at all levels should have strong guidance and counseling unit to help all the children in need of special attention. The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT), Universities and religious organizations should work together and develop training programme on Love.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Overview**

This research investigated the extent to which broken marriages affect academic performance of pupils in primary schools and Ilala District was selected as a case. Although there is no data available on the rise of broken marriages in Tanzania, that the incidences of broken marriages are on the increase, as well as the failure of children in all levels of education and this study intends to explore and investigate the perceptions of teachers and community members on the effects that broken marriage has on children's academic performance and their role in minimizing those effects.

This chapter contains background to the problem, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objective of the study, significance of the study, research questions, conceptual framework of the study, delimitation, limitation of the study, ethical considerations and definition of the terms.

#### **1.2 Background to the Problem**

Most broken marriages end in divorce. Divorce, according to Havemann (1990) is a legal process through which a marriage is dissolved. Traditionally, divorce implied that one of the partners was guilty of some transgression in the marriage and that one was at fault. Historically, adultery and physical cruelty were the only basis for divorce, but later, a number of other transgressions were added such as abandonment, habitual drunkenness and mental cruelty. Divorce is considered as

unmitigated evil. The experience of the human race, however, seems to prove that there may be a right or wrong use of it. Divorce has become, not only a legal action, but also a range of economic, psychological and social actions.

Steinzor (1969) sees divorce as an act of considered and willful choice which is inconsistent with human heritage. In human culture, love and personal choice in marriage are logical derivations of institutionally guaranteed freedoms, where there is freedom to choose divorce as means a freedom to change one's mind.

The image of the heavy hand of death in the marital vow, "till death do us part," it seems, contradicts tradition of liberty and the individual right 'to change mind before death' (Steinzer 1969). Thus, divorce has become contradictory to marriage vows: that one is committed to achieving harmony within the family but be ready to separate if family life becomes a prison.

According to McDonald (1978) - as cited earlier on, divorce is defined as the dissolution of a relationship, which is recognized as marital relationship. It is marked by formal court proceedings and its decree is divorce. Divorce is usually accompanied by formal arrangements for the owning of property, custody and support of children, if there are any. The property adjustment may also include a provision requiring alimony to be paid by one partner to the other although alimony is less frequently granted today.

Children from divorced families are nearly five times more likely to suffer damaging mental troubles than those who live with both parents. This shows that two parents



are much better in bringing up healthy children than one. Children who come from broken families will most likely have difficult time in life. Children of divorced parents are roughly two times more likely to drop out from school than their peers who benefit from living with parents who are not divorced (McLanahan 1994). Some children from broken marriages are more likely to turn to drug abuse or other negative behaviors. The truth is that every child needs and deserves the love and provision of a mother and a father. The loving two –married –parent family is the best environment for children. A strong family and home is a place where children gain the identity, discipline, and moral education that are essential for their full individual development.

America, once a nation with a strong marriage, had created the best route to achieving the American dream. It has now become a nation in which divorce is commonly seen as the path to personal liberation. In this case many experts argue that, because nothing can be done about it, all Americans should simply accept the culture of divorce without considering the future of the children. Studies in the early 1980s showed that children in repeat divorce earned lower grades and their peers rated them as less pleasant to be around with (Andrew Cherlin, 1981).

In 1990s, the divorce in India was as low as 7 failed marriages per 1000 marriages. As women increased in work places and earned a salary, the need to rely on a man to earn the daily bread for the family has nearly ceased to exist. With this new found freedom, women no longer had to spend time to think about the consequences of a broken marriage. Still, the divorce rates in India posed the beginning of the new millennium are as low as 11 failed marriages per 1000 marriages.

The effects of broken homes on children are traumatic. Broken homes can cause children to question their self-worth, to experience unnecessary grief, guilt, or confusion. Young children especially, have difficulty understanding the rationalities of their parents' decision to divorce. In a broken marriage it is difficult for children to find a sense of security because experience shows them that what seemed stable and good fell to pieces and left them empty. Growing up in a broken home may also cause children to have difficulty in future relationship.

Parental relationship plays a very important role in determining the academic performance of their children in school. Family harmony can easily be affected due to parental conflicts. The degree of parental conflicts varies from mild to serious. These conflicts affect the academic performance of their children hence lead to drop out from school. In their recent longitudinal study, (Harold A, and Shelton, 2007) revealed the roles of marital relations and children's academic achievement. In accounting for the relationship between marital relations and children's adjustment, researchers suggest that a relationship between spouses affects their children's adjustment directly through the emotional stress level, role modeling and academic performance (Cummings & Davies, 1994)

Unhappy marriage of parents may be associated with low achievement, because witnessing conflicts between parents heightens a level of stress on children and keep them from focusing on schoolwork. These children also learn inappropriate social problem-solving skills through modeling parental behaviors. In Korea, Lee and Chung (2004) found that the marital relationship perceived by Korean adolescent students were positively related to their school adjustment. Parents in a dysfunctional

marriage are likely to be distressed and distracted by conflicts with their spouses, and they cannot afford to invest their time and energy in children. In turn, inappropriate parenting style worsens parent-child relations. This process is consistent with interdependence between subsystems that family systems theorists maintain (Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993).

The quality of parental relationship spills over into relationship with their children. Couples with satisfying marital relationships are more warm and supportive towards their children. Amato and Keith (1991) speculated that the gap in well-being between children with divorced and non-divorced parents might have narrowed either because divorce became more easily socially accepted or parents were making greater efforts to reduce the potentially disruptive impact of divorce on their children. Children with divorced parents score lower than children with continuously married parents on measure of academic success (Astone & McLanahan, 1991).

The quality of parental functioning is one of the best predictors of children's behavior and well-being. Several within-group studies show that either a conflicted relationship with the custodial parent or inept parenting on the part of the custodial parent are linked with a variety of negative outcomes on children including lower academic achievement, internalizing problems, externalizing problems, reduced self-esteem, and poorer social competence (Aseltine, 1996; Buchanan, Maccoby, & Dornbush, 1996).

Parenting, and by implication lack of it, is the single largest variable implicated in truancy, school disruption and under-achievement. It is therefore described as the

most important public issue facing the society. Both mothers and fathers make a vital contribution to the cognitive and emotional well-being of their children. However, studies suggest that the single most important family trend in the United States is the growing absence of fathers from children and this lead to truancy. Healy, Stewart and Copeland (1993), in a study of primary school children six months after parental separation, found that one third reported some feelings of self-blame, in turn was related to a variety of child's problems, and lowered feelings of self-competence.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

While literature on the relationship between broken marriages has focused on school going children's drop out, it is silent on the role of teachers and community members in minimizing the negative effects on off broken marriage on school going children. Because the increasing rate of dropout has affected the government and family social economic abilities, it is important to consider teachers and community members' role in minimizing the effects of broken marriages on school going children. This study intended to fill this gap in the literature. Studies such as those of Andrew 1981; Harold *et al.*, 2007; Cummings & Davies 1994; Turner & Koplec, 2006) were done in USA with a focus on nuclei family. Not much has been done in Africa where most families still have the elements of communal and extended families.

### **1.4 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions of teachers and community members on the effects that broken marriage has on children's academic performance and their role in minimizing those effects.

### **1.5 Objectives of the Study**

The objectives were to:

1. Examine primary school teachers' perceptions on the effects broken marriages on children's academic performance.
2. Explore the perception of children in broken marriages and the effects of their status on their academic performance
3. Explore community members' views on their role in the effects of broken marriage on pupils' academic performance.

### **1.6 Research Questions**

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the teachers' perceptions on the effects of broken marriage to children's academic performance?
2. What are children's perceptions on the effects of broken marriage to their academic performance?
3. What are the perceptions of the community members on their role in minimizing the effects of broken marriages on children's academic performance?

### **1.7 Significance of the Study**

The study intended to:

- (i) Provide a thick description of the effects of broken marriages on the academic performance of school-going children and teachers and community members' role in minimizing those affects.

- (ii) Contribute knowledge to the existing literature about the effects of broken marriage on students' academic performance in primary school pupils in Tanzania.
- (iii) Stimulate research on broken marriage and their effect on academic performance in primary school children.

As known by all educators, home plays a very significant role in formation of a child's personality and socialization, broken homes are identified as one of the factor that undermine the socialization process at home, which consequently affect the performance of the child in school. If the concern of education, in particular - is to look after socialization process of the child as well as his intellectual development, then this research work shall be of great importance to parents and educators that absence of one or both of the parent affect children educational carrier

## **1.8 Conceptual Framework of the Study**

Conceptual framework is a set of coherent ideas and concepts organized in a manner that makes them easy to communicate. Anderson (1982) defines conceptual framework as a simplified representation of an empirical situation of phenomenon.

Social factors have also been shown to positively cause of higher dropout rates on the pupils. For instance the use of excessive drugs and alcohol which lead to separation of families, affect the pupils from attending school, hence dropout. The model for conceptual framework of this study was adapted from (Bunto, 2002) on the relationship between the predictor variables, precipitating variable and the decision to drop out. Bunto's model was successful in identifying the patterns and

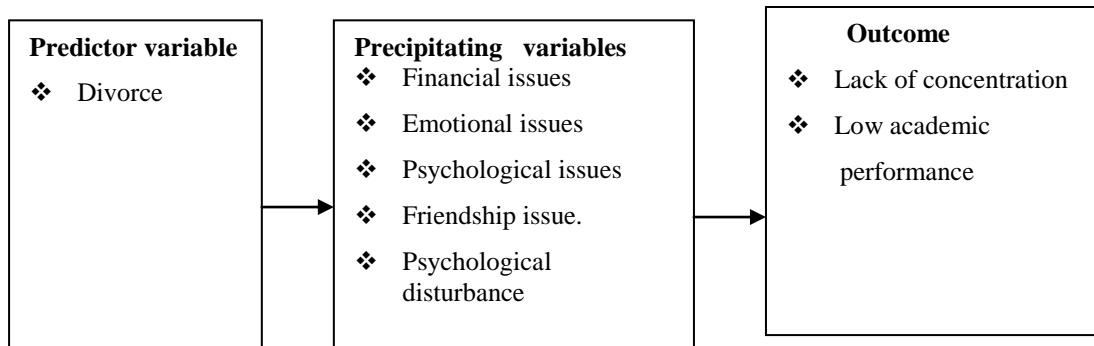
the causes of dropout among secondary schools students in Arusha Tanzania. The rationale for adapting Bunto's model was based on the fact that the study was conducted within the United Republic of Tanzania where Communities share almost similar social life environment.

Two categories of variables will be used to guide the framework for this study - the predicting and precipitating variables. The predictor variables comprise causes of broken family regarded as social life determinants such as financial issues, drug/alcohol, and prostitute, emotional and psychological issues. The predictor variables act as the root cause leading to other factors that may precipitate the low academic performance of pupils at school.

Precipitating variables are those characteristics, which come as a result of pressure from predictor variables that the student may encounter such as labeling, isolation from peers and feeling of being neglected hence lack of concentration in studies leading to poor academic performance. The precipitating variable for that matter would include life hardship, lack of friendship support, psychological disturbance and truancy. The major components of the overall conceptual framework are summarized in below conceptual framework.

### **1.9 Delimitation of the study**

The study concentrated mainly on people's perceptions and their role in the context of broken marriage. It did not dwell on the causes of broken marriage.



**Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework**

**Source: Researcher, 2013**



## CHAPTER TWO

### 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

Parents who have happy and supportive relationship with one another are more likely to respond sensitively to the child's needs (Erel & Burman, 1995). Conversely, parents in a dysfunctional marriage are likely to be distressed and distracted by conflicts with their spouse and they cannot afford to invest their time and energy in children. In turn, inappropriate parenting style worsens parent-child relations. This literature review focused in teacher's perceptions on the effects of broken marriage to children's academic performance, effects of broken marriage on school going children, perceptions of children with single parent, academic achievement among adolescents of divorced families, comparisons of children from divorced and two-parent families and factors affecting the children's academic performance and socialization processes in the family.

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 (Acock & Demo, 1999; Buehler & Gerald, 2002; Conger *et al.*, 1992).

A low level conflict with parents and closeness to them are associated with less likelihood of having behavioral and emotional problems (Caughlin & Malis, 2004; Parker & Benson, 2004; Vandewater & Lansford, 2005). Among various aspects of parent-child relations, communication is specifically important in adolescence when children have to negotiate their new roles with their parents (Noh, 1999). Children

who witness parents' conflicts may shape a negative perception on self, because they tend to consider themselves as causes of conflicts and blame themselves for a disharmonious marital relationship (Grych *et al.*, 2000).

Family disruption has been defined in various ways, including recurrent residential moves, separations from parent figure and marital dissolution or divorce (Adam & Chase-Lansdale, 2002). In Rodman (1993), an early family study, disruption was defined by characteristics such as female head of household, low socioeconomic status, receiving aid for dependent children, and parental separation.

Other researchers studying longitudinal samples (Chilton & Markle, 1972) defined family disruption only by a family composition different from husband-wife families; mother only, father only, and neither biological parent. In reviewing the literature through the late 1980s, Lee and Gotlib (1991) found that children's adjustment to family disruption was related to diminished parental availability or poor parental responsibility to the child. Anderson, (2002) found that adolescents from single parent families were involved in higher rates of delinquent behavior and that minorities from single parent families were especially more likely to be involved in certain types of delinquency than other students.

Because of the need to expand the study of family dysfunction and academic achievement, as well as the established relationship between family dysfunction and child behavior problems in some studies, and between behavior problems and poor academic functioning in other studies, the literature described next addresses behavior, achievement, and family disruption.

## **2.2 Teachers' Perceptions on the Effects of Broken Marriage to Children's Academic Performance**

Poor academic performance is understood as falling below an expected standard. Aremu and Soka (2003) submit that poor academic achievement is related to low motivational orientation, low self esteem, emotional problems, poor study habits and poor interpersonal relationships. This chapter focuses on broken marriage as being a factor that affects negatively the academic performance of primary school students.

Biblarz (2000) conducted a study which compared academic performance of children of divorce with children of widowed mothers. Findings concluded that children of divorcees were less likely to complete high school, attend college, or attend graduate school than children of widowed mothers. The McLanahan and Sandefur study of 1994 found that children from divorced homes were two times more likely to drop out of high school than children from two parent homes.

The longitudinal study conducted by Wallerstein determined negative correlation between divorce and school attendance, academic achievement, attitude towards learning and the ability to concentrate (Wallerstein, 1980). The study found that academic performance was not significantly related to the father or mother's socioeconomic level. Wallerstein concluded that the divorce did not significantly alter school performance of the group as a group, but individual effects existed. Children of divorced marriages get very little support from adults. He further observed that, during this time, adult friends, relatives and teachers are hesitant to interfere.

Whitemarsh (2008) found that educators are often the first to notice a change in behavior when a family is in transition to being broken up. Teachers have observed that some children from divorced families may show decreased functioning in academic performance and display oppositional behavior, or signs of anxiety and depression.

According to Smith (1999), some children are flexible and adapt well to change largely due to implementing effective coping strategies, while other children may react in the opposite way. Children may lose confidence, blame themselves for the break-up, and see their parent's separation or divorce in a complicated way. The range of feelings that a child may encounter include; disbelief and denial, sadness, loss, loneliness, depression, anger, anxiety, fear, relief and hope. Response to these feelings often results in different levels of intensity (Smith, 1999).

### **2.3 Effects of Broken Marriage on School Going Children**

Reaction of children to parental divorce may be influenced by remarriage of custodial parent. According to Zinsmeister (1996), remarriage of parents can add to, rather than subtract from, the stress of a child. Divorce makes children unsafe, uncertain of the future or makes children feel that the future is bleak and they become helpless because they fear that something bad could happen to them (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 2003). Some children perform better in school as an attempt to shut out problems at home (Lansky, 2000).

In contrast, other children may intentionally allow grades to slip in an attempt to gain attention from both parents (Richmond, 1998). Children living with newly divorced

mothers are more likely to be late for school and are less likely to have a help in their homework (Hetherington, 2002).

Amato conducted a quantitative meta-analysis in an effort to bring order to find the relationship between divorce and academic achievement. The results relating to academic achievement showed statistical significance in lower academic achievement in children of divorce when compared to children from continuously married parents (Amato, 1991).

Amato recently updated the meta-analysis to include studies performed in the past decades. The findings show that when compared with children from continuously married parents, 25 children with divorced parents continue to score significantly lower on measures of academic achievement as well as in the areas of conduct, psychological adjustment and social relations (Amato, 1991).

Although divorce is a major loss to children, however, not all children react the same way to their parents' divorce (Wade & Tavris, 1993). Each child's reaction depends on how she/he perceives it (Clandos & Kemp, 2007) or the different personal or familial circumstances before or after the divorce (Clando & Kemp, 2007).

While some children react with anger, fear or tremendous grief, others are happy or indifferent. Some children feel shame and hide the news of their parents' divorce from their friends or pretend that it is not happening; other children react by feeling relieved especially if there has been intense fighting in their homes (Clandos & Kemp, 2007).

There have been numerous studies (Dykeman, 2003; Wallerstein, 2005), that have documented the impact of divorce to children. Sun cited in ValderValk *et al.*, (2005) found children of divorced parents may have a lower sense of psychological well-being than children who grew up with intact families. Research also confirms that children of divorced parents may experience emotional problems such as loneliness and depression (Asetline & VanderValk, 2005).

Studies comparing the school records of children from single-parent and two-parent families have found that children raised in single-parent home have an increased risk of poor academic achievement (Mitchell, 1986). The effects of broken homes on students depend on many factors, the most important of which are the causes of the broken homes when it occurs, and it is either temporary or permanent. When there is a break in the home as result of death and children realize that, the parent will never return, mourn the loss and transfer their affection to the remaining parent, hoping in this way to regain the security they formally had.

By so doing one will find the students forgetting that they had other things to attend to like their academics and as a science student there is need for determination and commitment to the classroom activities and laboratory practices, but a child who happen to have a parent pre occupied with grief and practical problems of a broken homes give rise to children that feel rebuffed and unwanted.

This will, however, result to resentment that can seriously cause damage or affect the child's intellectual potentialities required from him/her as science student and that could deter his/her academic achievement in classroom and elsewhere. However,

Hauwa *et al.* (2005), observed that the loss of the mother in early life is more damaging to a child than loss of father.

She stated the reason for this to be that the care of young children must - under the circumstances, be turned over to relatives or paid housekeepers whose child training techniques may differ from those used by mothers and who rarely can give children the attention and affection they formally received from their mothers. Therefore, a science students brought up under this condition may likely fall victim of missing the love and care of the mother which thereafter affect him/her in the later life of the science students achievement when it come to classroom or practical aspect of science.

Nevertheless, Hauwa *et al.* (2005), observed that as children grow older, loss of the father is often more serious than loss of mother, especially for boys. The mother may have to go to work and with the double burden of home making and outside work, the mother may lack the time and energy to give children the care they need, consequently they feel neglected and become resentful, if mother are unable to provide the recreational opportunities and status symbols children's peers have, this will add to their resentment. Science students in this case may lack a lot of fatherly advice on their carrier choice in science as a science student compare to those from a stable home or whose father is alive.

For older boys, loss of the father means that they have no source of identification as compared to their friends, and they resent petticoat rule in the home as they do in school. A home broken by death in such a way that both parent were loss at the same

time, the effect are doubly serious beside having to make the radical changes in the pattern of their lives, children will have to adjust to the care of another person, often a person unknown to them, and by so doing the students will have to face so many challenges in his/her academic achievement. Balikisu *et al.* (2005) perceived a home to be broken by divorce, such homes can be more damaging to students.

She supported her point by two reasons – namely: the period of adjustment to the divorce is longer and more difficult for children than the period of adjustment to death of a parent, as children pass through series of adjustment like denial of divorce, anger which strikes out at those involved in the situation, bargaining in an attempt to bring the parent back together and depression all which must have gone a long way in determining the academic achievement of the student who need time to make good use of his brain to think logically as a student.

Secondly, broken homes caused by divorce are serious because they tend to make children different in the eyes of the peer group. When enquiry is made about the missing parent is or why they have another to replace the missing parent, they become embarrassed and ashamed.

Furthermore, they may feel guilty if they enjoy the time they spend with the missing parent or if they prefer living with the missing parent to living with the parent who is taking care of them. However, Hurlock (2004), reported that temporary absence could be damaging to children than permanent break. He added that this mostly occurs when the mother or the father is around for a relatively short time such as due to vacation, military operation or due to hospitalization in the case of the mother.



Such temporary breaks could be stressful for a child in science, though for both parents and their children, could lead to deterioration in family relationship.

Therefore, failure of the family to adjust may hinder the academic performances of science students from such a family background, and a child from a family that happens to be otherwise could also have challenges in his/her academic performance in science subjects, that is to show that at this juncture his/her problem could be social or emotional instability.

Abdulganiyu (1997), added that research has shown that children differ in various ways as a result of variables of their home background such as socioeconomic status, parental attitude to school, and child rearing practices. These home background variables are also found to be positively related to children's academic achievement, more especially science students that need care and love.

Similarly, Lioyd Young, M. (1997), investigated the factors within the students home background or family that affect their performance in school. The variables are: socio economic status, family size, birth order, parental attitude, child rearing practices, parental absence or presence have been found to affect social and intellectual learning experiences of children in schools. This is so because children are born with some psychological, emotional and intellectual needs such as need for love and security, the need for new experiences, the need for praise and recognition and the need for responsibility. Many of these needs are not offered to the children of broken homes which will influence their performance

## **2.4 Perceptions of Children with Single Parents**

Teachers may have pessimistic views concerning children from single-parent families. In some cases teachers might have negative attitude towards one-parent children and react to their behavior issues in a negative way. Teachers may also perceive children's intellectual ability in stereotypical way as well, and teachers may also expect less from children who have encountered a parental divorce Stedman *et al.* cited in Hargreavers, (1999).

According to Hetherington cited in Hargreaves, (1991), children may experience mood changes, anger and frustration while at school and children from divorced parents may be more disorderly in class, have less proficiency in study habits, and be absent more frequently than children from two-parent families. Amato cited in Hargreaves, (1991) suggested that children in one-parent families may have more household tasks and responsibilities adding to their stress level than children from two-parent families.

A study among Blacks in America found that academic achievement, measured by grade point average (GPA) was higher among two-parents families (Battle & Coates, 2004). DeBell (2008), found that an absence of fathers was related to lower academic achievement and worse educational experiences for students. Additionally, in other research, family instability can be related to a higher risk of internalizing and externalizing behaviors, as well as lower grades in school subjects (Marcynyszyn, Evans & Eckenrode, 2008). Anderson (2002) found that adolescents from single-parent families were more involved in higher rates of delinquent behavior and that

minorities from single-parent families were especially more likely to be involved in certain types of delinquency than were other students.

## **2.5 Academic Achievement among Adolescents of Divorced Families**

Past studies have shown that children and adolescents who are exposed to high level of parental conflict had more problems in academic compared with children and adolescents who had not experienced parental conflict. These children and adolescents have two to three times more tendencies to drop out from school (Kelly, 2000; Amato, 2001; Rodgers & Rose, 2001).

Rodgers and Rose (2001) examined the relationship between family factors and academic performance among a sample with mean age 15 years old from intact, divorced and blended families. This study revealed that adolescents of divorced families reported less parental support and monitoring which strongly predicted their academic achievement. Support from family is critical because poor support contributes to lower academic achievement among adolescents even in intact families (Siti Nor & Zaline, 2005).

According to Sun and Li (2002), high parental conflict is associated with lower score on Mathematics and reading exams among adolescents from divorced families compared to adolescents in intact families. Divorce generally leads to a severe decline in the standard of living of single mother families, and this decline may increase children's development risk in various aspects including academic achievement. According to Sun (2001) and Sun and Li (2001), the economic

hardship associated with divorced families was found to mediate the educational defects of children in such families.

## **2.6 Comparisons of Children from Divorced and Two-Parent Families**

Early in the decade, Amato and Keith (1991) published a meta-analysis of 92 studies that compared the well-being of children whose parents were married to each other. Their meta-analysis showed that children from divorced families scored significantly lower in a variety of outcomes including academic achievement. During the 1990s, the number of people touched by divorce increased, school-based programs for children divorced families became common, and education courses for divorcing parents became mandatory in many states (Emery, Kitzmann & Waldron, 1999).

A large number of studies in the 1990s continued to find that children with divorced parents score lower than children with continuously married parents on measure of academic success (Astone & McLanahan, 1991; Teachman, Paasch, & Carver, 1996).

## **2.7 Factors Affecting the Children's Academic Performance and Socialization Processes in the Family**

The factors discussed below have been found to influence learning at home and in the school.

### **2.7.1 Types of Family and Students' Academic Performance**

Three major types of family are nuclear or monogamous, compound or polygamous and traditional or extended family. Studies performed by people proved that each

type has its influence on the academic achievement of a child. Many research studies have indicated that children from nuclear families perform better in school than children from the compound or polygamous families (Ajala & Iyiola, 1988).

The reasons given for this difference in performance include; the children have more time for their studies in most cases because there are less people send them on errands. The reverse is the case in a polygamous family. Children from polygamous and broken homes have tendency to be social deviants due to lack of adequate supervision and care. Since there are many people in a polygamous family, they exert a lot of pressure or influence on the child. If it happens that a lot of such influences are bad then this will adversely affect the child.

### **2.7.2 Family Size and Position in the Family**

The larger families have been found to have less attention and devotion to children. Furthermore, large families cause stress to the parents in meeting the needs of the children both physically and emotionally. However the position a child occupies in a family plays a significant role in the child's development and academic achievement. Generally the first child enjoys most among the middle class and the rich families because the parents are excited and determined to provide all the required needs. First born children are generally overprotected and have tendency to become spoilt due to the type of family they come from. Due to some of the facts stated above, some of them that are undetermined achieve low academic excellence.

### **2.7.3 Family Educational Background and Socio-Economic Status**

These two are lumped together because they are related and one may rightly say that they are married and should not be divorced. Kerlinger (1973) opines that socio-class

or status could be defined more objectively by using such indices as occupation, income and education. It is assumed that the society is divided into different strata based on the possession of social and economic amenities.

## **2.8 Experience in Korean Family Relations**

Compared to families in Western culture, Korean families generally maintain strong familism focusing on parent-child relations rather than marital relations and emphasize instrumental family solidarity as compared with affectionate intimacy (Lee & Koo, 2006).

According to Busan Women and Family Development Institute (2008), for example, approximately 63% of parents felt that they should place the relationship with their children in a higher rank than their marital relationship. Accordingly, parents expect children in academic high schools to invest most of their time in studying and preparing for the universal annual college entrance exam (Davies & Cummings, 1998).

Korean students tend to spend a lot of time in school work than their counterparts in other countries, such as United States and Italy (Lee & Larson, 2000) and in turn they may have less time to interact with their parents and observe marital relations.

## **2.9 Parents' Marital Quality, Parent-child Relations, and School Adjustment**

Parents who have happy and supportive relationship with one another are more likely to respond sensitively to the child's needs (Erel & Burman, 1995). Conversely, parents in a dysfunctional marriage are likely to be distressed and distracted by

conflicts with their spouse and they cannot afford to invest their time and energy in children. In turn, inappropriate parenting style worsens parent-child relations.

Parents in a stressful marriage are less likely to have close relationships with their children, whereby parents who are satisfied with their marriage are more likely to have quality relationship with their offspring (Acock & Demo, 1999; Buehler & Gerald, 2002; Conger *et al.*, 1992). A low level conflict with parents and closeness to them are associated with less likelihood of having behavioral and emotional problems (Caughlin & Malis, 2004; Parker & Benson, 2004; Vandewater & Lansford, 2005).

Among various aspects of parent-child relations, communication is specifically important in adolescence when children have to negotiate their new roles with their parents (Noh, 1999). Children who witness parents' conflicts may shape a negative perception on self, because they tend to consider themselves as causes of conflicts and blame themselves for a disharmonious marital relationship (Grych *et al.*, 2000).

## **2.10 Family Disruption and Children's Academic Functioning**

Family disruption has been defined in a variety of ways, including recurrent residential moves, separations from parent figures (Adam & Chase-Lansdale, 2002) and marital dissolution or divorce (Morrison & Coiro, 1999). In Rodman N (1993), an early family study, disruption was defined by characteristics such as female head of household, low socioeconomic status, receiving aid for dependent children, and parental separation. Other researchers studying longitudinal samples (Chilton & Markle, 1972) defined family disruption only by a family composition different from

husband-wife families; mother only, father only, and neither biological parent. In reviewing the literature through the late 1980s, Lee and Gotlib (1991) found that children's adjustment to family disruption was related to diminished parental availability or poor parental responsiveness to the child.

Anderson, (2002) found that adolescents from single parent families were involved in higher rates of delinquent behavior and that minorities from single parent families were especially more likely to be involved in certain types of delinquency than were other students. Because of the need to expand the study of family dysfunction and academic achievement, as well as the established relationship between family dysfunction and child behavior problems in some studies, and between behavior problems and poor academic functioning in other studies, the literature described next addresses behavior, achievement, and family disruption.

### **2.11 The Long-term Effects of Divorce**

In a full-scale review of a longitudinal survey over the 1990s, Amato (2000) noted that adults and children score lower than their counterparts in married-couple families on a variety of indicators of well-being. He found that adults raised in divorced families suffered from a deficit in social skills and had special problems in handling conflicts within their own marriages. Cherlin and his colleagues drew their divorce population from a public health study in the United Kingdom (UK) begun in 1958 (Cherlin, Chase-Lansdale, & McRae, 1988; Cherlin *et al.*, 1995). Although they found that many of the children's difficulties were evident prior to the divorce, their most recent work (Cherlin *et al.*, 1995) showed that subjects from divorced



families were experiencing serious psychological difficulties after they reached adulthood which had not been foreseen.

Judith S. Wallerstein (2005) did a study on 'Growing up in the Divorced Family' and concluded that:

The findings from this study call for a shift in our dominant paradigm of understanding the impact of divorce on children and in the interventions that have been developed to mitigate its effects. The widely accepted premise has been that divorce represents an acute crisis from which resilient children recover, typically within a 2-year period, and then resume their normal developmental progress, if three conditions are obtained: (1) the parents are able to settle their differences without fighting; (2) the financial arrangements are fair and (3) the child has continued contact with both parents over the years that follow.

## **2.12 Importance of the Home**

The home of a child lays the desired social, moral, emotional, spiritual and intellectual foundations for the child. The family does a lot of things to influence the life of a child among which includes socialization of a child, child care and protection, emotional and social support.

## **2.13 Socialization of a Child**

The family provides the basic and the most important environment in which children learn the culture of the society in which they belong to. The family either - consciously or unconsciously, teaches children the main aspects of any culture which are shared values, norms and language.

### **2.14 Child's Care and Protection**

The family is the most effective in providing day –to – day care for its dependent members, children and the likes. Caring for children outside family is much more expensive and often less effective as the child will never feel safe and secure the way he feel in his home.

### **2.15 Emotional and Social Support**

Families perform a very important role of giving a baby a nomenclature and initial position in the society. When we hear of an abandoned child the question we ask ourselves is: “whose child is this and where does it come from?” The family gives a child an identity and a cause of belonging and a feeling of being valued. A child's family is able to provide a positive feeling of worth that is fundamental to healthy emotional development that meets the basic needs for love and affection, company and security. In broken homes, children are less likely to find support outside their homes.

Children are born with psychological, emotional and intellectual needs such as needs for love and security, the need for new experiences, the need for praise and recognition, and the need for responsibility. Sian *et al.* (1980), as presented by Abdulganiyu (1997), presented the following four basic needs of the child based on the model of Pringle (1974).

### **2.16 The Need for Love and Security**

From the very time a child is born the need for care and attention from parents or their substitute become manifest. The child who grows up with the feeling of being

loved by everyone in the family, develop a healthy and secure personality. Abdulganiyu (1997), presented a report which observed that the loving relationship which children encounter in the formative years give them confidence and some sense of security that could be of use to them in their future social encounters. Therefore a science student who happens to come from such a home would feel secure in any environment he/she found him/herself anytime he thought of his home.

### **2.17 The Need for New Experience**

Every child needs new experiences, according to Mitchell, A (1985), he observed that the degree to which people prefer a quite life or more excitement and novelty in their environment differ from individual to individual or situation in which one found himself / herself.

Also Norman (1993), asserted that some new experience could be regarded as a pre – requisite of mental development for children. Children learn better when they are given opportunity to interact actively with their experiment; children who were discouraged from their environment there by denied the active exploration of the world around them would always be apathetic, bored and irritated. There is need for new experience to be meet, play and language should be introduced into children's day-to-day activities.

Therefore as science students there is need to spend a lot of time with them talking to them, answering questions and helping them to find solution to their own answers through participation. So the orientation one had determined to a large extent how well the need for new experience is met.

### **2.18 The Need for Praise and Recognition**

In order to have confidence in life, every child wants assistance of others in his/her life such as parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts and other members of their family to praise and recognize the efforts he/ she is making in a bid to cope with demands of day – to –day existence. The way the children perceive their parent's attitude towards them, may - to some extent, determine the way they see themselves and their concept.

### **2.19 Summary**

This chapter focused on different studies which attempted to explain the relationship and effects of broken marriages on academic achievement. It can be said that divorce or family break-up lowers the performance of children in schools. Divorced families were noted to have less parental support and monitoring children's academic achievement. The child who is raised in the divorced or remarried family grows to adulthood in a different culture from the child raised in an intact family. Parent–child relationship not only changes at the breakup but continue to change during the years that follow. In all families, the parent-child relationships are dynamically embedded in the parents' union. It is noted that a stable family has a powerful capacity to support and stabilize each parent's relationship with the child. When a family is broken by divorce, a wide range of passions spill over into all domains of the family.

Most of the literature on the relationship between broken marriages and children's progress in school is from developed countries. These literatures focus on dropout of

school going children and is silent on the roles of teachers and community members in minimizing the negative effects on broken marriage on school going children. This study has filled this gap by exploring community members' views on their role in the effects of broken marriage on pupils' academic performance and also by examining primary school teachers' perceptions on the effects of broken marriage on children's academic performance.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter describes the research design and methods to used in the study of *The Effects of Broken Marriages on Children's Academic Performance*. It includes the description of the research design, area of study, population and sampling procedures, instruments for data collection and analysis of the collected data. Instruments such as interviews, questionnaire and focus group discussion are also presented as well as the procedures of data analysis.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

A research design is an arrangement of condition for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance of the research purpose with economy in procedures (Settz, 1965) cited in Kothari (1990). The study employed both qualitative and quantitative research approach. Qualitative design helps to study the narratives on the effects of broken marriages on children's academic performance from teachers, community members and children themselves. Qualitative design enabled the researcher to make sense of those perceptions by interpreting the meanings the respondents attached to broken marriages.

The design is suitable in the collection of data about people's opinions and views on effect of broken families. In this study, the researcher looked at what teachers, community members and children say about the effects of broken marriages on children's academic performance. The quantitative approach allowed determination

of the distribution of incidents and the inter-relation between independent and dependent variables (Kerlinger, 1986).

Independent variables are those attributes that have an effect in the dependent variables. In the context of this study, the independent variable is the number of broken marriage while dependant variable is the extent of the effects on children's academic performance.

### **3.2 Area of Study**

The area of study was conducted in Ilala Municipality, Dar es Salaam Region. Ilala Municipality was chosen because of its relatively low rates of student's school participation.

### **3.3 Population, Sample And Sampling Techniques**

Fraenkel and Wallen (2000) define population as an arrangement of people or things that a researcher has in mind from which one can obtain information and draw conclusion .In this study, the population will include some primary school students, community members and teachers.

#### **3.3.1 Target Population**

According to Ary, Jacobo & Razariel (1996) target population includes all members of any defined class of people, events or object from which possible information about the study can be obtained. The target population of this study included primary school students, teachers and influential community members.

### **3.3.2 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques**

Kothari (2004) and Fraenkel and Wallen (2000) define sample as a smaller group of subjects drawn from the population in which a researcher is interested in gaining information and drawing conclusion. Sampling techniques refers to the process of selecting the participant of the study as a sample from the population. The study employed simple random techniques for the sampled schools to select 100 students out of 900, 10 pupils from each school and 50 community members and purposeful sampling technique to select 50 teachers 10 from each school. The study was carried out by personal interviewing the pupils, teachers, and influential community members.

### **3.3.3 Sample Schools**

For this study, data was collected from five out of ten randomly chosen schools from rural primary schools and five out of ten randomly chosen from urban primary schools. The process involved obtaining the list of wards from the office of district education officer where both rural and urban schools are located. The process involved labeling the names of all the urban and rural schools on separate pieces of papers and to randomly pick five from each category. From this procedure, all the schools in the ward had a chance to be included in this study.

### **3.3.4 Primary School Low Academic Achievers Sample**

The study design involved forty pupils from broken marriages with low academic achievement, four from each sampled school. A list of names of pupils living in single parent households was obtained from the head teacher's office.



### **3.4 Data Collection Techniques**

The study used triangulation data gathering technique. These techniques were questionnaires, interviews and documentary reviews. Questionnaires were distributed to respondents (teachers and community members) and collected back. Interviews were done to get ideas and views from 100 pupils twenty teachers and twenty community members.

Cohen (2000) pointed out that no single method can act in isolation because it can bias or distort the whole reality that the researcher is investigating. Therefore the idea of triangulation were used to cross-check accuracy of the data collected. The use of multiplicity of techniques serves as a means of cross checking the authenticity of data from single source and therefore can enhance their validity and reliability.

#### **3.4.1 Documentary Review**

This technique was used to collect information about the academic achievement trend of the students in single parents household, attendance register from every sampled school in order to collect information about the student's attendance and academic report. Yin (1994) emphasized on value of document in that they can provide more insights into the programme being studied by cross validating and arguing evidence obtained from other sources.

#### **3.4.2 Questionnaires**

Questionnaires are instruments containing a number of questions which a participant has to complete by her or himself. The researcher administered the entire questionnaire in person that is, moving from one school to the other; and

questionnaires were collected immediately after completion. The questionnaires were given to teachers. All the questions in the questionnaires were administered in Kiswahili and later translated into English.

### **3.4.3 Interview**

Interview is a common and important method in qualitative research. According to Seidman (1991), interview refers to an exchange of views between two or more people on topic of mutual interest, see the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production and emphasize on social situation of research data. In this study the researcher used semi-structured interview to students and parents because it gives the researcher a chance to probe and ask follow-up questions thereby gaining a deeper understanding of the interviewee's experience, feelings and perspectives concerning the topic under discussion.

The interview schedule contained six questions, which sought to capture information based on the effects caused low academic achievement of pupils that leads to dropout. The researcher used Kiswahili language being the conversant language for both interviewer and interviewee and later translated into English language. The researcher administered the interview in person after visiting the parents and pupils with low academic achievement caused by broken up families. The researcher recorded the interview manually on the interview guide prepared for the purpose.

### **3.5 Validation of the Study Instruments**

The validation of the instruments was done by conducting pilot testing and by seeking the expert opinion or my supervisor who went through the questionnaire

items and make recommendation for improving the clarity of wording. The draft questionnaire was pilot tested in three primary schools from Ilala municipality in Dar es Salaam. The pilot testing of the instruments allows researcher to test the validity of the questionnaires and research process as a whole. Pilot testing is important for researcher to understand whether the question have the same understanding among the respondents.

The quality of data gathering instruments is dependent on whether the instruments can measure what it is supposed to measure and if items carry the same meaning of all respondents (Kerlinger, 1986; Best & Kahn, 2006; Rea & Parker 1997). Piloting is important because researcher can identify and correct any grammatical, structural errors, content errors in the question hence corrected error will improve validity of the questionnaire. Pilot testing helped researcher identify ambiguities and unclear questions to answer for necessary corrections.

### **3.6 Data Analysis Techniques**

Data analysis involves categorization of information into smaller parts or areas of relevance. It is a step very important when a study has been implemented and results are needed for conclusion. According to Walizer and Wienier, (1978; Silverman, 2001) data analysis is systematic procedure designed to examine and analyze the recorded information. Data analysis is a process that entails editing, coding, classification and tabulation of the collected data. (Kothari, 1990). It involves organizing what the researcher has seen, heard and read so that the sense can be made of what a researcher has learnt (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992).

Since this study involves both quantitative and qualitative data analysis needed separation of these data. Quantitative data especially those concerning the behavior and the opinion of the people was recorded in interview and focus group discussion guides. Quantitative data was categorized and be presented in a tabular form and graphs.

### **3.7 Ethical Consideration**

Ethical standards were observed in the planning and conducting the study. First, the study was conducted with the consent of the subjects after they have been informed about the purpose of the study and due to that it was their choice to participate. Secondly, the researcher observed the right to privacy of the subjects and confidentiality of the information identifying individual's. Also the researcher was responsible for the security and stored of information which provided personal identities and controlled access to it by un-authorized individual

### **3.8 Summary**

This chapter has covered important elements of the study design and methodology. The qualitative approach used to get opinions of respondents on the effects of broken marriage on pupil's academic achievement. The study used the questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussion as the major instruments of data collection. The study sample involved pupils whose academic achievement is low, parents, and influential community members from Ilala district. Purposefully and random sampling procedure were used to get samples for the study.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4.0 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the research study. Firstly, demographic data is presented on all participants, drawing attention to points of interest within this information. This is followed by an analysis of the data gathered at the location of the study (Ilala Municipality) relating to the three objectives of the study which are to examine primary school teachers' perceptions on the effects of broken marriage on children's academic performance; To explore the perceptions of children in broken marriages and the effects of their status on their academic performance: To explore community members' views on their role in the effects of broken marriage on pupils' academic performance.

#### 4.2 Characteristics of the Respondents

##### 4.2.1 Sex of Respondents

The Table 4.1 shows the number of respondents with respect to their sex. According to the results it was revealed that majority of respondents 120(60%) were females and the remaining 80(40%) were males. This implies that gender was considered in selecting respondents so as to get consistent information regarding broken marriages from both sexes.

**Table 4.1: Sex of Respondent**

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Frequency (N=200)</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Male	80	40
Female	120	60
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field survey, 2013**

##### 4.2.2 Age of Respondents

The Table 4.2 shows the number of respondents with respect to their age. According to the result it was revealed that the majority of the respondents 80(40%) their age was below 20 years, followed by 60 (30%) whose age range was above 41 years while 40(20%) their age range was 31-40 years and the

remaining 20(10%) their age range was 20-30 years and above. This implied that respondents were mature enough to make judgments in all aspects of life.

**Table 4.2: Age of Respondent**

<b>Age Range (Year)</b>	<b>Frequency (N=200)</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Less than 20	80	40
20 - 30	20	10
31 - 40	40	20
41 and above	60	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Field survey, 2013

### **4.2.3 Education level of Respondents**

The Table 4.3 shows the number of respondents with respect to their education level. According to the result it was revealed that majority of respondents 70(35%) had attained ordinary secondary education level, 50(25%) university degree while 50(25%) diploma and the remaining 30(15%) advanced secondary education level.

**Table 4.3: Education Level**

<b>Age Range (Year)</b>	<b>Frequency (N=200)</b>	<b>Percent</b>
University degree	50	25.0
Advance level	30	15.0
Diploma	50	25.0
Ordinary level	70	35.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source:** Field survey, 2013

## **4.3 The Teachers' Perceptions on the Effects Broken Marriages on Children's Academic Performance**

### **4.3.1 Awareness on the Effects of Broken Marriages on Children's Academic Performance**

The Table 4.4 shows the response by the teachers on their awareness on the effects of broken marriages on children's academic performance. The questionnaires were

administered by the researcher to 50 teachers. The question was: Are there any effects of broken marriage to children's academic performance? All the respondents indicated that there were effects of broken marriage to children's' academic performance.

**Table 4.4: Awareness on the Effects of Broken Marriages on Children's Academic Performance**

Sex	Frequency (N=200)	Percent
Yes	50	100
No	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Field survey, 2013

**Table 4.5: The Types of Effects of Broken Marriage on Children Academic Performance**

Type of Effect	Frequency (n=50)	Percent
Psychological	30	60
Economic	8	16
Cultural	8	16
Physical	4	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Field survey, 2013

As Table 4.4 shows, all the respondents agreed that there were effects of broken marriage to children's academic performance. The second question was: What are the types of effects of broken marriage to children's academic performance? A total number of 50 respondents answered this question. Table 4.5 presents the findings.

On psychological effects, one teacher had this to say:

*For years I have observed that children from broken marriages are psychologically disturbed. Many find it difficult to concentrate in their studies and some end up not completing their studies because of one reason to another including shuttling between the parents.*

On the same concern, another teacher commented:

*Normally, children from broken marriages have a lot of psychological problems. For example, we had one student last year who refused to play with his peers, and refused to do assignments. When he was asked to go and bring his father, he broke down and cried. We came to realize that his parents had separated and he was living with his grandparents.*

These findings coincide with that of Whitemarsh (2008) who found that educators are often the first to notice a change in behavior when a family is in transition. Teachers have observed that some children from divorced families may show decreased functioning in academic performance and display oppositional behavior, or signs of anxiety and depression.

The third question through interview was: In what ways does the broken marriage affect children's academic performance? Forty teachers responded to this question. 32 (80%) of those responded to this question were positive that there are many ways that broken marriage affects children academically. But 8 (20%) had negative opinion towards that assertion.

Those who supported the idea that broken marriage affect children academically mentioned prominent ways such as truancy, day dreaming, and lack of concentration, moodiness, low self esteem and self hatred. This observation is consistent with Smith (1999) who argues that the range of feelings that a child may encounter include; disbelief and denial, sadness, loss, loneliness, depression, anger, anxiety, fear, relief and hope. Responses to these feelings often affect children's performance.



Examples of these responses include the following:

*There are many ways that broken marriage affect children's academically. For example, Maimuna used not to miss class and she has always holding number three to five. Since her parents separated last year, she comes to school only once or twice a week and last term she nearly holding the last position in her class. Another student, John; John was a very smart student, very punctual and jovial. Now after his parents' separation, you hardly see him playing with his friends and his grades are going down each term. It is pity to see how parents can ruin their children.*

The finding is also in line with Biblarz (2000) who conducted a study to compare academic performance of children of divorce with children of widowed mothers. His findings conclude that children of divorce were less likely to complete high school, attend college, or attend graduate school than children of widowed mothers. Moreover, this finding is also supported by McLanahan and Sandefur study of 1994 this found that children from divorced homes were two times as likely to drop out of high school than children from two-parent homes.

Those who did not see any effect on academic performance after broken marriage had the opinion that, some children find more peace when their parents are separated.

This position was a view of four respondents as the following indicates:

*I know some children get affected when their parents separate, but some blossom. A child who lives in a home where every day the parents quarrel and sometimes fight, he or she will be better off without those fighting when she or he remains with only one parent. We have many children in this school who are living with only one parent, and they are doing fine.*

These findings are in contradiction with a large number of studies in the 1990s such as those of Astone & McLanahan, (1991); Teachman, Paasch, & Carver,(1996) and others who argued that children with divorced parents score lower than children with

continuously married parents on measure of academic success. Likewise, Hurlock (2004), reported temporary absence could be damaging to children than permanent break and added that this mostly occur when the mother or the father is always around for a relatively short time, the absence could be for vacation, military operation and so on that take him away from the home, it could be hospitalization in the case of the mother, such temporary break for a child could be stressful and affect their concentration and academic performance. But a small number of researchers have supported this view. Erel & Burman, (1995) for example argued that parents in a dysfunctional marriage are likely to be distressed and distracted by conflicts with their spouse and they cannot afford to invest their time and energy in children. In turn, inappropriate parenting style worsens parent-child relations.

Likewise, Anderson, (2002) argued that adolescents from single parent families were involved in higher rates of delinquent behaviour and that minorities from single parent families were especially more likely to be involved in certain types of delinquency than were other students.

This study therefore has established two opposing sides on the effects of broken marriage to children academic performance. On one side, there is a feeling that broken marriages affect children's academic performance negatively due to truancy, failure to concentrate, development of low self esteem and the like, all which have been theorized in psychology literature as anti-social behaviors. On the other side, there were those who did not see the negative effect of broken marriage on some children. This group of respondent had an opinion that when parents keep on

fighting, it is more harmful to the children than separation.

#### **4.4 The Perception of Children on Broken Marriages a The Effects of their Status on their Academic Performance**

The second research objective sought to find out the perceptions of children from broken marriage on their academic performance. This objective aimed to find from the children themselves, what they considered to be happening in their academic life after the separation of their parents. Table 4.6 shows the response by the children on broken marriages and the effects of their status on their academic performance. The questionnaires were administered by the researcher to 100 respondents who were the children.

**Table 4.6: The Perception of Children on Broken Marriages on Academic Performance**

	<b>Statement</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Total</b>
1.	I am aware of the broken marriages among the parents	90(90%)	10(10%)	100%
2.	I get psychological effect following my parents broken marriages	70(70%)	30(30%)	100%
3.	Lack of support from my parents results into poor academic performance	80(80%)	20(20%)	100%
4.	I feel shame on my parents broken marriage	50(50%)	50(50%)	100%
5.	I feel angry due to my parents broken marriage	95(95%)	5(5%)	100%

**Source: Field survey, 2013**

According to the result on the Table 4.6, 90% of the children from broken marriages were aware of this situation, and the majority of them were affected by it. Also, almost all of the children were aware that their parents were experiencing difficulties in their relationships, before they learnt about the separation. They became aware of

problems in a range of different ways, including conflict between their parents, their parents spending little time together, and their parents, especially the fathers coming home late and sometimes not going home for days. In addition, children described violence, against a parent or the child or both, before the separation.

In the one to one interview with the children, the first question was: Are you aware that your parents are separated? The following were the responses from one child

*Yes, my father left when my mother told him she no longer wants to see him. Since my father left last year, my mother is angry all the time and this makes me angry too. We no longer play. There was a day when my brother was playing with his friend and my mother called him and bit him, so we don't know what to do. May be if we were not there, our parents would not quarrel all the time and my father would not leave.*

One child of standard three had this to say:

*You would always know when there were problems, because they always quarrel or fight.*

Another child of standard five had this to say:

*I always thought there was a problem because I and my siblings used to listen to them when we were in our room before we slept. When we hear mother coming to check, we pretend we were fast asleep...I knew they fought a lot.*

Another child had this to say: I know my father live somewhere else, but I know it is because of me. He did not like me. I know this because one day I heard my mother asking him why he hate me and that he was not supporting me. From that day, they always quarrel. I feel shame but what can I do?

These findings are consistent with those of Grych *et al.* (2000). Who argues that

children who witness parents' conflicts may shape a negative perception on self, because they tend to consider themselves as causes of conflicts and blame themselves for a disharmonious marital relationship?

Another child was in denial of the separation of their parents as the following responses shows:

*I know we don't live together but it is not like my father left my mother and that he will not come back. I know he will come. My mother said he will come back too, so my parents are not separated.*

This denial was also heard from many children, who thought their father was working and he would go back. Others said their mother had gone to see her parents and she would come back. . In their study, Clandos & Kemp, 2007) also noted denial among the children from broken marriage and argued that some children felt shame and hid the news of their parents' divorce from their friends or pretend that it was not happening and other children reacted by feeling relieved especially if there has been intense fighting in their homes.

Children were also asked if their parents had told them about the separation. All the interviewed children said they were not told, but came to know on realizing that one of their parent was no longer living with them, especially the father. Some were living with their grandparents and they came to realize that they were there because of the separation of their parents.

Children's access to information has been shown to be an important factor in their Adaptation to changes in the family following separation or divorce (Dunn & Deater-Deckard, 2001; Fawcett, 1998; Neale & Smart, 1998; Smart, Neale & Wade, 2000),

but this study shows that the information about parents' separation was hidden from the children, possibly because in African family, children are not considered to be a part and parcel of their parents' marital relationship. In their study, Dunn & Deater-Deckard (2001) argue that children who did not know what was happening, and did not have the chance to ask questions, were likely to feel confused and worried.

The issue of how much and when to tell children about relationship problems between parents is a complex matter because parents themselves may be distressed by the decision and fail to know how much and what kind of information to give to children about their relationship, and the decision that they were thinking would come up *et al.* opine, may be to protect children from distress and waiting for them to learn for themselves.

This study also solicited information about the children from broken marriages from other children who were friends to them. Some of them had this to say:

*I know Halima's parents are separated and when I ask her about it she pretend not to know. She does not want to talk about it and we are no longer as close as we used to be. She does not want to play with anybody and we have left her.*

Another said:

*Koku cry easily nowadays. There was a day that someone threw a ball at her. It just touched her hand and she cried the whole day. Nobody wants to talk to her because she is always very angry.*

These responses are consistent with those of Sun (.....) cited in ValderValk *et al.*, (2005) who found children of divorced parents may have a lower sense of psychological well-being than children who grew up with intact families. Likewise,

the findings of Asetline & VanderValk cited in VanderValk *et al.* (2005) confirmed that children of divorced parents may experience emotional problems such as loneliness and depression.

The data from children of broken marriages confirm the assertion that parental separation affects the children psychologically leading to impacting on their academic performance negatively. From the responses; we see anger, loneliness and isolation.

#### **4.5 The Community Members' Views on their Role in Minimizing the Effects of Broken Marriage on Pupils' Academic Performance**

The third objective was to explore the community members' views on their role in minimizing the effects of broken marriage on children. The first question posed to community members stated; Are you aware of any broken marriage of school going children? The majority (95%) of all the respondents knew of a family that had separated. The follow up question was to solicit information on their views on the role to those children. Some of the answers were related to African culture, others to religious and others to the relationship between the parents of the children.

On the African tradition, one community member had this to say:

*You know, as Africans, your neighbor's child is your child, and that's why we have a saying: It takes a village to raise a child. My responsibility to the children from broken marriages is to see and to treat them as my children. If they are living with a mother, I will have to make a point to talk to the mother and if she needs a support, I can give it to her to raise her children. If they are living with the father, I will give any support required from me, if it is to talk to the*

*children, or if I see them doing something bad, I have to step in like a parent.*

Another child had the same opinions about this question. Those who used religion as the motive to their role had this to say:

*I know marriage was put there for human beings to be together and to raise their children together. Unlike animal, human beings were told to live together. So, when it happens that these people can no longer live together with their children, everybody should know that children suffer more. My role here is to try to be a parent to those poor children. Whenever they require my support, I will have to give it to them, because I know it is not their fault that their parents separated.*

One Lutheran Pastor had this to say:

*Broken marriages were there even before Christ. But when Christ came, he blessed marriage and told the people to leave their parents and live together like one body. And this is what we tell people. But when it happens that they cannot abide to the law of the Bible, the community has a responsibility to see to it that the children do not suffer because of the sins of their parents, to help them till they are able to be upright members of the community.*

Those with opinion related to the relationship between the parents had this to say:

*I know the community has a role to help all the children, including those from broken marriages. But as a community member, it is not easy to start helping those children unless you are in good terms with the parents. Some people may think you are the cause of separation if you happen to be involved too much with other people's children, especially from broken homes. Things are not that straight forward. I am not saying community has no role, but one has to be cautious.*

Another question posed was whether there was negative perception of children from broken marriages and if there were, how the children from broken marriages were identified. Hundred percent (100%) of the respondents agreed that there were a lot of negativity about the children from broken marriages. These perceptions were as



follows:

- (i) Children (especially girls) brought up by only mother were considered to have bad manners from their mothers and therefore, they are not fit to be married
- (ii) Girls brought up by their fathers were considered to be of good manners because they were given good care by their fathers when their mothers were not there, so they will be good wives and mothers in future.
- (iii) Boys brought up by their mothers are said to be upright because they take care of their mothers and siblings
- (iv) Boys brought up by their fathers are considered to be good because they might have learned from their fathers how to take good care of a house without a woman.

From these findings, it shows that broken marriage always identified both girls and boys on a negative side. But the community sees it as its responsibility to take care of the children from broken marriage because of the culture, religion and good relationship in the community. All in all, broken marriage has a negative connotation to the community members.

#### **4.6 Summary**

This chapter presented data on three research questions that were developed in Chapter 1: Effects of broken marriage on children's academic performance; children's perceptions on the effects of broken marriage on their academic performance and the role of community members on the welfare of the children from the broken marriage.

The findings indicate that there are two opposing opinions as regards the effects of broken marriage on children academic performance. In one side, there is a feeling that broken marriage affects children's academic performance negatively and those who did not see the negative effect of broken marriage to some children. This group of respondent had an opinion that where parents keep fighting, it is more harmful to the children than separation children especially those who are exposed to parents quarreling and fighting. The data from children of broken marriages confirm the assertion that parental separation affects them psychologically leading to impacting on their academic performance negatively. On the role of community members on the welfare of children from broken marriage, the data shows that the community members take it as their responsibility to take care of the children from broken marriage because of the culture, religion and good relationship in the community.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **5.0 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Summary of Findings**

This study sought to investigate the perceptions of teachers, children and the community members on the effects that broken marriage have on children's academic performance. Specifically the study sought to:

1. Examine primary school teachers' perceptions on the effects broken marriages on children's academic performance.
2. Explore the perception of children in broken marriages and the effects of their status on their academic performance.
3. Explore community members' views on their role in the effects of broken marriage on pupils' academic performance.

Chapter 1 concentrated on exploration of the concept of broken marriage and its effects on children. Chapter 2 dwelt more on the literatures and studies on the effects of broken marriages on children's academic performance. It also reviewed the literature on the perceptions of children on the effects of broken marriages on their life and the role of community in minimizing the effects of broken marriages on children. Chapter 3, research methodology presented the research design for this study. This is mixed method design where quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analyzed. Chapter 4 is confined in data presentation and analysis.

The following findings were revealed by this study:

There are two opposing sides on the negative effect of broken marriage on children's academic performance. These opposing sides could be explained as an influence of the media, the church and the school, which see marriage as a norm, where two parents are supposed to live together and rear their children and broken one are going against the norm. Literature consistently shows that broken marriage has negative effects on children's growth physically and psychologically but it is silent on positive effects of broken marriage on children's development. Although there are those who believe a broken marriage is better than exposing children to adult violence, they also believe that marriage is a good thing for nurturing the family, regardless of other gender-based exploitation. Children who have experienced violence feel better when the marriage eventually is broken, but they suffer negative identification as developing bad manners due to lack of one figure, father or mother.

These findings have further shown that community members perceive themselves as with a role to ensure the welfare of the children from broken marriage although this role vary. There were those who felt they are responsible because they are Africans, and those who thought they have a role to play because of religious teachings. This concurs with the literature reviewed in chapter two as well as other literature referred to in chapter five under discussion. It was also noted that children were not informed by their parents on the prospects of separation.

Based on these findings, however, it cannot be confirmed with certainty that children from broken homes are worse off than those from intact marriage because some may be experiencing violence, which has more negative effect than living peacefully with

one parent. All in all, parents need to ensure the safety of their children whether they are in marriage or outside of it for a simple reason that children need to be brought up in peaceful environment if we want to have an upright future generation.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

### **5.2.1 Recommendations for Action**

On the bases of the results obtained in the research and the literature reviewed, the following are recommended.

- (i) The community members including teachers, neighbors and all children lovers should make it their responsibility for all the children regardless of being their biological parents.
- (ii) Schools at all levels should have a strong guidance and counseling unit to help all the children in need of special attention.
- (iii) The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT) in collaboration with Universities and religious organizations should work together and develop training programme on love, marriage and care for parents in order to educate the society on the importance of love and family care for healthy families, communities and society in general.

### **5.2.2 Recommendation for Further Study**

The further study is enhanced to other researchers particularly on effective strategies towards minimizing broken marriages among couples.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix I: Research Questionnaires and Interview Schedule to Teachers

Dear Teachers,

I am a student at the Open university of Tanzania (OUT), pursuing Masters of Education M.Ed (APPS).Currently undertaking study on the topic The effects of Broken-Marriages on academic achievement in Primary school pupils in Ilala-Rural. The purpose of this questionnaire is to help the researcher in collection of data (information) that will be used only for this research and not otherwise.

1.    (a)      Sex \_\_\_\_\_
- (b)      Age \_\_\_\_\_
- (c)      Level of education \_\_\_\_\_
- (d)      Name of school \_\_\_\_\_
2.    What is your position at school? \_\_\_\_\_
3.    What is your marital status?  
       Married\_\_\_\_\_ Single \_\_\_\_\_ Divorced \_\_\_\_\_
4.    Do you know anything about broken marriage?    Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
       No\_\_\_\_\_
- If Yes what do you think about it in the context of current  
       Tanzania?\_\_\_\_\_
4.    At your school do you have students who come from broken marriages?
- (a)      Yes \_\_\_\_\_
- (b)      No \_\_\_\_\_

6. In your views, are there any differences between children from broken marriages and other children \_\_\_\_\_
7. Do you think there is any difference in their performance before parent's separation and after their separation? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What key issues/problems do you think children from broken homes face different from those in normal homes? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. What do you consider to be the role of teachers in the lives of children from broken homes?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. What do you consider to be the role of community in the lives of children from broken homes?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. Is there any difference between students who comes from separated families and those who don't come from separated families academically?
12. What suggestions would you give to parents about the effects of broken marriage to their children?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix II: Research Interview Schedule to Children from Separated Families**

Dear Pupils,

I am a student at the Open University of Tanzania (OUT), pursuing Masters of Education M.Ed (APPS).Currently undertaking study on the topic. The effects of Broken-Marriages on academic achievement in Primary school pupils in Ilala-Rural. The purpose of this questionnaire is to help the researcher in collection of data (information) that will be used only for this research and not otherwise.

1.     (a)    Age\_\_\_\_\_
- (b)    Sex\_\_\_\_\_
- (c)    Class\_\_\_\_\_
- (d)    Name of school\_\_\_\_\_
- (e)    Where do you live.\_\_\_\_\_
2.     Are you living with your
  - (a)    Father\_\_\_\_\_
  - (b)    Mother\_\_\_\_\_
  - (c)    Guardian\_\_\_\_\_
3.     When did your parent separate? \_\_\_\_\_
4.     Before the separation of your parents which position where you getting in class?
5.     How many siblings do you have?\_\_\_\_\_
6.     Do you live with all your parents?\_\_\_\_\_



7. Who is your best friend?\_\_\_\_\_

8. Can you explain the attitude of your friends towards you?

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9. (a) Who is your favorite teacher?\_\_\_\_\_

(b) Why do you like this teacher more than others?

10. Can you tell me more about your life at home?

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11. Can you tell me more about your father?\_\_\_\_\_

12. Can you tell me more about your mother?\_\_\_\_\_

13. Would you want your parents to get back to each other?

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Why?\_\_\_\_\_

### **Appendix III: Research Questionnaires and Interview Schedule to Influential Community Members**

Dear madam/sir,

I am a student at the Open University of Tanzania (OUT), pursuing Masters of Education M.Ed (APPS). Currently undertaking study on the topic; *The effects of Broken-Marriages on academic achievement in Primary school pupils in Ilala-Rural*.

The purpose of this questionnaire is to help the researcher in collection of data (information) that will be used only for this research and not otherwise

1.    (a)    Sex \_\_\_\_\_
- (b)    Age \_\_\_\_\_
- (c)    Level of education \_\_\_\_\_
- (d)    Where do you work? \_\_\_\_\_
2.    What do you think is the effect of broken marriage in this community?  
       \_\_\_\_\_  
       \_\_\_\_\_
3.    What do you consider to be your role in the lives of children in broken homes?  
       \_\_\_\_\_  
       \_\_\_\_\_
4.    What suggestions would you give to your community for the children from broken homes?  
       \_\_\_\_\_  
       \_\_\_\_\_