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EFFECT OF MARITAL DISSOLUTION ON EARLY ADOLESCENTS' ACADEMIC AND PSYCHO-SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

CHRISSIONA MAUKI

2014

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EFFECT OF MARITAL DISSOLUTION ON EARLY ADOLESCENTS' ACADEMIC AND PSYCHO-SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

by

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PROMOTOR:
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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my lovely wife, Mirriam,

and my beautiful daughters, Rommy and Ronél.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, and foremost, I would like to thank my living God through His son Jesus Christ who has helped me throughout this journey of sacrifice, hard work and commitment. With His assistance I can now confidently say **Ebenezer,** "this far the Lord has helped me." Without you, my Lord, all my efforts would have been in vain.

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I am grateful to my employer, the University of Dar es Salaam, for offering me an amazing opportunity to pursue my PhD studies. Through this scholarship my dream has come true.

Finally, with everything and for everything, to God be all the glory.

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DECLARATION OF LANGUAGE EDITING

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09 April 2014

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to confirm that I have language edited and proof-read the Abstract, Acknowledgements and Chapters 1-6 of the thesis, **EFFECTS OF MARITAL DISSOLUTION ON EARLY ADOLESCENTS' ACADEMIC AND PSYCHO-SOCIAL WELL-BEING,** by **CHRISSIONA MAUKI** from the Department of Educational Psychology in the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria.

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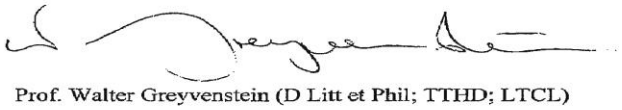

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ABSTRACT AND KEY WORDS

This study investigated marital dissolution in the Tanzanian context. The study specifically focused on the potential effect of marital dissolution (both positive and negative) on early adolescents' academic and psycho-social functioning. The primary research question directing the research is: "How can insight into marital dissolution in Tanzania broaden our knowledge on its effect on children?"

The conceptual framework for the study is based on attachment theory, crisis theory, family stress theory and life course theory. Epistemologically, the study utilised social constructivism as paradigm. A qualitative methodological approach was followed, implementing an instrumental case study as research design. I purposefully selected eight children from two children's centres in Tanzania and four additional children from custodial homes. In addition, twelve parents, who had been separated from their partners, as well as twelve teachers and caregivers who have been involved with the child participants, participated in the study. For data collection I employed semi-structured interviews with the parents and children; focus group discussions with teachers and caregivers; interviews and narrations with children; and an analysis of existing documents. Field notes, a research diary and verbatim transcripts were utilised to document the data I collected.

Following inductive thematic analysis four themes emerged, relating to the reasons for marital dissolution, the effect of marital dissolution on early adolescents' functioning, trends following marital dissolution and managing marital dissolution in Tanzania. In terms of reasons for marital dissolution I identified the following subthemes: abuse, lack of commitment to the family, influence of others, and financial strain. In terms of the effect of marital dissolution on early adolescents' functioning three subthemes emerged namely; effect on early adolescents' academic performance, effect on early adolescents' psycho-social well-being, and parents' insight into the effect of marital dissolution on their children. With regard to trends following marital dissolution I identified the following three subthemes: positive effect of marital dissolution, change in living arrangements, and other related changes negatively affecting children. Finally, two subthemes emerged concerning the management of marital dissolution in Tanzania, namely minimising the effect of marital dissolution on children, and potential role of the Tanzanian government.

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The findings of this study indicate that the majority of Tanzanian couples merely separate, rather than following a legal divorce. Parents showed limited insight into the effect of marital dissolution on their children. Besides some children experiencing the separation of their parents as a relief, the majority of children were negatively affected in terms of their academic performance and psycho-social functioning. Children indicated the need to be involved in discussions preceding and during the separation process, yet Tanzanian parents did not value the involvement of their children during this process. Based on the findings I obtained I conclude that the effect of marital dissolution on children are not only continuous but that the effects in various areas of functioning are interrelated and cyclic in nature, and that children can experience the effects before, during and after marital dissolution.

KEY WORDS

- Academic performance
- Broken homes
- Custodial parent
- Divorce
- Early adolescence
- Marital dissolution
- Non-resident parent
- Parents' separation
- Psycho-social well-being
- Tanzanian context

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CHAPTER 1

SETTING THE STAGE: INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Divorce implies the termination of a marriage by legal means, whereas marriage separation in a social context is viewed as a situation in which a couple lives apart while deciding what to do about an unhealthy marriage (Ahrons, 1999). In a view put forward by Molepo, Maunganidze, Mudhovoz and Sodi (2010), divorce (or marital dissolution in this context) is described as the choice of two people not to live together as husband and wife any more. Berk (2003) suggests that marital dissolution should not be regarded as a once off event that occurs in a family, but rather as a period of change that may affect a variety of life aspects, such as changes in living arrangements; changes in income; as well as changes in family interaction. In many African countries divorce was unheard of in the past as it was not sanctioned by cultural norms. However, since the beginning of the 20th century divorce has become a common phenomenon in many countries across the globe (Pillay, & Wasielewski, 2007).

Today, perhaps due to many changes in the diverse walks of human life, the incidence of marital dissolution is increasing at an alarming rate. This increase is global in nature and affects all parts of the world. Although the family is traditionally considered as a loving and supportive social institution, in modern times it is often characterised by conflict and even violence which may lead to marital dissolution (Gelles, & Harrop, 1989). More often than not the victims of problems which occur in a marriage are the children who may experience both short- and long-term problems in terms of their academic, social, physical, emotional and psychological functioning and well-being[1] (Ahrons, 1999).

More than a decade ago, Trengove (1997) observed that approximately 40,000 children around the world experienced the breakup of their parents annually. Trengove (1997) predicted that up to a third of all children born in wedlock were at risk of experiencing their parents' separation before the age of 18. Non-intact family structures, such as single-parent

[1] Well-being as used in this study does not imply the positive functioning of the six dimensions of wellness as described by Ryff and Keyes (1995) but rather refers to the generic view of a sense of happiness, comfort, security and healthy welfare (Thomson, Hanson, & McLanahan 1994) that a child may experience in the family context. As a result, "well-being" is occassionally used as alternative for "development" or "functioning". In following a human developmental approach I view healthy child development or functioning as an indication of child well-being.

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families, stepfamilies, grandmother families and families in which parents are merely cohabiting, have become common alternatives to double-parent families.

Concerning the phenomena of parental divorce and marriage separation, Tanzania seems to differ slightly from other countries. The majority of Tanzanian married couples do not follow legal procedures or have any legal documents when they separate – as required for divorce in the true sense of the word. Couples merely decide to part with each going his/her own way. Parental separation is, therefore, common in Tanzania – as opposed to legal divorce which is limited (Shabani, & Kuname, 2011). Since the context of this study is Tanzania, the concept of '*marital dissolution*' will be used to imply both divorce and parental separation. Only limited research has been done in this area of interest in Tanzania, leading to the question concerning whether or not the effects of divorce on children (as determined in many studies of first-world countries) can be applied to the Tanzanian context where parents separate rather than divorce legally.

In addition to the rather common trend of Tanzanian couples to simply separate in challenging times, the country faces further challenges in the form of increased numbers of street children; increased delinquency and gang activities; high rates of school dropouts; and teenage pregnancies in girls (Kimwaga, 2000). In an effort to find reasons for the multitude of street children flocking to the city of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, Lugalla and Mbwambo (2005) found that, among other reasons, 69% of the children cited a variety of marital problems, such as marital dissolution and the death of a parent; 62% of the children mentioned fighting between couples and the abusive nature of a stepparent. In support of these findings, I found in my master's degree study, which investigated the causes of delinquency among street children that 60% of street children were forced out onto the city streets for reasons related to family conflict and parental separation (Mauki, 2007).

Although limited, findings like these indicate a potential link between marital dissolution and the increase in street children in Tanzania. In addition, unacceptable behaviour and misconduct by children are often related to parental problems (Shemsanga, 2011) which may, in turn, be linked to the incidence of street children and their behaviour on the street. In a study on drug abuse in Tanzania, Possi (1996) noted that insufficient influence of family over individual actions; lack of parental guidance; and poor social-economic conditions were among the reasons why children engaged in drug trafficking and abuse. Such problems may

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arise due to family disruption and dysfunction which, in turn, may be related to marital dissolution.

Child stagnation is viewed as a common outcome of marital dissolution causing children in a family to go into decline; to be inactive; and not to develop and excel as well as they used to (The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary of Current English, 2005). In this study, the focus is on two areas of child stagnation: namely, academic performance and psycho-social well-being – specifically among children of 12 to 15 years of age. In many broken families and particularly in the stated age group, these two areas of functioning have been found to be affected following the deprivation of certain needs and materials which may occur after marital dissolution (Kelly, & Emery, 2003; Clandos, & Kemp, 2007).

In order for children to excel, despite marital dissolution, it is important that good policies and rules are maintained by local Government to protect children from the negative outcomes of parental separation. This can be viewed as a particular weakness currently being experienced in Tanzania (Melkiory, & Kanyabuhinya, 2011) – as explained in the next section. At the other end of the spectrum, Størksen, Røysamb, Moum and Tambs (2005) cite the Norwegian Government as an example where special laws and regulations are in place to counteract the negative effects of marital dissolution on children. In Norway, newly separated couples are offered family counselling and single parents are given priority in several areas, including daycare services for their children and if a single parent is unable to work, the government provides financial assistance. In addition, the law requires a non-custodial parent to provide day-to-day financial assistance needed by his/her children. If the parent fails to do so for whatever reason, the government intervenes. Children are allowed to visit the non-resident parent (usually the father) one afternoon every week and a weekend every second week (Størksen *et al*., 2005). The question that arises concerns the possibility of introducing some of these policies, which correlate with divorce policies in other countries worldwide, to Tanzania as this – despite the country's low economic status – may, potentially, result in homes being supportive places for children to live and thrive.

1.2 CONTEXTUALISATION: CULTURE, MARRIAGE, MARITAL DISSOLUTION AND CHILD AFFAIRS IN TANZANIA

In this section I provide background information on the culture of the people in Tanzania and how marriage as an institution is viewed. I also explain children's affairs within this specific cultural context.

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1.2.1 CULTURE AND MARRIAGE IN TANZANIA

In general, the marriage culture in Tanzania varies from one ethnic group to another. Marriage within the ethnic group is promoted in some communities while in others traditions allow marriage outside the ethnic group (Seppälä, & Koda, 1998). Formerly, marriage arrangements were made between parents of both partners although this tendency has decreased. In various communities marriage to one wife is allowed – especially within Christian communities. However, polygamy is practiced in some cultures and also allowed in Muslim communities, despite this tendency apparently loosing popularity due to social and economic factors (Carlson, & Pratt, 2012).

The majority of couples in Tanzania are legally married as they typically go through religious (Christian or Muslim) ceremonies or civil ceremonies conducted by a civil marriage registrar. In all these types of marriages the couples' intention to marry is made public for 21 days before they wed. Finally, on the wedding day couples are given two official marriage certificates, one for the husband and another for the wife, as a legal confirmation of their union. Yet, despite the legal status of many marriages in Tanzania, it is reported that the majority of couples do not remain in the relationship more than ten years (Mpuya, & Lubeja, 2012; Shabani, & Kuname, 2011; Shemsanga, 2011).

Women in various traditional communities in Tanzania are regarded as inferior, weak and ready to be guided by decisions made by men (their husbands). The customary division of labour is that women are responsible for house chores and taking care of small children while men are seen as the main producers and breadwinners in terms of farming (in rural areas), employment and business (in urban areas). This view makes the situation of the mothers and their children even more difficult when marital dissolution occurs and the father's role appears to end. Only a few women, especially those who originate from ruling tribal families, successful business women and women politicians, receive almost the same respect as that of men in Tanzania (Mlozi, 1997).

Due to on-going societal transformation, the majority of Tanzanian girls and women have been able to access formal education, leading to a significant transformation in their lives. However, the success, employment and income of many women are reported to add to marital conflict between husbands and wives, especially when it comes to the roles and responsibilities of each (Carlson, & Pratt, 2012). The behaviour of husbands in undermining

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and disrespecting their wives' achievements results in many women deciding to opt for separation. Moreover, the disruptive outcomes of men engaging in, for example, alcohol abuse, extra marital affairs and materialism, has added pressure to relationships among families and has increased the chances of couples ending their marriages with little consideration of the consequences of this for the children (Seppälä, & Koda, 1998).

In various Tanzanian communities women who lose their husbands through death or marital dissolution are not taken care of in terms of customary laws and, therefore, they are obliged to find their own means of livelihood or be supported by their children (Yudkin, 1999). Such circumstances add to children's vulnerability (in this case children of separated parents), resulting in some of them finding themselves on the city streets begging, stealing or engaging in petty business in order to earn a living.

1.2.2 MARITAL DISSOLUTION AND CHILDREN'S AFFAIRS

In Tanzania, as in many other societies, various stages are passed through by couples on their way to physical separation (Shabani, & Kuname, 2011). The first stage occurs when friction, differences and conflict overshadow the intimacy between couples in a way that one or both of them start to feel the need for a break. Sometimes during this stage separation may be mentioned but is not implemented. The following stage involves couples deciding to disclose their situation to outsiders who may be parents, parents-in-law, friends or religious leaders. At this stage the intensity of the problem typically increases as the couple loses trust and faith in one another and two camps start to emerge. The final stage occurs when couples decide to part. This is where physical separation occurs with one parent becoming a custodial parent and the other the non-resident parent in the case of marriages with children (Shemsanga, 2011).

As already stated, marital dissolution in Tanzania generally occurs through parental separation rather than legal divorce – as is evident in the very low numbers of registered divorces – while the number of marital dissolution complaints in district social welfare offices is increasing day-by-day (RITA[2] Report, 2006/2007). Citing the example of the Kinondoni district, Shabani and Kuname (2011) report that each staff member of the Social Welfare Department deals with more than 12 complaints of marital dissolution per month; with 12 staff members, this means that more than 144 marital dissolutions occur per month in this district. If this number

[2]Registration, Insolvency and Trusteeship Agency is a government institution in Tanzania.

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is compared to the 48 registered divorces in 2007/2008 in this district, it seems clear that most couples who decide to separate do not follow the legal route.

Furthermore, Basela (2004) contends that an increased number of people have been seeking assistance with marital discord over the last few years in Tanzania. For example, while the *Tanzania Media Women Association (TAMWA) Magomeni crisis centre* received 118 matrimonial cases in 1997, the number had increased to 422 in 1999. This suggests a rapid increase in parental conflict in Tanzanian families. In addition, the annual report of the *Women Legal Aid Centre* (WLAC, 2001) showed that by 2000 about 1420 matrimonial cases were received and handled at the centre, yet by 2001 the number had risen to 1750.

Shabani and Kuname (2011) identify three reasons for many couples deciding to simply separate rather than going through a legal divorce. Firstly, the divorce process in Tanzania is said to be cumbersome and bureaucratic. Secondly, fathers reportedly fear ending up sharing their belongings with the mothers and the children and, finally, the majority of people are ignorant of existing laws and procedures related to divorce which makes it difficult for Tanzanian couples to follow legal process when they want to separate.

The apparent ignorance of a great sector of the Tanzanian population concerning the law relates not only to divorce issues but also to the rights of the child when parents' marriages end. Even though many things are clearly stipulated in the Law of Marriage Act of 1971 and the Child Right Act of 2009, little of this is practiced. One issue that is addressed by law but that is not actually practiced relates to child maintenance. The Law of Marriage Act 1971, Section 129, Article 1, namely:

> *"Save where an agreement or order of court otherwise provides, it shall be the duty of a man to maintain his infant children, whether they are in his custody or the custody of any other person, either by providing them with such accommodation, clothing, food and education as may be reasonable, having regard to his means and station in life or by paying the cost thereof."*

Despite this regulation, the majority of children who come from single homes come from homes with poor mothers because this law is not practically implemented. Cheni (2011) maintains that some of the children who are rescued from the street by the *Child in the Sun*

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Centre[3] have allegedly been forced by their mothers to go out onto the streets to find food for the family, following the departure of the father who had previously been the breadwinner. Poverty and other hardships in life are among the reasons that may result in children fleeing from their homes (especially in the mainland regions of Tanzania) to the city of Dar es Salaam with the intention to find means to support themselves as well as their mother and other siblings back home (Shabani, & Kuname, 2011).

Concerning the right of opinion, Section 11 of the Law of the Child Act (2009, p. 15) states:

> *"A child shall have a right of opinion and no person shall deprive a child capable of forming views of the right to express an opinion, to be listened to and to participate in decisions which affect his or her well-being."*

Yet in Tanzania children are, generally, not involved in issues related to their parents' marriages – even if those issues affect them directly or indirectly (Shabani, & Kuname, 2011). The exact reason for this seems unclear. In this regard, the current study may shed some light as it explored parents' insights in terms of the effect on their children when they decide to separate.

Another important area in which lack of practical implementation relates to the rights of the child is when parents separate. The Law of the Child Act (2009, p. 21), Section 26, Article 1, stipulates:

> *"Subject to the provisions of the Law of Marriage Act, where parents of a child are separated or divorced, a child shall have a right to*
> *(a) Maintenance and education of the quality he enjoyed immediately before his parents were separated or divorced;*
> *(b) Live with a parent who, in the opinion of the court, is capable of raising and maintaining the child in the best interest of the child; and*
> *(c) Visit and stay with the other parent whenever he or she desires, unless such arrangement interferes with his school or training programme."*

However, it is reported that the situation of children coming from broken homes is continually worsening in Tanzania. The country seemingly does not have policies in place to enforce the present laws relating to marriage and children (Melkiory, & Kanyabuhinya, 2011). In an

[3] Centre where homeless children between the ages of 8 and 17 are accommodated situated in the city of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

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attempt to make sense of current practice in Tanzania of existing laws that are apparently not implemented or perhaps not valued by married couples, I explored parents' awareness of laws concerning children from broken families. More specifically, the scenario of marital dissolution; its effects on children; and whether or not parents were aware of these effects during the breakup process were investigated.

1.3 RATIONALE FOR UNDERTAKING THE STUDY

My interest in this study rests on personal experience, as well as on the apparent need for research in this area.

1.3.1 PERSONAL MOTIVE/RATIONALE

This study draws on my personal interest in problems in Tanzanian marriages and the potential effect of marital dissolution on children's academic and psycho-social development. This interest resulted firstly from the findings of my master's degree study (Master of Arts in Applied Social Psychology – MAASP), focusing on the causes of delinquent behaviour among street children in the city of Dar es Salaam (Mauki, 2007). In my study, I found that the majority of children were exposed to street life and delinquency as a result of marital dissolution. However, given the limitation of the master's dissertation, I deemed it necessary to further explore this trend at doctoral level.

My second reason for being interested in this area of research is based on my experience as a practitioner. In addition to my full-time occupation as a lecturer in counselling, I have been involved in counselling couples during radio programmes, television programmes and individual sessions with clients in Tanzania. During these sessions, I have become aware of problems that couples generally experience and the fact that they apparently often do not consider how the outcomes affect their children when they decide to separate. A study in this field would allow me to build new perspectives in educational psychology and counselling for Tanzanian society and even beyond.

1.3.2 INTELLECTUAL/SCHOLARSHIP RATIONALE

Despite an acute increase in marital dissolution in Tanzania in current times, very little is documented in this area – particularly in relation to the challenge of child welfare. As stated, the increase in marital dissolution is said to have more negative than positive outcomes in

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westernised developed countries, specifically on the children's academic and psycho-social well-being (Amato, 2001; Kelly, 2002; Kelly, & Emery, 2003). Against this background, I investigated the reality of marital dissolution in the context of Tanzania; the subsequent effect on the functioning of the children; and the level at which parents consider these effects when they decide to separate. The reason for my focus on academic and psycho-social well-being is that various sources (Amato, 2001; Kelly, 2002; Kelly, & Emery, 2003; Størksen *et al*., 2005) suggest that these are the two areas most affected, when consulting literature based on studies that have been completed in countries other than Tanzania.

One of the primary determinants of the outcomes of marital dissolution on children is the parents' insight – or often lack of it – into the effects of marital dissolution on their children (Cashmore, & Parkinson, 2008). This situation seems to be of particular relevance in Tanzania where children (regardless of their age) are often completely excluded from knowing anything about their parents' separation. They are merely left to face the consequences, a position where they may be even more vulnerable. A substantial number of studies indicate the negative effects of marital dissolution on children in developed countries (Dunn, Davies, O'Connor, & Sturgess, 2001; Kelly, 2002; Kelly, & Emery, 2003; Størksen, Røysamb, Holmen, & Tambs, 2006; Størksen *et al*., 2005). However, the existing literature does not indicate the consequences of parents' insight (or lack of it) about the effects of marital dissolution on their children. As a possible contribution to the existing body of knowledge, this study may, therefore, fill a gap in this area.

As stated, it should be noted that many of the studies already reported on in the existing literature were carried out in contexts which differ from Tanzania where the people experience three unique features which seem to differentiate the country from others. Firstly, marital dissolution occurs mainly in the form of parental separation rather than divorce as very few couples decide to process their divorce through legal channels (RITA Report, 2007/2008). Secondly, the insight of the majority of parents into their children's well-being and emotional state – both before and during the breakup process – seems to be limited (Kelly, & Emery, 2003). Finally, the majority of separated couples are characterised by post-divorce conflict and enmity which typically exacerbates the effect on the children (Wade, & Travis, 1993). Against this background, a need seems to exist to reflect on the peculiar characteristics of the country's environment (Bojuwoye, & Akpan, 2009a), especially in terms of the position and status of children during the process of marital dissolution as this may offer some insight in terms of the possible effects of such a breakup on children in Tanzania. In addressing this

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need, the negative impact seen in the form of street children may subsequently be reduced in the long term.

1.4 AIM OF THE RESEARCH

According to Fouché (2002, p. 107), the words *aim* and *goal* can be used interchangeably to refer to "....the end towards which effort or ambition is directed". The aim of my study was to conduct an investigation into the effect of marital dissolution on early adolescents' academic and psycho-social well-being in the context of Tanzania. This study focused mainly on exploring and explaining the potential effect of marital dissolution (both positive and negative) on children's academic development and psycho-social well-being. Two children's centres were involved in the study where children between 12 and 15 years of age with the background of broken families and where the majority had once lived on the street were selected to participate in the study. Their teachers and caregivers also participated. Furthermore, selected parents and children from custodial homes were involved in the study.

Besides the focus on the effect of marital dissolution on children, interviews were used to investigate parents' insight into the potential effects of such an action on children. In addition, I explored parents' decisions to separate, as well as the process of the breakup itself. My aim was to explain how various decisions (separation being one of them) of parents in families may have an effect on the lives of the children involved, especially if those decisions are done without considering the well-being of the children. As such, this study may add to the existing knowledge base on the effects of marital dissolution on children's academic and psycho-social development in the context of Tanzania and whether or not parents' insight (or lack thereof) on the effects of their separation on children may have a significant impact on their children.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

My research was guided by the following primary research question:
How can insight into marital dissolution in Tanzania broaden our knowledge on its effect on children?

In order to address my primary research question, I was guided by the following secondary research questions:

- Which factors contribute to marital dissolution in Tanzania?

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- Which processes (traditional or legal) are followed when Tanzanian parents decide to separate?
- What is the effect of marital dissolution on children's academic and psycho-social development?
- What insight do Tanzanian parents have concerning the effect of marital dissolution on their children?
- To what extent do Tanzanian parents consider the effect of marital dissolution on their children during their decision to separate?

1.6 WORKING ASSUMPTIONS

Based on my initial literature review, I approached my study with the following assumptions:

- The effect of marital dissolution on children – initially documented as a result of research in first world countries – would be applicable in the context of marital dissolution in a third world context in Tanzania.
- The negative effects of marital dissolution on children's academic development and psycho-social well-being might be a result of parents not considering the outcome of their decision to separate.
- Tanzanian parents who separate do not, generally, consider where their children will be placed after the marital dissolution.
- The negative effects of marital dissolution on children will be less when they are left with a custodial parent with a good socio-economic status.
- Not all children from broken families struggle. Children who have lived with continuous parental conflict are likely to do well after their parents separate as this may mark the beginning of a peaceful life for them. Children who have experienced a negative child-parent relationship with a non-resident parent may also do well after separation.
- The support available (or lack of it) may influence the effect of marital dissolution on children. Children with good support structures, such as extended families or child care centres, may perform better than those with little or no support.

1.7 CLARIFICATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

In this section, I explain my understanding of the key concepts of the study.

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1.7.1 CHILDREN

A child is a person between 18 months and 15 years of age, with childhood being one of the major stages in a person's development (The World Book Encyclopaedia, 1992). The Tanzanian Law of the Child Act (2009, p. 10) views a child's development as a "process of change during which a child is able to reach physical, mental, emotional and social potentials. The development of each of these dimensions occurs simultaneously through continued lifetime interaction with the environment".

Within the context of this study, 'children' refers to early adolescents aged between 12 and 15. At this age children are sensitive to changes in the home, such as a change in family income; parents' separation; or even the death of one of the parents. The impact of life changes can affect their emotional and psychological well-being, resulting in their being viewed as a vulnerable age group (Morris; Duncan, & Clark-Kauffman, 2005).

Moreover, I also considered children in my study as people – holistic human beings, with lots of strengths and competencies that needed to be developed rather than being stagnated. They need recognition, respect and participation in anything that might affect their well-being in one way or another (Neale 2002; Willow, Marchant, Kirby, Neale, Fountain, Fajerman, & Treseder, 2004). This is where parents' insights into the effect of marital dissolution on children during the process of a breakup become necessary and inevitable.

1.7.2 MARITAL DISSOLUTION

Marital dissolution occurs when a couple decide to end their marital relationship and cease to live as husband and wife. This can take the form of divorce or separation. According to World Book Encyclopedia (1992) "divorce [or the dissolution of marriage] is the final termination of a marital union, cancelling the legal duties and responsibilities of marriage and dissolving the bonds of matrimony between the parties."

In many countries, couples who decide to divorce pass through various legal processes which involve different issues and decisions related to custody arrangements, child maintenance and property redistribution. Legal separation in western countries does not declare marriage between couples null and void; it merely revokes the marriage status of the couples involved, implying that each person is free to marry again (World Book Encyclopedia, 1992; Shemsanga, 2011).

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Within the context of this study, marital dissolution is regarded as a process that initiates other events which are likely to have an impact on the lives of the children involved. It consists of a sequence of experiences, rather than being a single phenomenon. These experiences may include a series of conflicts and violence within the family; the decision of one parent to leave the home; a relocation that may lead to a change in schools; neighbours and other social life; becoming a single-parent or living in a step-family; as well as adjustments to changes in relationships with family and social network members (Maundeni, 2000a). Although marital dissolution is largely viewed as a detrimental process to the children and the parents who are involved, it may sometimes produce positive results – especially for families where there was continuous conflict and where the relationships among members of the family were not friendly for the children (Amato, 2000).

1.7.3 EFFECT

The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary of Current English (2005) defines effect as change or changes that have the ability to bring forth particular results in somebody or something else. This change or changes might produce either positive or negative results. Viewing a family as a system, there are various incidents and processes that might effect children: for example, the use of media and technology in the family, parents' employment, parents' alienation, parents' education and parents' alcoholism. All these may have some effect (positive or negative, long-term or short-term) on the children involved (Baker, 2005; Wallerstein, & Lewis, 2004). In this study I specifically focused on the positive or negative changes that may occur in children's academic and psycho-social development as a result of their parents' marital dissolution.

1.7.4 CONSEQUENCES

Consequences are the result of something that has happened (Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary of Current English, 2005), in other words, a thing or circumstance that follows as a result of something preceding (Crystal, 1992). As the main focus of this study marital dissolution may be viewed as a unitary phenomenon even though it is followed by significant changes with different magnitudes on the people involved – in this case parents and children (Amato, 2006; Bojuwoye, & Akpan, 2009a). Variations of these magnitudes are discussed in the following chapter. Consequences in the context of this study are the significant results or circumstances observed among children aged 12 to 15 years as the result of their parents' separation.

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1.7.5 PARENTS' INSIGHTS

Insight implies an ability to see and understand the reality about people or a situation; it is an understanding of what something is like (Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary of Current English, 2005). In other words, insight implies an understanding of a specific cause and effect in a specific context. This understanding goes beyond knowing the cause and effect; it also entails the ability to understand how to deal with an emerged effect in order to solve or reduce a problem (World Book Encyclopedia, 1992).

In various circumstances children may be victims of the decisions their parents make without considering whether or not these decisions have an impact on the lives of the children. It is, therefore, believed that if parents could have an insight into such effects on children, the negative impact may be reduced (Thorne, 2009). Parents' insights in the context of this study are viewed as the ability of parents to foresee and understand potential negative or positive results of marital dissolution on their children during and after the breakup process.

1.7.6 NON-RESIDENT OR NON-CUSTODIAL PARENT

Amato and Gilbreth (1999) define a non-resident parent or non-custodial parent as the opposite of a custodial parent. A non-resident parent is a parent who does not stay or live with a child in the same home but there may be a legal or informal agreement between the parents and the child concerning visitation rights and other provisions. In Tanzania, as in many other countries, children automatically remain with their mothers if a separation occurs when the child is younger than seven years of age (Shabani, & Kuname, 2011), even though this age may vary from one country to another. This trend results in many fathers being non-resident parents where contact and visits from children are determined by circumstances, such as age and the school schedule of the child. Other determining factors include family relationships, the quality of the father-child relationship and the level of dependency on the father (McLanahan, 1999; Strous, 2011).

1.8 UNDERLYING THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In undertaking this study, I relied on four theories: namely, attachment theory (Bowlby, 2008; Smith, & Hart, 2002), crisis theory (Turner, & Avison, 1989; 1992), family stress theory (Crosbie-Burnett, 1989) and life course theory (Conger & Elder, 1994; Elder, 1998a). A brief

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explanation of each theory is provided in the following sections, culminating in a discussion of my conceptual framework. These theories are discussed in more detail in Chapter 2. As an overview and introduction, Figure 1.1provides a summary of how I integrated the various theories into a conceptual framework.

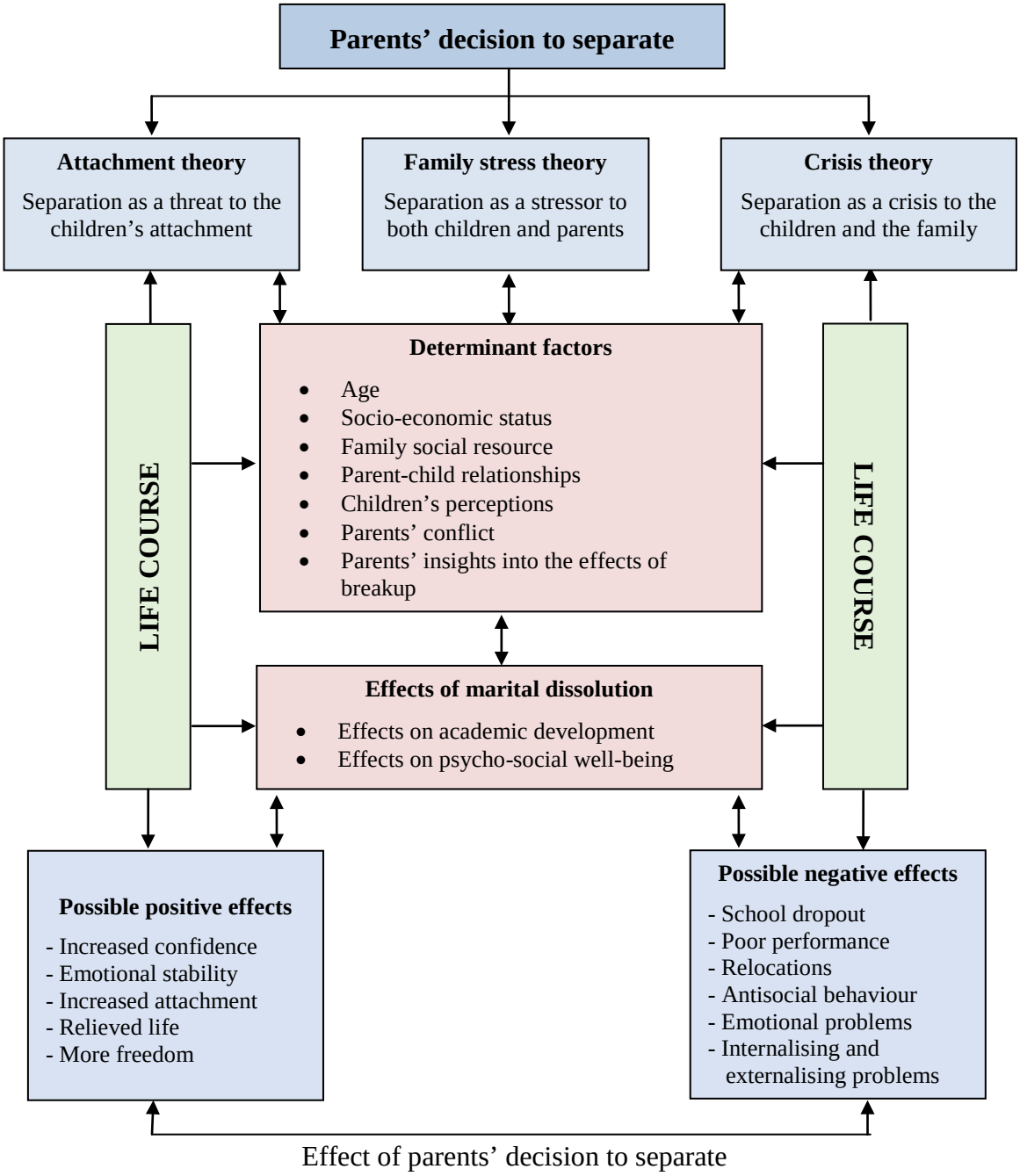

Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework

1.8.1 ATTACHMENT THEORY

Attachment theory was developed in order to explain – among other things: a) why separations may cause anxiety; and b) which similarities exist between adult and childhood

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mourning (Bowlby, 2008). As described by Carter (2005), an attachment relationship is concerned with feelings of comfort and security whereby the attached person – in this case, a child – seeks an attachment figure, typically a parent, to provide security, protection, comfort and help. The attachment relationship in this sense is considered to be complementary.

Attachment behaviour is usually displayed when an attached person is frightened, tired or not feeling well. Such feelings are reduced when an attachment figure provides assistance, comfort or protection. The mere idea of the attachment figure being available results in a feeling of security and may encourage an individual (the child) to value and maintain the relationship (Bakermans-Kranenburg, & Van IJzendoorn, 2007; Bowlby, 2008).

1.8.2 CRISIS THEORY

Crisis is been viewed by different crisis theorists as the transitional period that may be a stimulant to an individual's growth and maturation or to a period of risk and vulnerability to the same individual (Turner, & Avison, 1992). A crisis can be referred to as an "upset in the person's steady state" (Schwartz, 2012:16) and may be initiated when an individual encounters a challenge or an obstacle in terms of important life goals. Within the context of this study, marital dissolution can be seen as such an obstacle to a child's life goals. It can, therefore, qualify as a crisis for children while it may also be a crisis for both the parents who are separating. Such a crisis, typically, affects the actions and reactions of all the people involved.

1.8.3 FAMILY STRESS THEORY

Family stress theory depicts the complexities involved in the manner in which marital dissolution may affect the children. It emphasises how similar events can be defined differently by the people affected (Maundeni, 2000b). The decision by parents to separate can be viewed as a stressor for both the parents and the children as it creates an environment in the family that can directly or indirectly affect the children (Krahn, 1993).

Family stress theorists identify various factors influencing children's perceptions of marital dissolution and the manner in which they cope with the incident. These factors include the children's perceptions and experiences as well as their personal resources, familial resources and social networks (Maundeni, 2000a; Turner, & Avison, 1992). In this study, children's perceptions of various marital dissolution-related experiences were solicited. Various family

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stress theory terms, such as stress, coping, adjustment, adaptation and support resources were used during data collection and in the interpretation of the results.

1.8.4 LIFE COURSE THEORY

Life course theory emerged during the 1920s with the intention of explaining how various events that had occurred in an individual's past may alter developmental trajectories throughout the life span of the person (Conger, & Elder, 1994; Elder, 1998a). According to Conger and Elder (1994); Elder (1998a); and Sameroff (1993), life course events – in this context marital dissolution – may interfere with an individual's emotional stability, economic stability, behavioural trends, educational attainment and work habits. In this connection the individual may also experience problems in relating to others due to certain life course events (Elder, 1996).

Among other things, life course theory explains how life course events may affect not only an individual's life but also the family as a whole (Elder, 1995). In the context of this study, parents' separation (marital dissolution) is considered to be an event that takes place somewhere in a child's life with the potential to have significant positive or negative outcomes in that child's life.

1.8.5 INTEGRATION OF THEORIES IN A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Parents' decision to separate can be explained in terms of attachment theory as it threatens the existing attachment between children and their parents. In support, family stress theorists explain the way such a decision may become a stressor to both parents and children while crisis theorists view this decision as the commencement of a series of crises in the children's lives and in the family at large (Turner, & Avison, 1992; Krahn, 1993; Bowlby, 2008). In further support, parents' separation as one such life course event (Conger, & Elder, 1994; Elder, 1998a) may set in motion a series of other events, such as relocation, remarriage, dropout from school and street life. These events may have continuous negative effects on the entire life of the child.

The extent to which parents' separation may affect children as explained by the four theories largely depends on the determining factors as displayed on Figure 1.1. These may finally affect children's academic development and psycho-social well-being, either positively or

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negatively. I provide further explanations on the manner in which I integrated the underlying theories in my conceptual framework in Chapter 2.

1.9 PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Based on the nature of this study, the context and the participants, I relied on social constructivism (Charmaz, 2000, 2006; Creswell, 2012) as an epistemological paradigm. As a methodological paradigm I followed a qualitative approach (Merriam, 2002).

1.9.1 EPISTEMOLOGICAL PARADIGM: SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM

Social constructivists contend that in order for researchers to comprehend certain experiences of a particular community they should elicit the ideas, views and opinions from the people living in that community (Minichiello, & Kottler, 2010). These worlds of lived reality and the meaning of incidences and contexts that are explored by researchers are constructed by participants in a specific social setting and at specific times (Lincoln, & Denzin, 1994). In applying social constructivism to my study I kept in mind that participants who were the source of information could have different perspectives to those of others about their experiences, including their decisions and the effects of marital dissolution on their children. I considered and respected various perspectives since this is the core value of qualitative research. Furthermore, because the language used by participants could potentially influence how they expressed their reality, all verbal and written communication with participants was conducted in Kiswahili which is the common language used in Tanzania. This allowed participants to freely communicate meaning in their own words.

I regard social constructivism as a suitable paradigm for my study because it allowed me to gain insight into the experiences of, and meanings attached to, marital dissolution as perceived by the different participants involved in my study during different phases and times (Lincoln, & Denzin, 1994; Schwandt, 1994). Even though the study included caregivers and teachers who had day-to-day experience with children from broken homes, I relied strongly on the children and parents who had personal experiences of marital dissolution. The latter group has first-hand and original information of the actual experience of marital dissolution as they had lived it, seen it and understood the pain as well as the gain resulting from the phenomenon.

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1.9.2 METHODOLOGICAL PARADIGM: QUALITATIVE APPROACH

Qualitative inquiry seeks to understand human and social behaviour – not from an outside perspective, but from the inside as it is lived by participants in a particular social setting (Merriam, 2002). In qualitative research information is collected and presented by means of words and pictures rather than numbers. In my study I used the information obtained to build a new theory instead of trying to prove an existing theory or hypothesis (Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, & Sorensen, 2006).

My decision to follow a qualitative approach in this study was influenced by the fact that I intended to investigate and understand the participants in their natural contexts; to collect data on their feelings and attitudes; and to rely on their voices and their own perceptions regarding the topic being studied. Various concepts and processes that are involved in marital dissolution are perceived and explained differently by different people in various parts of the world. Several studies in this area have been conducted reflecting different cultures with varying results. I specifically intended to capture the feelings and experiences of Tanzanians expressing their perceptions of the phenomenon of marital dissolution and its effects on their children's academic and psycho-social development.

1.10 BROAD OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGICAL STRATEGIES

By conceptualising a suitable research design, as the researcher, I was able to connect the research questions with the information required and determined suitable strategies that could be used in collecting and documenting data (Punch, 2005; 2009).

1.10.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

I relied on an instrumental case study design (Creswell, 2012; Stake, 1994) due to the fact that my study aimed at providing insight into the specific issue of the effects of marital dissolution on children in Tanzania. In choosing this research design I relied on my knowledge, assumptions, and past experiences, as all these influenced the way I collected, documented and analysed data (Fouché, 2002; Punch, 2005; Nieuwenhuis, 2007).

Case study research aims at an in-depth understanding of how people in a specified context interact with each other and with their environment in conjunction with how they make

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meaning of the phenomenon under study (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). In this study I considered a case study to be a suitable research design because the selected participants were expected to provide personal experiences regarding marital dissolution and the way they were either harmed by, or benefited from, it. The perceptions obtained from the participants were confined to within the social context of this study and do not, necessarily, explain other outside contexts. In undertaking this study I regarded children from broken families as the unit of analysis. The effect of marital dissolution in Tanzania was the case for my study.

1.10.2 Selection of Case and Participants

This study was carried out in the city of Dar es Salaam which is the largest commercial and residential city in Tanzania and has been since colonisation in the 1960s with the majority of its residents falling in the low socio-economic bracket. Because of the mixed cultures and poor economy of the people living in this city trends, such as intermarriage, early marriages, early pregnancies and other social dynamics, may weaken the stability of the institution of marriage and create an impetus for marital dissolution. I purposefully selected the city of Dar es Salaam due to its nature and characteristics – as explained above.

My study involved three groups of participants: namely, 12 children from broken family backgrounds (eight from children centres and four from their custodial homes); 12 parents; and 12 teachers and caregivers from two selected children centres (6 from each centre). Both children's centres and the participants (children, parents, teachers and caregivers) were purposefully selected (Creswell, 2012; Punch, 2009). I elaborate on the selection criteria for each group of participants in Chapter 3. In some cases, particularly in the purposeful selection of custodial parents and children who stay at home, I used snowball sampling (Creswell, 2012), where participants suggested other people who they thought would be suitable participants.

1.10.3 Data Collection and Documentation

In collecting data for my study I used semi-structured interviews (Merriam, 2002), focus group discussions (Ary *et al*., 2006; Merriam, 2002), children's narratives (Britten, 1995; Frid, Öhlén, & Bergbom, 2000; Langdridge, 2007) and document analysis (Merriam, 2002). Interviewing is one of the most widely used methods for obtaining qualitative data. I relied on interviews to collect information pertaining to participants' own ideas, opinions, and beliefs

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and respected their interpretations of the particular phenomenon (Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, & Sorensen, 2010).

I conducted twelve interviews with children of above 12 years of age (see Appendix B for the research instruments) from both child care centres and custodial homes. In addition, I conducted twelve interviews with custodial parents as well as the parents of children who lived at the children's centres (see Appendix B for the research instruments). The interviews were conducted in Kiswahili and then translated and transcribed into English for access by a wider audience. In addition to interviews I also obtained data from the children by using narrative accounts.

I used focus group discussions to collect data from the teachers and caregivers[4] from the selected children centres (see Appendix B for the research instruments). This method of data collection typically focuses on a specified issue (in this study marital dissolution and its effect on children) with a skilled interviewer (in this case with me, as the researcher) prompting the views of the group members while noting the interaction within the group (Ary *et al*., 2006). I believe that focus group discussions gave me room to examine collective views and interaction. I conducted two focus group discussions during the course of my study. All discussions were recorded, translated and transcribed.

Information on the children's academic progress was collected in the form of existing documents (see Appendix B for the research instruments). Documents that I reviewed in my study include the children's academic reports, exercise books, behaviour performance records, their written stories and drawings, and other relevant available material (Merriam, 2002).

Throughout the course of my research I documented my interaction with the participants by means of field notes which I recorded in a research diary (Punch, 2009). This enabled me to re-visit the process when it was necessary. Different observations that emerged during the interviews and focus group discussions together with participants' details – obtained from document analysis and verbal interaction, were documented in the diary. In addition, I documented my personal reflections, emotions, experiences and areas which might need re-thinking during the course of the study.

[4] House caregivers in some children's centers in Tanzania are commonly referred to as mothers/fathers while their assistants are called aunts/uncles.

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For data analysis, I relied on a framework by Miles and Huberman (1994), known as Miles and Huberman's stage analysis. Accordingly, I analysed qualitative data by means of three main components, namely, data reduction, data display and drawing and verifying conclusions. These three components featured simultaneously throughout the process of analysis (Patton, 1999; Punch, 2005; 2009). I translated the raw data from the field, which was mainly in Kiswahili, into English paying attention not to impair the intended meanings. The process of translating the information into English was done in order to make my final report accessible internationally.

1.11 QUALITY CRITERIA

The results of the data collection, analysis and interpretation should always be pure and of a high quality. Throughout the process of conducting the qualitative study, my objective was to obtain credible, dependable, transferable, confirmable and authentic findings (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011). Credibility aims to ensure that explanations fit descriptions and that "interpretations are trustworthy and reveal some truth external to the investigator's experience" (Whittemore, Chase, & Mandle, 2001, p. 530). In striving for credibility, I explored the in-depth information about marital dissolution in the context of Tanzania from various sources (separated parents, their children, teachers and caregivers), each expressing their views and ideas – based on how living realities are perceived in their social contexts. In attempting to achieve dependability, which implies that a researcher ensures that each process in a study is logical, traceable and documented, I have provided extensive documentation of my data, methods and decisions and recorded possible changes which could occur in descriptions and in the report of the study (Babbie, & Mouton, 2001; Seale, 1999; Schwandt, 2007).

In terms of transferability I have provided detailed descriptions of the context and research process in this thesis, so that other researchers could gain insights with the possibility of transferring the findings to similar contexts (Seale, 1999; Schwandt, 2007). I attempted to obtain confirmable findings by relying on member-checking as well as frequent discussions with my supervisor on everything that emerged from the field (Whittemore, Chase, & Mandle, 2001). In striving for authenticity, I aimed to maintain a balance and fairness in the views from the various categories of participants (Whittemore, Chase, & Mandle, 2001; Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011). Both triangulation and crystallisation were used as strategies to enhance the rigour of this study (Creswell, & Miller, 2000; Richardson, 2003; Patton, 2002).

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Other strategies that were used relate to member-checking; verbatim accounts of participants' responses; prolonged field duration; providing rich and thick descriptions; and peer debriefing (Mays, & Pope, 2000; Babbie, & Mouton, 2001; Schwandt, 2007; Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011). I discuss the quality criteria I considered in depth in Chapter 3.

1.12 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In order to maintain integrity, quality and trustworthiness in this study (Punch, 2000) I adhered to the ethical principles of informed consent and assent, freedom to withdraw, privacy, confidentiality and anonymity, and use and misuse of results (Babbie, 2008; Forrester, 2010; Hill, 2005; Punch, 2000). Other principles which I respected include honesty and trust as well as protecting participants from harm. In making sure that there was informed consent, all participants, regardless of their age, were informed about the nature, aim, and benefits of the study prior to its commencement. Each participant was given the freedom to willingly participate or withdraw from the study at any time (Babbie, 2008). Adults indicated their consent by completing consent forms and each child was asked to complete an assent form (Hill, 2005) (see Appendix A for the informed consent forms and assent forms). Privacy, confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by making sure that all information was treated with integrity and confidentiality by removing participants' names or identities, deleting institutions' names from the report and replacing them with identification numbers or symbols.

In attending to the issue of use and misuse of results, I informed the participants and selected institutions that the results of this study are for academic purposes. However, it was also stated that in cases where challenges emerged I would be obliged to offer recommendations to policy-makers and families in favour of the children's welfare. Honesty and trust in the study was guaranteed by establishing trust and rapport with the participants during initial contact and positively maintaining this until the end of the research process (Punch, 2000). I include more details of the strategies I employed to respect ethical guidelines in Chapter 3.

1.13 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

The chapters in this thesis are structured as follows:

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CHAPTER 1 — Setting the stage: Introduction and rationale

Chapter one serves as a background to the thesis. I introduced my area of focus and provided an overview of the study. I explained the choice of the particular phenomenon I focused on. Next, I discussed the rationale for the study, the research context, and my assumptions. I also presented the aim of the study, my research questions and a clarification of the key concepts. I continued by presenting my conceptual framework; my selected paradigmatic perspectives and then provided a broad overview of the selected methodological strategies. I briefly introduced the quality criteria and ethical considerations I regarded during this study.

CHAPTER 2 — Literature review, underlying theories and conceptual framework

Chapter 2 entails a discussion of the existing literature on marital dissolution and its potential effect on children from a global perspective and also within the Tanzanian context. The characteristics of early adolescents are explored as this is the selected age group of children involved in this study. In order to provide the necessary theoretical foundation of what I explored in the literature, I also discuss the underlying theories on which this study is based: namely, attachment theory, crisis theory, family stress theory and life course theory. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of my conceptual framework.

CHAPTER 3 — Research methodology

In Chapter 3, I describe how I undertook research in the field. I discuss my research design and methodology; and justify my choices in terms of the purpose of my study. I stipulate my selected methods of data collection, data documentation and data analysis and the way I interpreted my results. I identify strengths and challenges of my methodological choices. Finally I discuss how I strove to maintain rigour and which ethical considerations I respected.

CHAPTER 4 — Results of the study

In Chapter 4 I present and report the results in terms of the themes and subthemes I identified during data analysis. I include the ‘voices’ of participants in the form of verbatim responses and support these with visual data and excerpts from my field notes and research diary.

CHAPTER 5 — Discussion of findings

Chapter five provides the junction between the research results and the existing literature as presented in Chapter 2. I relate my results to the theories and conceptual framework underlying this study in order to reach conclusions concerning the research problem. I

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highlight areas where my findings correspond to, or contradict, existing literature and indicate where this study adds to the existing body of knowledge.

CHAPTER 6 — Conclusions and recommendations

In Chapter 6 I summarise my findings by addressing the research questions and revisiting the purpose of the study. I highlight areas of strengths and indicate the challenges I experienced during the undertaking of this study. After drawing conclusions I make recommendations for future research, training and practice.

1.14 CONCLUSION

In chapter one I set the stage by providing an introduction and a general orientation of the study. I explained the rationale and provided the aim of this study which was to conduct an investigation into the effects of marital dissolution on early adolescents' academic and psycho-social development in the context of Tanzania with the focus on exploring and explaining the potential effect on children's academic and psycho-social well-being. I formulated my research questions; stated my working assumptions and clarified the key concepts. I briefly introduced my selected conceptual framework, indicating links and integrative processes between attachment theory, family stress theory, crisis theory and life course theory. In order to introduce the empirical undertaking of this study, I provided my selection of research design and methodological strategies.

In the next chapter, I explore existing theory on marital dissolution and its potential effect on children's academic and psycho-social development. I also explain my conceptual framework and the guiding theories in more detail and how these can be linked to the existing body of literature I focused on in this study.

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CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW, UNDERLYING THEORIES AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I discuss the existing literature related to my study. I explore the developmental characteristics of early adolescents in relation to marital dissolution; the involvement of children in their parents' decision to separate; the potential effects of marital dissolution on children's academic and psycho-social development; and the typical reactions of children to their parents' marital dissolution – as discussed in contexts other than Tanzania. I conclude the chapter by explaining my conceptual framework.

2.2 DEVELOPMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS OF EARLY ADOLESCENTS

The study of child development includes descriptions of how, when, why and in what order changes typically occur when a child becomes an adult during various phases. When one understands what a child's capabilities should be at different age levels, it is possible to identify delayed development or instances where normal functioning is influenced by a phenomenon, such as marital dissolution (Corner, & Calendar, 2013). Early adolescence is, generally, referred to as part of the developmental transition between childhood and adulthood and it entails major, interrelated physical, cognitive, and psycho-social changes. Children of 12 to 15 years fall within this life phase.

Different factors may affect the development process; such as circumstances of birth, problems during prenatal development and injury or illness during early years of life. While these factors do not apply to all children, two remain constant: heredity and environment (Corner, & Calendar, 2013). Marital dissolution may create a family environment that could affect the development of the child. In the next sub-sections I briefly discuss the various components of adolescent development as a backdrop to the participants' life phases. I elaborate specifically on academic (Sub-section 2.2.2) and psycho-social (Sub-section 2.2.4) development as these areas of development form the focus of this study.

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2.2.1 PHYSICAL AND HEALTH DEVELOPMENT

Early adolescence (12 to15 years) offers opportunities for growth not only in the physical domain but also in terms of cognitive and social competence, autonomy, self-esteem and intimacy. Children in this age group experience a variety of challenges; the majority experience difficulty in handling life changes, such as changes within the family (parents' marital dissolution being one of them), the attainment of sexual maturity and the establishment of an own identity (Offer, & Schonert-Reichl, 1992). The findings of Anderson (2002) suggest that children in early adolescence face greater challenges in terms of their physical and mental well-being than their counterparts in other age groups.

During early adolescence children are said to especially need their parents' attention as this period often includes experiences of instability in terms of self-esteem as a result of rapid pubertal timing and changes (Williams, & Currie, 2000). These pubertal complications – whether early or late – may lead to developmental difficulties when complications impair children's abilities to be involved in their expected roles and activities (Alsaker, 1995). Adolescence is a period during which the majority of children are dissatisfied with their bodies, although the extent of dissatisfaction may differ according to gender as girls may display positive feelings concerning their appearance (Williams, & Currie, 2000).

Early adolescence is often characterised by the beginning of risk behaviour, such as drinking, drug abuse, aggression, sexual and gang activity as well as suicide (Rivara, & Grossman, 1996). Studies by Johnson, Hoffmann and Gerstein (1996) and by Masse and Tremblay (1997) mention possible reasons why early adolescents are likely to engage in drug abuse. The reasons include poor impulse control and a tendency to seek out sensation; family influence; parental use or acceptance of drugs; poor or inconsistent parenting practices; family conflict; and troubled or distant family relationships. In addition, early and persistent behavioural problems, academic failure and lack of commitment to education, association with drug users, alienation, rebelliousness and early initiation into drug abuse may be contributing factors. Despite the fact that inconsistency in parenting and parental conflict – as causal factors – can, potentially, be a result of parents' separation or marital dissolution, I had to remain aware of other potential reasons for behavioural problems and at-risk behaviour during this study. Even though marital dissolution could, potentially, result in problems displayed by the participants, I had to keep in mind that children in this life-phase often act out, due to the developmental challenges they face.

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In addition to the challenges cited in the previous paragraph, early adolescents may face the challenge of Sexually Transmitted diseases (STDs) as a result of early sexual activity (Remez, 2000). Besides STDs the prevalence of depression is considered to increase during early adolescence. Adolescent girls – especially early maturing girls – are more subject to depression than boys (Conger, & Elder, 1994; Stice, Presnell, & Bearman, 2001). This difference between girls and boys may be linked to biological changes related to puberty or to how girls socialise as well as to them being more vulnerable (Birmaher, Ryan, Williamson, Brent, Kaufman, Dahl, & Nelson, 1996). Linked to this, findings by Lugalla and Mbwambo (2005) indicate how early adolescents who are living on the city streets because of broken families often engage in early sexual activity and, thereby, become victims of sexually transmitted diseases. Despite the risks encountered by early adolescents, the findings of Dryfoos (1998) indicate that some children are able to manage and control physical, biological and emotional changes occurring during this life phase.

2.2.2 COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Early adolescents do not only look different compared to other groups of children, they also think differently. Their speed of information processing continues to increase, but not as dramatically as during middle childhood (Kail, 1997). Although their thinking may remain immature in some ways, the majority are capable of abstract reasoning – formal operation, according to Piaget (1970) – and sophisticated moral judgement which entails being able to plan more realistically for the future (Papalia, Olds, & Feldman, 2002).

Children in this age group are able to integrate what they have learned from challenges in the past when making plans for the future. They may desire freedom and hate to be exploited or oppressed by negative circumstances surrounding them. This may explain why adolescents tend to leave home fairly easily after experiencing difficulties, such as those resulting from a broken family (Kail, 1997).

Despite the ability to solve abstract problems and having an ideal imagination of their surroundings, early adolescents may be rude to others. They may be troublesome in making up their minds when carrying out their daily duties and they often act as if the whole world revolves around them (Elkind, 1998). Such behaviour may add a burden to a single parent who has been left with children of this age after marital dissolution. Elkind (1998) adds that the early adolescent's immaturity in thinking may manifest itself in various characteristics,

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such as idealism and being critical, argumentativeness, indecisiveness, apparent hypocrisy and self-consciousness.

The school is a central organising experience in most adolescents' lives. It offers opportunities to acquire new information; learn new skills and sharpen old ones; participate in sports, the arts, and other activities; explore vocational choices; and be with friends. It also widens intellectual and social horisons (Masten, & Coatsworth, 1998; Papalia, Olds, & Feldman, 2002). A number of factors may, however, hinder children from utilising the opportunities that the school offers. These include poor socio-economic status, a compromised quality of the home environment and a lack of parental involvement in their children's affairs (Jimerson, Egeland, & Teo, 1999; Friedman, 2000). These factors may be present in a broken family, implying the possibility of poor scholastic performance by children who are affected.

Early adolescence is often referred to as a period of storm and stress (Roeser, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2000) in which the majority of adolescents are exposed to some risks that may impair their academic and social development, such as aggression, violence, at-risk sexual behaviour, substance abuse and dropout (Carnegie Council, 1995). The effect on academic performance does not only refer to performance in subject matter but also to unhealthy conduct that may, potentially, impair schooling, such as disrespect at school, unhealthy relationships with others, lack of motivation to learn and unstable mental health (Dryfoos, 1998; Wentzel, 1991; Carnegie Council, 1995; Masten, & Coatsworth, 1998). Parents at home and teachers at school are, generally, urged to establish a conducive and healthy environment that will allow early adolescents to go through this critical developmental process smoothly. Early adolescents who are committed to school achievement and develop positive social skills with the help of their parents are said to be less likely to take risks (Midgley, & Edelin, 1998; Lonczak, Abott, Hawkins, Kosterman, & Catalano, 2002).

Wentzel (1991) maintains that early adolescents' academic achievement does not stand in isolation but in association with other factors, such as the child's social competency which is viewed as the ability of a child to assume social responsibility, maintain interpersonal trust and demonstrate problem solving ability. It follows that marital dissolution and its related outcomes may affect children's social competency and, therefore, hinder their academic achievement. In this study I kept this possibility in mind – against the background of the holistic development of the participants and with an influence in one area of development potentially impacting on other areas.

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In addition to the direct effects of marital dissolution on children, marital dissolution tends to also affect parenting styles negatively. Glasgow, Dornbusch, Troyer, Steinberg and Ritter (1997) comment that children in early adolescence need an authoritative parenting style where parents are involved in their children's lives in a friendly way. This involvement does not only involve the monitoring of scholastic progress but also that parents should take an active interest in other aspects of their children's lives.

2.2.3 MORAL DEVELOPMENT

According to Kohlberg's levels of morality – as presented by Papalia, Olds and Feldman (2002), children older than ten years fall into the second level of conventional morality or morality of conventional role conformity where the standards of authority figures are internalised. When marital dissolution occurs in a family the family's stability is shaken. The role and responsibility of authority figures in a family may become questionable to the extent that the children might become morally destabilised. This tendency may affect children's character and personality throughout their lives (Kurtines, & Gewirtz, 1995).

The best and balanced moral reasoning for children aged 12 to 15 years is said to take place if both parents work together to help their child/children maintain moral standards and by being good models in character and frequently reasoning with their children (Papalia, Olds, & Feldman, 2002). Children whose parents are in continuous conflict or who are divorced usually miss this opportunity. Moreover, the essence of parents being good examples for their children in terms of moral values may, potentially, be questionable when the children start observing aspects such as extramarital relationships and abusive behaviour, which may lead to their parents' separation. Tendencies such as these may result in children experiencing moral dilemmas which may negatively impact on their later lives.

2.2.4 PSYCHO-SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

According to Elkind (1998), during the period, 12 to15 years, children start determining a self-identity (Roeser, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2000). This involves a healthy, vital process that builds on the achievements of earlier stages of "trust, autonomy, initiative and industry and lays the good work for coping with the crises of adult life" (Papalia, Olds, & Feldman 2002, p. 425). Therefore, in the case of destabilisation in an early adolescent's life as a result of, for example, parents' separation this may negatively affect the self or identity building process and, hence, result in identity or role confusion. Subsequently, early adolescents will lose their ability to

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effectively conceptualise their potential roles in the family and society at large. This often occurs in environments where children experience parents' remarriage or live with stepparents due to marital dissolution (Friedman, 1999). To form an identity, early adolescents must ascertain and organise their abilities, needs, interests and desires so that these can be expressed in a social context (Papalia, Olds, & Feldman, 2002). A supportive home environment will support this process.

Although adolescents are highly involved with their fellow peers for companionship and intimacy, most of their fundamental values remain closer to their parents than is generally realised. At this age they look to their parents for a secure base (Laursen, 1996). Laursen (1996) highlights how early adolescents whose parents have separated are at risk of not having proper parent figures who may stand as a secure base from which they can build their own identity and become independent. Due to the fact that 12 to15 year old children are often regarded as rebellious against their parents and the family at large, Schlegel and Barry (1991) suggest that the presence of both parents is crucial in facilitating a smooth transition from early adolescence to late adolescence. If the transition is not well managed by, for instance, parents being immersed in continuous conflict or being distant due to marital dissolution, children may become even more rebellious (Arnett, 1999).

During this phase in life, early adolescents are said to often experience intense emotions and may even become depressed and be easily and negatively influenced by their peers. Moreover, children of this age may be aggressive, destructive, and sometimes difficult to handle. These experiences may be a result of the complexities in identity formation as well as due to self-perceptions (Roeser, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2000).

It follows that if parents are not supportive of their children due to marital dissolution or continuous conflict, the effect on children may be detrimental. In addition to this, Mwamwenda (1996) suggests that the social and emotional development of early adolescents may lead to their being influenced by peers and finding it difficult to remain quiet and attentive and to concentrate. They can, potentially, also develop sensitivity in understanding their feelings as well as the feelings of others. For this reason early adolescents may be negatively affected when they observe their parents in conflict or if one of the parents is abused. At this age children have great expectations of the future and, as a result, marital dissolution may become a crisis to early adolescents especially when it is considered to shut down all future dreams. In undertaking this study I kept normal emotional and social

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challenges experienced by early adolescents in mind in order not to ascribe these to marital dissolution if it could be the result of normal development.

In exploring the physical, cognitive, moral, academic, and psycho-social development of early adolescents, I considered the fact that the majority of studies in these areas are based in a western context and that the risks and opportunities of this age group in relation to parents' separation may vary according to where a study is conducted. In this study I aimed to investigate and explain how early adolescents in the specific context of Tanzania – are negatively affected by the separation of their parents, specifically in terms of academic and psycho-social development.

2.3 DIVORCE TRENDS IN CONTEMPORARY TIMES

Divorce remains on the increase, globally, even though many contextual variations can be observed from one country to another. In the following sections I present current trends in divorce patterns.

2.3.1 DIVORCE RATES

Worldwide, divorce rates are on the rise. The current divorce rate in the United States of America (USA) is higher than in any other Western country and it has been at a very high level since the 1980s. Several years ago Schoen and Canudas-Romo (2006) estimated that 43% to 44% of married couples in the USA at that time would experience marital dissolution. It is also indicated by American divorce records that over one million children (40%) are subjected to their parents' divorce every year (Fagan, & Rector, 2000; Tanner, 2002; Bojuwoye, & Akpan, 2009a). A comparable situation is reported in Australia by Pike (2000). Largely, divorce is considered to be one of the "most traumatic and complex crises facing children in Great Britain" (Johnson, & Wiechers, 2002, p. 177).

Closer to sub-Saharan Africa, the same problem is observed in South Africa where many registered marriages end in divorce. Statistics show that among 148,188 marriages which were registered in 1995, 31,592 ended in divorce (Pillay 1999; Mukesh 2003). Likewise, a study by Bojuwoye and Akpan (2009b) reveals that almost one in three married couples ended in marital dissolution in South Africa at the time of their study. Over the past two decades the divorce rate has also increased in Botswana (Bhebhe, & Mosha, 1996; Maundeni, 2000b). While statistics like these display the magnitude of the problem on the one hand, on the other

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hand it also poses a question as to whether or not divorcing parents consider the consequences of their break up on their children before taking action.

Narrowing the context to that of Tanzania, a distinct difference can be observed from other countries. Tanzania experiences an acute rate of marital dissolution, but in the form of parental separation rather than divorce. As very few couples follow legal processes to get a divorce, a rather limited number of divorces are registered. Current statistics by the *Registration, Insolvency and Trusteeship Agency (RITA)* reveal that 13,631 marriages were registered in 2011/2012 and only 51 marriages ended in divorce. Statistics for previous years show that in 2008/2009 15,345 marriages and 77 divorces were registered while in 2009/2010 17,106 marriages and 85 divorces were registered. In the year 2010/2011 the number of registered marriages rose to 23,108 but the divorce rate remained low at only 69. These numbers are very small when compared with other statistics, such as those of South Africa where the number of divorces in 1995, alone, was more than 31,000 (Pillay, 1999; Mukesh, 2003).

Statistics concerning marriage and divorce in Tanzania (usually kept by RITA) may, however, not provide a true picture of the situation in Tanzania for several reasons. Firstly, different centres that deal with marriage registration, such as religious institutions, often do not submit marriage information to RITA on time. In some offices marriage information is delayed for up to three years. This tendency makes it hard for RITA to maintain timely information. Secondly, in Tanzania only the court has the mandate to announce a marriage null and void and to provide divorce certificates. The majority of the population have a limited knowledge about issues related to marriage and divorce documentation (Mpuya, & Lubeja, 2012). Furthermore, very few people see the need to formalise their separation by going to court for a legal document.

Mpuya and Lubeja (2012) mention some reasons for this tendency, such as a lack of awareness, lack of passion in documenting family issues and a lack of policy to enforce the need for formal divorce processes and documentation to separate couples. Only those who desire a file case for property distribution claims or those who are getting remarried outside the country may feel the need to obtain a divorce certificate (Mpuya, & Lubeja, 2012). Complicated, bureaucratic and cumbersome procedures that couples claim to experience at social welfare offices, the marriage reconciliation council and in the court system often result in them separating without following formal procedures (Shabani, & Kuname, 2011). Yet, it is common knowledge in Tanzania that many marriages end in separation and that the

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consequences of such separations for their children are seldom considered by the parents. Parents seldom plan where their children will be placed post-separation and due to the often low socio-economic status of the custodial parent, these children may be left vulnerable (Shemsanga, 2011).

In a social context divorce is usually thought to be symptomatic of family instability and synonymous with family dissolution. This view is reflected in the terms used to describe the divorced family as a "broken family", "disorganised", "fractured" or "incomplete" (Ahrons, 1999). Divorce is even regarded by some authors as pathological and as an index of a social disorder. It is viewed by the media as the leading source of social problems – followed by phenomena such as substance abuse, delinquency and family violence (Ahrons, 1999).

2.3.2 PREDICTORS OF MARITAL DISSOLUTION

Various possible factors are said to be involved in parents' decision to dissolve their marriage. For example, economic factors and demographic factors, such as changes in a population's age structure may contribute to changes in expected divorce rates. Social and technological transformation has in recent years empowered women, both socially and economically, making them more independent and, hence, creating better conditions for marital dissolution. The presence and awareness of legal procedures amongst the majority of women has increased a demand of their rights – particularly when it comes to their need to separate (Kesselring, & Bremmer, 2006).

Amato (2010) presents a number of demographic and economic predictors that may give way to marital dissolution. These include poverty among couples, teenage marriage, lack of employment, low level of education, living with a partner before formal marriage, pre-marital birth, introducing a child/children from previous union into a new marriage (especially for the mothers), race differences, growing up with parents who have a history of breaking up and unmarried parents. However, these factors may differ from one race/ethnic group to another and remain predictors of marital dissolution and not definite causes (Amato, & De Boer, 2001; Teachman, 2002; Sweeney, & Phillips, 2004).

Linked to these factors, various scholars (Rogers, 2004; Sayer, & Bianchi, 2000) suggest that when a wife is employed or has a considerable income, this can contribute to marital tension – especially when it comes to the division of responsibilities. The so-called wife employment

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factor relates to the number of hours spent at work, while the wife income factor concerns perceived unfairness in handling different responsibilities at home. These factors may contribute to marital problems (Amato, 2010). However, in some cases a wife's income is reported to contribute to the family – especially in families of low socio-economic status, resulting in a wife's employment and income potentially having both positive and negative effects (Amato, Booth, & Rogers, 2007).

Apart from economic and demographic predictors of marital dissolution – as presented by Amato (2010), other authors (Orbuch, Veroff, Hassan, & Horrocks, 2002; Previti, & Amato, 2004; Hall, & Fincham, 2006) identify interpersonal factors that may result in a break up. These include frequent conflict, domestic violence, marital unfaithfulness, weak commitment to marriage, poor relationship skills and a low level of love and trust among couples. When both demographic and interpersonal predictors accumulate they can create a pressure between couples and make it easier for them to opt for separation through one of two ways: firstly, by having high levels of conflict and unhappiness; or secondly, by having a low level of commitment to marriage (Amato, & Hohmann-Marriott, 2007). This may inevitably lead to marital dissolution. In the Tanzanian context a study by Omari (1988) indicates marital unfaithfulness (especially among wives) as a leading determining factor for marital dissolution.

Although certain levels of conflict exist in almost every marriage, couples who experience difficulty in dealing with their differences are more likely to divorce (Gottman, Coan, Carrere, & Swanson, 1998; Rogge, Bradbury, Hahlweg, Engl, & Thurmaier, 2006). Other factors that may result in separation include the nature of a prior marriage; educational level of partners; depression, aggression, substance abuse and behaviour, such as infidelity, extravagance, moodiness and irritating habits (Amato, & Rogers, 1997; Emery, 1999). Complications related to children, such as disability or prolonged illness, may also result in inter-parental discord and, therefore, create an environment where couples may separate (Wymbs, Pelham Jr, Molina, Gnagy, Wilson, & Greenhouse, 2008).

In addition to personal and behavioural factors, a study by Kitson and Holmes (1992) indicates that problems often mentioned as contributing to marital dissolution are communication difficulties, unfaithfulness, incompatibility between couples, lack of quality time together and misunderstanding of financial matters (South, & Lloyd, 1995). Besides these so-called 'proximal causes', marital dissolution may be the result of life course factors

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or 'distal causes' (see Figure 2.1), such as the partners' ages at the time of the marriage, social class, faith or religion, ethnicity and the existence of parental divorce (Cherlin, 1992; Amato, & Rogers, 1997). White (1990) maintains that limited relevant literature exist that documents personal factors as a cause of marital dissolution due to the fact that for research purposes few divorced people are willing to explain how their personal behaviour had caused their separation. In this study I investigated the relevance of both proximal and distal factors for marital dissolution in the context of Tanzania. Throughout, I remained aware of these potential causal factors in exploring the reasons for marital dissolution in Tanzania and their effect on early adolescents. Figure 2.1 below provides an overview of these potential contribution factors.

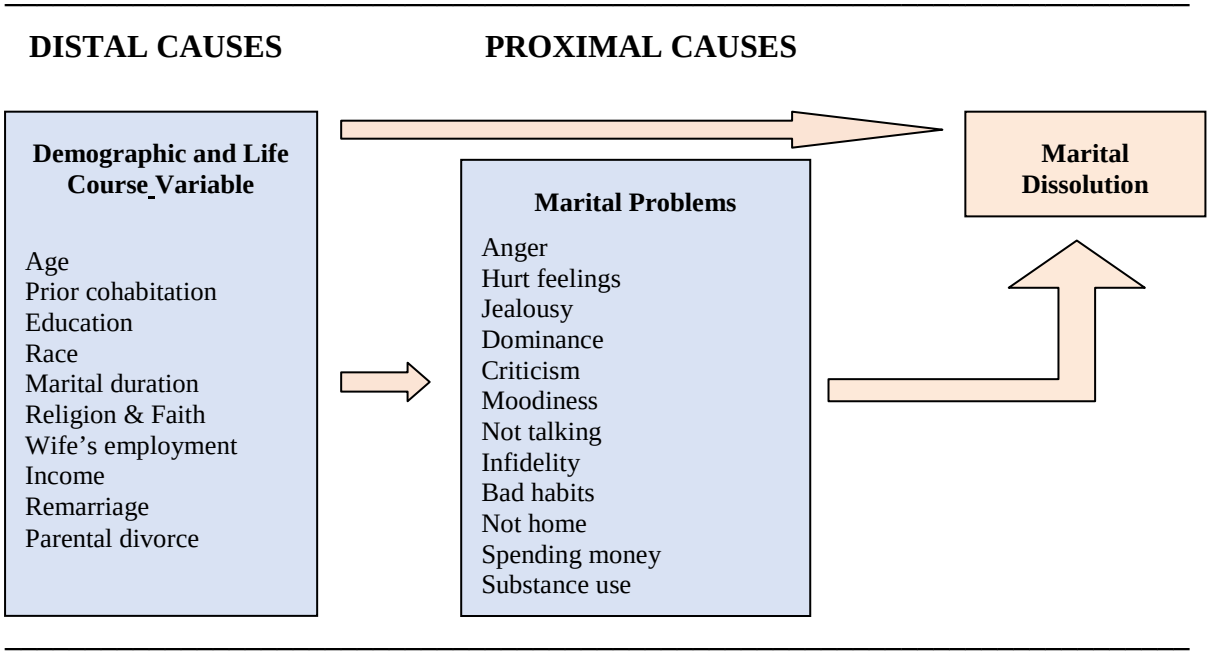

Figure 2.1: Distal and proximal causes of marital dissolution (adapted from Amato, & Rogers, 1997)

2.4 MARITAL DISSOLUTION IN TANZANIA

The separation of couples may occur in several ways in Tanzania, with only a few couples being regarded as having gone through legal divorce (Rwezaura, & Wanitzek, 1988). Couples often separate when a father or mother simply leaves the home, without following any legal procedure. In other cases, *'talaka'*[5]among the Muslim communities takes place whereby a man pronounces three *'talakas'* in order to denounce his marriage and sever the marriage

[5] A few lines are written on a paper by a husband declaring that he is no longer in need of the wife. This document formally ends the marital relationship between the couple.

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bond (Mbilinyi, 1972:67). Children often remain with their mother until they turn seven when they can be claimed by the father – in accordance with the patrilineal customary law which considers children as paternal property (Mbilinyi, 1972).

Furthermore, despite the new Marriage Act of 1971 which allows women to defend their rights in the case of marital dissolution, experience shows that in most communities where customs and tradition have influence the majority of women are reluctant to assert these rights (Rwezaura, & Wanitzek, 1988). In many cases despite the cause of separation, women still believe that processing a legal divorce will be viewed by society as a sign of disrespect and intolerance of woman. In this view, qualities (which are assumed to be negative) may disqualify a woman from getting another husband. Even though these tendencies may be counted among potential reasons contributing to fewer legal divorces among Tanzanian couples, the question remains as to why Tanzanian couples often prefer separation rather than legal divorce. My study may shed some light in addressing this question.

Besides the reasons listed above, Rwezaura (1994) states that according to the Tanzanian Marriage Act of 1971 a man may, for example, sign up for a Christian monogamous marriage and a few years later contract an additional customary marriage without first seeking a proper divorce. This leads to the second marriage being regarded as null and void under general law, contrary to the couple's belief. The victims of such practice, particularly in terms of marital dissolution, are usually the women and the children (Rwezaura, 1994). Likewise, weaknesses in the marriage law was also observed in a study by Howland and Koenen (2011) which indicates that as divorce rates continue to increase in Tanzania, a number of issues are still not properly addressed in the Law of Marriage Act (1971), adding risks for the victims of marital dissolution who are often the women and the children. In this regard my study may potentially shed some light on whether or not couples' knowledge or lack of knowledge concerning legal matters as well as any limitations in the Law of Marriage Act (1971) contributes to the dynamics of marital dissolution in Tanzania.

According to the Law of the Child (2009) Part 2, Section A, when marital dissolution occurs in Tanzania a man is supposed to provide child maintenance in terms of accommodation, clothing, food and education for the children whether or not he has custody of them. Often, the enforcement of this law has been difficult, with the majority of men avoiding their responsibility for their children after separation. This situation adds to the burden on poor custodial mothers and increases the vulnerability of the children they care for (Rwebangira,

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1996). Some fathers do not only escape their financial responsibility, they also disassociate themselves from the lives of their former families by concealing their whereabouts. The weakness lies not only with the fathers but also with existing laws and law enforcement. For example, the legal principle governing child maintenance – as stipulated in Sections 129-130 of the Law of Marriage Act (1971) – shows the amount payable per child per month to be 100Tsh[6], which is totally insufficient (Rwebangira, 1998). This shortfall is the result of the fact that the court quantifies the maintenance amount from an individual's official income which is often very low, forgetting that people have other sources of income that may exceed their official salary and which could also be utilised for child maintenance (Rwezaura, & Wanitzek, 1988). Mbilinyi (1972) adds that it is often not clear in Tanzania how much a woman or, in some cases, the custodial father may receive for maintenance following a divorce.

In addition, in cases where fathers provide child maintenance following marital dissolution, custodial mothers often view the bureaucratic process of accessing and collecting the money as cumbersome. These challenges make child maintenance in Tanzania unrealistic and challenging, especially where legal regulations are not enforced (Rwebangira, 1998). Child well-being in such circumstances can be questioned, due to the fact that most of the custodial mothers live in abject poverty, particularly in urban and peri-urban areas. This increases the burden on relatives and grandparents and often forces children to drop out of school and engage in child labour in order to support themselves and their poor families – as depicted in Photographs 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3.

Photograph 2.1: Children between 9 and 12 years of age selling fish on the streets instead of attending school. Parents' separation was mentioned to be the cause. (Photograph by Issa Michuzi, November, 2011).

[6] Equivalent of US $ 0.0625

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Photograph 2.2: Children below 14 years of age from Uwandani Vitongoji carrying bricks to earn an income to sustain themselves and their families. These children are from broken families living with their poor custodial mothers. (Photograph by Issa Michuzi, 2 April 2013).

Photograph 2.3: Children who reportedly come from broken families carrying soil bricks for a small income to support their poor custodial mothers and other siblings. (Photograph by courtesy of Mjengwa Blog, 13 June 2012).

If it is provided, payment of child maintenance is often terminated when the mother decides to remarry or cohabit. This is considered by Rwebangira (1996; 1998) as unfair in terms of the children's well-being and for the mother as it prejudices her desire to remarry (even after failure of a first marriage) as she has to remain single in order to receive maintenance, or she must take care of the child herself or place the child in a relatives' care. As a result of separation some pregnant women and mothers with infant children abandon their babies in the bush or get rid of them in pit latrines to avoid complications related to child maintenance. Furthermore, as a result of the cumbersome nature of the provision and accessibility of child maintenance, children of poor custodial mothers are often expelled from primary and secondary schools and vocational centres because of unpaid tuition fees. Girls from these families are also likely to fall pregnant and, as a result, be suspended from school – thereby

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increasing risks concerning their academic and psycho-social development as well as the security of their expected babies (Rwebangira, 1998). Based on existing law regarding child maintenance not functioning effectively, my study aims – among other things – to shed some light on how child maintenance and father responsibility have been handled in Tanzania in recent years.

Due to unpredictable circumstances facing children from broken homes many children end up as street children. Rwebangira (1998) and Lugalla and Mbwambo (2005) are of the opinion that children from divorced homes constitute a great many of the children who roam the streets begging and getting involved in all sorts of antisocial behaviour. However, other factors, such as continuous parental conflict as well as abject poverty (which are also causes of separation), may lead to children living on the street. In this regard, beside parents' separation, Rwebangira (1998) names factors, such as single parenting, unemployment of the father, low income, substance abuse, large families and disintegration of family values, as also contributing to the incidence of street children in Tanzania.

In support of these findings, a study conducted in the north western part of Tanzania (Urassa, Boerma, Ng'weshemi, Isingo, Schapink, & Kumogola, 1997), reveals that marital dissolution was mentioned by 29.2% participants as a reason for children living apart from their fathers and by 64.5% as a reason for children living without their mothers' care. The study indicates that a large number of children either remained under their fathers' custody or were taken to paternal relatives (Urassa *et al*., 1997). The reason for this, given by Urassa *et al.* (1997), is that women often return to their natal home without their children after marital dissolution, providing an opportunity for the fathers to remarry. My study aimed to shed some light on issues related to custodianship and children's living arrangement following marital dissolution in the Tanzanian context.

In writing this section I came to realise that the body of literature regarding marital dissolution in Tanzania is endowed with a large number of legal sources, but with limited research on the social and psychological effects of marital dissolution on children. My study may fill this gap in the body of knowledge by exposing the effects of marital dissolution on children in Tanzania in a social and psychological context. More specifically, my study will address the question about the extent that the trends concerning the social and psychological effects of marital dissolution on children – as found in other parts of the world – can be applied to Tanzania.

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2.5 POTENTIAL EFFECTS OF MARITAL DISSOLUTION ON CHILDREN

The reactions of children to the marital dissolution of their parents vary. A study by Amato and Hohmann-Marriott (2007), for example, suggests an improvement in the psycho-social well-being of children whose parents' separation frees them from conflicting and oppressive family relationships. On the other hand, deterioration in psycho-social well-being may occur among children where marital dissolution marks the end of a loving, caring and supportive family environment. The frequency of family structure transitions experienced by children will determine the extent of the effects of, and adjustments made to, marital dissolution. For instance, children who have experienced parents' separation more than once or those who have experienced transitions from their parents' separation, relocation, and parents remarrying stepparents are more vulnerable than children who have not experienced such challenges (Barrett, 2000a).

The effects experienced by children as a result of marital dissolution may vary. Hetherington (2003, p. 217) states that "although marital dissolution presents family members with stressful life changes and challenges, it may also present them with an escape from an unhappy, conflict filled or abusive family situation, a chance to build new, more fulfilling relationships and an opportunity for personal growth and individuation". In the same way, while the negative effects of marital dissolution tend to decrease over time for some children, there are those children whose instability persists into adulthood (Hetherington, 2003).

Despite variations in children's reactions, Kelly and Emery (2003) as well as Berk (2003) emphasise that for more than 40 years marital dissolution has been regarded as the most important cause of children's academic, emotional and psycho-social instability. Children and adolescents from broken families are more inclined to experience academic problems; display internalised and externalised problems, such as delinquency, anxiety and depression; be socially less responsible; show poor social adjustment; have less competent intimate relationships; drop out of school; engage in sexual activities at an early age; engage in drug abuse; get involved with bad peer groups; and have lower self-esteem than those in non-broken families (Conger, & Chao, 1996; Gibson, 2002; Johnson, & Wiechers, 2006).

Other outcomes may involve excessive drinking and smoking, and violent and aggressive behaviour (Emery, 1999; Hetherington, & Stanley Hagan, 1999). It has further been found that children between the ages of 12 and 15 (which is the target group of this study) from broken families are, typically, at risk of displaying anti-social behaviour in the school environment

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when compared to other children (Hetherington, & Kelly, 2002). In support of this, research by Johnson and Wiechers (2006) in government schools in middle income areas of Johannesburg in South Africa reveals that a large number of older children from broken families are referred to counsellors following problematic behaviour or poor academic performance. Studies on adults from broken families reveal a continuous cycle of problems as the majority of these adults have a low level of education, a low level of psychological well-being and a poor relationship with their parents (Amato, 2010). Others may experience problems in their relationships while some may experience marital dissolution themselves (Barrett, & Turner, 2005; Teachman, 2002). Although several studies (Amato & Keith, 1991; Amato, & Gilbreth, 1999; Størksen *et al.*, 2006) suggest that the availability of stable policies to protect children during and after marital dissolution may reduce the negative effects of the breakup of parents on the children, it is argued that some of these outcomes are considered to be profound and detrimental and that they may only be manifested during adulthood (Hetherington, & Stanley-Hagan, 1999).

Marital dissolution often results in single parenting. Children who live with single parents are more likely to experience child abuse than those who live in an intact family, perhaps due to the stressors often associated with single parenthood. This adds yet another stressor, as abused children tend to be difficult to nurture because of what they have experienced (Santrock, 2001). In addition to this, a good number of children have been reported to have been abused by their stepparents after their biological parents had separated. The following excerpts provide examples of this potential negative effect of marital dissolution in Tanzania:

- Deogratius Mganga, a Guardian correspondent from Tanzania, gives a report of a girl (name withheld) who was raped by her stepfather and impregnated: *"It was revealed that the accused committed the offence in his house in November last year (2003) when his wife (a remarried wife and the biological mother of the girl) was away"* (http://www.ippmedia.com.II/07/2004, accessed on 18 May 2012).
- Some children are reported to have been abused by their stepparents. Sabina Mgella, a Komesha correspondent from Tanzania, writes: *"Mashaka Seffu, a two year old Shambala child (real name withheld) was killed by his stepfather when the mother of the boy went down to fetch some water in a nearby river. The woman testified that since the time she was married to the man (after divorcing the first husband) he did not accept the boy. At one time, she explained, the man locked up the boy in the storeroom to let him suffocate"* (http://www.ippmedia.com.II/07/2004, accessed on 18 May 2012).

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One of the potential consequences of marital dissolution is the inability of the custodial parent to afford a stable place of residence due to unstable socio-economic conditions. This situation may lead to frequent relocations – often to low status communities – which may affect the children's social lives because of weak social connections and their academic life in terms of frequent changes of school (McLanahan, & Sandefur, 1994). When changes to living arrangements occur, a divorced couple sometimes decides to remarry. In these cases the adjustment problems of step-family children will be similar to those of children from broken families – as indicated earlier (Solivetti, 1994).

Young children who experience parents' separation may end up having a negative perception of marriage which, in turn, may affect their behaviour when they become adults. For instance, by observing their parents, children from broken families may easily assume that couples can merely decide to end their marital relationship when they are dissatisfied with it. Children may get the idea that marriage is not meant to last a life time and that in a case of dissatisfaction one may consider ending a marriage as the best solution (Amato, & Booth, 1991; Amato, & De Boer, 2001). Riggio (2004) argues that children's perceptions of marriage may not only affect them in their future marital relationships but may also affect their behaviour and attitudes each time they form personal relationships – even when they do not live with conflicting parents or are exposed to parental conflict anymore. Although the effects of marital dissolution vary in terms of academic, social, emotional and psychological well-being, my study aimed to determine to what extent these effects – as depicted in western societies – may apply to children in the Tanzanian context.

2.5.1 EFFECTS OF MARITAL DISSOLUTION ON CHILDREN'S ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT

The negative effects of marital dissolution on children's academic development seem to be a global phenomenon affecting all children involved. In developed countries the emergence of diverse family structures during the 1960s and 1970s prompted social scientists to investigate how children may be affected by various family structures (McLanahan, Donahue & Haskins, 2005; Pillay, & Wasiekewski, 2007). The breaking up of families may result in social problems associated with a so-called "anti-child culture" (Smit, 2010:11), which may have a negative impact on children's social, psychological and academic development as it gives rise to feelings of guilt, doubt, insecurity and being neglected. A combination of these may cause children to react in a delinquent manner.

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Studies of the potential effects of paternal absence on children's academic achievements indicate two general trends. The first is that paternal absence may result in a child repeating a grade and the second is that boys living without their fathers, typically, perform poorly in school (Martinot, & Monteil, 2000). However, contrary to Martinot and Monteil's (2000) findings, a study by Downey (1994) indicates that the absence of the father may cause poor performance and repeating a grade only if the father (non-resident parent) was the sole financial provider in the family before he left. A stable socio-economic status of a custodial mother may, therefore, provide a child with a better position to achieve academically.

A study by Desai, Chase-Lansdale and Michael (1989) indicates that the absence of the mother may reduce the time devoted to the children's school work. Psychologically, the absence of a mother may initiate a trajectory that impairs the long-term social and intellectual well-being of the child. The damage to mother-child attachment caused by marital dissolution is said to negatively affect children's concentration, resulting in them performing poorly academically (Belsky, 1988). Furthermore, adolescents who live in families without their mothers are reported, typically, to spend more time in other family activities than in those involving school-related tasks. Generally, the absence of a mother's care during childhood and early adolescence as a result of marital dissolution may be detrimental to children's cognitive and behavioural well-being regardless of gender and socio-economic status (Baydar, & Brooks-Gunn, 1991). In undertaking this study I kept this in mind while exploring the effects of marital dissolution on, amongst other things, the academic performance of children in Tanzania.

Martinot and Monteil (2000) found that younger children are, generally, more affected by parents' marital dissolution than older children. Their study highlights the early findings of Kaplan and Sadock (1998) who note that school performance will decline if the separation of parents occurs when the children are between the ages of 7 and 12. A study by Molepo *et al*. (2010) reveals that younger children of 6 to 14 years of age are, generally, more affected by the experience of marital dissolution than older children which refute the hypothesis that children from intact and non-intact families will show equal academic achievement. In my study the outcomes of marital dissolution on academic performance was explored among children of 12 to 15 years of age. My decision for choosing this age group rests on the idea that during early adolescence children are said to be sensitive and more vulnerable to any kinds of change that may occur in the family (in this context marital dissolution). In addition,

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this age group comprises a large portion of children in centres and in street children in Tanzania which is seemingly often the result of parents' separation.

Some scientists believe that the poor academic performance of children of single parents may be related to socio-economic disadvantage and not, necessarily, to the absence of one parent (McLanahan, 1999). Others relate the outcomes of the poor socio-economic status of a custodial parent to school drop-out, an increase in teenage pregnancies and lowered expectations to achieve success (Pong, & Ju, 2000; Spencer, Zimet, Aalsma, & Orr, 2002; Sun, & Li, 2002; Acklin, 2008). In Tanzania, being among the poor countries of the world that seemingly lack implementation of policies to protect children from broken homes, the effects of a poor socio-economic status of a custodial parent need to be explored with the aim of informing parents about this as well as the broader community and people who implement policy. The findings of this study may provide a platform from which such recommendations can be made.

Other studies on the effects of marital dissolution on children indicate that conflict between parents may have an impact on the school behaviour, grades and self-concept of children (Atwood, Schuster, & Tempestini, 1994). Lleras (2008) is of the opinion that marital dissolution may harm a child more than the natural death of a parent, due to the continuous conflict that precedes separation. As such, children from broken homes are often deprived of strong relationships and intimate personal communication that is essential in terms of children's education, socialisation and emotional needs. These problems may further be related to a lack of sufficient parental support or a focus on school and homework. When one parent is absent, the other parent is inevitably burdened with more chores and duties than before, which may reduce the academic attention and support for the child (Ermisch, & Francesconi, 2001b; Størksen *et al.*, 2006; Smit, 2010). Considering the effect of parental conflict on children's academic and psycho-social development, this study may shed some light on the effects of parental conflict on the children.

Children who live with single mothers (for reasons other than marital dissolution) are said to have a 14% lower chance to perform well at school and to continue to advanced levels than children in intact families (Ermisch, Francesconi, & Pevalin, 2004; Björklund, & Sundström, 2006). It is, however, suggested that the educational level of a custodial mother will also determine the extent of the effect on the children's academic performance. In other words, the negative outcomes of marital dissolution on children's academic achievement are expected to

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be worse in circumstances where the custodial mother is less educated (Albertini, & Dronkers, 2009).

2.5.2 Effects of Marital Dissolution on Children's Psycho-social Well-being

Typically, parental separation has a negative effect on children's psychological functioning – often resulting in high levels of stress, anxiety, depression and low self-confidence (Johnson, & Wiechers, 2002). The psychological harm that children may suffer as a result of parents' marital dissolution may have an impact on them throughout their lives. However, the ability of a child to conceptualise a break up incident is co-determined by her/his self-concept and self-confidence (Kantrovitz, & Wingert, 1992; Johnson, & Wiechers, 2002).

Kelly-Plate and Eubanks (1997) comment that early adolescents of parents who are separated, or who are in the process of separating, undergo a difficult period of emotional adjustment and when marital dissolution occurs in the family they often tend to think that they are the cause of the problems and at such times, they need love and reassurance. A crisis, like marital dissolution, may leave children feeling that they were, somehow, responsible for their parents' problems and give rise to a sense of guilt when they feel that their undesirable behaviour could have caused the separation. A tragic part of such tension is that the children are sometimes forced to take sides and to avoid this they may withdraw from both parents and become increasingly lonely (Amato, 2001; Ward, Spitze, & Deane, 2009). After separation these children tend to be aggressive and prone to antisocial behaviour; they may be moody and younger children may often be hostile to adults or mean to other children (Wu, Hou, & Schimmele, 2008). According to Albertini and Garriga (2011), marital dissolution will not, necessarily, solve problems but, rather, initiate a time of change and adjustment for most children.

Various studies show that children from broken families may experience adjustment problems during the various life stages from childhood to adulthood (Harland, Reijneveld, Brugman, Verloove-Vanhorick, & Verhulst, 2002; Kelly, & Emery, 2003; Størksen *et al*., 2006). Størksen *et al*. (2005) add that, generally, children from broken homes experience lower levels of self-efficacy, low self-esteem and less efficient coping styles. Such negative feelings may result in acting out behaviour, like at-risk sexual activities. An example is provided in the next report, taken from a Tanzanian newspaper:

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> *"A thirteen-year old prostitute hanging around the Kinondoni graveyard told the Sunday Observer correspondent, Nasser Kigwangallah, that she came to Dar-es-Salaam from Kihesa in Iringa Region in Tanzania following the divorce of her parents a couple of years ago, after both parents had remarried and left the children without proper care. She said she and her three brothers were illiterate and each had to fend for her/himself"* (*Sunday Observer*, 22 January 2012).

Apart from the direct effects of marital dissolution, children may be indirectly affected by the way their parents deal with marital dissolution. Studies on separated couples reveal that parents who separate tend to experience depression, anxiety and health problems and may display aggressive behaviour and substance abuse (Cherlin, Chase-Lansdale, & McRae, 1998; Fagan, & Rector, 2000; Stahl, 2007). Likewise, divorced couples are more exposed to the risk of overall mortality when compared to married couples, something that may further add to the risks of children who are in their care (Amato, 2000; 2010; Liu, & Umberson, 2008).

The vulnerability of separating parents is influenced by the fact that marriage provides a centre of social support where couples may offer each other companionship, everyday assistance and encouragement as well as emotional support (Amato, 2010). An absence of these benefits may negatively affect individuals' physical and mental health. Generally, parents who experience such problems find it hard to raise their children in a responsible and appropriate way, thereby increasing their children's vulnerability. Children from broken families may, therefore, be at risk in terms of substance abuse, anti-social behaviour and their involvement with deviant peers because of a lack of close parental monitoring (Longmore, Manning, & Giordano, 2001). As this study involves parent participants from broken homes, its result may shed some light on their social, emotional and psychological well-being, following marital dissolution and whether or not the situation may have an effect on children in the Tanzanian context.

Furthermore, children may face psycho-social problems as a result of custody arrangements. Neuman and Romanowski (1998) as well as Bojuwoye and Akpan (2009a) suggest that a joint custody system could expose children to confusion and frustration, especially when it comes to parenting and disciplining arrangements. This possibility is said to be more problematic when parents decide to engage in post-divorce relationships. Gender-wise, boys are said to be at greater risk concerning problems related to behaviour and relationships while girls tend to be disadvantaged academically (Amato, 2006). Among other things, this study may shed some

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light on issues related to custodianship and living arrangements as well as how these may affect children.

2.5.3 Effects of Marital Dissolution on Children's Relationship with Non-residential Parents

Separation results in parents being divided as one parent, typically, lives with the children in one house (custodial parent) and the other leaves home (non-resident parent) – often the father. Amato and Gilbreth (1999) argue that researchers should not only consider the negative effects of divorce on children but also focus on parent-child relationships, feelings of closeness and authoritative parenting which, when absent, may have negative consequences. Studies by Chen (2008a) and Dunn, Cheng, O'Connor, and Bridges (2004) suggest that in order to minimise the negative effects of separation the incidence of contact between the non-resident parent and the child should be increased. A contrary opinion by McLanahan (1999) suggests that it is the quality of the relationships between the children and their non-resident parents (mostly fathers) that determine the effects on the children rather than the level of contact.

Dunn and Deater-Deckard (2001) maintain that both frequent contact and a positive parent (father)-child relationship are crucial in minimising the negative effects of marital dissolution on children, especially during the adjustment process. It is further reported that the affection, companionship and support that exist as a result of positive relationships between non-resident parents (fathers) and children correlates with the positive relationships between the other parent (mothers) and the children. Such a trend seemingly supports the psychological well-being of children (Dunn *et al*., 2004).

A post-separation parent-child relationship implies two aspects: firstly, the physical or structure aspect which is concerned with issues of contact and time spent during contact and, secondly, a quality aspect which concerns the psychological attachment and emotional bond between the child and the parent that results in a need to be together (Neale, & Flowerdew, 2003b). Healthy, quality relationships between parents and their children may determine the extent of the physical aspect (contact) before and after marital dissolution with the potential to positively affect the well-being of the child (Neale, 2002; Smart, Neale, & Wade, 2001). However, Neale and Flowerdew (2007) suggest that a proper arrangement regarding the

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number of contacts and the amount of time allocated to these may be suitable grounds for quality and flourishing relationships between parents and their children.

Despite the fact that frequent contact between children and their non-resident parents are said to be helpful, any policy on this matter needs to take the views of the children involved into consideration. Some environments may, for example, hinder children's readiness to visit their non-resident parents, such as in circumstances where the children have been exposed to domestic violence or child abuse (Dunn, & Deater-Deckard, 2001; Dunn *et al.*, 2004). The nature and characteristics of contact and visits between children and their non-resident parents vary as contact and visitation rights in some countries are legally determined by legal divorce procedures. In Tanzania, where a large number of couples do not follow the legal route to marital dissolution, contact with the children as well as visitation rights are mostly informal. Among other things, this study aimed to investigate the nature of contact and visits between children and non-custodial parents in determining the effects of marital dissolution on children in the context of Tanzania.

Marital dissolution is said to be more detrimental to parent-child relationships when compared to continuous marital conflict. This is because during marital conflict both parents are physically present while in the case of marital dissolution children are separated from one parent (often the father) who becomes a non-resident parent (Pillay, 1999; Zieman & Baker-Randall, 2000). This situation may hinder communication between children and parents and, in turn, harm their psycho-social connection (Seltzer, 1991). On the other hand, marital dissolution is said to often diminish a custodial parent's ability to be an effective parent due to the fact that the absence of a non-resident parent may overwhelm the custodial parent, leaving her/him frustrated, overreacting, repulsive, unfriendly, less affectionate and poor at disciplining the children (Thomson, McLanahan, & Curtin, 1992). Although mothers are often custodial parents, in recent times fathers increasingly fulfil this role. A study by Hamer and Marchioro (2002) suggests that many fathers become custodial parents by default and are often reluctant to assume the responsibility of fulltime single parenting. Often, custodial fathers are largely dependent on extended family support networks (Hamer, & Marchioro, 2002). Although this study aimed to investigate the direct effects of marital dissolution on children in terms of academic performance and psycho-social well-being, I was also able to explore the indirect effects of marital dissolution by investigating how marital dissolution in the context of Tanzania may impact on parenting ability and, thereby, affect the children. This was viable as single parents were among the participants of the study.

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2.5.4 EFFECTS OF PARENTAL CONFLICT BEFORE AND AFTER MARITAL DISSOLUTION

Marital dissolution does not occur haphazardly. It forms part of a continuous process which normally follows numerous incidents of conflict and misunderstanding – even physical fights. In Tanzanian families many separations are the result of continuous, severe and unresolved conflict between the husband and the wife (Lugalla, & Mbwambo, 2005). Sometimes parental conflict is addressed by traditional, religious and community counselling, but often without success, resulting in the idea that marital dissolution is inevitable. In the midst of this process, the children experience high levels of psychological problems and emotional deterioration. Some parents may exchange heated negative sentiments in the presence of their children and some may influence their children into taking sides while others may try to remove the children by force – acts that will harm the children's emotional well-being (Kelly-Plate, & Eubanks, 1997). Overall, parental conflict during the breaking up process may cause a number of psychological problems in the children (Amato, & Keith, 1991; Sun, 2001; Størksen *et al*., 2006).

In order to prevent psychological and mental health problems among family members, parents should be encouraged not to allow their domestic friction to spill over into other peoples' lives (Lipman, Offord, & Boyle, 1994; Strohschein, 2005), but this is often hard to do. Conflict between parents may affect, among other things, the parent-child relationship which, in turn, will negatively affect children's psycho-social well-being (Amato, & Keith, 1991; Booth, & Edwards, 1990). Continuous conflict between parents may also affect parent-child attachment and result in the children feeling insecure, not only in relating to their parents but also in other relationships (Riggio, 2004).

Children are said to be very vulnerable when a parent-child relationship is affected as this attachment contributes to the strengthening of the children's social and psychological functioning throughout their lives (Amato, Loomis, & Booth, 1995). Similarly, the children's vulnerability may increase due to the fact that marital conflict may cause parents to be more aggressive – not only to one another but also to their children. Parents' emotional involvement with their children as well as positive parenting patterns may be influenced negatively. Children who have been exposed to frequent parental conflict may develop a fear to relate to others which, in turn, may affect the strength and stability of their future relationships (Amato, 2000; Riggio, 2000; Simons, Whitbeck, Melby, & Wu, 1994). By constantly finding themselves in an atmosphere of their parents' frequent fights, the children from dysfunctional

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families may adopt the aggressive behaviour of the parents through social learning. Using attachment theory as one of the theories that informed this study, my findings may shed some light on how parents' conflict and/or marital dissolution may affect parent-child attachment as well as the children's social relationships.

In addition to the effects of conflict during separation, the stressful situation resulting from post-divorce conflict may affect how children adjust to the break up (Bojuwoye, & Akpan, 2009a; McIntosh, & Chisholm, 2008; Neuman, & Romanowski, 1998; Thayer, & Zimmerman, 2003). As the context of this study, Tanzania is characterised by high levels of post-divorce conflict (Shabani, & Kuname, 2011). I explored the possible reasons behind this problem when conducting my empirical study.

Despite the majority of studies (Amato, & Rezac, 1994; Aquilino, 1994; Booth, & Amato, 1994; Johnston, 2006; Kelly, 2000) indicating the negative effects of pre- and post-divorce conflict on children, some studies reflect inconsistent findings on this matter (Rossi, & Rossi, 1990; Amato, & Booth, 1991). Arditti (1999) as well as Cooney, Smyer, Hagestad and Klock (1986) report an increased closeness between mothers and their children following parents' separation. Similarly, Amato and Booth (1991) found that marital dissolution and post-divorce conflict may positively affect contact between children and their parents – fathers in particular. In search of confirming that these findings from a western society context apply to Tanzania, I aimed to establish the effects of continuous parental conflict on the children who participated in my study.

2.6 FACTORS INFLUENCING CHILDREN'S REACTIONS TO PARENTS' MARITAL DISSOLUTION

Although marital dissolution is, typically, viewed as traumatic for children and results in negative short-term and long-term consequences, evidence also exists that not all children are affected in the same way (Wade, & Travis, 1993; Wallerstein, & Blakeslee, 2003). For instance, while some children react with anger, fear and pain, others have been observed to display some feelings of relief when parents' marital dissolution brings an end to continuous parental conflict. Children who grow up in an environment with continuous parental conflict tend to consider their parents' separation as a positive move because it implies a potential to improve their well-being. However, marital dissolution that occurs in cases of limited conflict between parents tends to have more negative consequences on children's well-being (Amato,

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2000). In addition to this, children who have experienced negative parent-child relationships with one or both of their parents are expected to view their parents' separation as a relief, especially when a hostile parent is separated from them. Generally, the effects on the children depend on whether the decision of the parents to separate will remove the children from a harmful environment or not (Amato, 2010).

The difference in children's reactions may be influenced by personal factors as well as the perception they have concerning the break up incident (Hetherington, 1993; Amato, 1994; Kelly, & Emery, 2003; Clandos, & Kemp, 2007; Amato, & Cheadle, 2008; Bojuwoye, & Akpan, 2009a). For instance, if the children see the decision to break up as an intention to neglect and abandon them, they will probably react negatively but if they consider the decision to be a solution to some of the family's problems, they are expected to react more positively. Although the parents may celebrate the break up as it sets them free from, for example, a stubborn relationship, children may perceive it as an indication that their parents do not care for them (Gruber, & Colabella, 2008; Bojuwoye, & Akpan, 2009b).

Factors, such as a child's age and gender, can be related to the child's reactions to marital dissolution (Amato, Loomis, & Booth, 1995; Björklund, & Sundström, 2006; Fronstin, Greenberg, & Robins, 2001). Findings by Amato and Ochiltree (1987), Bojuwoye and Akpan (2009a) as well as Amato (2010) suggest that the children's ages, especially at the time of the marital dissolution, can have a significant implication on their reactions. Younger children – below five – are, for example, not yet sufficiently capable of contemplating the changes in the family system that are expected to result from a breakup of the marriage (Amato, & Booth, 1997; Furstenberg, & Kiernan, 2001; Gruber, & Colabella, 2008; Bojuwoye, & Akpan, 2009a). Younger children, typically, display emotional problems, such as feelings of pain, sadness and severe distress, during parents' marital dissolution while slightly older children may be confused and frustrated in thinking of their future should one parent no longer live with them. While adolescents are more matured, infants – being immature – are often, somehow, less affected by the process of marital dissolution (Amato, & Keith, 1991; Cherlin, 1999; Richardson, & Rosen, 1999; Bojuwoye, & Akpan, 2009b).

In this regard, Ahrons (2007) reports that when marital dissolution occurs while children are in early adolescence they are exposed to various emotional and psychological risks that will continue to jeopardise their transition from childhood to adulthood. Likewise, marital dissolution that occurs when children are young and dependent typically depresses the parents,

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especially the mothers. On the other hand, it is assumed that the apparent effects of marital dissolution are not similar for both genders (Hill, Yeung, & Duncan, 2001). However, the studies by Hetherington (2006), Sun (2001) and Sun and Li (2002) indicate a contrary finding: namely, that there are no gender differences as far as the effect of marital dissolution is concerned.

The majority of single parents (usually the mothers) face financial challenges following marital dissolution. Poverty can complicate family relationships and harm adolescents' development due to its impact on the parents' emotional states (Papalia, Olds, & Feldman, 2002). Early adolescents who are raised by poor custodial parents may be indirectly affected by being treated harshly with frequent punishment, a situation which may harm their emotional well-being and scholastic performance (McLoyd, Jayaratne, Ceballo, & Borquez, 1994). Moreover, Ceballo and McLoyd (2002) maintain that family poverty, resulting from marital dissolution, will increase the risk of teenage behaviour problems. However, Barber and Eccles (1992) suggest that the detrimental effects of single parenting may be minor or non-existent for adolescents when factors, such as socio-economic status and parental conflict, are stable. It is, therefore, the home atmosphere that seemingly matters and not only the structure of the family (Papalia, Olds, & Feldman, 2002). In addition, findings by Wade and Tavris (1993), Amato (1994), Clandos and Kemp (2007), as well as Bojuwoye and Akpan (2009b) identify family social circumstances, the custodial parent's economic status, access issues and the custodial parent remarrying to be among factors that will determine the children's reactions to their parents' separation.

Also, parents who experience mental health problems, such as depression, are expected to display an impaired ability to take full care of their children. Young children in such families may be influenced negatively by the break up itself as well as by the effects resulting from it; they are at a higher risk of a number of problems, including poor mental health, low academic performance, poor socialisation and other disruptive behaviour problems. Due to the fact that children of depressed parents may also become depressed, measures should be taken to ensure that they are monitored during such a challenging time (Almeida, & McDonald, 1998; Taylor, & Andrews, 2009).

Considering the potential effects of marital dissolution in later stages of children's lives, a study by Laumann-Billings and Emery (2000) found that young adults whose parents separated when they were still children cited a series of difficulties in their childhood. Some

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of them said that they had been deprived of time with their fathers and some assumed that they were not loved by their fathers while others took a negative attitude about times when both parents failed to attend to their social and academic needs. Coping after parents' marital dissolution is, generally, not easy for early adolescents. It sometimes requires parents to make special efforts and be committed because the situation may increase the responsibilities of the children at home and reduce the time they spend with both parents, not just with the non-resident parents (Kelly-Plate, & Eubanks, 1997). In some cases even those children who, through standardised measures of adjustment, do not display negative behaviour following parents' separation will still experience psychological pain (Lawmann-Billings, & Emery, 2000). In conducting this study I kept the background information related to the factors that may influence children's reactions in mind as well as the factors relevant to early adolescence.

2.7 MARITAL DISSOLUTION AND DECISIONS ABOUT LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

One of the consequences of marital dissolution is living arrangements. The decision concerning living arrangements is often the result of parent agreement, clan or relative decision, social worker recommendations and/or a court ruling (Kelly, & Lamb, 2000). Decisions about living arrangements may positively or negatively affect the children involved (Kelly, 2007). It often happens that the rules and guidelines that determine the children's living arrangements embrace what people consider to be in the 'child's best interest', but other important aspects, such as the history of parent-child relationships, the nature of parenting styles, the nature of existing conflict, child preferences and other psycho-social complications for the parents, are neglected. This situation may exacerbate the negative effects of marital dissolution on children (Kelly, 2000).

When parents decide to separate by following the legal route, the decision concerning custodial arrangements will either be sole legal custodianship or joint custodianship. A parent who is given sole custodianship is given a full mandate to make all decisions affecting the children, such as in matters related to education and health and in day-care decisions, with no input from the other parent. In joint custodianship both parents are involved in matters concerning their children. Studies show that children feel safer and more comfortable when parents jointly decide on their well-being. This is, however, only possible when favourable policies are in place (Emery, 2011; Kelly, 1993; 2004; 2007). The question remains as to what the effect will be in the case of Tanzania where formal divorces are rare and where policies

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are not enforced regarding custodial arrangements – even if parents were to formally divorce – as this often results in children being moved around and becoming victims of the decisions by the various parties (Melkiory, & Kanyabuhinya, 2011).

In circumstances of a resident and non-resident parent arrangement, agreement needs to be reached regarding visits. The number and interval of visits between children and non-resident parents (often the father) may influence the children's mental, academic, social and psychological well-being (Parkinson, & Smyth, 2004; Smyth, 2004, 2005). However, a number of factors are reported to determine the extent to which children will visit their non-resident parents. These include age (adolescents tend to visit their non-resident parents less compared to younger children); time lapse since marital dissolution; socio-economic condition of the non-resident parent; level of conflict; and history of the parent-child relationship. Other determining factors include institutional barriers, especially where the court has imposed some restrictions; children's unwillingness; relocation of a parent; and post-divorce relationships – repartnering or remarriage (Kelly, 2007).

The effects of the relationship between two parents after marital dissolution (sometimes referred to as post-divorce co-parental relationship) will depend on how the parents relate to one another (Kelly, 2007). Parents who are involved in continuous conflict hardly get time to speak about the children and any emotional attachment to the children will, typically, be negatively affected. At the other end of the spectrum, when taking collective measures in thinking and deciding about the affairs of the children, the parent-child emotional attachment will, typically, be maintained (Hetherington, & Kelly, 2002; Kelly, 2007). Due to the socio-economic situation of many Tanzanian families; a lack of an informed policy that is enforced; and the nature of marital dissolution, the majority of post-divorce co-parental relationships fall within the first category of conflicted co-parental relationships which could pose a distinct challenge to children's academic and psycho-social development. This study may potentially add to this knowledge base, specifically within the context of Tanzania.

Although many children prefer more contact with their non-resident parents – usually the father – some may avoid contact for a number of reasons, including anxiety as a result of their parents' separation and poor parent-child relationships (Johnston, 2006; Kelly, 2003ab). In addition, the marital dissolution of parents often results in a change of residence that may involve the move of one parent with or without children to more affordable accommodation. Almost 45% of children from broken families move with their custodial parents within a

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period of two years after marital dissolution (Hetherington, & Kelly, 2002; Kelly, 2007). The negative impact of relocation on the children does not only occur when they move with their custodial parents but also when non-resident parents move away from home. The extent of the impact depends on the children's perception of the role of the non-resident parents in their lives and how they have been emotionally connected (Braver, Ellman, & Fabricius, 2003). However, in some cases children may benefit from either their own move or the departure of the non-resident parent, such as in circumstances where violence and disharmony existed between children and the non-custodial parent prior to the dissolution (Kelly, & Lamb, 2003; Kelly, 2007).

By relocating to new residential areas children need to change friends as well as their school environment (Emery, 1999; Amato, 2000). The process of building new friendships in the vicinity of a new residence is not always smooth and may expose children to risks, such as negative peer influences which may affect their academic performance. Hartup and Stevens (1999) maintain that a young person with moderately deviant tendencies may be pushed further in that direction by associating with deviant peers (Papalia, Olds, & Feldman, 2002). However, not all early adolescents display anti-social behaviour and violence due to the influence of their peers.

In order to help children adjust, a number of factors can be considered by parents, such as the presence of positive and warm parenting; a psychologically stabilised custodial parent; low levels of conflict after separation; and proper living arrangements that take into consideration the needs of the children (Kelly, 2000; Kelly, & Emery, 2003). Living arrangements that allow frequent contact between the non-resident parent and the children are also said, typically, to facilitate the positive adjustment of children, although this will depend on the nature of the relationship between the children and non-resident parents (Booth, & Edwards, 1990; Amato, & Keith, 1991; Riggio, 2004).

When parents continue with conflict after separation, children will find the adjustment process challenging even when the living arrangements allow frequent contact between the children and their non-resident parents (Amato, & Rezac, 1994; Hetherington, 1999; Kelly, 2007; Neale, & Flowerdew, 2007). However, not every time children reduce contact with their non-resident parents do they intend to avoid oppressive and conflicting behaviour. Neale and Flowerdew (2003a) as well as Booth and Amato (2001) comment that sometimes aspects of life, such as a great distance between the children and non-resident parents may influence the

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time they spend together. Similarly, contact between children and non-resident parents may diminish as children enter adolescence (Neale, & Flowerdew, 2007).

However, positive parent-child relationships as well as parents' readiness to be actively involved in their children's affairs may motivate children to perform academically and to maintain a positive attitude toward school (Amato, & Gilbreth, 1999; Kelly, 2000). Some of the activities in which non-resident parents can be involved include helping children with school assignments; regularly enquiring about their activities and their progress; providing emotional support; and practising positive parenting (Kelly, 2007; Collins, Maccoby, Steinberg, Hetherington, & Bornstein, 2000; Nord, Brimhall, & West, 1997). A study by Menning (2002) indicates that children, whose non-resident fathers provide financial and socio-emotional support, have a greater chance of completing high school and attending college than those whose parents only provide financial support without being involved in their children's other affairs. This may be challenging in Tanzania due to the fact that marital dissolution, typically, results in poor parent-child relationships and a lack of child maintenance – both factors potentially affecting the children's performance at school negatively. In addition to scholastic problems, various studies (Hetherington, 1999; Pruett, Williams, Insabella, & Little, 2003) show that children who receive little paternal support often demonstrate a number of behavioural problems, such as delinquency, substance abuse, truancy and stealing. However, in situations where a paternal figure is actively involved, children are sociable, respectable, communicative and equipped with adaptive behavioural skills (Kelly, 2000; 2007).

Attachment theory (Bowlby, 1982) proposes that detachment between a child and non-resident parent who had been close to the child may affect a child emotionally (Neale, & Flowerdew, 2007). In order to reduce the impact of marital dissolution on children, parents should make living arrangements that allow for prolonged time with both parents, including overnight stays with the non-resident parent (Kelly, & Lamb, 2000; Pruett, 2005). Studies by Pruett, Ebling and Insabella (2004) as well as Kelly (2007) confirm that during early adolescence children who frequently overnight with their non-resident parents display better psychological and social adjustment than if they did not have such opportunities. Generally, a proper living arrangement plan which favours both parents' opinions and includes the views of the children is said to promote psychological and behavioural adjustment and academic achievement of children.

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Shared residence, an arrangement where children from broken families spend almost equal time with the custodial and non-resident parent, may be disruptive to the children if not planned carefully. Neale and Flowerdew (2003b) argue that shared residence can only be beneficial to the child if both parents give priority to the needs of the child rather than their own needs – as well as maintaining a positive parent-child relationship. Very few of these circumstances seem to prevail in the Tanzanian environment where the majority of separated couples apparently dwell on post-separation conflict, thereby exacerbating the well-being of the children who live with them. This study may shed light on this observed probability.

In addition to a change of residence or relocation affecting children in a number of ways, the decision of one or both parents to engage in a new intimate relationship after marital dissolution may also affect the children (Hetherington, & Kelly, 2002). Communication between the custodial and non-custodial parent concerning the children's affairs, as well as the contact between children and their non-resident parents, may diminish when one parent decide to date, cohabit and/or remarry. Children's relationships with their custodial parents can also be affected by the presence of a new partner (Anderson, & Greene, 2005; Bray, 1999).

2.8 PARENTS' INSIGHT INTO THE EFFECTS OF MARITAL DISSOLUTION ON THEIR CHILDREN

Despite the fact that children are often the primary victims of parents' marital disputes and divorce, they may be voiceless and not considered in terms of these issues. Studies show that children from broken homes are not only negatively affected by divorce, but also by the whole process of marital conflict; the decision to separate; custodial arrangements; remarriage; and even post-divorce conflict – if present (Amato, 2000). All these incidents have the potential to affect children from their childhood and throughout their lives. However, the negative outcomes of a divorce process on children might be reduced if children are informed of the processes preceding the dissolution and if their opinions are taken into consideration (Sanchez, & Kibler-Sanchez, 2004). McIntosh (2000) believes that by involving children and making them aware of the divorce process (in accordance with their age) parents embrace the fundamental concept of family. Such involvement could provide both parents and children with an opportunity to reorganise their family in a way acceptable to all parties involved.

Over the past decade there has been an increased awareness of children's involvement in family matters that are likely to affect them in one way or the other (Smith, Taylor, & Tapp,

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2003). Children's inputs have been found to be constructive in decision-making processes and are on the safe-side when marital dissolution is inevitable (Cashmore, & Parkinson, 2008; Smith, Taylor, & Tapp, 2003). In emphasising the importance of considering children's opinions during the divorce process, Smart, Neale, and Wade (2001, p. 156) argue:

> *"In order to treat children ethically we need to be able to hear what it is they value and to be able to see how they make sense of the social world. Children have standpoints which are not the same as adult standpoints; moreover they know a great deal about parenting and its consequences."*

Several studies which involve children from broken homes report that, typically, children desire to have a say in their parents' divorce process but that they are often not considered when these decisions are made (Cashmore, & Parkinson, 2008; Parkinson, Cashmore, & Single, 2005; Smith Taylor, & Tapp, 2003).

Considering children during the divorce process implies a number of benefits for both children and parents. For instance, in a study by McIntosh (2000) it was found that when children's opinions were valued during the divorce process, parents occasionally decided to change their views and focus on their task as parents. Some fathers are reported to have experienced positive behaviour changes following feedback from their children. The inclusion of children's views during marital disputes is also said to make parents rethink their actions and their roles and, therefore, to increase the chances of them changing the situation for the better (McIntosh, 2000; Saposnek, 2004).

Other benefits of children being involved in the separation process include that they may feel more valued and respected. Experiencing lower levels of stress could result in them being emotionally stronger to positively adjust to family changes that may be caused by separation (McIntosh, 2000; Parkinson, Cashmore, & Single, 2005). Children consider awareness to be important, particularly in families where conflict, violence, and abuse are common. Because marital dissolution affect both parents and children, the best interests of both parties need to be addressed rather than leaving children uninformed about their parents' actions (Cashmore, & Parkinson, 2008).

In Tanzania, a number of factors, such as frequent post-separation conflict among parents may hinder this from happening: firstly, by blinding the parents from seeing the negative effect of their separation on their children; and, secondly, by diminishing the possibilities of parents

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sitting together with their children to inform them about how the separation processes will unfold. The general practice in Tanzania seems to be one where parents decide to separate without considering the effects that their decision has on the children or without discussing arrangements in terms of caring for the children (Melkiory & Kanyabuhinya, 2011). The situation is worsened by the absence of law enforcement of child maintenance following marital dissolution.

2.9 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

The various concepts incorporated in my conceptual framework (see Chapter 1, Figure 1.1) are linked in terms of four underlying theories to this study: family stress theory, attachment theory, crisis theory and life course theory. In this section I explain how these theories informed my conceptual framework[7].

2.9.1 ATTACHMENT THEORY

Attachment theory – also known as Bowlby's ethological attachment theory – was formulated by John Bowlby almost 50 years ago in an attempt to explain, among other things, why separations may cause anxiety and what the similarities between adult and childhood mourning are (Bowlby, 1969; 2008). Attachment theory provides an insight into the social-emotional qualities that are, typically, applied by children in their early years in understanding themselves, the people around them and the world at large (Kennedy, & Kennedy, 2004). The theory facilitates the understanding of how children's early relationships can affect their development and their capacity to form relationships later (CPR[8], 2006). This understanding may play a role in predicting children's psycho-social and academic performance (Kennedy, & Kennedy, 2004; CPR, 2006). Other features, such as language and intellectual as well as interpersonal relationship abilities, may also be determined by attachment levels built in a child's early years of life (Cicchetti, Toth, & Lynch, 1995; Bretherton & Munholland, 1999).

Attachment is viewed as the affectionate bond between a child and a primary caregiver (often a mother or permanent mother substitute) which initially starts to develop after birth through behaviour, such as crying, looking and clinging and is strengthened by how a caregiver responds to the child (CPR, 2006). As described by Carter, Ahnert, Grossmann, Hrdy, Lamb,

[7] In this section I often include dated sources in an attempt to present the views and understanding of founding theorists – relying on primary sources.
[8] Centre for Parenting and Research.

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Porges, and Sachser (2005), an attachment relationship concerns feelings of comfort and security where the attached person (in this case the child) seeks an attachment figure (a parent) to provide security, protection, comfort and help. The attachment relationship in this context is considered to be complementary. It is the day-to-day relationship between the caregiver and the child that is expected to either strengthen or weaken the attachment between them. From infancy a child starts assuming closeness to some individuals around her/him, and as s/he grows starts to direct attention and responses to one caregiver (Bowlby, 1982).

Thus, attachment behaviour refers to a psychological state that is said to exist within a person (Hinde, 1982). Within this system feelings of security and actual conditions of safety are related. The purpose of the system is to explain child behaviour in seeking and maintaining proximity and close contact with those who are regarded as attachment figures (Benson, & Haith, 2010). This theory provides one potential explanation of the difficult and risky circumstances of a child who, due to marital dissolution, loses an attachment figure which could be a parent or a playmate that is no longer available. With the removal of the attachment figure through marital dissolution, children may become more vulnerable and may in turn more easily be affected by the negative effects of separation than other children where custodial parents are also attachment figures.

Several authors, including Lamb (2004) and Bakermans-Kranenburg and Van IJzendoorn (2007), have documented that in Western cultures, the mother often becomes the preferred attachment figure, whereas the father tends to be the preferred playmate. However, many authors maintain that both father and mother can fulfil the role of attachment figure as well as that of playmate (Lamb, 2004; Lytton, & Gallagher, 2002). Attachment behaviour is, typically, displayed when an attached person is frightened, tired or not feeling well. Such feelings are reduced when an attachment figure provides assistance, comfort and/or protection. The mere idea of the attachment figure being available may result in feelings of security and encourage an individual (child) to value and maintain the relationship (Bakermans-Kranenburg, & Van IJzendoorn, 2007; Bowlby, 2008). Although attachment behaviour is most noticeable in early childhood, it can be observed throughout life, especially in stressful situations, such as during detachment resulting from marital dissolution. This may explain the reason why children from broken families – the participants of my study – experience feelings of insecurity and of low self-esteem after being detached from a parent with whom they previously had an emotional connection.

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Well-built attachments between children and their caregivers may determine the children's ability to withstand life stress as well as build social support (CPR, 2006). However, early detachment of children from their parents as a result of parents' separation may make children vulnerable and unable to cope with stress. It is reported that a child who is well-attached to one of the parents may experience emotional instability when parents separate. As a result emotional instability may cause a child to be annoyed with the non-resident parent even when the parents' reunion occurs (Kennedy, & Kennedy, 2004). Other behaviour that may be displayed by a destabilised child includes verbal and/or physical aggression and if the child is unable to express her/his feelings openly s/he may be observed to exhibit behaviour such as withdrawal, loneliness and conflicting habits (Jacobvitz, & Hazen, 1999). However, Main and Solomon (1990) point out that there is no specific measure that can predict how children will behave when they are stressed as a result of attachment instability. As stated earlier, custodial decisions in Tanzania seldom consider the feelings of the children in allowing them to decide to live with a parent they are emotionally connected to. With such an experience children may be psycho-socially affected.

Learning is said to be effective when children explore the environment with an attachment figure who assures security (Bowlby, 1982). When feelings of security and comfort are distorted, the foundations of learning processes may be affected and children may experience difficulties at school. In a classroom situation teachers come with their own attachment styles and pupils with theirs. These styles originate from the manner in which individuals related to their primary caregivers during their early years of life. The interaction between teachers' and pupils' attachment styles in a classroom may, thus, either promote or retard the learning process (Kennedy, & Kennedy, 2004). Teachers in classrooms as well as parents at home respond to children in accordance with their own specific attachment styles (Dozier, Lomax, Tyrrell, & Lee, 2001).

It should be noted that attachment theory and most of its related studies are based in a western context. Keeping this in mind, I saw the need to explore the relevance of attachment theory in the context of Tanzania where marital dissolution processes and decisions seemingly neglect children's custodial preferences and where poor parent-child relationships are prevalent. This may in turn harm a child's well-being due to being detached from her/his beloved parent.

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2.9.2 CRISIS THEORY

Caplan (1964) and Taplin (1971) explain that a crisis evolves when an individual is exposed to circumstances where problem-solving mechanisms are jeopardised. At this point an individual may succeed or fail to deal with a problem. The success or failure to solve a problem may result in the person being stable or unstable in dealing or coping with future crises. In support of this, a crisis is viewed by crisis theorists (Turner, & Avison, 1989; 1992) as the transitional period that may stimulate an individual's growth and maturation or as a period of risk and vulnerability for the same individual (Turner, & Avison, 1992). On the other hand, a crisis can also be referred to as an "upset in the person's steady state" (Schwartz, 2012:16) and may be initiated when an individual encounters a challenge or an obstacle in terms of important life goals. This obstacle is often experienced as overwhelming when relying on routine problem-solving procedures (Turner, & Avison, 1989; Schwartz, 2012).

The extent of an emotional crisis faced by an individual – in this context a child from a broken family – will be determined by the child's interpretation of the incident (marital dissolution) as a threat or a non-threat. A child is expected to display negative emotions if s/he perceives an incident as a threat (Caplan, 1964; Taplin, 1971; Halpern, 1973). Determinants of the effects following a crisis incident (parents' separation) are related to how the child will think about separation; how s/he remembers; her/his ability to evaluate circumstances; how s/he responds to people; as well as how s/he makes decisions (Taplin, 1971; Halpern, 1973). The ability of a child to remember is largely dependent on his/her age when the parents' separation occurs. Young children – below 5 years – tend to remember less when compared to older children of 7 years and above (Amato, & Ochiltree, 1987).

Taplin (1971) views a crisis as a disturbance of homeostasis, i.e. the circumstance in which the destabilisation of the internal environments of an individual (child) makes her/him unable to control or deal with the external environment. Bloom (1963) adds that it is the nature of the behaviour displayed by an individual (a child or parent from a broken family in this context) that will determine the nature of a crisis incident experienced by that individual. Marital dissolution is considered by crisis theorists as an incident which may initiate emotional crises of different forms and character in the lives of children and/or their parents but, on the other hand, it may allow for growth opportunities for the people involved (Wiseman, 1975; Turner, & Avison, 1992). In helping children who have experienced a crisis of marital dissolution one does not, necessarily, need to be a professionally qualified person as any person can help. This

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highlights the potential role of children centres, government interventions and significant others (Taplin, 1971), which were also components referred to during the empirical part of this study.

Turner and Avison (1992) refer to Erikson's fundamental suggestions related to crisis theory, according to which individual personality growth develops through normative developmental crises. These developmental stages are interrelated and dependent on one another. Therefore, if anyone manages to successfully pass through a crisis at an early age, s/he is expected to be stable and strong enough to combat other future crises. The same process may determine the direction of the personality growth of an individual (Turner, & Avison, 1992). Within the context of this study, marital dissolution can be seen as such an obstacle to a child's life goals. It can, therefore, qualify as a crisis for children, while it may also be a crisis for the parents who are separating. A crisis often affects the actions and reactions of all the people involved.

Both early and contemporary findings suggest that adverse events and circumstances may have notable results on the physical and psychological development of those involved – in this case, primarily, the children (Turner, & Avison, 1989). However, unlike the general contemporary point of view, these adverse events may not necessarily be negative in their effects each time they occur. Repetition may, rather, increase individual adaption ability, providing circumstances for emotional growth and developing preventive measures (Turner, & Avison, 1992). As such, in the context of this study the effects of marital dissolution can be expected to be either positive or negative, depending on various factors. In my study I could not assume that marital dissolution will result in a negative crisis. I had to investigate this possibility during the course of the study.

Crisis theory rests on the following assumptions which I have incorporated in my planning and in undertaking the research:

❖ **Precipitating event**

In order for a crisis to occur a precipitating event is required that is expected to destabilise a child's steady state. The event may occur at any age and stage of human development (Levy, & McGee, 1975). A crisis incident may face an individual, a group of people or a community. Marital dissolution and child custody – the focus of this study – are considered by Robert (2000) to be among the high-risk group of crisis events.

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❖ **Situational and developmental types**

These are crisis incidents which are accidental or unexpected and which may affect individual development – depending on the time of occurrence. Marital dissolution and changes of living arrangements after separation are among such incidents (Slaikeu, 1984). Early adolescents may be influenced negatively as they are able to remember their parents' separation; evaluate the risks; and directly experience the negative effects of separation (Taplin, 1971; Haplern, 1973).

❖ **The cognitive key**

Taplin (1971) suggests that the extent to which a child will be affected by a crisis event, such as marital dissolution, is largely determined by how a child perceives the event. Perception in this context is viewed within a framework of a child's picture of life, future goals and expectations (Slaikeu, 1984). When parents' separation occurs, it will generally negatively influence the functioning of the children, for example in terms of school dropout, change of residences and change of close friends. Similarly, the majority of children will interpret parents' separation as a threat in cases where the non-resident parent had been the bread winner in the past (Bojuwoye, & Akpan, 2009a). It is, however, possible that one child may perceive separation as a threat and another not.

❖ **Disorganisation and disequilibrium**

One of the distinctive features that differentiate a crisis from other critical incidents is the fact that a crisis will lead an individual to an emotional upset or emotional equilibrium. An individual will, therefore, experience feelings of ineffectiveness, helplessness, and acute tension (Slaikeu, 1984). Emotional disequilibrium will not only cause psychological problems, such as anxiety, anger and depression, but may also result in health difficulties. Halpern (1973) mentions that an individual in crisis – in this context a child or parent from a broken family – may display several psychological symptoms including feelings of exhaustion, helplessness, inadequacy, confusion and anxiety. A child may be observed to be dysfunctional in areas of interpersonal relationships with people within the family and in school (for school children); poor parent-child relationships; and disorganisation in other social activities (Halpern, 1973). Generally, a crisis may bring about an imbalance in a child's physical, social, psychological and emotional well-being.

❖ **Vulnerability and reduced defensiveness**

When a crisis incident is interpreted as a threat, an individual – a child from a broken home in this context – may become vulnerable to other future crises. A child may become unstable in

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coping with life stress and her/his defensive ability may be reduced (Taplin, 1971). The less crisis events occur in a child's life, the stronger and more stable s/he will become but the more a child experiences a series of crises, such as parents' separation and its related consequences, the more vulnerable and emotionally unstable s/he may become (Caplan, 1964). The same concept is explained in life course and multitransitional theory (Conger, & Elder, 1994). In this regard, Turner and Avison (1992) suggest that a crisis event may not only expose a child to hazards, but also to opportunities.

As the majority of studies on crisis theory has been conducted in the clinical field and, largely, in a western context, I set out to investigate how marital dissolution may cause a crisis to children from broken families in the context of Tanzania. In doing this I aimed to examine the perceptions that children and parents had concerning separation incidents and whether or not such incidents brought about stabilisation or destabilisation in the family.

2.9.3 FAMILY STRESS THEORY

Family stress theory was initially introduced by Reuben Hill in 1949 in his work, *Family under stresses*, in which he developed the ABCX model of family stress following his study on families' responses to war, separation and reunion (LoBiondo-Wood, 2004). The original model was later revised as the Double ABCX Model by McCubbin and Patterson (1983). Crosbie-Burnett (1989) presents Hill's ABCX model by explaining various variables that may occur in a family situation and create a stressful environment. This model explains the idea that any incident which happens in a family, such as marital dissolution in this context, may be regarded as a stressor (A) if it impairs the family resources or means of obtaining resources (B). How that family perceive the incident (C) will determine whether or not a crisis is produced (X) (Crosbie-Burnett, 1989).

A process in which a particular family experiences stress, crisis and adjustment is often continuous and dynamic (Dong, Hopewell, Kline, Simmons, & Wellborn, 2012). Referring to family stress theory two families may be affected differently by marital dissolution, depending on the stability of their internal systems. A family where the internal systems are disrupted by a series of stressful events may not be able to withstand the shocks of marital dissolution. On the other hand, a family that is able to organise and manage internal and external resources well may be able to combat and control changes that occur within its systems (Burr, 1973; McCubbin, 1979). A process of strengthening family systems includes the ability of a family

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to expand its connections and networks through community engagement; maintaining social support; as well as minimising sources of stress (Burr, 1973). Children who come from families that lack stable internal resources and have poor social support may display negative reactions to parents' separation when compared to children coming from families with stable resources and a sound social support system.

When stable family resources and social support are lacking, an individual involved in a stressful incident, such as marital dissolution, may display symptoms that may include depression, anxiety, problem behaviour and/or signs of mental instability (McCubbin, Dahl, & Hunter, 1976; McCubbin, 1979; McCubbin, & Patterson, 1983; Dong *et al.*, 2012). The degree of family disruption as a result of a stressful event – in this context marital dissolution – may be determined by the ability of the family to withstand the shock on the one hand, or the family's ability to recover from the shock of the incident on the other. The nature of a family's vulnerability or its ability to bounce back after a stressful event is the result of various factors, such as family resources, social support and the frequency of the occurrence of stressful incidences within the family (McCubbin, & Patterson, 1983; Smith, 1984).

McCubbin and Pattersen (1983) as well as Smith (1984) criticise Hill's ABCX model by stating that it only emphasises what is happening in a family before a crisis and ignores the variations of family well-being after a stressful incident (marital dissolution) has taken place. In order to close this gap these authors came up with the double ABCX model of adjustment and adaptation, which includes the following factors concerning a family's ability to recover from stressful circumstances: pile-up of stressors; family efforts to acquire new resources; modification of definitions of the situation; and results of coping strategies (McCubbin, & Patterson, 1983; Smith, 1984; LoBiondo-Wood, 2004).

Smith (1984), however, views the double ABCX model as an imbalance in demand, meaning that the vulnerability or stability of a family that has experienced marital dissolution will be determined by how that family define the imbalance. If family members consider the imbalance as an opportunity (positive), they will probably experience growth, yet if they consider the imbalance as a threat (negative) the family will probably encounter distress. In the same manner, if the family organises or reorganises its resources well and views the incident of marital dissolution positively, its stressful circumstances will probably not result in a crisis. The family may, in such a case, be able to make positive changes based on the incident (McCubbin, & Patterson, 1983; Dong *et al.*, 2012). Moreover, family stress theorists

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identify various factors that may influence children's perceptions of marital dissolution as well as the manner in which they cope with the incident. These factors include children's perceptions and experiences and their personal resources, familial resources and social networks (Maundeni, 2000b; Turner, & Avison, 1992).

Family stress theory, therefore, depicts the complexities involved in the manner in which marital dissolution may affect children. It emphasises how similar events can be defined differently by the people being affected (Maundeni, 2000a). The decision by the parents to separate can be viewed as a stressor for both parents and children as it creates an environment in the family that may directly or indirectly affect the children (Krahn, 1993). Reflecting on Hill's ABCX model (Crosbie-Burnett, 1989), I consider marital dissolution as well as the changes related to separation as a stressor event (A) which is regarded in the model as normative transition. Therefore, every stressful circumstance resulting in a family's dysfunction is expected to be normal (Chiriboga, & Catron, 1991). The availability and accessibility of family or community resources (B) play a significant role in determining how children adjust. Moreover, how children perceive their parents' separation (C) will determine whether or not they have the ability to cope with, and to adapt to, such a stressful situation (Crosbie-Burnett, 1989; Chiriboga, & Catron, 1991).

Currently, family stress theory is often used in the nursing profession to assess processes and adaptations during chronic illness. In the context of my study, however, I attempted to apply this theory in exploring and explaining how parents and children from broken homes describe marital dissolution. To this end I investigated parents' and children's perceptions of various marital dissolution-related experiences. Various family stress theory terms, such as stress, coping, adjustment, adaptation and support resources were used during data collection and in my interpretation of the results.

2.9.4 LIFE COURSE THEORY

Life course theory was developed during the 1920s with the intention to explain how events that had occurred in individuals' past may alter developmental trajectories throughout their lives (Conger, & Elder, 1994; Elder, 1998a). In the context of this study parents' separation is considered to be an event that takes place somewhere in a child's life with the potential of resulting in significant positive or negative outcomes for that child's life. Life course theory was developed through longitudinal studies which were done at various stages of people's

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lives, such as from adolescence to young adulthood and from lower levels of education to advance levels, with the purpose of tracking the effects of particular life course events that had occurred (Elder, 1998b).

According to Conger and Elder (1994), Elder (1998a), and Sameroff (1993), life course events – in this context marital dissolution – may interfere with an individual's emotional stability, economic stability, behavioural trends, educational attainment and work habits. Related to this, the individual may experience problems due to some life course events (Elder, 1996). Among other things, life course theory explains how life course events may not only impact on an individual's life, but also on the lives of the family as a whole. Some experiences in life may move a family from stability to instability. As a result, aspects of life, such as relocation, change of life style, problems in meeting educational needs, change of school and economic hardship, may be experienced within a family (Elder, 1995).

Furthermore, the accumulation of negative life course experiences may cause parents to feel emotional pressure which, in this context is often the custodial parents, making it hard for them to raise their children in an appropriate manner (Clausen, 1995; Elder, 1995). Adolescents who have experienced multiple transitions in their family structures are said to generally be more influenced psychologically than others. This includes children who have experienced their parents being together and later separated and where separation has resulted in the children living in a single parent family or in a stepparent family when a custodial parent decides to remarry (Papalia, Olds, & Feldman, 2002). One can comprehend how marital dissolution may, subsequently, have a negative impact on children's academic and psycho-social development.

Despite an indication of how a life course experience may have a negative effect on individuals, life course theory explains the reason why some children may be more vulnerable as they go through particular life events while others better endure the effects of these pathways of life (Conger, & Elder, 1994). Likewise, marital dissolution may not always be regarded as a negative event for all children. Some children, for example, encounter positive experiences as a result of their parents' separation. For the children to be either negatively or positively affected, several factors need to be considered. Firstly, the meaning these children attach to separation is important. Secondly, the nature of the parent-child relationship that existed before marital dissolution is significant; and, finally, whether or not the marriage had been dominated by frequent violence and conflict is important.

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Furthermore, life course theory explains how parents face challenges in dealing with the effects of various life course events, such as relocations and challenges in coping with children – especially when it comes to rapid changes of life style. Usually, in the case of reoccurrence of life course events related to marital dissolution, including relocation, remarriage or continuous separation, parents as well as children become weak and vulnerable in other crises and life shocks that life may bring their way (Elder, Johnson, & Crosnoe, 2003). Despite the hazards being presented by the reoccurrence of life course events in a child's life, the same may give way to opportunities, such as emotional growth and the ability of the child to deal with other related life events. This will however only be possible when previous life course events have been resolved successfully (Turner, & Avison, 1992).

The application and relevance of life course theory to this study lies in its principles. In the context of my study I relied on the following principles:

❖ **Historical time and place**

An individual's life course is often constructed within various historical periods, places and experiences encountered throughout the life time (Elder, 1995, 1996). In the context of this study this principle explains how the nature of life course events, such as marital dissolution, in a child's background and the time and context of its occurrence may have an effect on a child's current and future well-being.

❖ **Timing in lives**

The developmental impact of a succession of life transitions or events is contingent on when they occur in a person's life, for instance when (at what age) marital dissolution occurred in a child's life. If it happened when the child was very young fewer effects may be expected than if it occurs in early adolescence when children are vulnerable due to their development stage (Clausen, 1995).

❖ **Linked lives**

Lives are interdependently linked and social and historical influences, typically, are expressed through a network of shared relationships. Historical events – marital dissolution being one of them and individual experiences are connected through family-linked members. The misfortune of one member is often shared through relationships with others (Elder, 1995; 1996; 1998a). Stressful and depressive states of separated mothers may, for example, affect their parenting style and, therefore, their children. The history of an adult parent who was

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raised without an intact family can, thus, also be negatively shared with her/his family/children. This, in turn, may affect the way s/he relates to others in the family.

❖ **Human agency**

Individuals construct their own life course through the choices and constraints of history and social circumstances. The following questions come to mind: *How do some custodial parents find the means to cope and continue with life? For instance, why do custodial parents – often the mothers – sometimes decide to engage in petty business in risky environments to make a living for their children? How do some children manage to thrive in the midst of hardships resulting from marital dissolution?* For instance, the decision of a child to live on the street may initiate a new life course which may in turn expose the child to many other risks. On the other hand, a parent's remarriage may initiate a series of life course events for both parents and children (Elder, Johnson, & Crosnoe, 2003; Cicchetti, Rogosch, & Toth, 2006).

2.9.5 INTEGRATING UNDERLYING THEORIES INTO A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

As noted earlier, marriages in Tanzania often end in couples' separating rather than going through a legal divorce – an ending which, in the context of this study, is referred to as marital dissolution and explained by attachment theorists as a possible threat to a child's attachment (Bowlby, 2008; Benson, & Haith, 2010). Accordingly, the attachment that had been formed between a child and one or both parents may be shaken or torn apart, possibly resulting in a negative emotional effect. This situation is expected to be worse when a parent who is closely attached to a child becomes a non-custodial parent (Smith, & Hart, 2002).

On the other hand, marital dissolution is viewed by family stress theorists as a stressor to both parents and children (Crosbie-Burnett, 1989; Maundeni, 2000a), where children are expected to be affected directly because of a stressful environment which results directly from parental separation and indirectly from their parents' own stress (Chiriboga, & Catron, 1991). The same incident of parents' separation is considered to be a crisis for children from broken families because it stands as an obstacle to their important life goals, such as their educational development (Turner, & Avison, 1989). Often, marital dissolution is expected to be a major crisis with long-term negative effects, particularly for children who were neither involved in nor informed about their parents' decision to separate (Turner, & Avison, 1992).

Considering marital dissolution both as a stressor and a crisis may, furthermore, be influenced by other factors, such as the age of a child; socio-economic status of the custodial parent or

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guardian; available familial resources; social support; and the way a child perceives the entire scenario of marital dissolution (Turner, & Avison, 1992; Bojuwoye, & Akpan, 2009b). Other determining factors include parents' conflict, especially post-divorce conflict, and parents' insight – or lack of it – into the effects of marital dissolution on children (Kelly, & Emery, 2003; Strohschein, 2005).

The underlying theories of my study have some linking qualities which allows for explanation within the context of this study. For example, both life course theory and crisis theory carry a belief that a series of crisis incidents or negative life course events in the life of an individual – in this context a child from a broken family – may weaken the child's steady state (equilibrium), making her/him vulnerable to future crises or life events (Caplan, 1964; Taplin, 1971; Halpern, 1973; Elder, Johnson, & Crosnoe, 2003). Likewise, family stress theorists assume that a family which has passed through a number of stressful incidents may not be able to either withstand or recover from other life shocks (McCubbin, Dahl, & Hunter, 1976; McCubbin, 1979; McCubbin, & Patterson, 1983; Dong *et al*., 2012). The relevance of this argument becomes a reality when marital dissolution as a crisis or life course event initiate a series of other events, such as dropping out of school, a change of residence and stepparenting, which may potentially be considered by children as additional crises that can further weaken their emotional stability.

In addition to the above argument, both crisis and family stress theories relate the ability of an individual or family to deal with future crises or stressful moments to the manner in which the person/family were able to successfully deal with previous crises. Failure to deal with past crises seemingly adds vulnerability to the future of a child or a family (Turner, & Avison, 1989; Schwartz, 2012). In all three theories, crisis, family stress and life course theories, the series of events that constitute a crisis, such as stressful incidents or life course events are often continuous and dynamic (Dong *et al*., 2012).

Furthermore, both crisis and family stress theorists view the extent of marital dissolution to be determined by how an individual (child) or a family perceive or define the incident – as a threat or as an opportunity. An individual or a family that perceives marital dissolution as a threat is expected to experience distress and other psycho-social consequences. On the other hand, if they see the incident as an opportunity, growth is expected (McCubbin, & Patterson, 1983; Slaikeu, 1984; Dong *et al.,* 2012). Attachment theory also suggests that a child may be negatively or positively affected by parents' separation, depending on how s/he defines the

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existing attachment with the non-resident parent (Carter *et al*., 2005). This integration explains the possibility of two families or two children being differently affected after experiencing a similar occurrence of marital dissolution.

Selecting children's academic development and psycho-social well-being as a focus for my study was purposely done due to the fact that these two areas of development are central to the adolescence life phase and based on these domains being interrelated in various ways. Children's academic development and psycho-social well-being correlate in a way that when a child fails to continue with school due to, for example, financial difficulties resulting from marital dissolution s/he will possibly become vulnerable to various psycho-social risks beyond the school. The time which was spent in school may be spent unconstructively elsewhere, with the child being at risk of negative peer influence (Amato, 2001). On the other hand, the psycho-social problems (internalised and externalised) emanating from poor parenting or single parenting difficulties as a result of marital dissolution may also hinder a child from performing well in school. Moreover, behaviour, like truancy and other delinquency conduct, may subsequently lead to expulsion from school (Amato, & Cheadle, 2008).

A sequential flow from the moment when parents decide to separate in combination with the determining factors and potential effects of marital dissolution, therefore, constitute a series of crises, stressful moments and life course events that may alter children's developmental trajectories (Elder, 1998b). The findings of this study may shed some light in terms of the most probable outcomes when parents decide to separate. These include outcomes when children and parents consider the break up as an emotional detachment incident, crisis, family stressor and/or life course event.

2.10 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I first discussed adolescence as a backdrop to my study. I then reviewed existing literature on marital dissolution and its potential effects on children's academic development and psycho-social well-being in a global mostly westernised context. Throughout, I however foregrounded the Tanzanian context as the focus of my study. I concluded the chapter by explaining my conceptual framework, in terms of the theories that support this study, namely, crisis theory, family stress theory, attachment theory and life course theory.

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In Chapter 3 I describe the empirical study I undertook. I explain the epistemological and methodological paradigms that guided me and also describe the strengths and challenges of the choices I made in terms of the purpose of this study and the research questions I formulated in Chapter 1. I also discuss the research process and the manner in which I collected, analysed, and interpreted the data.

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CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter I explored relevant existing literature and discussed different authors' views on the topic of this study. I also explained my conceptual framework and the theories underlying it.

In this chapter I discuss the methodological strategies and processes of the research I completed. After explaining the paradigmatic perspectives that governed my research approach, I deal with my selected research design, the research context and the selection of participants. Next, I review data collection methods and analysis procedures. All methodological choices are considered in terms of the strengths and challenges for this study. Throughout, I justify the choices I made against the background of the purpose of my study. I conclude by discussing how I attempted to maintain rigor and ensure ethical standards in undertaking the study.

3.2 PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVES

A paradigm "is a set of assumptions about the social world, and about what constitutes proper techniques and topics for inquiring into that world" (Punch, 2000, p. 154). A paradigm, therefore, implies a set of basic beliefs, a world view or a view of how science should be handled. In this way, a paradigm represents a broad perspective built on the contained assumptions or beliefs of how a particular truth or reality is expressed. These assumptions or beliefs are rooted in everyday life and control the values and norms of their believers (Donmoyer, 2006). Due to the nature of the topic of this study; the information being researched; the context; and the participants, I relied on social constructivism as the epistemological paradigm. I selected a qualitative approach as the methodological paradigm.

3.2.1 EPISTEMOLOGICAL PARADIGM: SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM

Social constructivism is based on five main assumptions. The first assumption is that human life is believed to be understood from within and, therefore, it cannot be observed from an external reality. It focuses on people's subjectivity on how they 'construct' the social world

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by sharing meanings and how they interact or relate to one another (Maree, 2011). In studying a phenomenon – in this study marital dissolution – I had to use research techniques that would allow me to understand how the participants interpret and interact within their social environments. In this regard, my study used Kiswahili as the medium of communication as it is a commonly understood language in Tanzania. The use of interviews, focus group discussions and children's narratives allowed me to grasp information based on how marital dissolution is socially constructed and perceived by people in this particular setting (Maree, 2011).

The second assumption is that social life is viewed as a distinctively human product within the social constructivist paradigm. Social constructivists assume that reality is not objectively determined, but that it is socially constructed (Maree, 2011). Eliciting information from people in their social contexts gives researchers an opportunity to understand the perceptions they have of their own activities (Speed, 1991; Collis & Hussey, 2009). Accordingly, the uniqueness of a particular situation (context) determines the understanding and interpretation of a meaning that is constructed (Riegler, 2001; Maree, 2011). In my study the decision to involve children who were living at children centres and in custodial homes, but were once living on the streets as a result of parents' broken marriages, was made in order to determine whether or not their unique contexts affected the way each group would explain the effects of marital dissolution on their lives.

The third assumption of social constructivism is that the human mind is the purposive source or origin of meaning (Riegler, 2001) whereby people impart meanings to phenomena and their social contexts. By uncovering how meanings are constructed, researchers may gain insight into meanings that are imparted and, thereby, improve their comprehension of a phenomenon. An example of this was seen in the way participants attached meanings that had a particular significance in the Tanzanian context but would, perhaps, not imply the same meaning when taken out of this particular context. One challenge relates to some words in Kiswahili when directly translated losing the intended meaning and, therefore, potentially not implying exactly what the participant wanted to convey. In addressing this challenge I had to indicate these words in Kiswahili and describe their direct translation in the participants' context. For instance, during parents' conflicts concerning child custodianship some parents were ready to "lose the child" (meaning to let the child die) rather than to allow the child to be raised by the other parent. This idea was expressed in the Kiswahili words "*tukose wote*", meaning that it is better for both of us to lose the child than one of us remaining with him/her. In addressing this

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potential challenge I also used various data collection techniques and did not consider the direct meaning of the contribution as absolute the truth. By doing this I was able to see the participants' views from various angles.

The fourth assumption of social constructivism explains that human behaviour is affected by the knowledge of the social world. Social constructivists believe that multiple and not single realities of phenomena exist and that these realities can differ across time and space (Atwater, 1996). Researchers' knowledge of the social world and the way meaning and reality are socially constructed will enrich their theoretical and conceptual framework and, in turn, assist them in taking research decisions and making sense of the world (Speed, 1991; Maree, 2011). In my study some ideas expressed by participants were attached to the history of Tanzania as a country, something that can only be understood in the Tanzanian social context. For example, the sentiment expressed by Child 2: "I have acquired the attitude that every man is by nature a 'colonialist'" (CN[9] 2, p. 6), means that what the father was doing to them in being aggressive, bullying, torturing and hurting others emotionally could be equated with the acts of colonialists against Tanzanians before independence. This is supported by Denzin and Lincoln (1994) as well as Schwandt (1994) who comment that the constructed meaning in social constructivism takes place through the complex and continuous process of people's interaction within a given community, involving their history, language and actions.

The fifth, and final, assumption of social constructivism implies that the social world does not 'exist' independently of human knowledge (Riegler, 2001). In making this relevant in my study, the knowledge I possessed and the way I understood the concept of marital dissolution affected the way I conducted my investigation. My prior knowledge, therefore, influenced my understanding and perception of the phenomenon being studied. Conceiving the world external to my knowledge base would imply denying the subjective part of my own previous research and experiences (Riegler, 2001; Maree, 2011). However, I attempted to focus on the feelings and perceptions elicited from the participants, not allowing my ideas to influence their responses. Besides, it was not the intention of this study to search for objectivity, but rather to gain a deep understanding of the effect of marital dissolution on children in the Tanzanian context.

According to Charmaz (2000; 2006), social constructivism focuses on the meaning ascribed by the participants in a study. These meanings are, largely, determined by the views, values,

[9] CN= Child participant's narrative.

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beliefs, feelings, assumptions and ideologies of the individuals. In applying social constructivism, as the researcher I aimed to explain the feelings and perceptions of the participants as they experienced a phenomenon or a process – in this study marital dissolution. Social constructivism mentions the beliefs and values of the researcher and avoids predetermined categories, such as those found in axial coding (Creswell, 2005; 2012).

Social constructivists believe that no objective reality exists for people, but that what is assumed to be real must be constructed by the minds of the individuals involved (Lincoln, & Guba, 1985; Speed, 1991; Riegler, 2001). Knowledge and truth are believed to be created and not discovered by the mind. Social constructivists contend that in order for researchers to comprehend certain experiences of a particular community, they should enquire about the ideas, views and opinions of the people living in that community (Minichiello, & Kottler, 2010). In this study, in understanding marital dissolution in Tanzania I had to ask parents and children about their personal experiences of parents' separation. These worlds of lived reality and the meaning of incidents and contexts explored by researchers are constructed by specific people in a specific social setting and at a specific time (Speed, 1991; Lincoln & Denzin, 1994).

In applying social constructivism to my study I also kept in mind that some parents – as a source of information – might have different perspectives than others about their experiences, including their decisions and the effects of marital dissolution on their children. In the same way, children could potentially share their personal experiences of living in broken homes or at children's centres. I considered and respected various perspectives as this is the core value of qualitative research (Maree, 2011). Furthermore, because the language used by participants could influence how they expressed their reality, I translated the instruments of this study into the local language. All verbal and written communication with participants was done in Kiswahili which is the common language used in Tanzania – allowing them to freely communicate meaning in their own words.

I consider social constructivism as an appropriate epistemological paradigm for my study as it allowed me to gain insight into the experiences and meanings of the participants in different places and at different times (Lincoln, & Denzin, 1994; Schwandt, 1994). However, the presence of multiple meanings and multiple realities could, potentially, lead to conflicting constructed meanings, making it difficult to give a single explanation and reach a conclusion or truth (Atwater, 1996). Studies in this paradigm cannot be generalised because the realities

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and perceptions merely reflect particular social settings (Punch, 2009). It should be noted that – based on the methodological paradigm underlying this study – generalisation was not my focus. I aimed, rather, at gaining an in-depth understanding of marital dissolution as perceived by the participants (Atwater, 1996; Maree, 2011).

Another advantage to using this paradigm is that studies conducted under the social constructivist paradigm, typically, contain a richness and depth of exploration of the phenomenon being studied. In this sense, as the researcher I became the instrument through which the data was collected and analysed which allowed me to have access to first-hand and original information from participants' responses as well as from various observations in the participants' own lives which I documented in my research diary. I was also able to follow up during any stage throughout my study, if required.

3.2.2 METHODOLOGICAL PARADIGM: QUALITATIVE APPROACH

Qualitative research is based on the assumption that the meaning of a given phenomenon is constructed by how individuals in a particular setting interact with one another and with their worlds (Merriam, 2002). Qualitative inquiry is the pursuit of understanding things – not from an outsider perspective, but from an emic or insider perspective; in other words, looking at things in the same way as they are viewed by the people in that context (Merriam, 2002). The decision to opt for a qualitative approach in this study was influenced by my quest to investigate and understand participants' experiences in their natural contexts by collecting data on their experiences and views and by relying on their voices and perceptions of marital dissolution. Supporting this idea, Fraenkel and Wallen (1993) as well as Nieuwenhuis (2007) maintain that qualitative research focuses on describing and understanding participants in their natural contexts rather than explaining phenomena by means of statistical analysis. In this way social constructivism, as epistemological paradigm, aligns with a qualitative approach as it allowed me to obtain meanings that people attached to experiences and, then, to present these in a form of words and expressions. Regarding my study, specifically, I was able to obtain various meanings and interpretations as they were socially constructed by parents, children, teachers and caregivers concerning marital dissolution in Tanzania.

It follows that qualitative research is commonly used in areas where a researcher seeks to obtain a detailed understanding of events, processes and relationships in a particular social and natural cultural context (Ary *et al.*, 2010). This paradigm is useful in investigating the root

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causes or reasons behind certain human behaviour, actions and practices as well as ideas and opinions related to the topic being studied (Holloway, & Wheeler, 2009). In carrying out this qualitative study I analysed the verbal and non-verbal accounts and reactions of participants regarding marital dissolution in their natural environments in order to reach a meaningful interpretation. This was possible, amongst other things, due to the positive rapport I was able to establish with the participants as the trusting relationships allowed me to enter the participants' life worlds (Holloway, & Wheeler, 2009; Nieuwenhuis, 2007).

In qualitative research the researcher often strives to understand how people construct meaning in their natural contexts and how they perceive their own world and experiences (Lincoln, & Denzin, 1994; Schwandt, 1994). In this study I attempted to understand how participants perceived marital dissolution in the Tanzanian context and I was interested in exploring and explaining some meanings attached to separation and divorce as well as how children are affected under these circumstances. Another characteristic of qualitative research is that a qualitative researcher is the key instrument in collecting and analysing data. As a qualitative researcher I was involved in the initial process of constructing – in collaboration with my supervisor – the instruments for data collection and analysis. Complete involvement enabled me to own my study and to gain an insight into what I was researching. However, this advantage also posed the potential danger of subjectivity that might impact on a study (Merriam, 2002). Searching for objectivity was, however, not my intention as I aimed to obtain a deep understanding of marital dissolution in Tanzania. In an attempt to avoid subjective interpretation I continuously reflected in my research diary and entered into discussions with my supervisor on my thoughts and interpretations.

Qualitative research often deals with textual and richly descriptive data rather than numerical data. It follows that the researcher often presents what has been obtained descriptively in terms of words and pictures and that such rich and thick descriptions of words and pictures may persuade readers of the trustworthiness of the findings (Merriam, 2002, p. 15). Due to its nature and practice, qualitative research is, therefore, described as interpretive, contextualised, immersed and emic (Holloway, & Wheeler, 2009, Merriam, 2002).

In following a qualitative approach I took a holistic stance, focusing on the participants' experiences of marital dissolution in the context of Tanzanian families. Selected participants shared their experiences while in their natural settings with a high level of researcher involvement in their everyday lives. This interaction allowed me to produce descriptive and

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narrative data (Speziale, Streubert, & Carpenter, 2011). Therefore, in carrying out my study, I followed an inductive approach and used information obtained from the field to build a new theory, instead of trying to prove an existing theory or hypothesis (Merriam, 2002; Ary *et al*., 2010). In addition, the relationships between the participants and me as researcher were based on equality and respect for each other as human beings.

Exploring human ideas, behaviour and practices is often a dynamic and unpredictable process which may lead to undependable data. In overcoming this potential obstacle I spent a long period of time with the participants and employed various data collection methods in an attempt to ensure that what I obtained was dependable (Seale, 1999; Creswell, & Miller, 2000; Babbie, & Mouton, 2001). Rapport in my study did not merely imply an intimate or close relationship between the participants and me, but also a relationship that would provide room for negotiation and the sharing of ideas. This kind of relationship was continuous throughout the research process and gave the participants the confidence to ask questions and to share their views (Glesne, 1989; Nieuwenhuis, 2007).

However, this study – like other qualitative studies – contains bulky and voluminous data from the field which, in turn, required ample time for processing, analysis and verification of conclusions (Miles, & Huberman, 1994). In addressing this challenge I set aside ample time for data collection, processing and analysis, taking leave from my work to devote the necessary time to my study. Furthermore, a qualitative approach allowed me to commence with initial data analysis while the collection process was being concluded and to probe, clarify and summarise the responses of the participants (Merriam, 2002, p. 5). This approach was both dynamic and developmental in nature, with a focus on processes and outcomes.

In undertaking a qualitative study based on social constructivism as an epistemological paradigm, I attempted to grasp the experiences and views of the participants who had personal experiences to relate concerning marital dissolution in Tanzania. These experiences and views were only intended to explain what emerged from the lives of the individuals and not to be generalised. As stated, generalisation was not the aim of my study but rather to be able to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied. The rich descriptions I obtained which is typical of qualitative research – may, however, allow for transferability to areas or contexts similar to this study (Nieuwenhuis, 2007).

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3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGICAL STRATEGIES

This section outlines the various steps I followed in carrying out the empirical part of my study.

3.3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design connects the research questions with the information acquired and the strategies used in collecting data (Punch, 2005; 2009). Fouché (2002) refers to a research design as encompassing each and every plan and decision the researcher makes when structuring a study. In other words, it involves the planning of how to proceed in determining the nature of the relationship between the variables in a study (Maree, 2011). In choosing a research design a researcher needs to consider his/her knowledge, assumptions, and experiences as all of these may influence the way that data is collected (Fouché, 2002); Punch, 2005; Nieuwenhuis, 2007). I relied on an instrumental case study design (Creswell, 2012; Stake, 1994) as I aimed to gain insight into a specific phenomenon, namely the effects of marital dissolution on children in Tanzania. The nature of my study qualifies it as an instrumental case study as a specific issue – the effect of marital dissolution in Tanzania – was thoroughly explored to provide me with a broad insight (Merriam, 2002; Creswell, 2012).

According to Willig (2008), the cases in instrumental case study design are selected to enable a researcher to do a thorough study of a phenomenon of interest which is identified in the research question. In this study I selected two children centres in order to explore how children from broken families may be affected by marital dissolution, specifically in terms of their academic and psycho-social development. Participants who had experience of marital dissolution constituted a suitable case for analysis (Willig, 2008). By relying on an instrumental case study design I was able to gain a clear understanding of, and acquire knowledge of, marital dissolution. My choice also provided me with the opportunity to use multiple sources of information and to facilitate the process of exploring and describing how marital dissolution may affect children in the Tanzanian context (Stake, 1994; Maree, 2011:299; Creswell, 2012).

Merriam (2002) explains a case study design as the intensive study of a phenomenon or social unit. The broad objective of case study research can be described as an in-depth understanding of how people (usually a small number) in a specified context interact with one another and with their environment in conjunction with how they make meaning of the phenomenon being

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studied (Mouton, 2011; Nieuwenhuis, 2007). A case study design, therefore, seeks to describe a phenomenon in depth "with the unit of analysis and not the topic of investigation characterising the study" (Merriam, 2002, p. 8). In this study, children from broken homes who were either negatively or positively affected by marital dissolution were the unit of analysis. In other words, this was a group in which the in-depth study of background, behaviour, similarities, differences and function determined some boundaries (what a case is and what it is not) and, thus, qualified the bounded system I set out to investigate (Stake, 1995; Creswell, 2012; Maree, 2012). According to Creswell (2012), the unit of analysis may be a single individual or several individuals, separately or in a group. For me, the goal was to understand the effect of marital dissolution in Tanzania through a case study design (Cohen, & Crabtree, 2006).

A case study design focuses on the uniqueness and idiosyncrasy of a particular case in all its complexity with the intention to investigate the dynamics of a bounded system (Welman, Kruger, & Mitchell, 2005). By using case study as my design I placed my focus on an in-depth exploration of the experiences of children from broken families which was carried out directly with the children themselves as well as indirectly with their parents, teachers and caregivers (Willig, 2008; Yin, 2008; Maree, 2012). Throughout my research I was obliged to explore thoroughly, using multiple sources of data, as case study research is typically based on extensive data collection (Welman, Kruger, & Mitchell, 2005; Willig, 2008; Mouton, 2011; Creswell, 2012).

One of the advantages of a case study design is the emphasis on an intense examination of the research setting which allows a researcher to obtain detailed information from the intended subjects as well as from potential individual differences (Bryman, 2004; Maree, 2011; Mouton, 2011). Similarly, in this study – among other things – I was able to explore variations in the effects of marital dissolution on children in terms of gender and age and also how coping processes differed from one child to another. A case study design is further said to be a useful approach in learning situations where little is known -once again emphasising the suitability of the approach for this study, based on the fact that information concerning marital dissolution and its effects on children in the social and psychological perspective are not well documented in the Tanzanian context (Maree, 2011).

Moreover, a case study research design includes methods that can allow original ideas to surface from vigilant and detailed observations (Maree, 2011). Due to its nature of providing a

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longer period of time for exploration purposes, by using a case study design I was able to build and develop a sound rapport with the participants which in turn enabled me to obtain rich data. A longer time for exploration; an in-depth study; and the use of multiple methods and sources of data also increased the probability of credibility and dependability in my study – as is typical in case study research (Mouton, 2011).

However, the selected case study design implies certain potential challenges as I faced the risk of losing focus; the generalisation of the results may be questioned; and subjectivity and researcher bias may have influenced the interpretation of the data as well as my findings (Punch, 2009; Hofstee, 2006). The nature of case study research often results in lengthy periods of time in the field, collected data may be bulky and, therefore, the data analysis process may be a cumbersome and time consuming one (Mouton, 2011). In an attempt to address these challenges, I used different methods of data collection, multiple theories and multiple sources of data to increase the rigor of my study as well as the possibility of transferability. I attempted to eliminate bias in not allowing my prior knowledge and perceptions to influence the findings. To this end, I continuously monitored my interpretation of the data to ensure authenticity (Maree, 2011; Mouton, 2011) and I discussed my ideas and interpretations with my supervisor. Besides, based on my selected paradigms, it was not my aim to generalise the findings but rather to gain an in-depth understanding of marital dissolution and its effect on children in the context of Tanzania, as already indicated.

3.3.2 RESEARCH CONTEXT

The study was carried out in the city of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania against the backdrop of the city's specific nature and characteristics. Dar es Salaam is estimated to have a population of approximately five million people (Lugalla, 1995; Lugalla, & Mbwambo, 2005), making it the largest residential and commercial city in Tanzania. Since colonisation in the 1960s the city has taken the lead in terms of an urban population and has accommodated over one third of all city dwellers in the country over the last three decades (Lugalla, 1995). Due to its poor economy and other features of urbanisation, Dar es Salaam currently has high levels of mixed cultures, intermarriage, early marriage, early pregnancies and other social dynamics (Mpuya, & Lubeja, 2012) that may weaken the stability of the institution of marriage and create room for marital dissolution. Garenne (2004) maintains that the majority of women in the city – particularly those from a low socio - economic background -get married at a young age of between 15 and 19. The reason for this trend can be related to low socio-economic status and

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poor education. Early marriage may, in turn, contribute to high incidents of marital dissolution (Amato, 2010).

During the past 15 years Tanzania has experienced rapid changes in its cities – changes that have led to the transformation of people's lives and their environments (Hosier, 1993). These changes include a development in telecommunication, water supply, electricity supply and food as well as the beverage industry. In Dar es Salaam new shopping malls, restaurants, banks and other infrastructure have, for example, been constructed (Helgesson, 2006). The transformation has resulted in numerous effects on people's social and economic well-being – one of these being an alarming increase of street children in cities - more specifically in Dar es Salaam but also in other cities, such as Arusha and Mwanza (Lugalla & Mbwambo, 2005).

Due to the social and economic crisis resulting from urban transformation children are often neglected. Subsequently, some children have decided to run away to the cities for survival. Street children in Dar es Salaam are children from within the city and its neighbouring towns as well as children who have migrated from the main land regions. The majority of these children are reported to be victims of their parents' deaths and separation, which is the focus of this study. The unpredictability of their survival in the city often leads to them engaging in anti-social behaviour, such as theft, bullying, vandalism, rape and substance abuse (UNICEF, 1990). Despite the government's effort to send these children back to their homes of origin, such efforts are often unproductive due to the fact that the environment back home (broken families and poverty) is not a welcoming one and, as a result, many children end up returning to the city (Rajani, & Kudrati, 1996).

At the outset of my study I assumed that the lives and overall interaction of the participants within their contexts would have some impact on the way they behaved. I, therefore, attempted to study every action and event as they occurred during my investigation. Being a Tanzanian citizen and having resided in Dar es Salaam for approximately fifteen years facilitated my understanding of the context of my study and it helped me grasp the meanings which were communicated through the various actions and perceptions in the responses of the participants (Silverman, 2010; Travers, 2001).

3.3.3 SELECTION OF CASES AND PARTICIPANTS

I purposefully selected two children centres that accommodate children from broken homes – with the majority of these children once having lived as street children. I selected eight

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children (four from each centre) within the age range of 12 to 15 and whose parents had separated over the past five years. In addition, I included in my sample an additional four children of the same age range (12 to 15 years) who were living in their custodial homes at the time of data collection but whose parents had separated over the past five years. The selection of four children who were still living in their custodial homes was done to determine whether or not all children from broken homes display similar experiences, regardless of different settings.

Furthermore, three caregivers and three teachers from each of the two centres participated (twelve in total). Finally, eight custodial parents took part in the study. Table 3.1, below, summarises the categories of participants and the kind of information I expected to collect from them while Tables 3.2 to 3.5 include more details of the participants.

Table 3.1: Category of Participants and Information Expected to be Collected

Category	N	Type of information expected
Parents (eight custodial parents and four parents of children who lived at centres)	12	Experiences in raising children on their own; insight into the effects of marital dissolution on children; impact on children's academic and psycho-social development; attitudes towards marital dissolution.
Children from separated families	12	Experiences before, during and after marital dissolution of the parents.
Teachers and caregivers	12	Experiences of children's behaviour, attitudes, academic performance, discipline, risk-taking behaviour, attendance and psycho-social functioning.
Total	**36**	

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Table 3.2: Parent Participants

Parent	Gender	Level of literacy	Occupation	Nature of marital dissolution
P1	F	Grade 7, Primary school education	Security officer	Separated
P2	F	University education	Banker	Divorced
P3	F	Grade 12, Secondary school education	Petty business	Separated
P4	F	Grade 10, Secondary school drop-out	Hair dresser	Separated
P5	M	Grade 10, Secondary school drop-out	Restaurant attendant	Separated
P6	F	Grade 7, Primary school education	Petty business	Separated
P7	F	Grade 7, Primary school education	Petty business	Separated
P8	F	Grade 7, Primary school education	Petty business	Separated
P9	F	Grade 7, Primary school education	Petty business	Separated
P10	F	Grade 10, Secondary school drop-out	Petty business	Separated
P11	F	Grade 12, Secondary school education	Petty business	Separated
P12	F	Grade 7, Primary school education	Petty business	Separated

Table 3.3: Child Participants

Child	Age	Gender	Level of education	Custodial parent's occupation	Duration in custodial home/on the street
C1	14	M	Grade 6	Centre 1	3 years (street)
C2	15	M	Grade 7	Centre 1	3 years (street)
C3	15	M	Grade 3	Centre 1	4 years (street)
C4	15	F	Grade 6	Civil servant	4 years (home)
C5	14	M	Grade 3	Centre 1	5 years (street)
C6	13	M	Grade 3	Centre 2	5 years (street)
C7	13	M	Grade 3	Centre 2	3 years (street)
C8	12	M	Grade 2	Centre 2	2 years (street)
C9	14	F	Grade 6	Security officer	5 years (home)
C10	12	F	Grade 6	Banker	4 years (home)
C11	15	M	Grade 10	Social worker	5 years (home)
C12	12	M	Grade 4	Centre 2	4 years (street)

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Table 3.4: Reasons for Child Participants Living in Centres

Child	Reason
C1	Poverty of the custodial parent (mother) and a search for education
C2	Poverty of the custodial parent (mother) and a search for education
C3	Poverty of the custodial parent (mother)
C5	Pressure from stepmother
C6	Running away from an abusive parent (father)
C7	Running away from an abusive parent (father)
C8	Poverty of the custodial parent (mother)
C12	Running away from an alcoholic and abusive parent (mother)

Table 3.5: Teacher and Caregiver Participants

Participant	Centre	Gender	Role
FP1	Centre 1	M	Caregiver
FP2	Centre 1	M	Teacher
FP3	Centre 1	F	Caregiver
FP4	Centre 1	M	Teacher
FP5	Centre 1	F	Caregiver
FP6	Centre 1	F	Caregiver
FP1	Centre 2	F	Teacher
FP2	Centre 2	F	Teacher
FP3	Centre 2	F	Teacher
FP4	Centre 2	F	Teacher
FP5	Centre 2	M	Caregiver
FP6	Centre 2	M	Caregiver

I selected the cases, the children's centres, and all the participants (children, parents, teachers and caregivers) purposefully (Willig, 2008; Punch, 2009; Maree, 2012). I was assisted by the heads of the centres and the caregivers in selecting the children, who could potentially provide rich data in terms of the focus of my study. I attempted to ensure a gender balance in the selection of the children, teachers and caregivers in an attempt to capture voices from both genders and to minimise gender bias (Glesne, & Peshkin, 1992; Marshall, 1996). However, the majority of the children residing at the centres are boys. Parent participants could be either

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fathers or mothers. Because qualitative inquiry comprehends meaning in participants' perspectives, I considered it to be important to select participants who could produce rich data – a process known as purposive sampling (Welman, Kruger, & Mitchell, 2005; Patton, 2002).

Purposive sampling is commonly used in qualitative research as it can add credibility to a sample by allowing for the selection of individuals where – and with whom – the processes being studied are most likely to occur (Coyne, 1997; Patton, 2005). Likewise, purposeful sampling may assist the researcher to be fully aware of the members of a sample with an intention of developing a detailed understanding of a phenomenon being studied (Sandelowski, 1995; Teddlie, & Yu, 2007; Creswell, 2012). Another advantage of purposive sampling is that it may enable the researcher to obtain in-depth and detailed information from information-rich cases (Glesne, & Peshkin, 1992; Marshall, 1996; Merriam, 1998). However, due to the fact that participants are, typically, selected in terms of the researcher's subjective opinions, findings cannot be generalised to another context, time and population (Lincoln, & Denzin, 1994; Punch, 2009). As previously stated, generalisation was not my aim, based on the paradigmatic choices I made. In some cases, particularly in the selection of custodial parents and children who live at home, I also used snowball sampling (Sandelowski, 1995; Teddlie, & Yu, 2007; Creswell, 2012) by requesting participants to identify other suitable individuals who could provide me with useful information.

Purposive sampling in qualitative studies uses systematic non-probabilistic sampling with the intention to identify specific participants who may share specific qualities for a topic under study and not just establish a random representative sample from a certain population (Teddlie, & Yu, 2007; Creswell, 2012). This gives the researcher a wide choice and the power to select various types of participants, based on what they know about the topic to be investigated (Coyne, 1997; Thompson, 1999; Teddlie, & Yu, 2007). Participants in this study were selected based on their relevant characteristics against the background of an investigation into the effects of marital dissolution on early adolescents' academic and psycho-social development in the context of Tanzanian families (Sandelowski, 1995; Teddlie, & Yu, 2007). For instance, only children in the 12 to 15 age group were selected within a context of marital dissolution due to the fact that this age group is said to be more vulnerable to family shocks than other age groups. I selected teachers and caregivers on the basis of their relationship with the children – either as a class teacher or as a mother/aunt in the houses at the centres where the children lived. Table 3.6 summarises the specific selection criteria that I applied.

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Table 3.6: Criteria for the Selection of Participants

Category	Selection criteria
Child participants	▪ Must come from a broken family ▪ Must remember what happened during separation ▪ A child of parents who separated in the past five years ▪ Must live at a centre or with a custodial parent ▪ Must be an early adolescent between 12 and 15 years of age.
Parent participants	▪ Must have experience of marital dissolution ▪ Must have a child or children who were also available and who experienced the separation ▪ Must be a custodial parent
Teacher and caregiver participants	▪ Must be familiar with the child/children from broken families ▪ Must teach the child/children or live with them at the centre ▪ Must be aware that the selected child/children are from broken families

Many studies, including those by Alderson (2001), Alderson and Morrow (2006) as well as Christensen and James (2008), have in the past considered children as mere objects of research. By relying on social constructivism as an epistemological paradigm, this study considered children as active research participants with their own independent and constructive voices (James, & Prout, 1997). I did not just consider child participants as passive victims of their parents' separation but as active members in family systems with the potential to effect change or be affected by change that occurs within a system (Neale, & Flowerdew, 2007).

Correspondingly, the extent to which children may be impacted by family dynamics, including marital dissolution, is determined by the role played by the children in the family as well as how they are perceived. In this study children were considered in terms of two perspectives: firstly, as welfare dependants and, secondly, as young citizens (Neale, & Flowerdew, 2007). According to the first perspective, children especially those under 15 years of age were considered as full dependants of their two parents and entirely in need of care, protection and control because of their immaturity. Following the fact that a large part of children's lives is determined by parents, it was clear that any change that occurred in the family, such as parents' separation in this study, could potentially would result in children being vulnerable (Neale, 2002; Willow *et al*., 2004).

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In summary, purposive sampling allowed me to know who to sample for the study (Coyne 1997) and it enabled me to select participants according to the aim of the study; in other words, I could select participants who would be able to answer my research questions (Teddlie, & Yu, 2007) and provide rich data on marital dissolution in the Tanzanian context (Patton, 1999). However, in order to avoid the possibility of selecting just any person to participate I applied stipulated selection criteria, making sure that each participant was suitable for the study, regardless of the time and the resources spent in reaching or accessing those individuals. Even though this mandate to select participants who suited the study could have led to bias and subjectivity, I attempted to limit my prior knowledge in, and any perceptions from, influencing my selection of participants. I remained focused on the aim of the study rather than being steered towards generalisation or maintaining objectivity (Coyne, 1997; Teddlie, & Yu, 2007).

3.3.4 DATA COLLECTION AND DOCUMENTATION

For data collection I used semi-structured interviews, children's narration, focus group discussions and the analysis of children's academic documents. I documented raw data by means of transcripts, field notes, a research diary and visual data documentation techniques.

3.3.4.1 Semi-structured interviews with child and parent participants

Interviewing is one of the most widely used methods for obtaining qualitative data. Interviews are used to collect information related to participants' ideas, opinions and beliefs in terms of their own experiences and interpretation of a particular phenomenon (Ary *et al.*, 2010). Potentially, interviews can provide information which cannot be obtained merely through observation, but which can be used to verify observations (Punch, 2000). In this study I used semi-structured interviews to obtain specific information from the children and their parents.

Before starting the interview sessions I reminded the participants of the nature, aim and significance of my study. I also requested their permission to record the discussions and I explained the reasons why it was important for me to have them recorded (see Appendix A for the informed consent and assent form) (Britten, 1995; Merriam, & Simpson, 1995). I conducted twenty-four interviews, involving 12 children (above the age of twelve) and 12 custodial parents. Each interview session lasted 45 to 90 minutes and was conducted in Kiswahili so that all the participants could express themselves freely in their mother tongue. I

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recorded all interviews and later translated and transcribed them *verbatim* for the purpose of data analysis. Table 3.7, below, gives a summary of the details of the interviewees.

Table 3.7: Summary of Interviewees

Interviewee	Date	Venue
C1	15 November 2012	Centre 1 premises
C2	16 November 2012	Centre 1 premises
C3	20 November 2012	Centre 1 premises
C4	16 November 2012	Custodial home: Mwenge
C5	20 November 2012	Centre 1 premises
C6	22 November 2012	Centre 2 premises
C7	20 November 2012	Centre 2 premises
C8	21 November 2012	Centre 2 premises
C9	28 November 2012	Custodial home: Popo bawa, Kinondoni
C10	22 November 2012	Custodial home: Sinza
C11	14 December 2012	Custodial home: Bamaga
C12	23 November 2012	Centre 2 premises
P1	28 November 2012	Home: Popobawa, Kinondoni
P2	21 November 2012	Home: Sinza
P3	29 November 2012	Home: Yombo
P4	30 November 2012	Home: Kijitonyama
P5	1 December 2012	Home: Ubungo
P6	3 December 2012	Home: Mbezi Ndumbwi
P7	3 December 2012	Home: Mbezi Ndumbwi
P8	5 December 2012	Home: Mbezi beach
P9	6 December 2012	Home: Mbezi beach
P10	8 December 2012	Home: Mbezi juu
P11	10 December 2012	Home: Kawe
P12	13 December 2012	Home: Mbezi makonde

During the semi-structured interviews the conversations were guided by a pre-determined list of questions on issues to be explored (see Appendix B for the respective interview guides) (Merriam, 2002). Interviews took the form of conversations during which I was able to

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explore various dimensions of the problem of marital dissolution, based on individual experiences.

I collected different kinds of information in the interviews, such as information concerning children's experiences of life before, during and after marital dissolution as well as their attitudes about their parents' decision to separate; their attitudes and feelings about marital dissolution itself; and the extent of the effects of the breakup on them. The parents, of whom the majority were mothers, shared information on their insights into the effects of marital dissolution on their children, given that they had lived with the children before, during and – some of them – after the breakup. Parents' insight (or a lack of it) into their children's well-being during breakup; the effects on their academic performance; changes in their behaviour; and other reflections on the outcomes of marital dissolution – whether positive or negative – were also investigated.

Interviews as a method of data collection provided me with an understanding of the participants' feelings, opinions and experiences regarding marital dissolution (Blanche, Blanche, Durrheim, & Painter, 2006). A well-planned interview often facilitates positive interaction between the researcher and the participants and may, as a result, expose other hidden related issues that may be beneficial to a study. It may also allow the researcher to view the investigated problem through the eyes of the participants (Babbie, & Mouton, 2001; Greeff, 2005). By means of the interviews I was able to collect descriptive data using the participants' own words and language – in this regard the Kiswahili language. This made it fairly easy for me to analyse how participants interpreted their own worlds which is a core value of social constructivism (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998; De Vos, Strydom, Fouche, & Delport, 2002).

As such, individual interviews gave me the opportunity to engage in dynamic conversation. It allowed me to clarify, and to obtain additional explanations in areas where I needed more information. I was also able to grasp meaning through both the verbal and non-verbal cues of the participants (Merriam, 2002). The open-ended nature of the semi-structured interview questions allowed the participants to freely express their feelings, views, beliefs and perceptions regarding parents' separation and its effects on the children's academic and psycho-social well-being (Nieuwenhuis, 2007; Ary *et al*., 2010). A free and secure environment, in which participants could discuss their experiences, was largely facilitated by the sound rapport established with participants prior to the interview sessions which included

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eating and playing with children in the centres and sharing conversations beyond the topic under study by, for example, talking about their hobbies and future expectations. I also had time to share some typical day to day living with the custodial parents by, for instance, paying frequent visits to them and by becoming familiar with other people with whom they were also connected.

In this study interviews resulted in large volumes of in-depth data, providing insight into the participants' perspectives; the meanings of events for the people involved; information about the site; and even information on unanticipated issues (Glesne, & Peshkin, 1992; Britten, 1995). I could use the interviews to discuss complex and sensitive issues; however, the challenge that I faced with the interviews was that conducting and transcribing them was time-consuming (Willig, 2008). Subsequently, the data was also time-consuming to analyse. Despite this potential challenge, participants were ready to give of their time and provide information which gave me an in-depth understanding of marital dissolution and its effects on children in Tanzania. In cases of participants having busy schedules, they were prepared to reschedule our meetings, thereby making sure that the interview sessions were successfully completed.

Another potential challenge of interviews relates to interviewees potentially not being willing to share information or offering false information – especially in a vulnerable and personal context, such as this study. I attempted to deal with this challenge by establishing a sound rapport with all participants prior to the interview sessions. The subjective nature of interviewing also implies the possibility of bias. However, the intention of my study was not to ensure objectivity but to obtain in-depth information on the effects of marital dissolution on children in the Tanzanian context (Ary *et al*., 2006, 2010; Creswell, 2012). Throughout, I guarded against allowing my own bias and beliefs to influence the data obtained, by reflecting and entering into discussions with my supervisor.

3.3.4.2 Narration with early adolescent participants

In addition to interviews, information was obtained from the 12 children by using narrations (see Appendix I for children's narratives) as traditional interviews may not, optimally, suit small children. The choice of using narrative accounts worked well with the children because I could follow a chronological flow of events resulting from parents' separation and the

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consequences attached to it. Similarly, through the flow of events from the narratives I discovered how life course theory informed my study.

Narratives and storytelling are different in meaning; a narrative is a flow of incidents – often expressed in the first person (Maree, 2011), while storytelling is a story which is told repeatedly by another person and not, necessarily, the narrator (Frid, Öhlén, & Bergbom, 2000). This approach to qualitative data collection is sometimes referred to as oral history (Leedy, & Ormrod, 2005). Narration implies an individual's ability to communicate reality; intertwine background and present life; and create an identity – often by using images and metaphors about personal experiences (Frid, Öhlén, & Bergbom, 2000). Boykin and Schoenhofer (1991) describe narration as a method of organising and communicating what is in the mind of a narrator (in my study children from broken homes). Through their narratives the children who participated could expose their deepest feelings, emotions, views and past experiences which were useful in this qualitative study (Langdridge, 2007).

Narrative descriptions may also be used by researchers in evaluating the flow of information given by participants as well as in doing a quality follow-up of life events as expressed by the narrator (Rittman, Paige, Rivera, Sutphin, & Godown, 1997; Maree, 2011) which makes the narrative a useful tool for collecting qualitative data. Bates (2005) suggest that there is a need for narrators to give their narratives in their first language and their own terms of reference in order to allow for the smooth and consistent flow of their life thoughts and experiences. In this study participants gave their narratives in Kiswahili, the language that is commonly used in everyday life in Tanzania. The use of participants' own language allowed me to record the thoughts they intended to share.

The central function of using narratives in qualitative research is to investigate how individuals experience life (Emden, 1998). In this study I used narratives with the intention of investigating how children experienced marital dissolution and its effects on them. The concept of a narrative does not exist in a vacuum, but is rooted in, and related to, the lived world of the narrator (Maree, 2011). A coherent narration does not emerge automatically but depends on the ability of the narrator to speak in a flowing narrative way to ensure that the explanation is coherent (Frid, Öhlén & Bergbom, 2000; Willig, 2008). Participants involved in this study were able to provide a coherent flow of their life events because they were mentally sufficiently mature with a clear memory of what had happened in their lives before and after the separation.

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Reflecting on the interpretation of participants' narrative accounts, Frid, Öhlén & Bergbom (2000) as well as Maree (2011) suggest that researchers should interpret the possible worlds of the narrative by entering into them and by adopting what seems foreign and converting it into reality. This interpretation may involve inconsistencies, signs and images and, thus, introduce productive meaning. In the context of my study I carefully compared the reflections obtained from participants' narrative accounts with descriptions from various scholars' viewpoints. This comparison allowed me to remain aware of the consistencies and inconsistencies regarding marital dissolution in Tanzania when compared to other parts of the world.

During the recording of the participants' narratives I allowed our discussions to take the form of a conversation, giving participants the chance to relate their experiences and anything else they considered to be relevant. I asked some probing questions and, where necessary, I guided the narrator through the topic being studied. I was doing this while reflecting on the central idea, which was to restructure a social experience from the view of the participant as directly as possible (Bates, 2005). Narratives were presented individually to maintain confidentiality. Each participant gave his/her own narrative which was related to personal experience and illustrated views and experiences concerning parents' separation (Weyers, 2001; Leedy, & Ormrod, 2005).

Expressions used in the narratives provided data on the way in which the child participants had constructed meanings in some aspects of their lives (Willig, 2008). The chronological flow of life events and experiences -as expressed by the children enabled me to reach some initial conclusions about what I had observed and, perhaps, what may be expected (Willig, 2008). However, not every narrative had a chronological flow of events and experiences, as some children's life events were confused and needed attention in order to determine the direction. In these cases I used follow-up and probing questions to help the child find direction in his/her expression (Leedy, & Ormrod, 2005). Another challenge I experienced relates to some children's narratives lacking consistency or areas of similarities with other children's narrations, making it hard to arrive at a particular conclusion. Despite these challenges, I set out to investigate how each child experienced his/her parents' separation in his/her own unique way and did not seek generalisation.

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3.3.4.3 Focus group discussions with teachers and caregivers

Focus group discussions or group interviews (sometimes considered to be steered conversations), typically, focus on a specified issue which is facilitated by a skilled moderator – in this case me as the researcher, prompting the views of group members while noting interaction within the group (Welman, Kruger, & Mitchell, 2005; Teddlie, & Yu, 2007). Using this technique, a small number of participants (six to ten) who share some common characteristics related to the study discuss questions concerning the research topic. The interaction within the group is expected to generate data (Barbour, & Kitzinger, 1998).

I facilitated two focus group discussions with teachers and caregivers at each centre, shaping the conversations and making sure that there was a comprehensive exchange of ideas among participants (Welman, Kruger, & Mitchell, 2005; Maree, 2011). The intention was to explore participants' ideas, beliefs and perceptions of marital dissolution and its effects on children. As the researcher, I asked the group some open-ended questions (see Appendix B for focus group schedules) and allowed the participants to explore these to generate their own responses. In the group discussion sessions participants were the audience for one another (Barbour, & Kitzinger, 1998). Focus groups were helpful in this study as they provided various perspectives as well as the reasons for those perspectives (Ary *et al*., 2006; Creswell, 2012). The decision to have six participants in each focus group discussion seemed appropriate because it gave each participant enough time to engage fully in the discussion. Table 3.8, contains the details of the focus group discussion.

Table 3.8: Details of Focus Group Participants

Group	Date	Venue	Duration	Category of participants
FGD centre 1	10 January 2013	Centre's premises	3 hours	Teachers and caregivers
FGD centre 2	15 January 2013	Centre's premises	2.30 hours	Teachers and caregivers

Before starting any discussion I made sure that I was mentally alert and free of anxiety or pressure that could impair my ability to think clearly. I did this knowing that moderating a group discussion would require attention, concentration and careful listening (Krueger, 1997a). I also familiarised myself with the prepared questions prior to the discussions. Participants agreed to maintain respect for one another and to respect each other's

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contributions and, as the moderator, I also respected the participants and their views. In this regard I showed consideration for their wisdom regardless of their levels of literacy, experience or background, and paid attention to each contribution (Krueger, 1997a; Barbour, & Kitzinger, 1998; Bloor, 2001).

At the start of the discussions it was agreed that all participants would be free to contribute according to what they thought relevant to the topic being studied and that any interruptions should be made with the intention to build on the discussion rather than to criticize or demoralize others (Bloor, 2001). I explained the aim of my study and its potential significance to the country (see Appendix A for the informed consent form). Somewhere in the middle of the sessions we had refreshments – an informal interaction which increased the bonding experience among the group's participants and reduced the possibility of artificiality which participants of focus group discussions may potentially display (Morgan, 1993; 1997).

Merriam (2002) discusses some advantages of focus group discussions which also apply to my study. Firstly, I was able to use time and resources economically. Secondly, focus groups assisted me in studying a topic where there was little information, with the intention of generating new ideas; and thirdly, focus groups were flexible and socially-oriented. Moreover, during focus group discussions I experienced that some views and ideas which could have been difficult to identify during initial individual conversations were more easily put forward in group discussions. This may be due to the fact that human behaviour may be more easily understood through interaction with others rather than in an individual setting (Ary *et al*., 2006; 2010).

Furthermore, focus group discussions allowed me to stimulate the participants' inclusion in the discussion by teasing out assumptions that were sometimes taken for granted. The discussions generated large amounts of rich data in a relatively short period of time (Bloor, 2001). Using focus group discussions thus enabled me to explore participants' experiences, opinions and concerns as each one generated information in his/her own terms. In this way I obtained different perspectives – as conceived in the various participants' social contexts. Both verbal and non-verbal cues also carried meaningful messages (Barbour, & Kitzinger, 1998; Silverman, 2004; Wilkinson, 2004).

In addition, I was able to observe and follow-up on participants' interaction within a group setting. The interaction assisted me to uncover various meanings, perceptions, beliefs and

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attitudes projected within the group. In the group setting meaning was socially rather than individually constructed. Through the interaction between teachers and caregivers I was able to identify how meaning and attitude were produced among the participants. The ideas, perceptions and opinions conveyed during focus group discussions might not have been obtained in the same way using other data collection methods. Participants of the focus group discussions were able to add to explanations or critique each other's contributions, thus providing a picture of their everyday conversations, perceptions and experiences (Morgan, 1993; Morgan, 1997; Bloor, 2001; Anderson, 2002; Patton, 2005). Participants involved in the focus group discussions seemed energised and motivated by the discussions. This nature of the discussions seemingly accelerated the process of collecting data. Some participants in the groups also shared accounts of being the victims of their parents' marital dissolution. Throughout, however, I was guided by the research questions of the study (Kamberelis, & Dimitriadis, 2011).

The focus group discussions did also pose some potential challenges (Bryman, 2004). Discussions were, at times, difficult to control; data was sometimes hard to analyse; and transcribing recordings was time-consuming. Likewise, participants of the focus group discussions were sometimes affected by social pressure to the extent that some artificial responses were forthcoming. Some participants experienced difficulty in expressing views which were apparently contrary to those of the rest of the group. In addressing these challenges I asked participants to only share information that was relevant to the topic being discussed. I also observed which of the participants tended to dominate the discussions. In order to maintain an equal voice I had to probe some participants directly by pointing to them or mentioning their names so that each individual could make a contribution (Morgan, 1993; Morgan, 1997; Barbour, & Kitzinger, 1998; Nieuwenhuis, 2007).

Focus group discussions are, sometimes, not viewed as a productive tool in collecting qualitative data; for example, when the topic under study is sensitive in nature or when it involves strong feelings (Krueger, 1997b; Krueger, & Casey, 2008). Participants may shy away from sharing their experiences on issues which are regarded as sensitive or too personal. This challenge did not hinder the flow of data in my study as the teachers and caregivers were not discussing their own personal experiences but, rather, issues related to the children who were in their care. Occasionally, I experienced some participants moving away from the topic of discussion, expressing their personal views and beliefs which were not relevant to the study. When this happened, I directed and steering them back to the topic and encouraged

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them to stay focused on the relevant discussion (Bloor, 2001; De Vos *et al.*, 2002; Wilkinson, 2004; Patton, 2005).

I conducted the focus group discussions with teachers and caregivers at the centres at times when the children were occupied with other activities. The environment inside and outside these premises had no distractions, allowing participants to concentrate during discussions. As stated before, the discussions were conducted in Kiswahili which I translated, transcribed and analysed, allowing enough time for each of these procedures (Bryman, 2004).

3.3.4.4 Document analysis

Existing documents may take the form of written, oral, visual or cultural artefacts, public records, personal documents, archival records and physical materials. In my study I focused on the children's academic materials and exercise books. In some of these documents, academic development trends and the effects of marital dissolution on children were reflected either directly by children themselves, or indirectly by teachers and caregivers' perspectives (see Appendix B for the document analysis guide that I relied on) (Merriam, 2002; Creswell, & Clark, 2007; Maree, 2012).

Atkinson and Coffey (2004) caution qualitative researchers to pay proper attention in selecting documents they want to analyse as the choice of appropriate documents may expose the potential realities of a phenomenon under study. In a quest of knowing how an organisation or particular group of people work and conduct their daily life, for example, researchers are advised to consult what is written in relation to the particular group or organisation. Through the analysis of related documents one may become familiar with individuals' actions, interaction and their various encounters (Dey, 2003; Atkinson, & Coffey, 2004; Patton, 2005). Although a careful analysis of related documents may be useful, qualitative researchers are also urged to incorporate a clear understanding of how documents are produced, circulated, read, stored and used (Atkinson, & Coffey, 2004). In conducting document analysis in this study I kept the central idea of the topic in my mind to guide me throughout my investigation (Caulley, 1983; Silverman, 2010). I specifically used academic documents to gain an insight into how children's academic performance was, potentially, affected by their parents' separation.

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Ary *et al*. (2006) suggest that when using documentary sources a researcher should establish the authenticity of the document as well as the validity of its content. The validity of existing documents as a source of data is marked by the fact that it already exists in a situation and that it may not be altered due to the presence of an investigator (Caulley, 1983; Merriam, 2002). The analysis of qualitative documents involves a coding process in which a researcher identifies significant terms and topics – as set out in a document analysis guide – and then makes a constant comparison to clarify themes, settings and discourses (Altheide, 2000, p. 291).

Documents analysis is a useful approach in case study design, such as was used in this study, as it involves an analysis of how things have happened in the past and are happening in the present. The analysis of academic documents in this study was relatively quick and cost effective. It was a method that I was able to use at any time as it did not pose hindrances. Documents were easily accessible, particularly those related to the children living at centres (Caulley, 1983; Dey, 2003; Patton, 2005; Maree, 2012).

However, I faced some challenges in relation to document analysis. Despite Maree's (2012) suggestion that documents are often easily accessible, the process of accessing academic documents related to the children living in their custodial homes was not as smooth and easy as for those at the centres and the majority of academic documents, such as text books and exercise books, were of a poor quality. I did not observe a culture of using children's diaries to record teachers' daily comments about the children's academic and social development. Likewise, schools and centres did not have a culture of keeping children's behaviour records, as behavioural incidents were only verbally communicated.

In addition, documentary analysis may potentially be biased as the analysis only represents the views of the researcher. Since these documents reflect the unique context of particular participants they are not expected to be representative and, hence, limit generalisation. Despite these potential challenges I focused on not being biased by my personal reflections. I aimed at conducting an in-depth investigation on how the academic development of the children in this study was, potentially, affected by marital dissolution and my purpose was, therefore, not to generalise my findings (Patton, 2005; Maree, 2012). The academic documents I analysed helped me to acquire some essential information that was not be obtained through interviews and narrative accounts (Caulley, 1983).

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3.3.4.5 Observations, documented in the form of field notes and a research diary

Observation is a process of collecting first-hand information through observing people's actions and interaction on a research site (Creswell, 2012). In this study I used observation in support of other data collection methods whereby I observed activities and interactions with parents, children, teachers and caregivers (Merriam, 1998). As a qualitative researcher I shared in the lives of the participants during my interaction with them (Nieuwenhuis, 2007; Creswell, 2012).

Although observation, as a method of data collection, is prone to researcher bias, I attempted to document information without prejudice or to interpret what I observed in an unbiased manner. When uncertain about something, such as a non-verbal message, I clarified this with the participants. The fact that I am a Tanzanian citizen assisted me in observing non-verbal cues that were relevant to conversations that transpired. I also engaged in discussions with my supervisor about what I had noted and documented in my field notes and research diary. In order to avoid my own thinking and feelings affecting my observations, I immediately documented what I observed and did not postpone recording my observations to a later stage (Babbie, & Mouton, 2001). Throughout, observation was a measure of trustworthiness as it enabled me to confirm what was reported through verbal interaction.

Throughout my study I used field notes (see Appendix F) to record my observations and my interaction with the participants. The recorded interaction made my reflection process easy. My field notes contained different observations that emerged during verbal and non-verbal interaction with the participants as well as my reflections, emotions and experiences, as well as notes of the areas which needed re-thinking during the course of the study. I kept a record of strengths and challenges of my methodology as well as areas in which I had to make some improvement. Through the use of field notes I was able to make initial interpretations and gain insight into the data obtained from participants' responses and observations (Strauss, & Corbin, 1998; Babbie, & Mouton, 2001; Patton, 2002; Bogdan, & Biklen, 2003; Punch, 2009).

I also made use of a research diary (see Appendix H) to record my everyday involvement in the research field. While my field notes contained the participants' information; my observations; details of the setting; as well as my reflections, my research diary contained information about what I – as the researcher – was doing: where, when and with whom at each stage of the research project. The records I kept in my research diary were useful whenever I

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wanted to revisit the research process. Field notes and my research diary, therefore, complimented the data I obtained by means of other methods. This is sometimes referred to as interpretation of interpretation (Hughes, 1996; Mayan, 2001; Bogdan, & Biklen, 2003; Nadin, & Cassell, 2006, p. 208).

Throughout the research process I used my research diary as a tool to reflect on my research practices. It involved exploring my day-to-day practices in the field; provided a mirror in which I reflected on my conduct in the field; gave me confidence in recording and writing research accounts; and provided an audit trail to my research progress (Hughes, 1996; Nadin, & Cassell, 2006). The use of field notes and a research diary enabled me to apply reflexivity through which I reflected on the way I conducted my study and helped me to comprehend how the research process shaped its outcomes. This was aimed to increase the trustworthiness of my study (Mayan, 2001; Nadin, & Cassell, 2006). As such, the use of field notes and a research diary provided me with the opportunity to document my observations and reflections on how I perceived the research process. It also allowed me to generate a history of my field work, thereby enriching the development of my research skills (Hughes 1996; Straus, & Corbin, 1998; Stake 2000; Bogdan, & Biklen, 2003).

However, despite its value, the use of a research diary and field notes was sometimes challenging as it demanded attention while I was also immersed in other activities with participants. Concentrating on note-taking and writing reflections occasionally became a hindrance in building and sustaining rapport with the participants. The practicality of a research diary and reflexivity is often unfamiliar to researchers. In addressing these challenges I documented my reflections and observations as soon as I finished a session because I knew that if I left to do it later I might end up forgetting some useful details. I gave myself ample time to reflect on what transpired during each session and to write down my observations and reflections. Similarly, I tried not to dwell on capturing each and every detail in my field notes but only the necessary information so that I could pay attention to the flow of responses from participants. In cases of any forgotten input during my reflections, I relied on the participants' audio-recorded conversations (Babbie, & Mouton, 2001; Patton, 2002; Punch, 2009; Nadin, & Cassell, 2006).

3.3.5 MY ROLE AS RESEARCHER

The role that a researcher assumes in the field may positively or negatively affect the findings of a study. Despite being a scholar and practitioner as educational psychologist and

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counsellor, I entered the field assuming the role of researcher and establishing a researcher-participant relationship from the initial stages of the research process until the end. This was done after I successfully managed to obtain permission to enter each research site and had made myself familiar with the authorities at those sites.

Being a university academic staff member in my community in Tanzania, typically, creates a certain hierarchical perception among community members which could, possibly, damage the involvement of participants in research and, potentially, affect the data. In dealing with this challenge I had to level myself to the position of the participants in order not to be considered as a stranger but as one of them (an insider). I had to live their life and do what they did. During focus group discussions, I fulfilled the role of moderator and not participant, ensuring that each group produced what was aimed at despite differences in their understanding, perceptions and views of the world. My role as an insider ended when I was interpreting and analysing data and writing up the findings as I reported the reality and experiences from the field not as one of the participants but as lived by the participants (insiders) in their social context (Kelly, 1999; Creswell, 2007; Mertens, 2009).

Living participants' lives and being an insider in their context did not mean that I equated myself with them but that I constantly avoided hierarchy and differences in perceptions for the sake of my study. In order to gain insight into participants' views, beliefs, perceptions and attitudes on marital dissolution and how it may affect children's academic development and psycho-social well-being I had to rely on the participants' voices as well as observe their verbal and non-verbal cues regarding the topic being studied. The transcriptions of participants' recorded voices were supported by the reflections which I documented in my field notes and my research diary (Denzin, & Lincoln, 2000; Babbie, & Mouton, 2001; Cockcroft, & Israel, 2004).

Furthermore, by being an insider and documenting my reflections and observations which form part of the data put me in another role as an instrument of research. I acknowledge that in such circumstances, my prior knowledge, perceptions and experiences could have influenced how I documented the participants' interactions as well as my interpretations of the data. In minimising this risk I had to rely on documenting my feelings and biases in my field notes. I also interpreted the participants' views, beliefs and opinions while being aware that – as a person – I had my own perceptions, beliefs and views of the world. Moreover, I documented the day-to-day activities of my research process in a research diary to allow for continuous

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revisits to the process at later stages (Patton, 2002; Nieuwenhuis, & Maree, 2007). However, Peshkin (1988) and Strand (2000) maintain that subjectivity cannot be avoided by any researcher and recommend that researchers should be aware of this throughout the research process. Besides my reflections on this possibility in my research diary, I also regularly discussed my potential bias and subjectivity with my supervisor in an attempt to limit it.

3.3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

Punch (2009) states that methods of data analysis should be systematic disciplined and be able to be seen and described. Data analysis involves reducing and organising data, synthesizing, searching for significant patterns and identifying what is relevant. In doing this a researcher must organise what s/he has seen, heard and read and then try to make sense of this in order to give explanations and reach conclusions, develop theories or pose new questions (Ary *et al*., 2006). Data analysis in a qualitative study is often done concurrently with data collection by means of an iterative and dynamic process (Punch, 2000). Bogdan and Biklen (2003) support the idea of Punch (2000) that data analysis is not a once-off incident but rather an on-going dynamic and systemic process of a researcher searching for meaning behind what is researched.

The analysis of data in this study is based on a framework suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) which is known as Miles and Huberman's stage analysis. As such, my analysis is based on data reduction, data display, and drawing and verifying conclusions, processes which worked concurrently throughout this study. During data collection and the documentation of participants' responses I started drawing some conclusions from an initial interpretation of the data, with some of these conclusions being confirmed as the process unfolded. I captured my initial interpretation of the data in my field notes (see Appendix F) (Patton, 1999; Punch, 2005; 2009).

Data reduction – as it occurs through the various stages – includes editing, segmenting, summarising, coding, memoing, finding themes or patterns, conceptualising and explaining (Punch, 2005; 2009). In this qualitative study the aim of data reduction was to reduce the data without any significant loss of information; in other words, without stripping the information from its context (Babbie, 2008). In the first stage of data display, processes, such as organisation, compression and assembling of information, were involved. This stage was crucial due to the fact that qualitative information is, typically, high in volume and it is

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dispersed. To begin with, I organised my data in terms of frequently occurring categories, although these categories were bulky at that stage. The assembling process enabled me to initially group the data according to possible themes and subthemes. Setting aside the frequently occurring from the less frequently occurring categories among the data formed part of the data reduction process. The more I reduced the bulkiness of the data, the easier the data organisation process became (Punch, 2005). The process of qualitative data analysis, therefore, involved repeated and iterative displays of data. The data reduction and display stages were focused on coding and memoing (see Appendix D for coding in the transcriptions), (Miles, & Huberman, 1994; Punch, 2009). During the final process of analysis, I noted conclusions in the form of propositions and, once drawn, these were verified. Drawing and verifying conclusions is a conceptually distinct stage of data analysis but it may occur simultaneously with other phases (see Appendix F for initial conclusions in my research diary) (Patton, 1999; Punch, 2005; 2009).

Using Miles and Huberman's stage analysis framework (1994) I subjected all data I gathered by means of interviews, focus group discussions, children narratives, existing documents, observation and field notes to open-coding. I made brief descriptions in the margin of the transcripts based on the meaning I derived in each line which were, then, used in my initial coding process (see Appendix D for transcriptions). As the process unfolded I was able to identify numerous categories that facilitated the creation of themes and sub-themes. I used different colours to differentiate these themes and sub-themes; for instance, categories marked with light blue represented participants' responses related to the effects of marital dissolution – whether positive or negative, while yellow represented categories that concerned reasons for marital dissolution. In order to reduce the number of categories and to solidify the data, I then grouped related categories together, a process which is known as axial coding (Creswell, 2012; Nieuwenhuis, 2007b). I attempted to establish relationships between the emerged themes and sub-themes from the discussion as well as by creating relevant categories between the meaning of what participants had said and its implications. This process was helpful and simplified the analysis process (Punch, 2005).

Throughout the coding process I was able to reflect on, and recall, my contact with participants as well as other research activities conducted in the field. Moreover, I relied on my supervisor's guidance in the entire processes of coding, categorising and producing themes and sub-themes. From time to time she guided me in refining my emerged themes into a more meaningful product by ensuring that all related categories fell under one sub-theme and that

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these sub-themes built up to meaningful themes that addressed my research questions. With her assistance I managed to group related voices and quotations under particular themes and sub-themes – a process that simplified the presentation of the findings in Chapter 4. Although it was a cumbersome and time-consuming process, it shaped my study. In translating and transcribing the data into English, I actively attempted not to change the meaning as it was intended by the participants. The translation from Kiswahili to English was driven by my intention to make my final report internationally accessible.

Despite the fact that the processes of data reduction, data display and verifying conclusions consumed a vast amount of time, it enabled me to easily create a trail of evidence through which my research process could be traced. This adds to the rigor of the study (Babbie, & Mouton, 2001) (see Appendix D for analysis of the transcriptions). By personally engaging in the research process and listening and observing to details related to the central topic throughout the study, I was able to obtain insight into the research context. The insight I obtained was useful in my analysis and interpretation of the data and it reflects my conceptual framework. (Peshkin, 1988; Strand, 2000; Babbie, & Mouton, 2001; Anderson, 2002).

Due to the fact that this study involved large amounts of data the processes of data organisation, assembling and reduction were time-consuming, tiresome and needed careful attention. I aimed to minimise the associated risks by setting aside ample time for these processes with frequent consultations and guidance from my supervisor. As in other qualitative studies, the processes of data collection and data analysis were inseparable during the study. However, I aimed for the results of data collection, analysis and interpretation to be pure and of a high quality. Throughout, I attempted to obtain credible, dependable, transferable, confirmable and authentic findings (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011).

3.4 QUALITY CRITERIA

In qualitative research trustworthiness is a preferred term rather than truth and value as these are used in positivist research (Rolfe, 2006). Trustworthiness is viewed by Lincoln, Lynham and Guba (2011) and by Graneheim and Lundman (2004) as a general picture of quality in any qualitative study. Trustworthiness implies credibility, which corresponds with internal validity, as it is used by positivists while dependability relates to reliability. Transferability relates to external validity; and confirmability is concerned with issues of presentation

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(Halldórsson, & Aastrup, 2003). In addition, authenticity is closely related to credibility and validity (Whittemore, Chase, & Mandle, 2001).

3.4.1 CREDIBILITY

Credibility refers to the conscious effort to establish confidence in an accurate interpretation of the meaning of data and to ensure that what comes out of the research findings corresponds with the living realities of the people under study (participants) or of their contexts in a believable way (Whittemore, Chase, & Mandle, 2001; Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011). Seale (1999) and Guba and Lincoln (2005) see credibility as an extent to which the results from the field provide a true reflection of the 'truth' which implies the researcher's professional integrity, methodological capability and rigor. Credibility, thus, aims to ensure that explanations fit descriptions and that "interpretations are trustworthy and reveal some truth external to the investigator's experience" (Whittemore, Chase, & Mandle, 2001, p. 530).

In ensuring credibility in my study, I explored in-depth information about marital dissolution in the Tanzanian context from various data sources, including separated parents, child victims, teachers and caregivers where each expressed their views and ideas based on how living realities are perceived in their social contexts. I made use of field notes and a research diary in an attempt to provide a rich description of my research context as well as my own feelings, insights and assumptions – based on the research process (Bogdan, & Biklen, 2003; Nadin, & Cassell, 2006). In this study I relied on both triangulation and crystallisation as strategies to enhance rigor. Triangulation refers to a search for an intersection among numerous sources of information in order to identify themes or categories in a study, while crystallisation aims to view one phenomenon from various perspectives in order to obtain layered, multiple views or meanings. Furthermore, triangulation is a method to support credibility in a qualitative study as it involves an organised process of categorising the information obtained in the field through various means and from data sources in order to find common themes by reducing overlapping areas (Creswell, & Miller, 2000; Patton, 2002; Richardson, 2003).

By employing triangulation I was able to compare the results that emerged from two or more methods of data collection (multiple methods); from different sources of data (multiple informants); as well as from multiple groups (two groups of parents and two groups of teachers and caregivers). The use of triangulation benefited the study in such a way that the weakness of one method could be compensated for by the strength of another as each method

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revealed reality in a different way and this increased the trustworthiness of the findings (Creswell, 2012). Generally, triangulation assists in maintaining the comprehensiveness of the findings of a study and promotes a more reflexive analysis of the data (Mays, & Pope, 2000).

As different methods reveal different aspects of empirical reality, this study employed multiple methods of data collection, namely, interviews, focus group discussions, children's narratives, observations and document analysis. Various sources of data were involved, such as children from broken families, custodian parents, caregivers and teachers of these children. I intended that my study should be viewed from various angles, dimensions and perspectives and, therefore, I employed Richardson's (2003) concept of crystallisation. In order to enhance the theory of perspective crystallisation, four theories, namely: attachment theory, crisis theory, family stress theory and life course theory, underpin this study. During data collection I tried to cross-check the data obtained from the field against the description of these theories. For investigator and analyst crystallisation I relied on a close collaboration with, and assistance from, my supervisor during each stage of the study (Schaller, & Tobin, 1997; Kelly 2002; Patton, 2002).

In an effort to maintain peer debriefing or review I discussed my instruments and other ideas concerning my study with the Applied Social Psychology (ASP) master's class at the University of Dar es Salaam before data collection. The purpose was to cross-check how these instruments and objectives were perceived by them as they were familiar with the Tanzanian context and general practices in the country. Furthermore, the processes of data collection, analysis and interpretation were reviewed by my supervisor on a continuous basis.

3.4.2 DEPENDABILITY

Dependability is closely related to auditability, according to which it is the duty of a researcher to ensure that each process in a study is logical, traceable and documented (Schwandt, 2007). Auditability or reliability – as perceived by positivists – seeks to determine whether or not the findings of a particular study could be the same if such a study is conducted again in the same context. This criterion, therefore, addresses the replication of the findings of a study (Seale, 1999; Mertens, 2009).

In attempting to achieve dependability, I provided extensive documentation of my data, methods and decisions and I recorded possible changes which could occur in descriptions and

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reports in the study (Babbie, & Mouton, 2001; Seale, 1999). In addition to the audit trail, I recorded, translated and transcribed all interviews and discussions *verbatim*. I also kept a detailed record of my research in my research diary in order to strengthen the rigor of the study (Nadin, & Cassell, 2006; Creswell, 2012). In addition, in order to ensure credibility and dependability, I relied on member-checking by going back to the participants to crosscheck if what I documented was exactly what they meant. This process was done partly in January 2013 and finalised in January 2014, during which time I presented the identified themes and sub-themes to the participants and requested them to comment on these. I also utilised the following strategies: *verbatim* accounts of the participants' responses; prolonged time spent in the field; providing rich and thick descriptions; collaboration; and peer debriefing. A *verbatim* account of the participants' responses was assured by recording and transcribing all sessions. In order to obtain rich, thick and reliable data from the field, I spent a considerable period of time collecting data; various interviews, focus group discussions and narratives were conducted during this period; and I completed a thorough analysis of children's academic documents (Creswell, & Miller, 2000; Mays, & Pope, 2000; Babbie, & Mouton, 2001; Schwandt, 2007; Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011).

3.4.3 TRANSFERABILITY

Transferability is referred to by positivists as external validity or generalizability (Mertens, 2009; Patton, 2002). In qualitative research, findings cannot merely be generalised and researchers attempt to obtain findings that may be transferred to other similar contexts (Seale, 1999; Schwandt, 2007). The aim of my study was not to generalise its findings but to obtain a deep understanding of marital dissolution and its effects on children's academic development and psycho-social well-being in the context of Tanzania (Merriam, 2002).

In order to achieve transferability of my study I provide thorough, rich and detailed descriptions of the context and research process in this thesis so that other researchers may consider the possibility of transferring the findings to other similar contexts. To obtain rich descriptions I had to spend a considerable period of time in the field to consolidate evidence as I checked the data obtained through numerous methods and sources and then compared it. A prolonged period of involvement in data collection also helped me lessen the possible distortion which might have been caused by my presence as an investigator in a particular context. The purpose of thick description is to produce explanations that may expose the feelings experienced by participants (Creswell, & Miller, 2000; Creswell, 2012).

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3.4.4 CONFIRMABILITY

Confirmability of a study is concerned with whether or not someone else can confirm the findings of a study. This criterion is based on objectivity, but because qualitative research is believed to be subjective in nature, its confirmability lies in the data answering the question whether or not the data of a study confirms the general findings and leads to further implications. In other words, confirmability implies the ability of views, perceptions and experiences shared by participants to confirm the general findings and not the ideas of the researcher (Creswell, & Miller, 2000; Whittemore, Chase, & Mandle, 2001; De Vos *et al*., 2002).

In order to draw a line between my preferences as a researcher and the emerging findings, I noted all my personal assumptions and reflections in a research diary so that they did not impair the data. I attempted to ensure the confirmability of my findings by relying on member-checking (which was partly done in January 2013 and finalised in January 2014) as well as frequent discussions with my supervisor about everything that emerged in the field. I conducted participant debriefing from time to time, and encouraged participants to ask questions or raise concerns related to the study. At points when I sensed any misunderstanding or misinformation I intervened by finding out what was needed to clarify the matter for each participant. Throughout this study I worked in close collaboration with the participants to obtain confirmable data. Each participant was regarded with great respect and support as a co-researcher and, as such, the participants provided assistance in modifying and strengthening my research questions, the collection of data and the process of analysis (Schwandt, 1994; Creswell, & Miller, 2000; Punch, 2005).

3.4.5 AUTHENTICITY

Authenticity in a qualitative study is used to determine whether or not a balanced view of the various perspectives, beliefs and values of the participants is provided by the researcher. Authenticity implies ontological, catalytic and tactical authenticity; in other words, a true description of participants, contexts and events. It can also be viewed as the researcher's ability to maintain fairness throughout a study and to ensure that various point of views are fairly represented (Manning, 1997; Schaller, & Tobin, 1997; Guba, & Lincoln, 2005; Schwandt, 2007).

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Since this study was guided by the social constructivist paradigm, various meanings, experiences, values and beliefs were derived from participants' own views on marital dissolution and its effects on children. I attempted to maintain a balance and fairness in the various views from all categories of participants by employing a range of different perspectives about the topic, thereby suggesting the use of crystallisation and triangulation. I also documented any contradicting or conflicting responses to maintain fairness to each participant and for each perspective. Furthermore, I allowed participants the opportunity to cross-check if what I had documented was exactly what they had meant. I made sure that they understood what was required of them before they responded and, to achieve this, I made use of member-checking and included an audit trail in this thesis (Whittemore, Chase, & Mandle 2001; Richardson, 2003; Lincoln Lynham, & Guba, 2011).

3.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In carrying out my study, I ensured that no participant was harmed in any way (Ary *et al*., 2006). In order to maintain integrity, quality and trustworthiness (Punch, 2000), I adhered to the ethical principles stipulated by the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria (www.up.ac.za) as discussed in the sub-sections that follow.

3.5.1 PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

After obtaining ethical clearance from the University of Pretoria (see Appendix E for ethical clearance certificate), a letter requesting permission to do research at the two selected centres was addressed to the directors of the centres (see Appendix C). Another letter of permission to conduct research in Tanzanian institutions was given to me by the Director of Research and Publications on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Dar es Salaam (see Appendix C) who has the mandate from the Government of the Republic of Tanzania to offer academic research permits.

3.5.2 INFORMED CONSENT AND ASSENT

All participants, regardless of their age, were informed about the nature, aim, and benefits of the study prior to its commencement and they were given reasons as to why they were considered for involvement in the study. Adult participants were required to complete consent forms (see Appendix A) in order to formalise their willingness to participate in the study and in order to avoid the potential effect of a hierarchy of consent or informal pressure (Hill,

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2005).Child participants were required to complete informed assent forms by ticking a happy face to show their agreement or ticking a sad face to imply disagreement (see Appendix A).

Assent forms were written and read in Kiswahili, the language which is understood by children in Tanzania. The complete initial contracting phase was witnessed by a caregiver or a custodial parent as the child's advocate. I also obtained consent from heads of the centres and custodial parents for conducting my study with the children in their care (see Appendix A). As informed consent is not always a straightforward issue, consent was viewed not as a single action but as a continuous/on-going process of negotiation, especially because of the sensitive nature of this study (Steane, 2004; Forrester, 2010).

3.5.3 FREEDOM TO WITHDRAW

The possibility of the freedom to withdraw from participation at any stage was conveyed to all participants as well as the fact that their decisions would be respected. As part of informed consent, participants were expected to base their voluntary participation in this study on a full understanding of the possible risks involved (Babbie, 2008) and so participants were informed of their freedom to withdraw any information that they provided if they felt the need to do so.

3.5.4 PRIVACY, CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY

In order to obtain privacy, confidentiality and anonymity I assured the participants that the information provided by them would be treated with integrity and confidentiality. Names and identities of participants and institutions have, therefore, been concealed and protected in the study. To assure anonymity, all identifying information was removed from participants' responses and replaced with identification numbers or symbols, for example, C1 and P1 indicating Child participant 1 and Parent participant 1. In the focus group discussions, I also asked participants to keep each other's contributions confidential and maintain respect for one another. In cases of any off-record comments, I asked participants for their consent to allow me – as the researcher – to keep a record of what was said and to indicate whether or not it was meant to be kept confidential.

Throughout my study I respected participants' privacy and tried not to invade it – even in cases where I had to visit participants' homes for interview sessions. Each parent gave consent for my visits and for the venue in which we conducted the interviews. The positive rapport I built with the participants prior to interview sessions made them feel secure in inviting me to

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their homes. Moreover, I assured participants of the respect for the data they provided and that I would store it in a secured environment while the study proceeded and only destroy the recordings and transcripts after 15 years as prescribed by the ethics committee of the Faculty of Education, University of Pretoria (Punch, 1994; Barrett, 2000b; Babbie, & Mouton, 2001; Forrester, 2010; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011).

3.5.5 USE AND MISUSE OF RESULTS

I clearly indicated to participants and the selected institutions that the results of my study were for academic purposes. However, my study offers recommendations to the Tanzanian government and other family and children-related stakeholders regarding the well-being of children coming from broken families as well as areas for further research. Furthermore, individual participants and institutions were told of their rights to access the study report (Forrester, 2010).

3.5.6 HONESTY AND TRUST

Honesty and trust are reflected in the relationship that a researcher has with the people who participated in a study (Punch, 2000). The researcher-participant relationship governed the entire undertaking of my study; for example I had to build rapport during initial contact with the participants – both children and adults – to make them feel at ease, confident and ready to provide reliable information. This process included visiting them and playing and eating with them. Sometimes I had to be with them during difficult times, such as when Child Participant 9 experienced medical complications due to an early pregnancy. I made sure that a positive relationship was maintained yet I constantly reflected on my primary role as researcher and guarded against fulfilling the additional role of counsellor as this was not my aim of involvement. I had to rely on reflexivity in dealing with this challenge.

3.5.7 PROTECTION FROM HARM

Researchers are obliged to in no way expose their participants to physical, psychological or legal harm (Sarantakos, 2005). Due to the fact that I was dealing mainly with children whose backgrounds made them vulnerable, some of their past painful memories were likely to be brought to the fore by their participation in the study. I addressed this challenge by constantly being alert to signs of discomfort and by ensuring that the centres' counsellors or a social worker were around and ready to provide support when a child needed this. In addition, I was

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prepared to discontinue any session that would cause emotional upset to a child as well as to parents, debriefing them and then continuing at a later stage. Fortunately no such incidences occurred, perhaps based on the prolonged time I spent in the research field and the relationships of trust I established with the participants prior to collecting any data.

Because of the nature of my study, there was a possibility that some parents would also experience negative reflections, regrets and guilt feelings. Parents who experienced distress were given the freedom to decide whether to continue or to withdraw from the study. No participant decided to withdraw from the study as I made every effort to ensure that they were all protected from harm (Strydom, Fouche, & Delport, 2002). In doing this, I did not focus on any aspect of their lives that was not useful to my study. Amato and Ochiltree (1987) and Hill (2005) caution researchers who work with children to be mindful of their emotional states during data collection activities and, occasionally, provide reassurance. In line with this recommendation I consistently ensured participants' emotional well-being and having a social worker available in case participants became distressed.

3.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I gave a detailed description of how I undertook the empirical part of my study. I described my research methodology, its strengths and the challenges I experienced in the field and I explained how I attempted to address such challenges. I further explained my role as researcher and the tasks I executed during the research process. I concluded the chapter by explaining the manner in which I attempted to obtain rigorous findings and conduct ethically sound research.

In the next chapter, Chapter 4, I present the results of my findings in terms of the themes and sub-themes I identified subsequent to qualitative data analysis. I include *verbatim* quotations of the participants, entries from my field notes and excerpts from the document analysis and visual data to enrich the discussion.

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CHAPTER 4

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 3 I described the empirical part of my study which I undertook in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, from October 2012 to February 2013 and later during member-checking in December and January 2014. Among other things, I justified my selected research design and the methodological strategies I used in terms of the research questions and the purpose of the study.

The aim of Chapter 4 is to present the results of the study in terms of the four themes that emerged following a thematic inductive analysis of the transcripts, the children's academic documents (visual data), the field notes, and my research diary. The themes are:

- Reasons for marital dissolution
- Effects of marital dissolution on early adolescents' functioning
- Trends following marital dissolution
- Managing marital dissolution in Tanzania.

My explanation of the themes, sub-themes and categories is enriched by *verbatim* quotations from the interviews, the children's narratives and the focus group discussions. I also use excerpts from my field notes, research diary and children's academic documents (visual data) to support my discussion. In Chapter 5 I integrate the emerged themes and sub-themes with existing literature in presenting my findings. Table 4.1 provides an overview of the themes, sub-themes and categories that I discuss in this chapter.

Table 4.1: Summary of Themes, Sub-Themes and Categories

THEME 1: REASONS FOR MARITAL DISSOLUTION	
SUB-THEMES	**CATEGORIES**
Sub-theme 1.1: Abuse	Alcoholism
	Conflict and abusive behaviour
Sub-theme 1.2: Lack of commitment to the family	Extra-marital relationships
	Family neglect

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Sub-theme 1.3: Influence of others	Couples' immaturity
	Influence of in-laws
	Lack of support from relatives
Sub-theme 1.4: Financial strain	Lack of stable employment
	Poverty
THEME 2: EFFECTS OF MARITAL DISSOLUTION ON EARLY ADOLESCENTS' FUNCTIONING	
Sub-theme 2.1: Effects on early adolescents' academic performance	Poor school attendance and dropout
	Concentration problems and poor academic performance
	Specific learning problems
Sub-theme 2.2: Effects on early adolescents' psycho-social well-being	Effect on parent-child relationships
	Emotional pain and consequences on children's perceptions
	Acting out behaviour
	Child abuse
	Variations in the effects of marital dissolution on children
Sub-theme 2.3: Parents' insight into the effects of marital dissolution on their children	Children's desire to be informed
	Factors influencing parents' disclosure of separation to children
	Limited insight into the effects of marital dissolution on their children
THEME 3: TRENDS FOLLOWING MARITAL DISSOLUTION	
Sub-theme 3.1: Positive effects of marital dissolution	Freedom from abusive environment
	Personal development and skills acquisition
Sub-theme 3.2: Change in living arrangements	Nature of custodial arrangements
	Visits with non-custodial parent
	Conflict related to living arrangements and visits with non-resident parent
Sub-theme 3.3: Other related changes negatively effecting children	Changed socio-economic status, poverty and relocation
	Remarriage and other post-divorce relationships
	Effect of parents' emotional states on children
	Increased dependency on relatives
THEME 4: MANAGING MARITAL DISSOLUTION IN TANZANIA	
Sub-theme 4.1: Minimising the effect of marital dissolution on children	Limiting incidents of marital dissolution
	Prioritising the well-being of children
	Relying on systemic support structures

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Sub-theme 4.2: Potential role of the Tanzanian government	Lack of awareness about policies by Tanzanian citizens
	Need for revised laws and policies related to children from broken families
	Potential supportive role of government

4.2 THEME 1: REASONS FOR MARITAL DISSOLUTION

In terms of the reasons for marital dissolution, the following sub-themes emerged: Abuse; Lack of commitment to the family; Influence of others; and Financial strain. Table 4.2 provides a summary of the inclusion and exclusion criteria I relied on in identifying the sub-themes and related categories. This theme relates to the first secondary research question, namely: *Which factors contribute to marital dissolution in Tanzania?*

Table 4.2: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria for Theme 1

THEME 1: REASONS FOR MARITAL DISSOLUTION		
Sub-themes	**Inclusion criteria**	**Exclusion criteria**
Sub-theme 1.1: Abuse	This sub-theme includes data related to conflict, excessive drinking, physical, verbal and sexual abuse between partners.	This sub-theme excludes references that do not refer to conflict, excessive drinking, physical, verbal and sexual abuse between partners.
Category 1: Alcoholism	This category includes data related to excessive drinking that jeopardised marriages.	This category excludes data that relate to abusive behaviour or conflict between partners.
Category 2: Conflict and abusive behaviour	This category includes data related to behaviour, such as couples' misunderstanding, beatings, rape and physical and verbal abuse.	This category excludes data related to alcoholism and substance abuse.
Sub-theme 1.2: Lack of commitment to the family	This sub-theme includes data related to insufficient commitment to marriage and the family.	This sub-theme excludes data that do not refer to the absence of commitment of one or both parents to the family's well-being.
Category 1: Extra-marital relationships	This category includes data related to infidelity displayed by one or both partners.	This category excludes data that refer to family neglect other than that of infidelity.
Category 2: Family neglect	This category includes data related to actions of forgetting and disowning one's family.	This category excludes data that refer to extra-marital relationships.
Sub-theme 1.3: Influence of others	This sub-theme includes data related to external influences and other people contributing to marital dissolution.	This sub-theme excludes data that do not refer to people related factors contributing to marital dissolution.

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Category 1: Couples' immaturity	This category includes data related to marriage at a young age as a contributing factor to a couple's inability to cope with marital challenges.	This category excludes data that refer to the influence of the in-laws and a lack of support from relatives on marital dissolution.
Category 2: Influence of in-laws	This category includes data related to in-laws as a contributing factor to marital dissolution.	This category excludes data that refer to a couple's immaturity and lack of support from relatives as contributing factors to marital dissolution.
Category 3: Lack of support from relatives	This category includes data related to limited support from relatives for a couple contemplating marital dissolution.	This category excludes data that refer to a couple's immaturity and the influence of in-laws on marital dissolution.
Sub-theme 1.4: Financial strain	This sub-theme includes data related to the impact of the socio-economic status of one or both partners on a marriage.	This sub-theme excludes references that do not refer to how poor socio-economic status may contribute to marital dissolution.
Category 1: Lack of stable employment	This category includes data related to a lack of stable employment as a contributing factor to marital dissolution.	This category excludes data that, specifically, refer to poverty as reason for marital dissolution.
Category 2: Poverty	This category includes data related to poverty as a cause of marital dissolution	This category excludes data that refer to a lack of stable employment as cause of marital dissolution.

4.2.1 SUB-THEME 1.1: ABUSE

Participants identified abuse as one of the factors that caused separations in Tanzania in terms of the following categories: a) Alcoholism and b) Conflict and abusive behaviour.

4.2.1.1 Alcoholism

According to the participants alcohol abuse could result in the marital dissolution of Tanzanian couples. Many husbands who were, reportedly, abusing alcohol were, apparently, involved in unacceptable behaviour, such as returning home late at night; sleeping away from home; being aggressive; and experiencing health problems. In addition, alcohol abuse resulted in men not being able to support their families as captured in the following extract:

> *"The reason of our separation was my husband's behaviour of over drinking. He was spending all his money in alcohol and forget his family, my children*

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were supposed to go to school but it was impossible because of him" (PP6[10], pg. 1).

The same participant later added:

> *"My husband was taking the rent from our tenant and drinks all of it, we never enjoyed this investment as a family, he was just drinking with his friends, I said to myself that I will never be able to live with such a careless husband"* (PP6, pg. 8).

In support, a teacher remarked:

> *"When one parent drinks (alcohol) there are number of weird behaviours that accompany the drinking that are often unbearable, it is hard tolerating living under the same roof with such a person"* (FGD2, P5, pg. 14).

In the same line of thinking a child participant said:

> *"Observing what my father was doing while drunk I wish I could never had a father like this, I hate alcohol and I think this is the reason I hear mom everyday complaining, saying that she is tired of this life"* (C6, pg. 12).

In this regard, I captured my thoughts in my research diary in the following manner:

> *"A good number of women seem to be unable to tolerate their husbands who were coming home late or sleeping outside home because of alcohol; they were also tired of frequent illnesses of their husbands due to alcohol and a lack of eating"* (Research diary, pg. 3, 15 January 2013).

4.2.1.2 Conflict and abusive behaviour

Alcohol abuse is often related to abusive behaviour, in the form of physical, verbal and emotional abuse. Participants in this study referred to alcohol-related abuse and yet, included examples not related to alcohol, such as bullying, rape, beatings and insults. The following extract from a child's narrative provides evidence of alcohol-related abusive behaviour:

> *"My father was drinking, so when he comes home drunk he does "stupid" things; he bangs doors, beat mom and throws things around – I hate this, even mom said she really hate this"* (CN4, pg. 4).

During the second group discussion, a participant said: *"Men misuse alcohol and when they are drunk, fights and abuse take place and lead to separation"* (FGD2, P1, pg. 1).

Another parent revealed:

[10] In reporting the results, the following abbreviations apply: PP=Parent Participant; CN= Child's narration; FGD= Focus group discussion; P= Participant in focus group; C= Child participant; and DA= Document Analysis.

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> *"When things were hard I decided to steal money from his trousers when he was drunk; each time I did this he would complain and beat me because his money was missing and I would tell him to go and report me to the police because I only used the money for his children, a very big fight resulted because of this"* (PP12, pg. 8).

In terms of incidents of abuse not related to alcoholism, one of the parents referred to physical abuse, contributing to their marital dissolution:

> *"Currently, I am suffering from a hearing problem because he used to hit me on the head; this has become a permanent disability I have never enjoyed my relationship with him since the early days of our marriage. I think if I had stayed much with him I would be dead by now"* (PP11, pg. 1).

In addition to abusive behaviour towards partners, child abuse was identified as contributing factor to marital dissolution: *"My husband was very abusive, he was beating me almost every day and one day he locked my children and me in the room so as he could set the fire"* (PP4, p. 5). Besides beatings and fights, rape was mentioned as another type of abusive behaviour contributing to marital dissolution. A custodial mother shared her experience:

> *"Unfortunately, he decided to rape me with the children inside the same room, the next day after he raped me he left home again, it was so painful I really cried, after few weeks I realised that I was pregnant of my sixth little daughter"* (PP3, pg. 3).

Abusive behaviour directed at a parent was, allegedly, sometimes observed by children – as is evident in the following excerpt:

> *"…although he was young, he noticed that I was physically abused by his father; he said that he saw with his own eyes how his father would behave like an animal when he was beating me. One day when he was four years old he took my hand and led me into a toilet saying: 'Mom I want to hide you in the toilet so that my dad will not see you when he comes home, I don't want him to beat you anymore.' He also told me to find a place far from his father for two of us to live because the father might kill me; he proposed that we should go to his uncle (my brother) or to his grandmother (my mother) rather than staying at home"* (P11, pg. 1).

During my field work I noticed that: *"The women appeared concerned about their own well-being and that of their children if they continued living with abusive husbands"*

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(Research diary, pg. 17, 18 January 2013). Participants indicated that abusive behaviour increased misunderstanding and conflict which, in turn, contributed to separation. A parent participant explained:

> *"He took my two bags full of clothes, poured kerosene over them and set them on fire. Both bags got burnt; only three dresses were rescued from the fire by my friends despite my husband holding a gun on them. Since that day we never had peace in the house until when I decided to leave"* (PP11, pg. 3).

In such instances, children seemed able to predict separation – as captured in the following narration by a child: *"They were in continuous conflict; he often beat my mother and there was no possibility for them to continue to be together in that way"* (C2, pg. 2).

Other children seemed willing to tolerate the conflict between their parents rather than see them separate. I wrote the following in my research diary:

> *"For the majority of the children, seeing their parents in conflict – but still living together – does not appear to be a bad thing but the memory of separation 'parents parting ways' appears to be the hardest thing that they can recall. A good number of the children seem content to see their parents living together at home. After separation, however, very few children seem to enjoy life"* (Research diary, pg. 12, 22 January 2013).

Participants in focus group discussions reported that when conflict between couples persisted the intimacy between them decreased, resulting in them no longer sharing a bed (so-called internal separation) while the next stage (external separation) would involve a person leaving home, either willingly or unwillingly. A caregiver from centre one explained this idea:

> *"Some start to separate emotionally and socially within the home, but nobody really knows about this. Children feel the differences between their parents even though people from outside may think that these couples are fine.... for them the physical departure of one parent is a second stage after the primary stage of an internal separation"* (FGD1, P2, pg. 3).

In this regard I noted:

> *"Parents' separation in families usually takes place in two forms (internal and external separation of couples). The first form is when parents separate physically, one being a non-resident parent and another a custodial parent, the second form is when parents are still living together under the same roof but they neither communicate nor share a bed, their sexual life is dead and*

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they don't talk or share anything. If parents are in internal separation and with frequent conflict chances are higher that children would be more affected than when parents decide to part ways" (Research diary, p. 17: Reflection following FGD 1, 8 December 2012).

4.2.2 SUB-THEME 1.2: LACK OF COMMITMENT TO THE FAMILY

A second reason for marital dissolution – as reported by the participants in this study – relates to a lack of commitment to the family. The following two categories apply: a) Extra-marital relationships and b) Family neglect.

4.2.2.1 Extra-marital relationships

According to the participants in this study, husbands are more inclined to engage in extra-marital relationships than wives. Even though the women appeared, initially, to tolerate such behaviour they seemed unwilling to do so if unfaithful behaviour continued, including, for example, men not sleeping home. The following extracts from parent interviews testify to this:

"I was wondering how he could enjoy with other women all night long while knowing that his children do not have even a single meal" (PP6, pg. 7);

"The same year I got a child and his other woman who was living in Dar es Salaam also got a child, from that time quarrels started because he started coming home twice or thrice in a month" (PP3, pg. 1); and

"Our conflicts always were based on his behaviours, coming with women at home and make love to them while I was in the house" (PP4, pg. 5).

Child participants also reported that their fathers were absent from the home when involved in extra-marital relationships:

"From my own example, since we came in Dar es Salaam my dad started getting late from work and often being absent from home with a lot of excuses. We were not happy with this situation, our mother was not happy too" (CN 2, pg. 9).

In support, a teacher remarked that:

"A parent's unfaithfulness does not only end at ruining the parent but also negatively effecting the children, a number of children who were observed with early sexual behaviours at school were children of parents with extra-marital relationships" (FGD2, P4, pg. 15).

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I also noted this trend:

> *"The majority of the wives were able to tolerate a number of problems from their husbands, some problems were easily solved through discussions and family meetings but when marital unfaithfulness was mentioned almost every woman seemed unable to tolerate"* (Research diary, pg. 3, 12 January 2013).

4.2.2.2 Family neglect

Extra-marital relationships seemed to result in family neglect. One of the children explained his perception of his father becoming careless about them:

> *"When my father started to go to this woman's house, he completely changed; his time being at home was reduced as well as his support for our family. He wasn't buying food and there was no health provision when anyone was sick – he was just irresponsibly coming and going"* (C2, pg. 2).

A caregiver from one of the centres added:

> *"It is not easy for one parent carrying the burden of the family when one parent decide to concentrate in useless things outside home, for such reason many decide to separate than keeping on calling themselves married"* (FGD1, P4, pg. 17).

In support of this perception, a parent reported on her experience:

> *"…every time when I was pregnant my husband used to leave home and only come back after I had finished breast feeding my babies. The last time he left me was when I was pregnant of my fourth child. It has been three years now since he left and I am sure this time he will never come back because no one knows where he lives"* (PP12, pg. 1).

During the data collection process I observed that, in this regard, women seemed tolerant but when neglectful behaviour persisted they tended to opt for separation. I captured my perception in my research diary:

> *"The majority of custodial mothers seemed to struggle to support every aspect of the family while their husbands were irresponsibly imbibing alcohol and having illicit liaisons with other women – even before separation. When the situation persisted these mothers reportedly got fed up and decided to separate"* (Research diary, pg. 16, 11 November 2012).

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4.2.3 SUB-THEME 1.3: INFLUENCE OF OTHERS

Participants reported that marital dissolution could, occasionally, be ascribed to external influences. The following categories apply: a) Couples' immaturity; b) Influence of in-laws; and c) Lack of support from relatives.

4.2.3.1 Couples' immaturity

Parents, teachers and caregivers all reported that when couples entered into marriage while still young and immature they often experienced problems in dealing effectively with marital challenges, potentially resulting in marital dissolution. Poverty, being illiterate and family arranged marriages were mentioned as possible reasons for early marriages. One of the parents explained her situation:

> *"This man stopped me from schooling, I was grade seven, I passed my grade seven national exams and I was selected to join Jangwani secondary school but I ended up getting married without knowing that this marriage was arranged by the two families. I was so blind of issues of marriage I think that's why we couldn't stay longer"* (PP4, pg. 4).

A caregiver added her views which were related to poverty and being illiterate: *"When a woman is uneducated and her family is poor, it is often very easy to get married at a young age and, thereafter, separate in no time"* (FGD1, P6, pg. 17).

Being young and not yet mature apparently contributed to young parents being ignorant of, and unable to deal with, various marital challenges. A parent participant explained: *"It was not possible for me to think of the effect of separation before the separation itself took place as I was only fifteen, but later my eyes were opened and I saw the dangers on me and my children"* (PP7, pg. 4). In support of how couples' immaturity may contribute to marital dissolution I noted that: *"The majority of the parents – especially the mothers – who were married or started families at a very young age also, apparently, experience their first divorce at a younger age"* (Research diary, pg. 16, 12 November 2012).

4.2.3.2 Influence of in-laws

According to the participants, marriages sometimes disintegrated because of the influence of in-laws. The following contribution by a caregiver captures this idea:

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> *"Couples are driven by outsiders – people who are not part of their marriage, particularly parents of both sides. Here couples listen to what others say and they make decisions based on these external influences. This includes issues concerned with marital conflict, as well as when couples or the in-laws take sides"* (FGD1, P2, pg. 1).

In sharing her experience, one of the custodial parents explained:

> *"Since I got married to that family, things were not OK between my mother in-law and me. Every time she used to tell me that I was not a good woman for her son and that she will make sure she drives me out whether my husband want it or not"* (PP 4, pg. 10).

According to the participants, if relatives and in-laws were understanding and supportive they could assist couples in dealing with challenging times instead of separating, as captured in the following excerpts:

> *"The in-laws have a great opportunity to protect the relationships of their sons and daughters; but if they are also involved in conflict or misunderstanding, they can be a catalyst in widening the social gap between the couples. They can sometimes be poisonous in couples' marriage if the couples are not matured enough"* (FGD1, P4, pg. 17) and later:
>
> *"There must be a good relationship and understanding between paternal and maternal in-laws. If these two sides relate well, then there are fewer chances that children will be affected when their parents separate, in cases where marital dissolution is inevitable the two sides of in-laws should ensure that the well-being of the children is respected and not abused"* (FGD1, P4, pg. 16).

Along the same lines of thinking I reflected in my research diary:

> *"At times when couples were in conflict or times when separation was once mentioned, often disputes were seemingly reported to in-laws. If the in-laws were supportive enough most likely couples would resolve but if in-laws took sides, conflict among couples seemed to escalate"* (Research diary, pg. 18, 22 December 2012).

Child participants also seemed aware of the possibility of conflict with in-laws, resulting in marital dissolution. One of the participants explained:

> *"My father wanted to stab my grandmother using his bush knife. My grandmother told my mother that she wanted to leave the house because she*

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didn't want to cause problems in my parents' marriage but my mother didn't agree and told my grandmother that she would be ready to separate from my father and remain with her mother rather than to let her go away. When my father heard that he decided to leave to Igunga in the Tabora region" (CN3, pg. 2).

4.3.3.3 Lack of support from relatives

At the other end of the spectrum participants reported that a lack of support from relatives when couples were in need of their help could also contribute to marital dissolution. One of the parents explained:

> *"During the divorce proceedings we never went to any meetings with relatives, they were not ready to help us; I think they wanted us apart, so we decided not to waste our time with meetings. My husband just wrote me my divorce letter, 'talaka moja', and the relationship was over"* (PP8, pg. 1).

In this regard, Child participant 2 added:

> *"When life was well in our family we had lots of relatives and friends, my uncles, aunties and other relatives from our village used to visit often, but when my parents started to quarrel, especially when my mother requested for their help, they all vanished, no calls, no visit, we were actually left alone"* (C2, pg. 9).

In relation to this experience, during focus group discussions teachers and caregivers shared the view that where relatives made demands on couples' marriages, especially when they came from poor backgrounds, such relationships would be at greater risk. This idea was explained in the following manner by a teacher:

> *"When one or both of you are from poor homes relatives tend to demand food, money and other things from you instead of supporting the marriage to last, my marriage is an example of those marriage that ended up because of pressure from my husband's relatives"* (FGD2, P5, pg. 15).

Throughout my interaction with custodial parents I noted:

> *"Although a lack of support and influence from relatives does not appear to be a cause for many marriages falling apart, it does seem to be a major cause of conflict and friction among couples which exposes their*

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relationships to the risk of breaking up" (Research diary, pg. 18, 22 December 2012).

4.2.4 SUB-THEME 1.4: FINANCIAL STRAIN

A number of marriages in this study reportedly collapsed due to financial strain. The following categories were identified: a) Lack of stable employment and b) Poverty.

4.2.4.1 Lack of stable employment

According to the participants, marital problems often emerged from financial difficulties, especially when needs and expectations were not met. Financial difficulties were related to a number of factors involving the participants, including a partner not being employed. A parent participant reported:

> *"I thought of making some effort to bring her back but the problem is that I don't have a job now. For a long time I have been moving around in different regions working in hotels and clubs, but the jobs have not been stable enough to help me support my family fully"* (PP5, pg. 1).

Additionally, situations where men were expected to fulfil the role of bread winners but seemed unable to do so, and which resulted in the women providing for the family, added to misunderstanding between couples. The following quotation provides evidence of this – as seen through the eyes of a child:

> *"One of the big conflicts before separation was because the house in which we lived belonged to my mother. All our properties belonged to my mother, including our cars - my father was job less in that time. When mother was busy working for the family, my father was busy spending her money; he even sold some of my mother's properties. My mother couldn't stand this"* (C2, pg. 4).

According to the participants, factors associated with financial difficulties include a lack of education and laziness, especially on the part of the men. One of the caregivers commented:

> *"If a husband is uneducated, he cannot get a good job so he cannot bring food at home and even when he bring food his supply is often not consistent, this situation usually overburden the wives especially if she is also lacking any income"* (FGD1, P2, pg. 17).

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In support of this idea I noted:

> *"For many women, the lack of a stable income – because of having no job – seems to add to the pressure to separate – even at times when they have tried tolerating their husbands' behaviour, including their infidelity and their excessive drinking"* (Research diary, pg. 23, 25 January 2013).

4.2.4.2 Poverty

Poverty was mentioned as another reason that could, potentially, result in marital dissolution, especially when the needs of the family could not be met. One of the parents explained:

> *"I didn't love him because he was poor; he couldn't even afford food for the family. He was not taking care of the children; we were not able to educate our children and when we separated they had to stop going to school"* (PP7, pg. 2).

Another custodial parent added:

> *"My husband was very poor, it was hard for him when it came to providing for the family; I really suffered when I was pregnant and when I had a small baby; he would complain every day that he didn't have money"* (PP9, pg. 1).

Furthermore, teachers and caregivers shared their views that some people entered into marriage with goals and dreams and when these could not be met marital problems would arise. This idea is captured in the following quotation:

> *"Some couples especially women decide to end marriage after realising that everything they ever wished for a marriage is no more there, the husband is poor, the family is struggling and no hope for the future, in this point it is easy for the two to call it off"* (FGD1, P1, pg. 17).

In this regard, I noted: *"Of the other factors that seem to put a marriage at risk, poverty appears to add the most pressure on the wives to lose interest in their marriages"* (Research diary, pg. 17, 7 January 2013).

4.3 THEME 2: EFFECTS OF MARITAL DISSOLUTION ON EARLY ADOLESCENTS' FUNCTIONING

The second theme that I identified relates to the third and fourth secondary research questions: *What is the effect of marital dissolution on children's academic and psycho-social functioning?* and *What insight do Tanzanian parents have concerning the effects of marital*

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dissolution on their children? I identified the following sub-themes: Effect on early adolescents' academic performance; Effects on early adolescents' psycho-social well-being; and Parents' insight into the effects of marital dissolution on their children. Table 4.3, below, provides a summary of Theme 2 in terms of the inclusion and exclusion criteria I relied on when identifying the sub-themes and categories.

Table 4.3: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria for Theme 2

THEME 2: EFFECTS OF MARITAL DISSOLUTION ON EARLY ADOLESCENT'S FUNCTIONING		
Sub-themes and categories	**Inclusion criteria**	**Exclusion criteria**
Sub-theme 2.1: Effects on early adolescents' academic performance	This sub-theme includes data referring to the effects of marital dissolution on early adolescents' scholastic performance and academic development.	This sub-theme excludes data that relate to children's psychological well-being as well as any factor that jeopardises a child's academic performance that is not a result of the marital dissolution of the parents.
Category 1: Poor school attendance and dropout	This category includes data related to the negative effects of marital dissolution on children's ability to attend and remain in school.	This category excludes data that relate to children's concentration problems, academic performance and specific learning problems.
Category 2: Concentration problems and poor academic performance	This category includes data related to children's inability to concentrate in class and perform optimally due to their parents' marital dissolution.	This category excludes data that relate to children's school attendance and specific learning problems.
Category 3: Specific learning problems	This category includes data related to spelling, hand writing and arithmetic problems in terms of children's level of performance when compared to others of the same age.	This category excludes data that refer to children's school attendance, concentration problems and academic performance.
Sub-theme 2.2: Effects on early adolescents' psycho-social well-being	This sub-theme includes data related to the effects of marital dissolution on children's social and emotional functioning.	This sub-theme excludes data that relate to the effects of marital dissolution on children's academic performance.
Category 1: Effects on parent-child relationships	This category includes data related to how marital dissolution affected the relationships between the parents and the children.	This category excludes data that refer to the effects of marital dissolution on children's emotions, behaviour and child abuse.
Category 2:	This category includes data	This category excludes data that

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Emotional pain and consequences on children's perceptions	related to children's feelings of hurt, pain and regret resulting from parents' separation and how these feelings affected their perceptions.	refer to the effects of marital dissolution on parent-child relationships, children's behaviour or child abuse.
Category 3: Acting out behaviour	This category includes data related to children's unfavourable behaviour following marital dissolution, such as bullying, truancy, early sexual activity and stealing.	This category excludes data that refer to the effects of marital dissolution on parent-child relationships, the emotional well-being of the child or child abuse.
Category 4: Child abuse	This category includes data related to conduct, such as beatings, humiliation, insults and the burning of children during marital dissolution.	This category excludes data that relate to the effects of marital dissolution on parent-child relationships or the emotional well-being or behaviour of the children.
Category 5: Variations in the effect of marital dissolution on children	This category includes data related to differences in the effects of marital dissolution on children – as manifested from one child to another.	This category excludes data that refer to the specific effects of marital dissolution on the children.
Sub-theme 2.3: Parents' insight into the effects of marital dissolution on their children	This sub-theme includes data related to the extent that parents consider the effects of their separation on their children.	This sub-theme excludes data that refer to the effects of marital dissolution on specific areas of children's lives.
Category 1: Children's desire to be informed	This category includes data related to children's actions and words that signify their need to be involved in parents' discussions about separation processes.	This category excludes data that relate to factors influencing parents' disclosure of separation to children or their insight into the effects of marital dissolution on their children.
Category 2: Factors influencing parents' disclosure of separation to children	This category includes data that related to parents' decision not to disclose separation information to their children.	This category excludes data that relate to limited insight into the effects of marital dissolution on children.
Category 3: Limited insight into the effects of marital dissolution on their children	This category includes data related to parents' levels of insight into the effects of their separation on their children and its consequences.	This category excludes data that relates to factors influencing parents' disclosure of separation to their children.

4.3.1 SUB-THEME 2.1: EFFECT ON EARLY ADOLESCENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Participants reported that children from broken families displayed deteriorated academic functioning following marital dissolution, regardless of their level of schooling. The manifestation of this deterioration was reported to have an effect on numerous areas in the

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children's lives. These areas are presented in terms of the following categories: a) Poor school attendance and dropout; b) Concentration problems and poor academic performance; and c) Specific learning problems.

4.3.1.1 Poor school attendance and dropout

According to the participants the school attendance of children from broken families was negatively affected with many children, subsequently, dropping out of school following marital dissolution. Various reasons for this problem were mentioned, for instance, that some children were obliged to drop out of school to help their mothers take care of the siblings while the mothers had to earn money for their survival. One of the children reported: *"I was in preschool and I was doing very well but when they separated I had to stop school and take care of my younger sister who was two and half years old"* (CN8, pg. 3). While some children stayed home to look after their siblings, others were reportedly assisting their parents (usually their mothers) to search for food or became involved in child labour or petty business. During a focus group discussion one of the teachers mentioned that *"Older children are forced by circumstance to take care of their siblings by staying with them at home or by going out in search of food for them"* (FGD1, P2, pg. 5). Similar to this view, a child participant reported:

> *"My performance in school was good before separation but things started changing when my father left. Circumstances forced me to stop going to school in 2003 as I was unable to pay the school fees. I had to work to support my family"* (CN2, pg. 3).

Besides children dropping out of school in order to support a parent or look after siblings, some children allegedly left school because of an inability to pay school fees. Parent participants explained:

> *"My first daughter stopped going to school when she was in Grade 5; the second could not finish primary school either. They went to the village because I couldn't pay for their education... The other two girls managed to reach Standard 7, but they failed and there was no any other means to help them any further"* (PP7, pg. 3), and
>
> *"My third son was in grade one; I couldn't even afford his stationeries, I just waited for any help from neighbours and other good Samaritans. Later when*

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> *he started secondary school I couldn't afford to pay fees, so he stayed at home for one year"* (PP3, pg. 5).

Even though some children were exempted from paying school fees, especially those who were in public schools and those whose parents reported their problems to school management, children apparently found it hard to attend school when custodial parents (often the mothers) could not afford stationery, bus fares and lunches. One of the parents explained:

> *"My children can't go to school because they don't have any stationery; they don't have a uniform or shoes; and there is no money for anything to eat or drink while they are at school. The headmaster exempted them from paying school fees but he told me to make sure I supplied them with uniforms and stationery – which I can't afford"* (PP12, pg. 3).

Furthermore, parents and teachers reported that truancy and school dropout by children from broken families were, sometimes, caused by a perceived lack of motivation. When children lacked motivational support from the family to attend school and were not informed about the benefits of school attendance, they seemed to perceived school as boring, resulting in truancy, and later dropping out of school. A parent explained: *"Their father tried to pay for them, but they didn't want to continue with school. They said they hated school"* (PP7, pg. 3). Two teacher participants added:

> *"Truancy is a big problem for children from broken homes: the majority of children lose hope in their education; and some can't understand what is taught in class, so they are bored and decide to sneak away"* (FGD2, P1, pg. 3), and
>
> *"These children need somebody they love who can say to them: 'If you do well in class I will buy you this.' They need a person to tell them: 'If you do well you will become somebody in the future"* (FGD2, P4, pg. 3).

Closely related, the lack of close care of, and supervision by, parents were mentioned as other reasons that caused truancy, dropout, poor performance and children failing a grade. A child participant reported:

> *"With the life I lived it was very hard for me to excel academically. I repeated class so many times. Next year I plan to continue with Grade 4 although at my age (13) I should be almost out of primary school. If my father*

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> *and my mother were together, I would already have finish Grade 7. I engaged myself in truancy because I lacked close care and supervision – it's hard for a grandmother alone to play that role. I had nobody to encourage me to love school and study hard. I think even if I had time with one parent I would have emptiness, missing the other parent"* (CN7, pg. 5).

In support of this a teacher said: *"Children, who do not have parents to supervise them; to encourage them; or to look at their exercise books every day, do poorly in class"* (FGD2, P5, pg.3).

Some children were reported not to be attending school after being suspended for behaviour problems at school: *"I had a fight with my teacher, I wanted to stone him so the disciplinary committee decided to suspend me for one month; this was not the first time they suspended me"* (CN1, pg. 3). Following their parents' separation, other children reported their own anger as a reason for dropping out:

> *"I went to school but I did not attend classes – lessons were passing me by. I didn't understand anything even if I went to class. Every time I felt angry and that's why I decided to drop out and start begging and selling empty bottles, mangoes and fish"* (CN6, pg. 7).

4.3.1.2 Concentration problems and poor academic performance

According to the participants, children experienced difficulty in concentrating in class following marital dissolution, typically resulting in them performing poorly. Various reasons were given for the lack of concentration, such as emotions related to the absence of a parent. This is evident in the following contribution by a parent, expressing what her son said after being separated from her:

> *"Mum, I wish you was here because I would then be able to concentrate on my studies but I am scared if you come close to father, he may kill you, I don't want to again hear or see what was happening in those days"* (PP11, pg. 3).

Similar comments were made by another child participant:

> *"Children can be affected academically when parents' separate, for instance, children can't concentrate well in class; they can't listen to their teacher properly; and all the time they are thinking that when they go home they*

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> *won't see their mother or their father. Sometimes when I was in class I was asking myself: 'Will dad come back again?"* (CN9, pg. 3).

Marital dissolution, itself, was identified as another cause of concentration problems and subsequent poor scholastic performance by children. A parent participant explained how her daughter behaved in a composition exercise after suppressing her experience for some time:

> *"Her teachers said that her behaviour changed abruptly; during break-time she wouldn't go out to play or eat with others – she would remain in class alone. She was also not able to concentrate. The composition she was told to write helped the teachers understand how our separation resulted to her lack of concentration and depression"* (PP2, pg. 3).

Another parent with a similar experience added:

> *"She isolated herself; seemed lonely all the time – even when she was in the midst of other children; she lost her ability to concentrate and forgot things easily. You could tell her to do something which she would agree to do but in a short while she would asks again what she was supposed to do"* (PP 4, pg. 8).

In addition to feelings of loneliness and isolation, some children experienced low self-efficacy, resulting in a lack of interest and subsequent lack of concentration and poor performance in school. One of the child participants explained:

> *"I cannot bother myself trying to do well in class because I know for sure that I cannot perform better, and I will never perform better in class, this life has made me a dull boy although I remember I was good"* (CN 5, pg. 7).

Closely aligned with this experience, poor academic performance was, apparently, also related to children having little hope for the future. This trend was, primarily, evident among children who lived at the centres – as reported by one of the teachers:

> *"Children from broken homes easily give up: the majority of our children at this Centre do very poorly in class; they do not have any hope for the future; one day a child may perform well in a certain subject but suddenly her/his performance deteriorates. These children do not see anything better for their future; the disappointment started from home; for them nothing can revive the lost hope again"* (FGD2, P5, pg. 3).

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Another example, illustrating how children at the centres performed poorly academically is captured in Table 4.4 which contains their examination results at the time of this study. The majority of the children scored below 50% in all the subjects.

Table 4.4: Examination Results of Children Living at the Centres

No.	Name	Mathematics	Science	English	Kiswahili	TOTAL
1	Child participant 1	54	47	42	38	178
2	Child participant 2	59	38	19	48	164
3	Child participant 3	13.2	43	42	60	158.2
4	Child participant 5	52.8	39.6	26.4	59	177.8
5	Child participant 6	59.4	37.2	22	60	178.6
6	Child participant 7	33	55	13.2	59.4	130.6
7	Child participant 8	26.4	59.4	19.8	46	151.6
8	Child participant 9	19.8	46.2	13.6	42.2	121.8
9	Child participant 12	19.8	26.4	6.6	66	118.8

However, not every child who performed poorly academically as a result of parents' separation ended up dropping out of school. Some were forced to repeat a class – as reported by one of the parents:

> *"My son has been very clever throughout his academic life; only some family circumstances have let him down. My boy has repeated a class twice; he should now be in form 2, but he is still in Grade 6. I know that because of what happened it is hard for a child to do well in class. I can't ask my son why he has had to repeat a class because his explanation would remind me of my past pain and I don't want to go back there"* (PP11, pg. 4).

This idea is supported by the following excerpt, taken from my research diary, capturing my observations on how relocations contributed to children repeating a class:

> *"When relocating increases, the children appear to become frustrated with and affected in their school performance and most of these children have to repeat a class several times because of the relocations"* (Research diary, pg. 9, 26 November 2012).

Apart from repeating a class, some children's low performance resulted in them not continuing with their schooling. One of the parent participants explained: *"However, after they failed their final primary examination they could not continue with school,*

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they returned back to me again" (P7, pg. 5). Teachers of these children mentioned the idea of "double tragedy", implying that sometimes they ended up punishing children who were performing poorly in class without knowing that the drop in performance was a result of family difficulties. This idea is contained in the following contribution by a caregiver:

> *"Sometimes these children face a double tragedy: not only do they suffer from their parents' separation but when they do badly at school their teachers beat them or give them other punishments, thinking that they are just lazy, without knowing about their domestic problems. Teachers may assume that these children are, perhaps, involved with gangs"* (FGD1, P2, pg. 5).

The teachers also commented that they observed variations in academic performance among children from broken families depending on who the custodial parent was. These variations are captured in the following excerpt:

> *"A mother's absence affects children greatly in their academic pursuits, because whereas the fathers pay the fees the mothers usually keep a close eye on every detail regarding the children – for instance, what they eat and drink at home and at school; their appearance; and checking their exercise books and home works, etc. So the progress of any child at school is determined by many other factors rather than just the father's efforts to pay the fees. Despite the school fees being paid, or being in the custody of a well-to-do father, children who are separated from their mothers may be negatively affected"* (FGD1, P5, pg. 6).

Additional evidence in support of this idea comes from my research diary:

> *"It is suggested that children of separated parents experience difficulties in their academic and emotional well-being even when they remain in the custody of a financially strong father. This may be due to the absence of a caring and loving mother who was seemingly always there – paying close attention to each detail related to the children's schooling, such as homework, cleanliness, communication with teachers, and other activities"* (Research diary, pg. 7, 17 December 2012).

Teachers and caregivers reported that not all children from broken families performed poorly in class. Some were observed to be trying to do well but with motives that were not pure – as can be seen in the following quotation:

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> *"A few children do seem to perform well in class even after they experience the negative consequences of their parents' separation. Their intention is not to excel in education and in life but rather trying to make sure they succeed in life so that they can get an opportunity to take a revenge on their non-resident parent, stepparent or anyone who has caused pain in the course of their life"* (FGD1, P1, pg. 4).

4.3.1.3 Specific learning problems

Children from broken families seemingly displayed spelling problems; problems with handwriting; punctuation problems; as well as problems with arithmetic. It was reported that these children often remained in lower grades for a longer period of time because of poor performance.

My analysis of the academic documents of Child participant 3 resulted in me noticing the following:

> *"At the age of 15 Child 3 can be seen to be trying to master some simple mathematics and the formation of letters, but different subjects are mixed up in one exercise book. Despite having at least two different subjects in one exercise book, the whole exercise book has only five pages that are written on. The Kiswahili exercise book has only two pages that are written on. The child is trying to write words like "mother", "father" and "sister" in Swahili"* (DA, C3, pg. 4).

Photograph 4.1, below, shows examples of observed specific learning problems experienced by Child participant 3 – taken from one of the pages in his Kiswahili exercise book.

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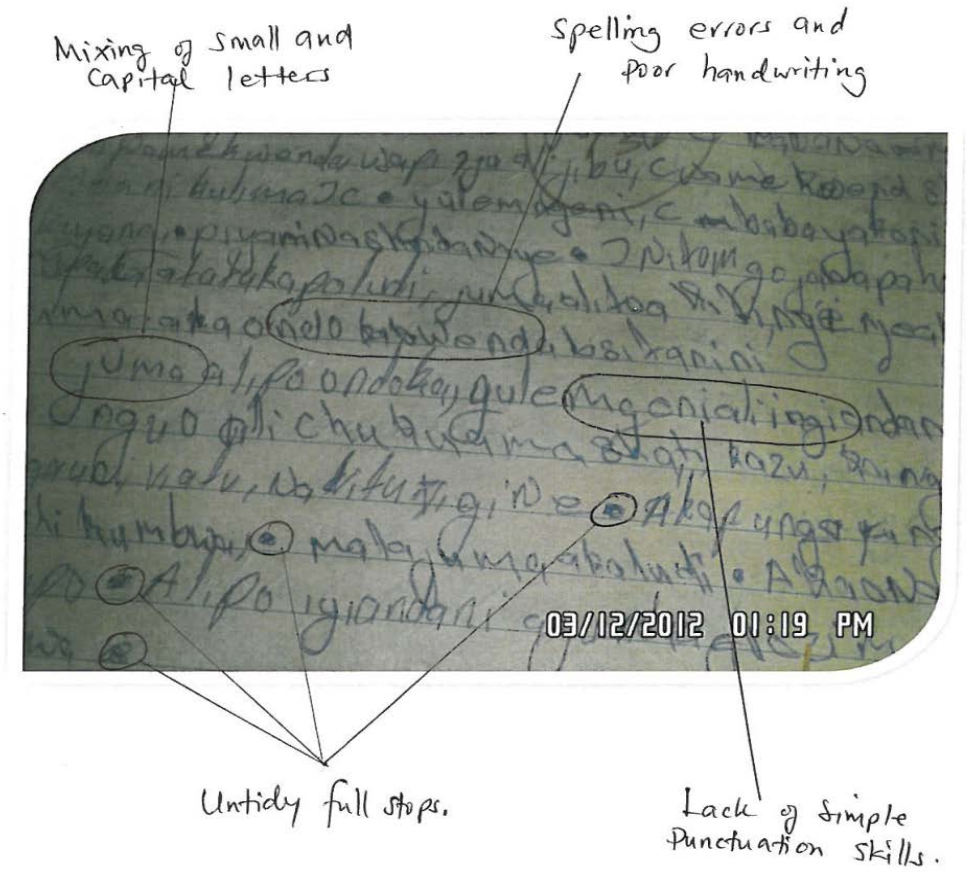

Photograph 4.1: Examples of specific learning problems experienced by Child participant 3

When analysing the school work of Child participant 6, I noted:

> *"Composition by Child 6 who is 13 years is in Swahili language but it is difficult to understand what is written; it is hard to get a clue as to what the learner intended to communicate. His sentences are not readable"* (DA, C6, pg. 2).

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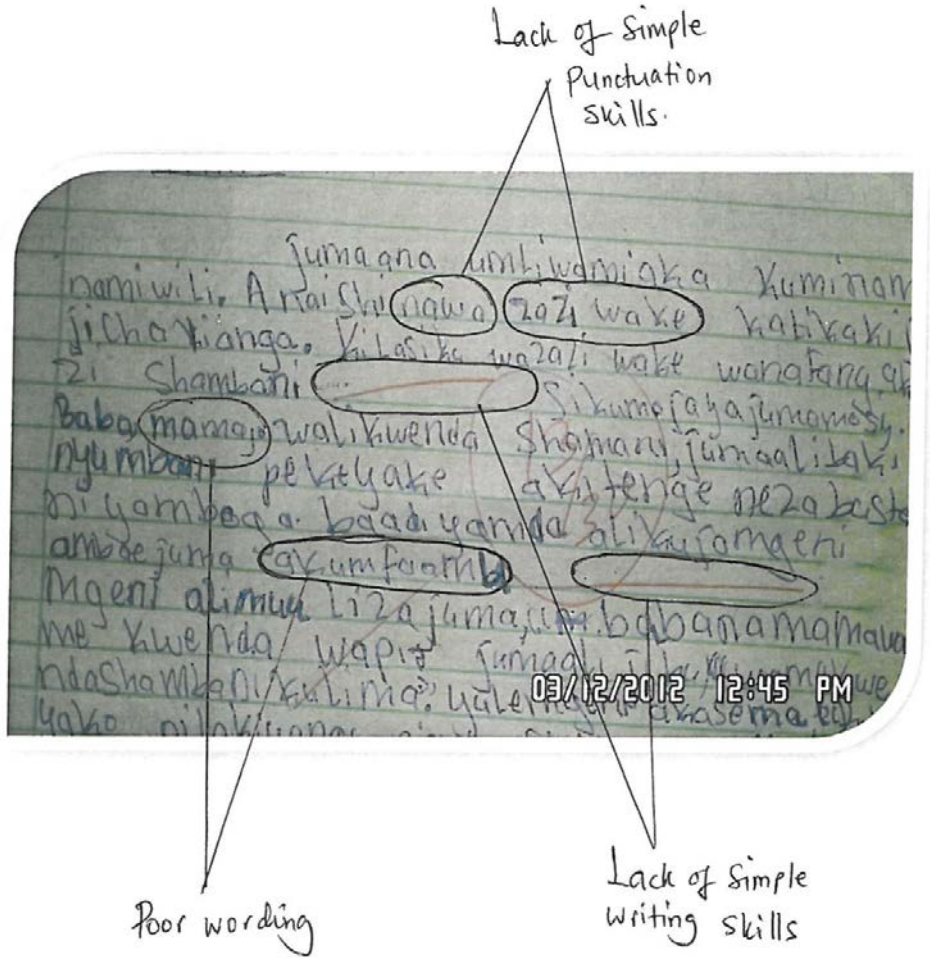
Photograph 4.2 captures my analysis.



Photograph 4.2: Features of specific learning problems experienced by Child participant 6

Concerning child participant 5's school work, I noted: *"....Child 5's exercise book has only four pages that have been written on, he is also trying to understand simple mathematics although what he is doing is quite easy in terms of his age (12 years)"* (DA, C5, pg. 4). This analysis is captured in Photograph 4.3

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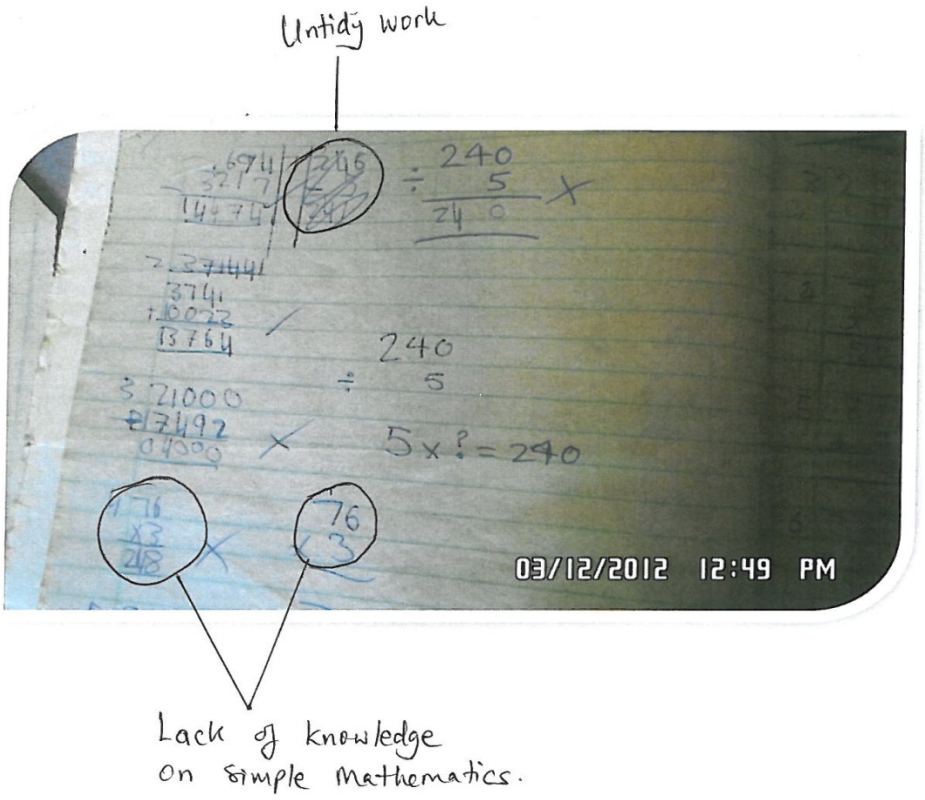

Photograph 4.3: **Poor arithmetic skills**

I observed a similar trend in the work of Child participant 6:

> *"It is hard to follow the sequence in his exercise book, because there is no proper arrangement of topics. Apparently, the child decides from which end of the exercise book to write; in some parts he starts from the back to the beginning and in some areas from the beginning to the back"* (DA, C6, pg. 1).

Generally, almost all the children appeared to experience similar specific learning problems. I captured my thoughts on this in my research diary:

> *"Most of the children's exercise books have very few pages which have been written on; different subjects are mixed up in one exercise book; and the arrangement of what has been written is very poor. Generally, there seems to be no proper organisation of classwork and material"* (Research diary, pg. 18, 3 December 2012).

4.3.2 SUB-THEME 2.2: EFFECT ON EARLY ADOLESCENT'S PSYCHO-SOCIAL WELL-BEING

The effect of marital dissolution on children's psycho-social well-being is discussed in terms of the following categories: a) Effect on parent-child relationships; b) Emotional pain and

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consequences on children's perceptions; c) Acting out behaviour; d) Child abuse; and e) Variations in the effect of marital dissolution on children.

4.3.2.1 Effect on parent-child relationships

According to the participants, marital dissolution affected children in terms of the absence of a non-resident parent. Some children reportedly displayed feelings of anger towards the non-resident parent (often the father). One of the child participants explained:

> *"It is over twelve years since I have seen my father. Only few days ago I received a call from a man who claimed to be my father and we talked a lot but I have not confirmed that he is my father. I never wished to see him, but it is true that sometimes I feel his absence and I feel the need of a father but when I think about what he has done to us, I know that I don't want him"* (CN2, pg. 5).

In support of this experience, one of the parents mentioned her son's anger towards his father after the father had decided to leave home and they had experienced extreme poverty:

> *"No one is ready to live with him or even bothers to communicate with him. He sometimes calls his elder son though he never asks anything regarding me or other children, his son told him to stop communicating until when the son decides to do so" (*PP3, pg. 9).

Another parent participant reported how her child was similarly hurt by the absence of her father: *"My daughter was very close to her father; they were friends and so his absence hurt her very much"* (PP1, pg. 7).

It was further reported how some children displayed a negative attitude towards a parent after observing abusive behaviour towards the other parent (mostly the mothers). One parent participant remarked:

> *"My son never loved his father; they had a very poor father-son relationship especially after observing how he was beating me every day. My son was very close to some of my husband's friends but not to his father"* (PP11, pg. 3).

A teacher had a similar view: *"Even when children observe conflict between their parents, still they hate a parent who beat or abuse another"* (FGD 1, P2, pg. 18).

Closely related to this, some children reported negative feelings towards their parents (fathers) as they considered them responsible for the pain they had gone through. An extract from my research diary attests to this idea:

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> *"The majority of the children seemed to hate their fathers who either left them or who left them with their mothers; somewhere, somehow these children have come to experience difficulty and seem to blame their fathers"* (Research diary, pg. 15, 4 December 2014).

According to the participants, parent-child relationships were also negatively affected when a non-resident parent (usually the father) disappeared and did not communicate with the family or paid child maintenance. In this regard, Parent participant 3 stated:

> *"He came to see me after I delivered, he stayed for two days, he bought us some banana and he left until today he never came back. He has never seen his daughter since then, and we have never seen each other as well, children are so angry about this"* (PP 3, pg. 3).

In support I noted:

> *"The majority of divorced couples do not appear to communicate after separation because the men usually forget about their children and the women give up fighting for child maintenance, this results in a total disconnection between the family and the father"* (Research diary, pg. 3, 11 December 2012).

A lack of communication between children and non-resident parents could have a continuous negative effect on children – as indicated in the following quotation:

> *"My children have experienced great loss from our separation. They don't communicate with their father; they don't get any love from him; and they don't go to school. They are just like luggage in the room, I am sure this might continue to affect their future"* (PP12, pg. 7).

Along the same line of thinking one of the caregivers added:

> *"Unfortunately in Tanzania couples end up in enmity even after separation something that makes a non-resident parent (usually fathers) disappear, and on the other end decreases the relationship between children and non-resident parents"* (FGD 2, P4, pg. 15).

4.3.2.2 Emotional pain and consequences on children's perceptions

Parents' separation was reported as a source of emotional pain in the children's lives. Several children indicated the pain they experienced:

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> *"It may be hard to acknowledge him if I meet him today. He will remain my father but I will not have anything to do with him. He knew what he was doing, so there is no need to ask why he did that. I have never thought whether my father would ask for forgiveness and I don't know if I would be able to forgive him"* (CN2, pg. 5);
>
> *"I felt very bad being raised by a single parent. It is bad and painful seeing one parent suffer for you and you do not feel well. I sometimes cry when I remember my father and mother fighting. My heart still pains though my mind is kind of stable now. When I am alone I think too much about my past and future"* (C8, pg. 3); and
>
> *"What my father caused in my life is like an alarm in my head and it often rings badly. Sometimes it reminds me of how disastrous he was to us, but at the same time reminding me how I need to have a focus and think further concerning what to do in his absence"* (CN2, pg. 7).

Some children apparently felt lonely when they were cared for by people other than their biological parents:

> *"I had an operation when I came to the Centre but neither my father nor my mother was with me in the hospital. It was a hard time being alone and being cared by people who were not my relatives while my own parents are alive"* (CN3, pg. 5).

Emotional pain during marital dissolution often results in a negative attitude amongst children regarding a specific gender – often male figures. The following extracts provide evidence of this trend:

> *"Right now I feel very bad for missing out on fatherly love. I don't trust men and I look at them as if they are all the same. I feel I can exist on my own without a man in my life. This feeling is bad and not right but what can I do? I don't have any connection with my father as a father figure"* (CN4, pg. 2); and
>
> *"I have acquired the attitude that every man is by nature a 'colonialist' (aggressive, bully, torturer, hurting others emotionally, etc.). Perhaps this might be a wrong impression but I know it is the result of some of the things that my parents were unable to share with me, or disclose to us"* (CN2, pg. 6).

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Whereas most children related their pain to non-resident parents, Child participant 6 linked his pain with a negative attitude towards the custodial parent who was apparently abusive when he was still living with him:

> *"I would like to visit my relatives; my grandmother, my aunt and my sisters – but not my father at all. How can I go to him? In fact, I don't see any value in him; even if he dies today I would have nothing to do with him. I would just like to know the fate of my sisters if my mother died"* (CN6, pg. 9).

Children's emotional pain was, apparently, manifested in various forms, such as feeling sad and often crying. One of the parents described her child's experiences:

> *"She cried and continued to cry until she was eight years old. She said that she needed a happy family; she needed both a father and a mother who were together. If she saw a good family on TV, she would start crying saying 'Look at how good that family looks. I don't like the way we are living here. Why aren't we like that family?' She said she used to hear people say that parents usually separate when children are older and asked why her dad and I separated while they were still so young, these comments used to make me cry a lot"* (PP2, pg. 2).

Besides sadness, being emotionally hurt during parents' separation processes seemingly resulted in feelings of low self-esteem, insecurity and guilt amongst children from broken families. This was reported as some of the reasons for children's unsettling behaviour. An excerpt from my research diary attests to this:

> *"The majority of children from broken families seem to be scared of harm – whether perceived or real – such as beatings, strong punishment and strong verbal reprimands. In order to avoid these, they usually escape whenever they sense danger, harm or pain"* (Research diary, pg. 2, 14 January 2013).

The following contribution by Child 6 illustrates his experience of a low self-esteem:

> *"I am always looking down on myself; the separation of my parents made me feel that I am no body, this failure in life will continue until I die, I wish I would be like other children"* (CN 6, pg. 11)

In terms of future relationships, parents who were once children from broken homes were reported to have a negative perception towards relationships, marriage and family. One of them explained:

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> *"The fact that my parents also separated has made me a pure victim of marital dissolution. It has really affected the way I relate and the way I have perceived the separation itself. Every time I was telling myself that I am not the first person to leave my husband. My mother did the same, she was not divorced she just left so it is OK for me to do it as well"* (PP4, pg. 2).

A similar view came from one of the caregivers: *"It doesn't matter how old are you but if you experienced hardships resulting from marital dissolution of parents you will continue feeling hurt and depressed"* (FGD1, P3, p. 18).

In observing the emotional impact on children I noticed that:

> *"Children who happened to be neglected following parents' separation seemed to display more academic, psycho-social and health problems than children who were just living with their custodial parents. For instance, children at Centre 2 were observed to have skin diseases, which resulted from first sleeping in a dirty environment in the street"* (Research diary, pg. 12, 18 December 2012).

Furthermore, I noted:

> *"Even when children consider the separation of their parents very positively and where there is a positive impact on them, somewhere in their heart/life they still acknowledge some negativity about their parents' separation"* (Research diary, pg. 8, 28 January 2013).

In support of my observation, Child 1 reported:

> *"Although separation may benefit one – or both – of the couple it is not necessarily of benefit to the children. Children continue to suffer when their parents are separated. Parents, your children still need you even when you don't need one another"* (C1, pg. 7).

A teacher's contribution supported this: *"The negative experiences in children's life as a result of marital dissolution goes deep in their hearts, making them having a very bad picture of life, relationships and family, in fact these experiences destroys them"* (FGD2, P1, pg. 15).

4.3.2.3 Acting out behaviour

Acting out behaviour displayed by the child participants in this study included running away, bullying, substance abuse, stealing, fighting and using abusive language. Such behaviour was

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apparently caused by reasons such as negative social learning; a struggle for survival on the streets; as well as the absence of one parent from home. Many of the examples of negative behaviour reported on were related to children living on the streets before being accommodated at children centres.

One of the child participants explained how street life affected her behaviour:

> *"I can also see some of this negative behaviour in myself as the result of being on the streets. I wouldn't be smoking marijuana; I wouldn't be a thief; I wouldn't live a street life; this compromised and difficult life environment would never be part of me"* (CN3, pg. 6).

During a group discussion a caregiver added:

> *"These children are often naughty and behave like bullies; they have many problems and are hard to manage in class. Life on the streets has affected them very badly in the way they live: they started smoking at a very young age; they make love to elderly 'sugar mammies'; they steal; they fight; and they have seen a lot on the street. In a way they are almost inhuman: they can't think as normal human beings and they are very dangerous and when they are angry with you the first thing they grab is a stone or a knife. The phrase 'I will kill you' is a common one coming out of their mouths. Their behaviour and the decisions they make when they are angry are different from other children"* (FGD2, P6, pg. 4).

Another caregiver who was working as matron at a centre reported:

> *"… those who are used to this kind of behaviour usually don't respect older women; they don't respect me as a matron because when the boys are 14 or 15 years old they have slept with a woman who is almost my age (+40 years) during their street life"* (FGD2, P6, pg. 4).

Throughout my interaction with children in the two centres *"I observed some bullying behaviour, shouting, insults, banging doors that displayed how street life seemed to have affected them" (*Research diary, pg. 2, 12 November 2012). Telling lies was also reported as common children's acting behaviour: *"That day I didn't pay the bus fare and I lied that I was with my mother who would pay for me; from Morogoro town I took another bus to Mkuyuni"* (CN7, pg. 2).

Negative social learning from inside and outside the family could reportedly affect children's behaviour following marital dissolution. Parent participant 5 explained:

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> *"I think some of her mother's actions have affected my daughter. For instance, when she sees a beer advert she says: 'Daddy, mummy always drinks that'. If she sees women with very short dresses and other funny clothing on TV she says 'those girls look like my mother'. My wife has been taking my daughter to her boyfriend where she has learnt very bad things. My daughter loves some funny songs and dances that she has learned by imitating her mother. The situation of not having a permanent home as well as a caregiver; living in squatter areas; and bad peer influence has affected my daughter"* (PP5, pg. 5).

A child participant elaborated: *"Parents' fighting can affect children as they usually replicate the life they have lived with their parents or what they saw their parents doing hence becoming aggressive or abusive individual in their adulthood"* (CN10, pg. 5).

Furthermore, children reported that they learnt acting out behaviour while struggling to obtain food for themselves and their siblings in order to survive. Some, allegedly, engaged in risk behaviour for this purpose:

> *"I got a job though I didn't like it much because I involved myself in selling and trafficking cocaine. They used to give me 500Tsh in the evening and I used to supply these drugs to the guys who were doing construction at Temeke Wailesi"* (CN2, pg. 3).

Although boys were reported to act out more often, following parents' separation, girls were also affected:

> *"The separation also affected my behaviour; I became a naughty girl and troublesome. I started truancy and not staying in school. I had bad friends and I lied to my mother. I know that all this was the cause of my early pregnancy at the age of 13"* (CN8, pg. 4).

The absence of a male parent in the family, as a result of marital dissolution, reportedly contributed to children's problematic behaviour. A number of custodial mothers indicated that they observed behaviour changes amongst their children soon after the father had left the house. One parent participant said:

> *"They started being disobedient because their father was not close to them. The children who were with me were worse as they had no respect for me at*

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all knowing that I was a woman and I couldn't do anything to them that their father would do" (PP9, pg. 4).

Another parent added:

> *"I think if their father was still with me they would show some respect. Children often despise their mother when their father is not around … For a long time now they have been disobedient. It would be different if their father was in the house"* (PP7, pg. 4).

Along the same line of thinking another parent explained: *"I am sure that my daughter has been psychologically affected; I observed her behaving badly when she started to experience the absence of an authority figure and she knew I couldn't do anything"* (PP1, pg. 7).

The absence of a father figure was, therefore, primarily related to disciplinary problems and children's lack of respect for the custodial parent by the participants in this study. On the other hand, the absence of a mother in the children's lives was reported as another cause for acting out behaviour. Based on the participants' responses, mothers seemed to be viewed as the teachers and guides of children. It was apparently common for a child to display behaviour problems if s/he grew up on the street or in an environment outside the mother's care. During a focus group discussion a caregiver explained:

> *"The children at the Centres are almost all affected in the same way, particularly those who are separated from their mothers when they are young: they become liars and thieves and are hard to trust. This is because the mother who is often considered to be a true teacher is not there with them"* (FGD1, P5, pg. 6).

Furthermore, staying at home with nothing to do – often as a result of dropping out of school – put girls at risk of indulging in early sexual activity. One of the parents explained:

> *"All this time they had nothing to do; they just stayed at home and started being involved with men at their very early age - soon they all fell pregnant and now they have children"* (PP7, pg. 5).

4.3.2.4 Child abuse

Participants reported that children from broken families were exposed to abuse of various kinds by their custodial parents and/or stepparents. One of the child participants said:

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> *"What pains me most was the way I was abused by my father; I can't forget the beatings and kinds of punishment we used to get from our father. I hate the way he gave me his underwear full of blood to wash while he was busy with his woman. I hate the way he was rude to us – not giving us even a little freedom to play with other children"* (CN6, pg. 9).

Other child participants added that:

> *"There was this incident when my sister was playing – imitating my mother cooking in the kitchen. When my father saw her, he took a hot charcoal and burnt her hands. She later recovered well but was left with permanent scars"* (CN 5, pg. 3), and
>
> *"…. he used to chain our legs and our hands before he beat us"* (CN4, pg. 4).

Although most reported incidents involved male custodial parents or stepparents, some incidents occurred when children were left in the care of a female custodial parent. I captured this in my research diary:

> *"The father of Child 12 ran away from home – leaving the children with their stressful mother who was so abusive and problematic that the children desired to go with their father just to be far away from their abusive mother, but it was not possible. The situation for these children seems worse psycho-socially than for those who had an abusive father. This is contrary to the majority belief that many times it is the women who are the ones running away from abusive husbands and not the husband running away from an abusive and alcoholic wife" (*Research diary, pg. 19, 23 January 2013).

In support of my observation, one of the parent participants said:

> *"I heard that the stepmother used to bite my daughter because she was naughty, she did not listen and she got into all sorts of mischief – so the stepmother punished her by biting her all around her body, as a result of this kind of life my child used to sneak away and come to my workplace, it was sad seeing her that way"* (PP1, pg. 4).

A similar report came from one of the teachers: *"A good number of students in my class, who live with their stepparents, often complain of being beaten, pinched, and sometimes starved"* (FGD 2, P1, pg. 15).

Apart from abusing children physically, stepmothers were accused of being unfair; giving less priority to stepchildren; and badmouthing the children in front of their fathers. An extract from one of the parent interviews exemplifies this:

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> *"I am quite sure that the stepmother would never be fair and just to my son. She has two children and my child is the third; she cannot give my son priority. I came to realise that she often beat my boy after I visited him, trying to convince the boy to tell her what we were talking about at the hotel. One day when she beat the boy he shouted: 'Kill me aunt if you want to, I cannot tell you what I was talking to my mother about because it has nothing to do with you!' His stepmother could do nothing, except tell her husband that the boy was spoiled and was hard to live with"* (PP11, pg. 4).

However, it should be noted that not all stepmothers were viewed as harmful to the children. Some children were reported to have been favoured and cared for by their stepmothers:

> *"When I went to my father he was alright with me and even my stepmother was OK with me. There was no problem except that I couldn't sit for my exams"* (CN7, pg. 4); and
>
> *"My stepmother secretly gives me food when my father is not around but when he comes back my father tells her that I am not his child, so he doesn't want to see me"* (CN3, pg. 4).

4.3.2.5 Variations in the effect of marital dissolution on children

The effect of marital dissolution seemed to vary from one child to another. Factors determining the variations of the effects as indicated in this study include age, gender, the custodial parent's socio-economic status and parent-child relationships. Child participants reported:

> *"It was really hard for me (Crying) but it wasn't a hard experience for my brother because he was very young and he grew up considering the situation as normal"* (CN10 [8 years at the time of marital dissolution], pg. 3); and
>
> *"The separation of my parents did not do more harm to my brother because he was still young and that's why he remembers only very few things"* (CN11 [10 years at the time of marital dissolution], pg. 7).

In support of their experiences I noted:

> *"Children whose parents separated when they were under three years of age seemed to remember less or nothing at all about the whole separation process and its impact on them"* (Research diary, pg. 5, 14 December 2012).

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In addition to age, parents believed that boys and girls experienced the effects of their separation differently:

> *"I think boys are affected more than girls, boys can even affect the parents. Boys can be easily influenced by peers, they buy marijuana together, and they can steal some things at home, selling them to get money for smoking. Boys can even arrange robbery for their homes or the neighbourhood especially when they lack some money to spend. Boys become more dangerous when they are out of hand than girls"* (PP3, pg. 6).

I noted a similar trend during my interaction with participants – as captured in my research diary:

> *"Boys seem to have less tolerance than girls when parents are going through a process of separation and so they make an early decision to leave home. This might account for why there is a majority of boys on the streets and in the centres rather than girls as girls seem to remain at home and take care of their siblings and help the custodial parent"* (Research diary, pg. 6, 11 January 2013).

Based on the participants' responses, it appears that the effects of marital dissolution were short term (temporary) and/or long term (lifetime). My own observations revealed:

> *"While with some children the negative impact of parents' separation on their academic and psycho-social well-being seems to last for a short period of time after the separation, there are others who take a long time to heal or who seem to be able to manage this effect"* (Research diary, pg. 14, 30 January 2013).

Some children reportedly experienced a negative effect soon after their parents' separation but then stabilised later, while some parent participants who were also children of divorced parents reported that at the time of this study they were still experiencing what they experienced when they were young. One of the caregivers explained: *"This is the age at which thieves and hardened criminals are nurtured because the impact is throughout their life"* (FGD2, P1, pg. 4).

An extract from my research diary attests to this:

> *"The majority of separated parents also seem to come from divorced families and some are of the opinion that what happened in their marriage was exactly what had happened in their parents' marriage"* (Research diary, pg. 13, 30 January 2013).

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Variations in the effects of marital dissolution on children were allegedly influenced by the custodial parent's socio-economic status. Participants reported that children who were left in the care of an affluent custodial parent experienced the separation less negatively when compared to those who were left with a poor custodial parent. One of the child participants explained: *"We are not that poor to desire any help from our father all the time, God has blessed us here with our mother. We have bread and butter on the table and now we see life in a better way"* (CN11, pg. 7).

Another child added:

> *"Nothing was hard in my father's absence. I never lacked anything and never felt any hardship as my mother was providing everything I needed – I was fully supplied. I would have suffered if my mother was a dependant on my father"* (CN4, pg. 4).

Along the same line of thinking I noted:

> *"Children who remained with custodial mothers who were not dependant on their husbands before separation are seen to do better academically and emotionally than those whose mothers were largely dependent on their husbands"* (Research diary, pg. 17, 12 December 2012).

Children who were allegedly not emotionally attached to their non-resident parents were reported to experience the marital dissolution less negatively than those who were emotionally attached to them. During a group discussion a caregiver explained:

> *"The effect will depend on who loved the non-resident parent most: if the non-resident parent, such as the father, was loved by his daughter, then the daughter will suffer and vice-versa; it depends which child was most emotionally connected to the non-resident parent"* (FGD1, P3, pg. 12).

In addition, children's emotional strength was mentioned by teachers as contributing to the varying effects of marital dissolution on children:

> *"But not every child in the family experience the negative effect of parents' separation in the same way, those who are very weak will really suffer just in no time but those few who are strong emotionally may cope. Even if they will show some signs of being shocked but it will not last longer"* (FGD2, P4, pg. 5).

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Finally, according to the participants, the negative effects of marital dissolution on the children were determined by whether or not the children had experienced a series of difficult incidents following marital dissolution. For example, children who experienced a number of negative incidents, such as relocation, abuse and hardship from stepparents were reportedly affected more negatively than those who did not. My thoughts in my research diary attest to this view:

> *"Children who ended up on the streets seem to be more negatively affected by their parents' marital dissolution than those who remained with custodial parents and the majority of children who live with their custodial mothers seem to be emotionally healthier than those who ended up with stepparents"* (Research diary, pg. 23, 22 January 2013).

4.3.3 SUB-THEME 2.3: PARENTS' INSIGHTS INTO THE EFFECT OF MARITAL DISSOLUTION ON THEIR CHILDREN

I discuss this sub-theme in terms of the following categories: a) Children's desire to be informed; b) Factors influencing parents' disclosure of separation to children; and c) Limited insight into the effect of marital dissolution on their children.

4.3.3.1 Children's desire to be informed

According to the participants, marital dissolution took the majority of the children by surprise, something which the children were seemingly unhappy about. I summarised my observations in this regard:

> *"The majority of the children seem to feel that it would have been better if they had been informed about the plans to separate prior to the separation itself. The majority expressed dissatisfaction about the fact that the separation of their parents was a surprise to them"* (Research diary, pg. 10, 17 January 2013).

In support of my observations, one of the child participants reported:

> *"I was not informed about their plans to separate; I just noticed that my parents were not together. They didn't sit down with us to tell us what was happening and the separation was a surprise to me. I knew that my parents were no longer together when we started moving from one parent to another"* (CN11, pg. 3).

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Moreover, some children shared the view that if they were informed about their parents' plans to separate they would have attempted to influence their parents not to separate – as captured in the following excerpts:

> *"I never knew or thought that my parents would separate; I was not informed or prepared. If they had told me – even though I was still young – it would have helped me. At least I could have talked to my father and have tried to persuade him not to separate from my mother"* (CN8, pg. 3); and
> *"If they had informed me before, I would have been in a position where I could possibly have advised them about the consequences that we would face if they separated. I would have told my father not to listen to people and to curb his temper. I think if I had had an opportunity to tell them something they would have listened to me. I feel bad not to have been considered important when my parents were planning to separate"* (CN3, pg. 6).

In addition to the wish to be informed and involved in their parents' decision to separate, participants reported that some children would have benefited from being allowed to choose where they wanted to live and how they could contact the non-resident parent after the separation. This, allegedly, did not happen as children were not involved in the process of separation and, hence, became so-called "victims of the circumstances". A child participant shared his experience:

> *"If I had been given an opportunity to know about the situation earlier, I would love to have known the fate of my education and also how I could communicate with both parents as freely as I wanted; to know where they were going to live; and what freedom of access I would have to both. I needed to know the cause of their separation and whether we, as children, were part of that cause"* (CN2, pg. 8).

This view was shared by Child participant 5:

> *"If my mother had shared with me her plan to leave home for Dar es Salaam, I would be in contact with her and when I decided to come to Dar es Salaam I would have been able to find her. If my father told me beforehand about his plans to marry another woman, I would have asked him to take me to my grandmother who I would have chosen to live with, rather than my stepmother"* (CN 5, pg. 7).

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In the same manner, Child participant 10 emphasised: *"Every child has a right to know what is happening and what will happen after parents go apart"* (CN10, pg. 7). During a focus group discussion a caregiver added:

> *"The custodianship decision may affect the child when decisions are made against the child's will; it will affect her/him psychologically. Children need to be considered when choosing where to live, especially when their age allows this"* (FGD2, P2, pg. 10).

In support of this idea Child participant 4 remarked: *"I am sure that I would not have felt this bad if my parents had informed me about where and with whom I will stay after they separated"* (C5, pg. 8).

In investigating whether children were involved in the separation process or not I discovered that:

> *"It seems that not a single child was informed about the possibility of their parents' separation and being involved in the processes following the separation. However, some children seemed to predict the separation before it occurred"* (Research diary, pg. 23, 26 December 2012).

Apparently, children from broken families did not only desire to be informed about their parents' plans to separate, but they also wanted to understand the reason behind the separation. The following extract captures this need: *"It would have been beneficial if I had known earlier what was about to happen. I would have known about the problems between them"* (C7, pg. 7).

Although Tanzanian parents do not seem to disclose their plans to separate to their children – or they delay sharing the news with their children – it became evident that some children predicted the separation through observing the continuous conflict and misunderstanding between their parents. The following extract provides evidence of this view: *"It's good to let children know what is happening in their dad and mum's relationship because sometimes they read things in the conflict, the silences, and the fights and they predict the future"* (FGD2, P3, pg. 8).

As marital dissolution is not a single incident but a series of events and processes that may have an impact on the children; children expressed the need to be aware of the various processes that occurred during marital dissolution. I captured this idea in my research diary:

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> *"It seems that children not only desire to be informed about their parents' plans to separate but also about the series of events that follow the separation, such as relocation, plans to remarry, visitations rights"* (Research diary, pg. 10, 11 January 2013).

Moreover, disclosing information about the separation process was indicated as potentially beneficial to the children. A caregiver provided examples of the benefits:

> *"Involving and informing children about family issues especially during the separation process helps them psychologically; it prepares them emotionally to face the reality which is sometimes inevitable. This makes them more emotionally and psychologically aware and prepared than if they were just caught by surprise"* (FGD1, P5, pg. 1).

Another caregiver elaborated: *"It is a disadvantage for children not to know that their parents are not together anymore, they are left with many unanswered questions and they fail to learn a lesson from the whole process"* (FGD2, P1, pg. 9). A similar view was presented by a teacher: *"Parents should consider ideas given by their children; sometimes this helps the children from being greatly affected from parents' separation"* (FGD1, P5, pg. 11).

During my interaction with the children I noticed that:

> *"The majority of the children seem to think that if they were informed of their parents' separation they would have been able to talk to them about it and advise them – regardless as to whether or not their parents took their advice. Some children appear to think that their advice would have changed the situation for better and some claim that they had the right to be informed of anything that happened in the family that might affect their well-being in one way or another; when parents treat the separation process as confidential, the children seem to create a different picture in their minds"* (Research diary, pg. 10, 9 January 2013).

However, not all children who participated in this study desired to be informed about the separation process. Two children out of the twelve took a different stance on this matter and expressed their views as follows:

> *"My parents didn't tell me they were going to separate. I am happy and I do OK not to know it. It is good that parents do not tell their children*

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> *beforehand – especially when they are still young – because they will be frustrated and will not be able to listen to their teachers at school* (crying, & wiping tears)" (CN10, pg. 2); and
>
> *"There is no need to sit down and start telling children about the separation. It hurts them more and adds pain in them; it also makes them think beyond what they can handle*" (CN11, pg. 7).

Both these participants, however, clearly captured the emotional pain they experienced in their responses (see Sub-theme 2.2, Section 4.3.2.2).

4.3.3.2 Factors influencing parents' disclosure of separation to children

The disclosure (or non-disclosure) of parents' separation to children was, reportedly, influenced by various factors, such as the maturity of the children; reasons for marital dissolution; culture; and poor parent-child relationships. Other determining factors relate to the parents being overwhelmed by continuous conflict as well as parents being uncertain about their children's reactions.

Although some participants were positive about disclosing their separation to their children, the majority of the parent participants, especially the mothers, were against this – based on factors such as the ages of the children, suggesting the immaturity of the children to handle such information. One of the parents explained: *"My children were not matured enough to know what was happening. Neither of us was able to tell them about our separation; we left them to discover it for themselves when they grow up"* (PP9, pg. 3). In support of this idea, Child 5 explained:

> *"We did not know what was happening; we just saw our mother was not happy, and every day she became weak, each time we asked she told us that we were not old enough to be told such family issues"* (CN2, pg. 10).

Another hindrance relates to the majority of separating couples reportedly being involved in issues concerned with extra-marital relationships, rape and other forms of abuse which – according to the parents – would harm the children if they knew about it. The following excerpts illustrate this idea:

> *"It is because some of us are separating for very shameful reasons, how can I tell my children that I divorced their father because he was having an affair in the neighbourhood or that he once raped me?"* (PP3, pg. 7); and

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> *"Sometimes when we fight children were curious to know the reason, unfortunately I couldn't make it open to them because it was so shameful"* (PP3, pg. 4).

Furthermore, parents' battles and bitterness – as a result of marital conflict – were identified as a reason for parents not disclosing their intention to separate to their children. During a focus group discussion a caregiver explained: *"The majority of couples are full of anger and bitterness towards each other; they don't see any value in sharing what is in their hearts with their children"* (FGD1, P2, pg. 10). In further support, disclosing marital dissolution information to children was considered as a hard and cumbersome process in circumstances that were often characterised by poor parent-child relationships. The following quotation provides evidence of such feelings:

> *"It is easy for parents who have a good parent-child relationship to consider their children if they have a tendency to sit together and discuss issues related to the children, but if they are only immersed in fighting, then the welfare of the children will always be at stake"* (FGD, P6, pg. 8).

Some parents reported that they were scared to tell their children about what was happening in their marriage and the possibility of separating because they feared that the reactions and questions of the children would be unpredictable. During a focus group discussion a teacher explained:

> *"Some parents are scared of some reactions and difficult questions from their children, such as if children were to ask their parents: What was the reason you gave birth to us if you knew you will separate one day? Parents are not prepared to hurt their children's feelings so they keep it a secret"* (FGD1, P6, pg. 10).

In addition, some participants mentioned that the disclosure of marital-related issues to children was not in line with African culture. The following extracts provide examples of this view:

> *"It is not bad if children are told about what was happening in their parent's relationship but it is always hard for us as Africans compared to our fellow Whites who are very open regarding family issues – parents sharing their problems with their children is not part of our culture"* (PP8, pg. 2); and
> *"In Tanzania, as in many other African societies, families are not transparent in terms of various problems. Sharing information about*

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family problems within the family is not regarded as important" (FGD1, P2, pg. 9-10).

In response to beliefs such as these, one of the teachers and caregivers who supported the idea of informing children about marital dissolution processes commented: *"Parents think that children do not understand what's going on, but in actual fact children read the signs of each and every incident that occurs in the family's daily life"* (FGD2, P6, pg. 8). Also in support, a child participant said:

> *"It is not healthy for parents to tell lies to their children or to cover up the truth about what is happening during and after the separation process,…sometimes some mothers ask their children: 'Why are you asking about your father; Do you miss food on the table?; Do you think you will not go to school?' I don't want to hear anyone mentioning father again"* (CN10, pg. 7).

4.3.3.3 Limited insight into the effect of marital dissolution on their children

Despite being blinded by continuous conflict or by not having sufficient insight into the negative effect of marital dissolution on the children, participants displayed an understanding of the necessity for parents to have an insight into the effect of marital dissolution on children. The following quotations capture parents' understanding:

> *"At least we (as parents) can now focus on our children and discuss issues regarding them; we make joint decisions about their well-being which is different to when we were living together"* (PP2, pg. 10);
>
> *"When parents consider the well-being of their children during the process of marital dissolution they might invest time and effort to these children so that they might be able to live their life to the fullest, this will gratify both the parents and the children"* (PP3, pg. 7); and
>
> *"Knowing the negative or positive effects of separation on their children helps parents to choose what is best for their children – for instance, parents may decide to separate when their children will benefit from their separation or they will protect their relationship from separation when there might be a negative impact on their children"* (FGD1, F3, pg. 8).

According to the participants, some parents showed insight into the effects of their separation on the children and wished to inform their children about the process but they were

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overwhelmed by the pressure of continuous marital conflict, resulting in them being unable to prevent their children from being harmed by the breakup. The following extracts support this idea:

> *"Although I had very little insight on the possibility of my children being affected by our separation, I never considered these effects in detail and how serious they would be. I was overwhelmed by the battles between my husband and myself; he also forgot about everything"* (PP2, pg. 7); and
> *"During my fights and conflict with my husband, my daughter was not on my mind; I was preoccupied with my battles with him; the child came to my mind only after the consequences started to emerge"* (PP1, pg. 6).

In cases where one of the parents had some insight into the effect of marital dissolution on the children and not the other, the effect on the children was apparently always negative. A parent reported:

> *"I knew before our separation that our issues might affect our daughter; I knew some of my wife's behaviour might also affect my daughter. I have been fighting hard to see to it that my daughter was not affected by our separation. Unfortunately, my wife does not think things through; she doesn't care about anything and she doesn't know how much her actions have affected our daughter's life. Sometimes, we have also been blinded by our misunderstandings"* (PP5, pg. 4).

I also observed this trend:

> *"When parents are in continuous conflict everything that unfolds in the separation process seems to come as a surprise to the children and that tends to make them more distracted"* (Research diary, pg. 22, 30 January 2013).

Mothers seemed to consider their children during the process of marital dissolution more often than the fathers. A caregiver summed this up during a focus group discussion:

> *"Women somehow think more about their children than men do; the pain and the attachment of the mother to their children make mothers more considerate of their children and more ready to protect them"* (FGD2, P2, pg. 6).

Keeping the negative effects of marital dissolution on children in mind, some custodial mothers reported that they tried hard to prevent the separation from happening by tolerating

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their husbands' behaviour in order to safeguard the well-being of their children. The following quotations attest to this statement:

> *"Throughout all this I thought of the possible problems that my children might encounter if we separated and that's why I tried to tolerate the situation rather than to go away. I knew that children need parenting from both their mother and their father; I knew that children are always happy to see their father around the home; and I also thought that by living with a single parent would never be good for them, despite all these efforts still the separation was inevitable"* (PP12, pg. 2);
>
> *"I had some thoughts about how difficult my life would be and the possible effects it would have on my children but there was nothing I could do about it. I learnt to accept all the problems that came on my way"* (PP9, pg. 5); and
>
> *"I considered the fate of my children before separation, I knew if we are separating it will not be easy for them but unfortunately I had nothing to do to avoid it, what happened was inevitable, I decided to take responsibility of my hard and tough decisions because there was no way to tolerate his behaviours"* (PP6, pg. 3).

According to the children who participated in this study, their situation would have been different if their parents had thought about the negative effects of marital dissolution on them before separating. A child participant shared his experience:

> *"My parents never considered me when they were divorcing. If they had done so, they would have solved their differences and they would not have parted; they would still be living together and I would have known my father"* (CN4, pg. 2).

Adding to this one of the parent participants said:

> *"During our days together I foresaw that one day we would separate. Despite seeing this from an early stage, we were blind concerning our children. We forgot about them and we came to talk about them only after the separation when I advised him to think about our children as part of his wealth; I am sure he had no idea about the fate of our children"* (PP2, pg. 6).

In supporting this view, a teacher commented:

> *"Parents put their interests first and their children's well-being comes last; when they get tired of each other the only thing they think about is a way*

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> *out – they don't consider the negative effect of their separation on their children"* (FGD2, P6, pg. 5).

Participants showed insight concerning the fact that the influx of street children in Tanzania – especially in large cities, such as Dar es Salaam may have been caused by parents' separations where there was no consideration of the effect that their marital dissolution would have on the children. Teachers, caregivers and parents felt that if parents had the necessary insight into the effect of marital dissolution on their children they would have tried harder to prevent their marriages from breaking up which would have resulted in fewer children on the streets. One of the teachers explained:

> *"When parents protect their relationship from breakup, they are automatically protecting their children from ending up on the streets. They might not know it – thinking that they are just caring for their children – but actually they are doing a great job of reducing the number of street children…. Without considering the consequences for their separation on children, separating parents are a good industry of producing street children. This means that the greater the rate of separation, the bigger the flock of children on the streets will be"* (FGD1, P1, pg. 9).

A parent participant supported this view: *"I am sure if both parents would consider the effects of marital dissolution on their children, the problem of street children would be reduced"* (PP3, pg. 9).

However, it was also noted that not all children living on the streets were the result of parents' separation as many other factors contributed to this phenomenon. One of the caregivers stated:

> *"Not every child in the street is from a broken family, some of these children come onto the streets because of poverty and their reluctance to participate in rural activities, like farming and animal husbandry. Many are on the street today because they have been told by their peers that life in town is good; they think that money can be easily obtained by selling empty bottles and scrapers or by begging and for this reason they decide to leave home and come onto the streets. The government needs to view this problem in a big picture otherwise it will continue to grow"* (FGD2, P5, pg. 7).

Another caregiver said:

> *"There is no real relationship between an increase of children on the streets and parents' insight on the effect on children. The relationship is small*

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because sometimes children leave their homes in the regions, knowing where they're going" (FGD2, P3, pg. 6).

4.4 THEME 3: TRENDS FOLLOWING MARITAL DISSOLUTION

The third theme I identified concerns data related to changes, arrangements and processes following marital dissolution. This theme addresses the third secondary research question: *What is the effect of marital dissolution on children's academic and psycho-social functioning?* I identified the following related sub-themes: positive effect of marital dissolution; change in living arrangements; and other related changes negatively affecting children. Table 4.5 provides a summary of Theme 3 in terms of the inclusion and exclusion criteria I used to identify the related sub-themes and categories.

Table 4.5: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria for Theme 3

THEME 3: TRENDS FOLLOWING MARITAL DISSOLUTION		
Sub-themes and categories	**Inclusion criteria**	**Exclusion criteria**
Sub-theme 3.1: Positive effect of marital dissolution	This sub-theme includes data related to the benefits that children experienced following the marital dissolution of their parents.	This sub-theme excludes data that do not relate to benefits that children experienced as a result of marital dissolution.
Category 1: Freedom from abusive environment	This category includes data related to children as well as parents being free of abuse following marital dissolution.	This category excludes data that relate to development and skills acquisition as a result of marital dissolution.
Category 2: Personal development and skills acquisition	This category includes data related to positive experiences, knowledge and skills that children developed - based on their parents' marital dissolution.	This category excludes data that refer to children and parents being free from an abusive environment.
Sub-theme 3.2: Change in living arrangements	This sub-theme includes data related to challenges and opportunities in terms of living arrangements following marital dissolution.	This sub-theme excludes data that do not relate to challenges and opportunities of changed living arrangements following marital dissolution.
Category 1: Nature of custodial arrangements	This category includes data related to decisions, operations and practices concerning the custodial care of children.	This category excludes data that refer to visitation rights and conflict surrounding custodial care.
Category 2: Visits with non-custodial parent	This category includes data related to how visits to, and contact with, non-resident parents were planned and executed.	This category excludes data that relate to the nature of custodial arrangements or conflict surrounding custody.

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Category 3: Conflict related to living arrangements and visits to non-resident parent	This category includes data related to parents' differences surrounding custody and visiting rights.	This category excludes data that refer to the nature of custodial arrangements or visits to non-resident parents.
Sub-theme 3.3: Other related changes negatively affecting children	This sub-theme includes data related to how children were indirectly and negatively affected by marital dissolution.	This sub-theme excludes data that relate to custodial issues or positive experiences of children.
Category 1: Changed socio-economic status, poverty and relocation	This category includes data related to environments that signified a changed socio-economic status of the custodial parent or relocation as a result of marital dissolution.	This category excludes data that refer to the indirect effect of marital dissolution on children or to post-divorce relationships.
Category 2: Remarriage and other post-divorce relationships	This category includes data related to parents' decisions to engage in intimate relationships after marital dissolution.	This category excludes data that relate to changed socio-economic status, poverty, and relocation or the effect of parents' emotional states on children.
Category 3: Effect of parents' emotional states on children	This category includes data related to how children were indirectly affected by emotionally destabilised custodial parents.	This category excludes data that relate to remarriage and other post-divorce relationships or to increased dependency on relatives.
Category 4: Increased dependency on relatives	This category includes data related to how custodial parents depended on relatives and its effects on the children following marital dissolution.	This category excludes data that refer to the effect of parents' emotional states on children or to changed socio-economic status and poverty following marital dissolution.

4.4.1 SUB-THEME 3.1: POSITIVE EFFECTS OF MARITAL DISSOLUTION

I discuss Sub-theme 3.1 in terms of the following categories: a) Freedom from abusive environment and b) Personal development and skills acquisition.

4.4.1.1 Freedom from abusive environment

According to the participants, the separation of parents occasionally had positive results and implied potential opportunities for selected children. One of the reported positive results was being free of an abusive environment, as expressed in the following excerpts:

> *"It is better that we separated because by now I would have been crippled or dead (crying). There was a point when he almost stabbed me with a spear. Being away from him is better for me and my son because the boy was*

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> *always sad when he saw me crying. When he was four years old he showed me places to hide, he is now happy that I am happy"* (PP11, pg. 6);
>
> *"There are children who have been in strong conflict with their fathers because of how they abused their mothers; this enmity between the children and the father makes children take their mother's side and they always take a stand against their father. In these kinds of families the enmity only ends when the parents decide to separate. In the scenario like this separation becomes a gateway to peace for both the mother and her children"* (FGD1, P2, pg. 14); and
>
> *"Some children related experiencing feelings of discomfort whenever their divorced parents thought of reuniting; these children claimed that they were better off without their non-resident parents. In such circumstances conflict may have arisen between the child and the custodial parent who was planning to allow the non-resident parent in"* (Research diary, pg. 8, 31 January 2013).

Some of the participating children reported that they were happy that their mothers could live in peace after their abusive father had left. Being released from a hostile environment seemed to be weighted more heavily than the economic hardship the children experienced living with poor custodial parents (mothers). The following quotation illustrates this:

> *"I considered my father's actions towards my mother as unfair and dehumanising so I thought it would be better if he was not part of us. My mother was a friend, so my father's actions were just giving all of us pain. I felt good when my father left because my mother was happy despite the economic hardship we are experiencing"* (CN2, pg. 4).

Furthermore, the children indicated that they felt it was better for parents to separate rather than to continue fighting in front of their children. One of the children explained:

> *"Separation might be better for the children because it marks the end of them seeing their parents fighting. Personally, I advise parents who fight to separate for the good of their children rather than remain married and jeopardise the well-being of their children by their daily battles"* (CN10, pg. 5).

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Some participants also explained how they were able to help each other with day-to-day living following marital dissolution, in contrast to when their husbands were still in the house. The following quotations capture this:

> *"We have been peaceful in his absence. It was not possible for my husband and I staying together with children and plan our income and expenditure peaceful like we do now. I consult my elder children freely and with higher expectations than it was before"* (P 3, pg. 8); and
>
> *"I don't know if remaining with him would have been as peaceful as it is here"* (CN11, pg. 5).

In further support, caregivers reported that some children seemed happy living at the centres, because they were tired of the daily fights of their parents. One of the caregivers said:

> *"If the relationship was characterised by frequent fights, the children may get some relief from the unfriendly and tension filled family environment when the noise, arguments and daily fight between parents come to an end. Some children who were highly disturbed by their parents' fights are happy living at the Centres"* (FGD1, P2, pg. 13-14).

4.4.1.2 Personal development and skills acquisition

According to the participants, marital dissolution could culminate in some so-called 'lessons-in-life' for the children. One of the child participants explained:

> *"The experience I got from my parents' separation has taught me a lesson. I will never do this to my own wife or to my children. My life will be like a movie in which I am the main actor. I will tell my children about the life I had; the need to be strong; to persevere; and to look forward. I have learnt a lot"* (CN1, pg. 6).

Another child reported how he acquired skills to help siblings as a result of marital dissolution:

> *"The breakup of my parents' marriage taught me to stand on my own feet. For instance, I learnt to drive a 'bajaj' (a three wheeled motorcycle); to drive a car; and also to take care of my siblings. I did this because I had to face the life that my parents had left for me to live. I also considered myself as a father who can't run away from his children, now I am anxious to learn more skills in the centre and go back home to apply them in order to help my*

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> *siblings develop. I don't know how I managed to do all these; I think I am talented*" (CN12, pg. 5).

Likewise, parents acknowledged that some children took responsibility and committed to everything they did after they became aware that the family could no longer depend on the father. One of the parent participants said: *"My children are now very responsible with time and with resources, we all share every little we get; we put our minds together to develop our family"* (PP3, pg. 8). Closely related to this, marital dissolution seemed to create opportunities for some parents and children. A child participant shared his experience:

> *"I think there has been a great gain in this separation as my mother was a house wife and she used to expect everything from our father but nowadays she is more independent and creative in that she can think of what to do; how and when to do it; and she can create some things that will sustain the family"* (CN2, pg. 6).

In terms of the practice of religion, in some cases marital dissolution provided an opportunity for the children to freely engage with their preferred religion. This was particularly applicable in circumstances where parents came from different religions – as is evident in the following extracts:

> *"Seriously, there are a lot of good things that I see from my parents' separation. When they were together my Christian faith was not strong because he was not a man of faith, but being close to my mother has really helped me spiritually and in my Christian walk"* (CN11, pg. 5); and
>
> *"My mother goes to church and we all attend fellowship; she also takes us to a Christian school and other good things. It is better with mother and I prefer being here where I have lots of good friends"* (CN11, pg. 5).

In addition to their own religion practices, marital dissolution apparently also brought relief to circumstances where differences in religion created tension between parents. One of the caregivers explained:

> *"When parents (couples) from different religions decide to separate - and if religion was also an issue for their differences - the children may get some relief by choosing between their father's and their mother's religion"* (FGD1, P2, pg. 13).

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Despite these differences, separated parents seemed pleased that their children were able to practise the religion of their choice. A parent participant stated: *"I thank God that since they came to live with me they became Christians and as he now see them happy, he decided to leave them free to choose their religion"* (PP2, pg. 4).

Apart from the lessons they learnt and their freedom to practice their religion of choice, marital dissolution allowed some children to excel. This is captured in the following quotations:

> *"Sometimes when parents separate, children end up in good and safe hands; they can develop and prosper well in the absence of their fathers"* (PP3, pg. 8); and
>
> *"Some children experience good opportunities after their parents' separation and their lives start to change positively after that. For instance, this happens when a child who was struggling at school due to her/his parents' constant fights ends up in the good hands of a responsible and good-hearted guardian who gives the child more opportunities to prosper"* (FGD2, P5, pg. 11).

My observations confirm this idea:

> *"Although the majority of the children seem to have suffered negatively from the impact of parents' separation, some seem to consider the separation as a positive challenge and take advantage of every opportunity that comes their way and are resourceful for the sake of their custodial parents and siblings. Some considered themselves to be fathers or heads of families and, therefore, were ready to assume all related responsibilities. This attitude seems to have extended them far above the level they would have achieved if their parents had been together"* (Research diary, pg. 7, 18 January 2013).

According to the participants, children's ability to cope with marital dissolution varied from one child to another. Coping skills were allegedly determined by factors such as the children's personal development, where children who were not able to cope easily with the negative effect of parents' marital dissolution experienced academic and psycho-social challenges. The ability to cope with the negative effect of marital dissolution, reportedly, became stronger as time passed – as explained by the participants:

> *"For me, I don't see much of its negative effects because I am used to it now, I don't think about it much. I learned to take it simply and to get used to it.*

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Though I must admit that it was hard at first, it is normal now" (CN10, pg. 3), and

"Some children find it hard to get used to the situation but some are able to cope with it within a short time. For example, in my case it was not so hard; I suffered when I was six and seven but later when I became nine I managed well" (C10, p. 5).

In addition, informing children about the decisions and plans for marital dissolution was reported to have an impact on the children's coping processes. Children who were well-informed seemed to cope more easily, with the effects being less detrimental when compared to children whose parents' separation caught them by surprise. In this regard, Child participant 2 said:

"Knowing that there were issues between parents can help someone predict what might happen. This could also help someone to withstand; to cope with; and to be ready to take a lesson from the circumstances of their lives. Generally, I would appreciate the need to know about the future of my life and what they were thinking about me in that context" (CN2, pg. 8).

4.4.2 SUB-THEME 3.2: CHANGE IN LIVING ARRANGEMENTS.

This sub-theme concerns the circumstances surrounding living arrangements following marital dissolution. I identified and discuss the following categories: a) Nature of custodial arrangements; b) Visits with non-custodial parent; and c) Conflict related to living arrangements and visits with non-resident parent.

4.4.2.1 Nature of custodial arrangements

The participants maintained that custodial arrangement decisions were determined by factors such as the children's ages and the parents' ability to take care of the children. However, these decisions were, reportedly, mostly informal and followed frequent conflict and antagonism between the parents. Custodial arrangements in Tanzania seem to be largely informal as very few couples go through a legal divorce. According to the participants, decisions about custodial living arrangements were based on personal influences and preferences. Mothers often seemed to remain with the children as one of the parent participants explained:

"In my case, even if the child was matured enough, I wouldn't allow the father to have her or allow her to be raised by a stepmother, I had to use

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> *everything in my power to stay with my child because only a biological mother can take a good care of her own child"* (PP10, pg. 4).

In rare cases of legal procedures, with a court ruling that the father should be given custody of the children, some mothers allegedly still ended up raising their children. A parent participant explained:

> *"The court ruled that he should take the custodianship of the children, but I came to discover that my children were going hungry, they had nothing to eat, and they used to ask for food from the neighbourhood. They were living like street children. I asked him to allow them to visit me for few days but I knew that I will never take them back to that life"* (PP4, pg. 7).

An extract from my research diary supports this:

> *"Even at times when court rulings granted custody to the father, there are times when the children ended up in the hands of their mothers – especially when the mothers were dissatisfied with the care they received from the fathers"* (Research diary, pg. 17, 17 January 2013).

Besides personal preference, the parents' ability to provide for the children was also reported as a major determinant for informal custodial decisions. Important factors that are considered include provision for health, domestic needs and education. A caregiver stated: *"The income of the parent also matters; the mother might need to stay with the children but if she doesn't have an income to support them, then the father will take charge of them"* (FGD2, P5, pg. 9). In addition to parents' ability to care for their children, participants reported that the children's ages and attachment to a specific parent were used to, informally, determine which parent should remain with the children. One of the teachers explained:

> *"... it is an automatic thing for the young children to choose to remain with their mother. Factors that determine this automatic response include closeness or an attachment of the children to the mother, her care and age"* (FGD1, P2, pg. 12).

I noted:

> *"The majority of the children often seem to remain with their mothers due to several reasons, including age, love and attachment to their mothers and irresponsibility and carelessness on the part of the majority of fathers"* (Research diary, pg. 17, 28 January 2013).

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Informal custodial arrangements were reported to be characterised by conflict and arguments between parents (see Section 4.4.2.3). According to the participants, such battles not only ruined the relationship between the separating parents but also affected the well-being of children:

> *"…..in some families there are some fights and battles over the custody of the children. These fights and misunderstandings sometimes affect the child. There is an example of a child who died mysteriously, as a result of witchcraft, when one parent was dissatisfied with the decision of not being the custodian of the child – they call it 'tukose wote' (meaning let both of us miss it)* (FGD1, P5, pg. 11).

Moreover, regardless of which factors determine custodial decisions, participants were of the view that children desired to be involved in, and informed about, such decisions. Custodial decisions in Tanzania, however, were reported to generally ignore and neglect the children's involvement. The following extract supports this statement:

> *"The custodianship decision may affect the child when decisions are made against the child's will; it will affect her/him psychologically. Children need to be considered when choosing where to live, especially when their age allows this"* (FGD2, P2, pg. 10).

It should be noted that a great deal of the information concerning custodial arrangements was collected from custodial parents and the children who were still living in their custodial homes. However, several children residing at the centres reportedly also came from mothers' custodianship, following difficulties to survive or due to financial need. A participant provided an example of such a case:

> *"My father left when I was in Grade 3. Life was not easy at home and food was a problem, we could no longer be able to go to school, my elder brother fled to the street and finally he ended up in this Centre. He is the one who made some arrangements for me and my little brother to also come here"* (C1, pg. 22).

4.4.2.2 Visits with non-custodial parent

Despite most contact and visits to non-custodial parents reportedly being unstructured, factors that could determine children's visits were identified, such as parent-child relationships. I noted in my research diary:

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> *"The desire of the children to visit their non-resident parent seems to be determined largely by the child-parent relationship that existed before the separation; the majority of the children seem to be angry with their fathers because of the pain they caused them"* (Research diary, pg. 4, 19 December 2012).

Distance between the children and non-resident parents was also mentioned as affecting visits to the non-residential parent, especially in cases where a family were poor. Parent participant 11 explained how distance was a challenge in their case:

> *"When the boy was with my mother in the village, his father never came to visit him. Since the boy went to stay with his father he has never been allowed to visit me – so I am making an effort to visit him. I have managed to visit him three times since 2007; it is not easy because of the distance and the costs"* (PP11, pg. 6).

A child participant added:

> *"Currently, we don't communicate with our father; the visits only took place when we were in Durban. There are no visit, no calls and no communication after we came here. He doesn't call and we don't call"* (CN11, pg. 5).

In some cases custodial parents, reportedly, allowed their children to decide whether or not, and when to visit non–resident parents. One of the parent participants reported that:

> *"My children are free to visit their father anytime they want. They have even taken their little sister to see him. They are also satisfied with how they are free to visit him, every time they visit him they come back so happy, chewing gums and holding packets of biscuits"* (PP6, pg. 6).

Likewise, even for a few parents who reported to have structured visits to non-resident parents, an agreement between the parents was important. This idea is captured in the following excerpt:

> *"Children are happy with the visits as they don't complain about anything. They go to their father for two weeks in each holiday. Sometimes they like to visit their father or just to be picked up for an outing. I usually allow them to do so because they are so happy when they are with their father"* (PP2, pg. 10).

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Participants reported that some children took advantage of their parents' miscommunication about visits by, for example, sleeping outside the home while claiming to visit the non-resident parent. One of the parents reported her experience:

> *"Unfortunately, she started to abuse this freedom. Sometimes she stole her father's mobile phone and called me saying that her father had asked her to sleep over but she was actually going to sleep to her boyfriend. Sometimes she said she was going to visit her father on the weekend but she was really going to her lover….so she took advantage of this and got pregnant at the age of 13"* (PP1, pg. 9).

I documented my observations during data collection in my research diary:

> *"Child visits to the non-resident parent (usually the father) sometimes seem to be abused by the children. Some children appear to have gone their own way (sleeping with boyfriends, girlfriends and peers) when they pretended to visit their non-resident parents. These tendencies have, apparently, contributed to a lot of moral degradation"* (Research diary, pg. 5, 16 November 2012).

In addition, Parent participant 2 reported:

> *"Sometimes children who move from one home to another develop some negative behaviour which may go unnoticed by both parents. The children may hide some issues that they know is not liked by one parent and sometimes they may take advantage of the distance between the two parents"* (PP2, pg. 11).

This was after the parent had observed some misconduct in her daughter which was the result of the parents' failure to manage her, particularly when she was in and out of their homes. A caregiver added to this thought: *"Moving from one home to another when parents have separated is not healthy to children's behaviour, we have observed various unusual behaviour go unnoticed during shared parenting"* (FGD2, P4, pg. 15).

4.4.2.3 Conflict related to living arrangements and visits with non-resident parent

For the majority of the parents involved in this study post-divorce conflict was caused by the non-resident parent (usually the father) not supporting the children or by parents' struggles for access to, and/or custody of, the children. In reflecting on her experiences, Parent participant 8 explained:

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> *"When he came to visit, he just showed up empty handed; he didn't even have a kilogram of sugar for his son – what kind of a father is that! When he came we spoke about the rent which was due but he couldn't do anything about it and I struggled by myself until I eventually managed to pay it"* (PP8, pg. 5).

In this regard, I noted in my research diary:

> *"Fathers were reported to be irresponsible in terms of child support – something that created a great deal of misunderstanding between the parents. It was reported that some fathers told the local authorities or social welfare offices that they were taking care of their children when they were not"* (Research diary, pg. 16, 22 January 2013).

A specific reported cause of post-divorce conflict is the desire to obtain child custody. The informal nature of custodial arrangements in Tanzania appears to result in frequent battles between parents, with both claiming to have the right to remain with their children following marital dissolution, although several children seemed to end up on the streets for a number of reasons, such as the poverty of a custodial parent (often the mother). An experience by a child participant attests to this:

> *"One day when we were in Durban my father came and forced us into the car so that we could leave with him. He then started fighting with my mother because she didn't want us to go. I didn't want to go either but I was forced to go. I think he realised that we were not happy with what he had done but he still decided to take us away"* (CN11, pg. 5).

A parent's account supported this experience:

> *"There has been a battle between us concerning the child, my ex-husband was taking our daughter from me by force and I would go to get her back by force. If he took her without me knowing, I would take her back when he was not around"* (PP1, pg. 8).

Besides conflict related to custody of the children, parents also reportedly fought when a custodial parent denied a non-resident parent contact with the children. An extract from an interview with a parent attests to this: *"…We haven't fought much after our separation – only when she wants to see her daughter and I do not want her very close to my daughter"* (PP5, pg. 7). Such conflict between separated parents was suggested to be potentially harmful to children, as both parents would typically aim to obtain the support of

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their children by fuelling them with negative words and perceptions about the other parent. One of the participants reported:

> *"My father used to tell us that our mother was dead when it was not true, he sometimes told us that mom never loved us, – he just wanted us to forget about her, hate her and not to talk about her (crying). He told us that if we saw our mother we must shout out as if we have seen a thief, the only thing he wanted is for us to take his side just because of their conflict"* (CN6, pg. 3).

When post-divorce conflict persisted, husbands were reported to often disappear, hiding themselves from the conflict – adding to the negative experiences of the children. A parent explained:

> *"My children very rarely see their father as we don't know where he lives nowadays. He doesn't call us and we don't call him. He has only visited us once. My children would love to visit or communicate with their father but we don't have the means to do so"* (PP8, pg. 5).

4.4.3 SUB-THEME 3.3: OTHER RELATED CHANGES NEGATIVELY AFFECTING CHILDREN

This sub-theme deals with the indirect effects of marital dissolution on children. I identified the following categories: a) Changed socio-economic status, poverty and relocation; b) Remarriage and other post-divorce relationships; c) Effect of parents' emotional state on children; and d) Increased dependency on relatives.

4.4.3.1 Changed socio-economic status, poverty and relocation

Based on the participants' responses, it appeared as if fathers were the breadwinners in many families pre-separation and were therefore responsible for providing for the needs of the family and the children's education. Marital dissolution, typically, brought about a significant drop in socio-economic status of the majority of the custodial parents (usually mothers) and, in turn, it affected the well-being of the children. The following extracts from the data attest this statement:

> *"Just after they separated – when my mom was struggling with the new life – things were not easy at all and we could feel the difference. She worked as a waitress in a restaurant; we used to sleep on one bed in a room with no TV and only a few chairs. Later we moved to Tanzania where my mother got a good job and life went back to normal"* (CN11, pg. 1); and

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> *"I am indebted to every shop in the neighbourhood because they give me maize flour for porridge for my children. My children normally eat once a day; we can't afford to buy food, so I make them porridge in the afternoon that has to last until the next day"* (PP12, pg. 2).
>
> *"When children experience a hard life by living with a poor custodial parent – following the departure of the bread winner (father), it affects them both physically and emotionally"* (FGD 2, P3, pg. 16).

A decrease in socio-economic status of the custodial parent often negatively affected the academic progress of the child – as explained earlier in Section 4.3.1.. Parent participant 12 explained her experience:

> *"My children were not doing well in the class; most of the time they were sleeping on the back benches because they were starving. They were neither concentrating nor performing well. I don't like to see them spending the whole day with me at the roadside, but I can't do anything about it, I wish my children were in class but I am truly overburdened now"* (PP12, pg. 4).

In trying to minimise the negative effects of poverty, custodial parents reported that they tended to start engaging in petty business. An excerpt from my research diary captures this:

> *"The majority of custodial mothers seem to be involved in petty businesses, such as selling fruit, khangas, vegetables, ground nuts, grilled maize and in weaving hair as well as in money circulation games, like 'upatu'. All these activities are done to just be able to afford to put food on the table and to keep the children alive after the husbands have left them – at this point school does not appear to be a priority. It seems that the mothers are forced to resort to these activities because the majority of the non-resident fathers are irresponsible"* (Research diary, pg. 6, 30 November 2012).

Some of these activities, however, seemed to pose risks for parents as well as for children – as captured in the following excerpt:

> *"Despite the difficult circumstances I was facing, I had to keep selling fruits until I was nine months pregnant and even when I had a one month old baby"* (PP9, pg. 2).

During the data collection process with the children and from their narrative accounts, they indicated some dissatisfaction with relocations following their parents' separation and – in

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most cases – subsequent poverty. An extract from the narrative account of Child participant 10 provides evidence of this:

> *"My mother left home to go to our uncle where we stayed for a while before we moved to Sinza and then to Ubungo, after the separation of my father and mother we never settle at the same place for longer, but we told mom that we want to stay here and not move again. At that time we were moving around with our mother – but I would have preferred to live with both my parents"* (CN10, pg. 2).

Frequent relocations were reported as common because the custodial parents searched for cheaper lodging – as illustrated by the following quotations:

> *"We left Gongo la mboto for Kigogo and then for Chanika because my mother was looking for a cheap house that she could afford to rent. I never liked moving from one place to another, I have changed schools so much, I have changed friends so much but I had nothing to do to change the situation"* (C8, pg. 3); and
>
> *"After my parents' separation we relocated three times before we came here as my mother says at this place the rent is more affordable despite its environment being so miserable (the place is highly congested, with dirty environments)"* (CN9, pg. 3).

Poverty and an inability to provide for their children allegedly led to custodial parents sometimes taking their children to children's centres for the sake of their survival. Children who missed the opportunity to enrol in, or continue with, school as a result of their parents' separation could, for example, be provided with an opportunity to obtain education when taken into a children's centre. An example of how children's centres assisted was provided by one of the parents:

> *"My other son ended up in children centres where he was also helped with school, which makes three children from this family going through this centre, it has really helped me"* (PP3, pg. 5).

In support, a child participant described his experience:

> *"I joined the centre when my mother was unable to take me to school after their separation. My brother who was also here made arrangements for me to be assisted by the Centre, both my older brothers passed through this Centre and currently there are two of us in the Centre"* (CN1, pg. 1).

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4.4.3.2 Remarriage and other post-divorce relationships

A new person in the life of a custodial parent was not always experienced positively by the children as a number of complaints were mentioned. One of the parent participants reported her experiences as a child when her father decided to remarry: *"I was so hurt by my stepmother's effort at distancing me away from my father"* (PP4, pg. 2).
I also noted:

> *"The fathers do not seem to have time to check on the lives of their children when they are in the care of their stepmothers and so the stepmothers apparently take advantage of the situation by scheming and reporting negatively on the children. Sometimes the fathers seem to believe everything they are told by their wives (the stepmothers); the majority of these mothers seem to make negative comments about the children*" (Research diary, pg. 1, 20 November 2012).

In adding to this, the children expressed concern about custodial parents' decisions to remarry:

> *"I felt bad about what happened. Staying with my mother was always a happy time but having a stepmother in our lives removed our happiness completely. My mother used to love us, while our stepmother didn't love us at all. She told my father lies, such as when she told my father that I was a thief – it was not true"* (C5, pg. 5); and
>
> *"I think she was doing this because she didn't have a child. When my dad wanted to whip us and if we asked for forgiveness our stepmother became very angry. She didn't want our dad to forgive us; she was always happy when we were beaten"* (C5, pg. 5).

Throughout my interaction with participants at the centres I realised that some children were forced onto the streets when they could not cope with their stepparents, following the marital dissolution of their parents' marriage. An excerpt from a focus group attests to this: *"... for instance, some students who are left with their fathers seem to do well but the battle between them and their stepmothers force them to escape from their homes to the city's streets"* (FGD1, P5, pg. 6). Furthermore, participants reported that children from broken homes were indirectly affected when custodial parents decided to engage in a causal relationship or to start dating. Some of these experiences are captured in the following extracts from the data I obtained:

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> *"My father used to take our food and give it to his woman; she was also given money as well as other things that belonged to us. Whenever we ask for anything we were insulted but this woman was given everything she wanted. When she came to our home, especially when my father was sick, we saw them kissing. When this woman was sick, our father would not go to work but spend time at her house"* (C6, pg. 3); and
>
> *"It reached a point where if we cooked at home, my father would come and take the food and give it to his woman. It was painful because sometimes we were left with no food. He even woke us up at 1 a.m. in the night to cook for them when they came from their outing"* (C6, pg. 4).

Post-divorce relationships of custodial parents were, thus, reported to negatively affect children's behaviour. A parent explained:

> *"At an early stage the child started showing bad behaviours; especially when her father brought different women home and they all shared a bed. I believe this might the reason why my daughter started indulging in sexual behaviour when she was very young and ended up falling pregnant at an age of 13"* (PP1, pg. 7).

In support, I noted during my observations:

> *"Post-divorce relationships of custodial parents seem to affect children in many ways in that the focus of money and other spending seems to be focused on the woman/women and the children have behavioural problems – for instance, the display of early sexual activity especially when they are exposed to the unethical, intimate conduct of a custodial parent"* (Research diary, pg. 2, 22 November 2012).

The request to call another woman 'mother' while knowing that their mothers were still alive was also experienced as a challenge by the majority of the children. In this regard one of the parents said: *"My daughter says she is always disappointed when she meets another woman at her father's home and he instructs her to call that woman 'mother'"* (PP10, pg. 4).

4.4.3.3 Effects of parents' emotional states on children

Based on the participants' responses, it appeared that children who remained in the care of emotionally challenged custodial parents experienced more negative effects than those who

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lived with parents who dealt with the separation in a seemingly emotionally mature manner. Emotional challenges were reported to be caused by a number of factors, such as poverty, emotional struggles due to the separation, challenges related to custodianship as well as problems in post–divorce relationships. The following extract from my research diary captures some of these experiences:

> *"Marital dissolution affects parents as well. The majority of parents seemed to be confused and frustrated soon after they had separated and these frustrations made them abusive with their children – causing a great risk for the children in their custody"* (Research diary, pg. 22, 17 December 2012); and
>
> *"Custodial parents who are stressed by the marital dissolution and its consequences are reported to be the cause of the physical, verbal and emotional abuse of their children, and children who are left in their custody are, therefore, at risk"* (Research diary, pg. 8, 19 January 2012).

One of the children provided an example of an abusive parent: *"When my father separated from my mother and when he started to have a relationship with this woman he was very frustrated, very violent and he beat us all the time"* (CN6, pg. 3).

Living with a custodial parent who experienced emotional challenges was, therefore, experienced negatively by their children. One of the parents explained:

> *"It is so painful to hear these words from my children; all of last night I was crying because of their words and I don't want my children to see me crying because they become so sad, so what I do is to hide somewhere until I dry up"* (PP12, pg. 4).

In addition, stressed parents were, allegedly, often negatively influencing their children as a result of their negative experiences with marriage. An extract from my research diary captures this idea:

> *"The majority of women who were emotionally challenged following a marital dissolution seem to have had a negative influence on their children, especially the girls. For example: a mother who told her daughter 'never [to] accept nonsense from a man, be strong to fight any man who makes any joke on you'"* (Research diary, pg. 8, 28 January 2013).

4.4.3.4 Increased dependency on relatives

Participants reported that in most cases custodial parents (usually mothers) as well as their children were assisted by relatives following marital dissolution. Relatives were often

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overburdened because of the separated family's poor socio-economic status. A parent explained: *"I thank God that my uncle was prepared to look after me during my pregnancy and even take care of my children. He was also prepared to educate them"* (PP7, pg. 3). Another parent shared that: *"After a great struggle my relatives supported me to make some blocks for my two rooms which my children and I later managed to live in"* (PP3, pg. 1). In support of this trend I observed:

> *"The majority of custodial mothers who were not financially stable ended up sending their children to relatives (brothers, uncles, grandparents, etc.) so that they could be assisted with their educational and life costs. This shows how the separation of parents may add an extra burden on relatives"* (Research diary, pg. 7, 10 January 2013).

Children who were raised by relatives and grandparents, reportedly, often displayed acting out behaviour and academic problems. One of the parent participants explained:

> *"Any child who stays far from her/his parents has more chances to be affected. Parents know that their sons and daughters are supposed to stay with them and be raised by them and not by someone else. A child raised by her/his grandparents will never have a perfectly balanced parenting because these old people always see the child as a baby; so no matter what the child does the grandparents will not be strict on her/him – rather they are always lenient with their grandchildren. This shows how very easy it is for children to be spoiled when they are raised by their grandparents"* (PP10, pg. 3).

In support of this view I documented: *"Children, who have been raised by their grandparents, seem to display more problems in terms of their academic development and their behaviour – due to improper parenting"* (Research diary, pg. 3, 3 December 2012). Besides displaying behavioural problems, several children who were taken to their relatives following their parents' marital dissolution ended up on the street for other reasons, as explained by Child participant 7: *"After moving from my grandmother in Morogoro to my uncle in Dar es Salaam, things were not easy; that is why I ended up on the street"* (C7, pg. 1).

4.5 THEME 4: MANAGING MARITAL DISSOLUTION IN TANZANIA

This theme reflects the data which are related to the management of marital dissolution in Tanzania – from the participants' perspectives. I identified the following sub-themes:

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minimising the effects of marital dissolution on children; and the potential role of the Tanzanian government. These sub-themes relate to the second, fourth and fifth secondary research questions, namely: *Which processes (traditional or legal) are followed when Tanzanian parents decide to separate?; What insight do Tanzanian parents have concerning the effects of marital dissolution on their children?; and To what extent do Tanzanian parents consider the effect of marital dissolution on their children in their decision to separate?* Table 4.6, provides a summary of Theme 4 in terms of the inclusion and exclusion criteria I relied on in identifying related sub-themes and categories.

Table 4.6: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria for Theme 4

THEME 4: MANAGING MARITAL DISSOLUTION IN TANZANIA		
Sub-themes and Categories	**Inclusion Criteria**	**Exclusion Criteria**
Sub-theme 4.1: Minimising the effects of marital dissolution on children	This sub-theme includes data related to participants' views on ways of reducing the negative effect of marital dissolution on children.	This sub-theme excludes data that do not relate to participants' views on efforts that could reduce the negative effect on children.
Category 1: Limiting incidents of marital dissolution	This category includes data related to efforts to protect marriages in Tanzania.	This category excludes data that relate to prioritising the well-being of children or systemic support.
Category 2: Prioritising the well-being of children	This category includes data related to putting the well-being of the children first and protecting them from being negatively affected by marital dissolution.	This category excludes data that relate to limiting incidents of marital dissolution or relying on systemic support structures.
Category 3: Relying on systemic support structures	This category includes data related to institutions that could provide support for couples, custodial parents as well as children following marital dissolution.	This category excludes data that relate to prioritising the well-being of children or limiting incidents of marital dissolution.
Sub-theme 4.2: Potential role of the Tanzanian government	This sub-theme includes data related to what the Tanzanian government is, or is not, doing in terms of marital dissolution and what it could do in future.	This sub-theme excludes data that do not relate to potential governmental efforts concerning marital dissolution.
Category 1: Lack of awareness about policies by Tanzanian citizens	This category includes data related to the Tanzanian people's limited insights concerning existing laws and policies on marital dissolution and child well-being.	This category excludes data that relate to the revision of laws or the potential supportive role of government.

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Category 2: Need for revised laws and policies related to children from broken families	This category includes data related to the need for the revision and potential adjustment of existing laws and policies concerning children following marital dissolution in Tanzania.	This category excludes data that relate to Tanzanian citizens' lack of awareness of policies or the potential supportive role of government.
Category 3: Potential supportive role of government.	This category includes data related to potential support that could be provided by local government in improving processes of, and following, marital dissolution.	This category excludes data that relate to Tanzanian citizens' lack of awareness of policies or the need for revised laws and policies related to the children.

4.5.1 SUB-THEME 4.1: MINIMISING THE EFFECTS OF MARITAL DISSOLUTION ON CHILDREN

This sub-theme discusses participants' views relating to potential ways of minimising the negative effects of marital dissolution on children in Tanzania. I identified the following categories: a) Limiting incidents of marital dissolution; b) Prioritising the well-being of the children; and c) Relying on systemic support structures.

4.5.1.1 Limiting incidents of marital dissolution

Participants were of the opinion that if couples were to put an effort into strengthening their relationships, marital dissolution would decrease, hence, also the negative effects thereof on children. Among other efforts, couples' ability to manage conflict was stressed:

> *"A good thing is for parents to stop fighting and to live peacefully together. If they stop fighting their children will always be happy and parents will be happy too, I don't see any reason for them to separate if they can manage their differences"* (CN10, pg. 5).

A caregiver, during a focus group discussion, shared a similar view: *"Couples should ensure that they protect their relationships from breaking up; they should learn to deal with their problems as these problems belong to them as a couple – not to the community"* (FGD1, P3, pg. 16).

Besides couples managing conflict, tolerance was mentioned as another factor that could strengthen marital bonds:

> *"There should be tolerance to prevent separation. I regret my separation because sometimes I think that perhaps I should have tolerated the situation*

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> *and continued to live with my husband, my children wouldn't then have kept on asking where their father was, I can't do anything about it now as we are already apart"* (PP8, pg. 6).

Love, understanding and acceptance among couples was, reportedly, lacking in many relationships which, in turn, resulted in more conflict and eventually separation. One of the parent participants explained:

> *"It is always better and healthy when parents stay together with love, there has to be love within the family"* (PP3, pg. 9). Another parent supported this view: *"Husbands should accept advice from their wives and there should be no gender stereotyping that a woman can't think or do anything good"* (PP10, pg. 7).

According to the participants, when couples were committed to their marriage and their children, their relationship would not be dissolved as commitment could help a couple withstand challenging times. In support of this idea, one of the parent participants said: *"My mother warned me that no matter how hard the life will be, I should never leave my children suffer, I decided to stay with this hard life just to make sure I look after my children"* (PP3, pg. 4). In this regard, parents who did not value the importance of being committed to their marriage and their children appeared to regret it when they start experiencing the negative effects of marital dissolution on their children. A personal experience from one of the parents attests to this: *"If I had known about these effects I wouldn't have done what I did. I would have fought not to separate from him; I would have obeyed everything he was saying just to keep us together"* (PP1, pg. 6).

A lack of commitment to their marriages and children was often related to a lack of awareness of and limited counselling services available in Tanzania, especially in terms of challenges related to marriage and children. A teacher explained the link between parents not being prepared for their responsibilities and marital dissolution:

> *"There is no proper lessons and preparation for people before they marry or even for the youth, in general. Men need to be made aware of their responsibilities – as do women. The differences between the two genders need to be communicated to both partners as early as possible. The inability of one or both of the couple to fully accept their responsibilities might also be a cause for separation* (FGD1, P4, pg. 2).

Along the same line of thinking, during a focus group discussion two caregivers added:

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> *"Premarital counselling and counselling during marriage should be promoted so as to help couples before marriage as well as those who are already married. Religious counselling needs to focus on helping couples live responsibly and with commitment"* (FGD2, P3, pg.13); and
>
> *"The community should educate couples on how to live responsibly in their marriage and in taking care of their children through counselling* (FGD2, P2, pg. 13).

Participants reported that the risk of separation was greater in larger families, especially when such families faced financial challenges. Family planning was mentioned by one of the parents as a potential way to reduce this risk:

> *"Sometimes I think that the burden would not have been this big on me if I would have considered family planning. I am all alone, no job, no stable income and almost six children are looking on me, it is so frustrating having a big family such as this, it is worse when marital dissolution occurs"* (PP3, pg. 10).

A similar view was presented by one of the teachers: *"There should be family planning to protect couples against having too many children because when marital dissolution occurs many children suffer"* (FGD2, P1, pg. 13).

4.5.1.2 Prioritising the well-being of children

Based on the participants' responses it appears as if the negative effects of marital dissolution could be reduced if parents prioritised the well-being of their children. The majority of parents reportedly did not attend to this until they observed the negative effects on their children. A parent participant commented:

> *"Parents should think of their children before deciding to separate. Children need to be given priority in family care, even when parents are in conflict, children need not be forgotten and conflict management skills have to be used to avoid separation"* (PP1, pg. 10).

In addition, one of the caregivers reported on the status of children at the centre:

> *"People think about these children as belonging to somebody else; nobody is prepared to assume responsibility on them. It is our task as part of the community to make sure that these children are considered and that*

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> *measures are taken to eliminate or reduce their numbers on the streets*" (FGD2, P1, pg. 6).

Parent participant 3 gave her understanding of what it would mean for parents to prioritise the well-being of their children and benefit the family:

> *"When parents consider the well-being of their children during the process of marital dissolution, they might invest time and effort to these children so that they might be able to live their life to the fullest; this will gratify both the parents and the children"* (PP3, pg. 7).

Along the same line of thinking a caregiver remarked: *"Couples should always know that taking care of the children is their first priority and that they should not expect any assistance"* (FGD2, P2, pg. 13). In further support of this, Child participant 6 insisted: *"If we were in the minds of our parents and if they truly loved us they would not forget us as they were thinking of going apart, what we are experiencing now is the consequence of their selfishness"* (CN6, pg. 12).

Prioritising the well-being of children was allegedly not only viewed as the responsibility of parents at home but also of the community at large. The following was said by a caregiver:

> *"The community needs to assume responsibility for the care of children; children should be owned by the community, not only by the family. Everyone needs to be responsible for other people's children; marriage and children's policies should back this up"* (FGD1, P5, pg. 16).

During a focus group discussion another caregiver added: *"The community should not just observe couples' problems and remain silent; they should take action by speaking to couples or reporting any abuse"* (FGD2, P3, pg. 13).

Moreover, participants felt that stakeholders and institutions which deal with the victims of marital dissolution needed to focus on the priority of children in order to minimise the negative impact of marital dissolution on them. An extract from the interview with Parent participant 2 provides supportive evidence:

> *"Sometimes this bureaucratic process delays reaching important decisions regarding the well-being of the children and creates suffering for the children involved as justice becomes difficult to be achieved. If the process was smooth and with no bureaucracy many children would be able to get some relief"* (PP2, pg. 12).

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Informing and involving children in decisions related to their parents' separation was also mentioned as a potential way of prioritising children's well-being:

> *"Children need to be involved in all family issues especially in things that affect them in one way or another. Parents have to be honest to their children even when they are separating, they should not abuse alcohol, parents need to be friends to their children"* (PP3, pg. 9).

In this regard, I noted: *"Prioritising the well-being of the children may yield fruitful results if it combines the efforts from both parents as well as the community at large"* (Research diary, pg. 24, 18 January 2014).

4.5.1.3 Relying on systemic support structures

Support structures presented in this category relate to people and institutions that couples, custodial parents as well as their children could, potentially, rely on for support during marital dissolution – according to the participants. These include relatives, neighbours, religious leaders, friends, children's centres as well as local government. Generally, these systems can provide support in terms of food, stationary, help and advice, accommodation, education opportunities and care.

Based on the participant's responses it appears as if neighbours, friends and relatives played a vital role in various areas of the lives of the parents and the children during, and following, marital dissolution. The participants indicated that friends could provide psychological support – as reported in the following extract: *"However, when I am with my friends I at least forget but when I am alone again I must start thinking back and if I remember home I remember the whole situation again which is so painful"* (CN1, pg. 3). Neighbours were identified as a potential resource for poor custodial parents: *"My third son was in grade one; I couldn't even afford his stationeries, I just waited for any help from neighbours and other Good Samaritans"* (PP3, pg. 5). A similar view was shared by a child participant: *"After the separation we started begging for maize flour from our neighbours. I was begging so that my siblings and I could eat. No parent was there for us, so I had to look after them"* (CN12, pg. 2). In this way, neighbours were identified as a potential source of support for both the custodial parents and their children following marital dissolution.

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Neighbours were also reported to, occasionally, take care of the children's well-being, for example, in families where children had been separated from their mothers and remained in the care of uncaring custodial fathers. This was clearly suggested by a child participant: *"I was severely beaten until the neighbours came to rescue me. I made another mistake on another day and my father started beating me telling me to call the neighbours who always came to rescue me"* (CN6, pg. 3).

Relatives, on the other hand, were expected to be more involved in reconciliation meetings during early stages of separation, despite the view that these meetings were usually unproductive. The following extract captures this idea: *"I started with family meetings. We had some meetings with his relatives, but the meetings were not a success...his father tried to intervene but he encountered some resistance from my husband"* (PP2, pg. 5). Based on the participants' responses, it seemed that in order for relatives or community members to provide assistance to somebody's family, good relationships had to exist between the couple and community. A contribution by Parent participant 3 captures this idea:

> *"Community really helps when it is in good terms with somebody's family, the problem comes when one of the couple or both do not listen to the warnings and advises from the people. Some people would love to help or give support but they are discouraged by the responses from the couple. I am currently helped by the community; my children wouldn't go to school if it wasn't for the friends and neighbours"* (PP3, pg. 9).

According to the participants religious leaders could assist couples in a number of ways, such as in the roles of advisors and reconcilers when couples were in conflict or heading towards separation. To illustrate this, a caregiver said: *"Some go through consultations with relatives and family meetings and if that doesn't work they go to religious leaders – very few manage to go through a divorce process"* (FGD2, P5. pg. 2). Another caregiver added: *"Women easily share their problems and they are the ones who propose family meetings or meetings with religious leaders"* (FGD1, P5, pg. 3).

Furthermore, religious leaders were reported to provide assistance by linking with, or referring couples to, authorities when the need arose. Parent participant 3 related his experience: *"I consulted religious leaders, he was called for a meeting but he denied saying some bad words, the church gave me a letter to take to the reconciliation council"* (PP3, pg. 2). In support of this idea Parent participant 4 said:

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> *"Pastor's wife connected me to the district social welfare office, when he was asked to give the divorce so as to leave me free he denied. So we went to the primary court where I was allowed to divorce him with a restriction that I should never ask for any property, they gave me a paper to sign, and there I divorced him"* (PP4, pg. 4).

Children centres were reported to fulfil various roles in rebuilding the lives of children following marital dissolution. In addition to educational support (captured in Photograph 4.4), children centres could be involved in reuniting children with their former families after staying at the centre for a certain period of time – according to the participants. However, some children who were given an opportunity to re-join their family members reportedly declined this and instead preferred to remain at the centres.

Photograph 4.4: Children during a classroom session at Centre 2

The following extracts – taken from interviews with the children – confirm this trend:

> *"They asked me if I wanted to stay with them at home but I told them I was fine at the Centre because that was where I also study"* (CN7, pg. 6); and
>
> *"I now feel good because the Centre is taking a good care of us. There is a big difference between here and home; here I study the computer; they pay for my medical expenses; and I also have time to play soccer with friends – there was nothing like this at home. There is no need to continue selling empty bottles. I was stealing so that I could eat nicely, but here we eat rice every day. Life has really changed after I got to the Centre"* (CN6, pg. 8).

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From these contributions, the children's decisions to rather remain at children centres seem to be related to their basic, psycho-social and academic needs being met by the centres. Photograph 4.5 provides supportive evidence of this.

Photograph 4.5: Children at Centre 1 during lunch time

Besides offering academic programmes to the children, children centres also offered vocational training for children over the age for entering a primary school as well as for those who wanted to improve their vocational skills. The vocational activities provided at Centre 2 include tailoring, mechanics, animal husbandry and computer skills. Photographs 4.6 and 4.7 provide supportive evidence.

Photograph 4.6: Child participant 12 showing one of his tailoring products

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Photograph 4.7: Children in class acquiring tailoring skills

In further support, children reported that the skills acquired at the centres would be useful when they left the centres and that they, in turn, could help their siblings and other family members. Child participant 12 explained: *"When I have learnt some tailoring skills at the Centre I will go home to start my own business so that I can help my siblings"* (C12, pg. 3).

In addition to children's centres providing education and vocational training to children following marital dissolution, they also reportedly acted as agents of change. A number of children reported a change from negative to positive behaviour by, for example, saying:

> *"Psychologically I am not the same. I used to steal things which did not belong to me. I am happy I have now stopped these behaviours after joining the Centre and receiving some counselling from the social worker"* (CN3, pg. 6).

In an effort to ensure that these changes were sustained, caregivers reported that they deliberately encouraged children to focus on what they were doing and to pursue their dreams. A caregiver explained:

> *"We need to know how to live with them and how to encourage and motivate them because when they put their hearts into something they love they often do it well. However, they always become angry with anyone who tries to discourage them"* (FGD2, P1, pg. 4).

Despite the majority of the children (five out of eight) opting to remain at children's centres after being given an opportunity to be reunited with their family, a few shared a contrary view. One example is captured in the following contribution:

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> *"I feel very bad to hear or see my mother crying for me. I wish I were at home doing some home activities with my siblings. I haven't seen them for a year now, this might seem to be a short time but the way I miss home I feel it is such a long time"* (CN3, pg. 7).

4.5.2 SUB-THEME 4.2: POTENTIAL ROLE OF THE TANZANIAN GOVERNMENT

I structure this sub-theme in terms of the following categories that I identified: a) Lack of awareness about policies by Tanzanian citizens; b) Need for revised laws and policies related to children from broken families; and c) Potential supportive role of government.

4.5.2.1 Lack of awareness about policies by Tanzanian citizens

According to the participants, the majority of Tanzanian citizens seemed unaware of existing laws and policies related to children from broken families. A caregiver stated: *"We have never heard of any law or policy related to children of broken homes; if there is law it is not heeded to protect the rights of the child"* (FGD2, P6, pg. 12). During the same focus group discussion a teacher supported this perception:

> *"In Tanzania issues concerning marriage and parenting are very informal, couples are blind about the proper procedures when they want to separate, and even when they separate they know nothing about the laws that may protect the well-being of their children"* (FGD2, P5, pg. 16).

I noticed that a number of the participants blamed the authorities for not having proper strategies in place for making the population aware of existing policy:

> *"The majority of the parents appear to know little about issues of the law and of policies related to children. Few parents seem to bother to learn about them; apparently, only an educated few will discuss legal-related issues concerning children. The situation may improve only if there are deliberate efforts to make people aware of laws and policies regarding marriage and divorce and their children"* (Research diary, pg. 19, 19 November 2012).

Ignorance amongst the majority of the population was identified by the participants as another factor contributing to the lack of awareness about laws and policies concerning marital dissolution and child victims in Tanzania. A contribution by Parent participant 3 provides evidence of this:

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> *"Majority of parents with the same experience like mine would not suffer as I do if they were aware of laws or policies that protect them and their children in times like this. Many of us suffer because of our ignorance. Awareness is really needed among the common population"* (PP3, pg. 10).

Similarly, I noted: *"The majority of couples seemed to be less educated and are lazy in making effort becoming aware of laws and policies related to marriage and children"* (Research diary, pg. 23, 15 December 2013). Even the few people who seemed aware of existing laws reportedly experienced problems in practicing their rights because of bureaucracy and the cumbersomeness of the procedures as explained by a caregiver: *"Many couples would like to go through a legal process and get divorce papers but the majority fail to do this because of ignorance of the laws and the bureaucracy of the legal system"* (FGD2, P5, pg. 2).

In addition to many people being unaware of existing laws and policies, some seemingly had a misperception concerning legal divorce processes. An example of such misperceptions is captured in the following quotations:

> *"He gave me a divorce letter which was written in front of the local leaders. I didn't want to process the legal divorce because I was scared to make the problem big and taking our marital issues to strangers. The family would have considered me a disrespectful woman"* (PP6, pg. 2); and
>
> *"The problems with legal divorce is that strangers tend to understand our marital problems, something that is opposed in our culture although I really needed help to get out of this cage"* (PP6, pg. 8).

4.5.2.2 Need for revised laws and policies related to children from broken families

Participants believed that limited policies existed in Tanzania to protect the well-being of children from broken homes at the time of this study. One of the caregivers said:

> *"The government should also promulgate policies that protect the well-being of children from broken homes. These laws and policies should ensure that each parent is liable when their children are negatively affected by their separation"* (FGD2, P3, pg. 13).

This indicates that clear laws and policies could, potentially, protect children following marital dissolution. A teacher added:

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> *"The Law of the child in Tanzania is like a toothless dog, it speaks a lot of things but there is not any policy to implement what is said into reality in helping the suffering of children and poor custodial parents following marital dissolution"* (FGD1, P4, pg. 18).

Participants seemed to condemn political leaders as hypocrites when they spread appealing messages about the well-being of children during public ceremonies, but failed to implement any concrete actions. One of the caregivers explained:

> *"In dealing with children at the centres, we are very disappointed with how laws and policies regarding children are enforced in this country. Tanzania, as a country, doesn't have its own views when it comes to the implementation of children's rights. Everything which is presented on Children's day, and on other children's ceremonies, remains at the ceremony grounds. Political leaders just talk to please people but nothing is really implemented"* (FGD1, P1, pg. 15).

Another caregiver added: *"Policy should prioritise the affairs of the children because they are tomorrow's nation and this should be propagated with actions and sincere hearts – not just words and mere slogans"* (FGD1, P6, pg. 16).

Despite the existence of the Tanzanian Law of the Child Act of 2009, participants seemed to be unhappy about the relevance and practicality of various sections of the act, especially in terms of the context of the child. The perceived weakness in the law and policy related to children was regarded by the participants as one of the causes of children experiencing challenges after marital dissolution. The following excerpts illustrate this statement:

> *"We do not deal much with policies or laws concerning children because no policies or laws work in this country; only international laws and policies seem to work. Tanzanian laws and policies are only on papers; they are not applied to the real environment"* (FGD1, P6, pg. 10); and
>
> *"There must be workable laws and policies that protect the rights of the children when parents separate, there should be government interventions powered by policies to safeguard the life of children of broken homes"* (FGD2, P4, pg. 13).

Another caregiver added: *"…this matter shows that Tanzania has no workable policies or laws to protect its children"* (FGD2, P2, pg. 12).

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Sharing her experience Parent participant 1 explained:

> *"It is true that the articles in the laws related to marriage and children are out-dated, they are no longer useful to a custodial parent in today's context, which is why many of us are disappointed even in making follow up on child maintenance"* (PP2, pg. 13).

During my interaction with the participants I noticed that:

> *"Participants in focus group discussions and parents seemed to be dissatisfied with how laws, policies and procedures are implemented regarding marital issues and children's well-being"* (Research diary, pg. 24, 17 December 2013).

4.5.2.3 Potential supportive role of government

The potential supportive role of the local government was emphasised by the participants. Even though some couples reported on the role of the local government in initial reconciliation efforts, these efforts were usually perceived as unproductive – as indicated in the following report by a parent:

> *"We have never used family meetings in our divorce process; he just told me to leave otherwise he would kill me. I went to the local government officer who tried to talk to him about his behaviour but he insisted that he didn't want me – later he chased us away without knowing where we were going"* (PP12, pg. 2).

In addition, some couples who attempted to secure a legal divorce reported that they were disappointed by how the government failed to create streamlined and speedy processes in cases of divorce. Parent participant 2 explained:

> *"I don't see any help of the government as it is always the same cumbersome system; it delayed my divorce and made me spend a lot of money, unnecessarily. I see nothing helpful coming from the Government in my case but rather just adding complications. I have seen many couples giving up their legal divorce because of such disappointing, cumbersome and bureaucratic processes"* (PP2, pg. 12).

Along the same line of thinking, I noted:

> *"The majority of couples seem to be disappointed consulting the local government leaders during initial processes of reconciliation because these leaders were reportedly telling couples 'if you are tired of each other just go*

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away, why holding to a person who does not love you?" (Research diary, pg. 24, 20 December 2013).

In support of the need for sound government procedures concerning divorce and child maintenance, one caregiver stated:

> *"There should be a special task force by the government to deal with broken marriages and how children are affected by them. Social welfare offices are overwhelmed with tasks and actually they are remote from the people they serve; these bodies need to be very close to the people and closely observe the problems of the community. It takes a long time in Tanzania to obtain child maintenance from the father because of corruption; if you don't have money to bribe, you will never get what is rightfully for you"* (FGD2, P4, pg. 14).

Another caregiver said:

> *"The government always influences children centres to receive street children who are the result of marital dissolution but soon after they are accepted in centres the government pulls off, no any leader had ever come back to see how these children are doing and whether they are alive or dead, this is very bad"* (FGD1, P1, pg. 4).

In support of the perceived improper procedures during divorce and child maintenance processes, Parent participant 1 explained:

> *"It is really unfair, imagine I experienced unfairness and tiring processes of divorce, nothing has worked out yet, and now I am facing same difficulty in obtaining child maintenance, when will the citizens of this country receive what is rightful for them?"* (PP4, pg. 10).

Generally, I noted:

> *"If the government from local to the central levels would have created conducive and amicable environment for couples processing their divorce and child maintenance, the negative effect of marital dissolution that seems to exist would have been reduced to a large extent"* (Research diary, pg. 24, 19 January 2014).

4.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I presented the results I obtained during my empirical investigation. I discussed the results in terms of four primary themes that emerged, referring to related sub-themes and

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categories in terms of the effect of marital dissolution on children's academic development and psycho-social well-being in the context of Tanzania. The data from which these themes were identified stemmed from individual interviews, focus group discussions, narrative accounts and the participating children's academic documents. My field journal, research diary and visual data also formed part of the raw data.

In the following chapter, I interpret the results against the background of existing literature in presenting the findings of the study. In doing this, I refer to findings correlating with and contradicting existing literature – presented in Chapter 2. I also highlight the gaps I identified when comparing my results with the existing body of knowledge.

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CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter I presented the results of my study. The themes and sub-themes I discussed represent the views, perceptions, and experiences of the participants of this study – the children and custodial parents from broken families as well as the teachers and caregivers involved with these children.

In this chapter I interpret the results against the background of existing literature. I discuss correlations as well as contradictions when comparing the results I obtained with existing literature – as unpacked in Chapter 2. I conclude the chapter by discussing new insights gained from the study. The emerging correlations and contradictions between the findings of this study and those of other scholars might be the result of a number of factors – one of these relating to the unique nature and context of marital dissolution in the Tanzanian context.

5.2 FINDINGS IN SUPPORT OF EXISTING LITERATURE

Table 5.1, below, provides a summary of the sub-themes of my study that support existing literature. After presenting an overview of my interpretive explanation of how the results of this study correlate with the existing body of knowledge in Table 5.1, I discuss these interpretations in more detail in terms of the main findings of the study.

Table 5.1: Results that Support Existing Literature

Author and year	Existing knowledge	Interpretive discussion: How my results support existing knowledge
THEME 1: REASONS FOR MARITAL DISSOLUTION		
Sub-theme 1.1: Abuse		
Lugalla and Mbwambo (2005) Rwebangira (1998)	Parents' overuse of alcohol and abuse are the causes for separation and children being on the streets.	Former street children at centres mentioned alcoholism of parents (fathers) and abuse as some of the reasons for them leaving home.
Pillay (1999) Zieman and Baker-Randall (2000)	Some children prefer parents' conflict to them separating.	In this study some children preferred that their parents continue fighting rather than separate.

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Sub-theme 1.2: Lack of commitment to the family		
Amato and Rogers (1997) Emery (1999) Kitson and Holmes (1992)	Infidelity and extravagance are causes for divorce.	In this study extramarital affairs and family neglect were mentioned as reasons for marital dissolution.
Sub-theme 1.3: Influence of others		
Cherlin (1992) Amato and Rogers (1997)	Age during marriage, social class and faith may result in separation.	Couples' immaturity, influence of in-laws and lack of support from relatives were identified as factors contributing to marital dissolution.
Sub-theme 1.4: Financial strain		
Kesselring and Bremmer (2006) Amato (2010) Amato and De Boer (2001) Sweeney and Phillips (2004) Teachman (2002) Rogers (2004) Sayer and Bianchi (2000) Hall and Fincham (2006)	Economic, personal and demographic factors are among causes for divorce.	Various economic, behaviour and demographic factors were listed as causing marital dissolution in Tanzania, such as family poverty, lack of a stable job and cases where the wife was financially more stable than the husband.
THEME 2: EFFECT OF MARITAL DISSOLUTION ON EARLY ADOLESCENTS' FUNCTIONING		
Sub-theme 2.1: Effect on early adolescents' academic performance		
Jimerson *et al.*, (1999) Friedman (2000)	Parents' separation is a contributing factor to poor academic performance of children.	Marital dissolution was reported to create an environment where children perform poorly in their academic work, due to being hungry while at school; the inability to afford school fees; and a lack of concentration in class.
Carnegie Council (1995)	Problem behaviour may cause school dropout.	A number of children who displayed problem behaviour ended up dropping out of school.
Dryfoos (1998) Wentzel (1991) Carnegie Council (1995) Masten and Coatsworth (1998)	Lack of motivation for learning will cause poor performance and dropout.	In this study the lack of motivation to learn demoralised children in continuing with school, resulting in dropouts.
Martinot and Monteil (2000) Downey (1994)	Children's academic performance may be negatively influenced when a father is absent following separation.	A negative change in children's academic performance was reported following the departure of the father, especially when the father had been the family's sole provider.
Belsky (1988) Desai, Desai, Chase-Lansdale and Michael (1989) Baydar and Brooks-Gunn (1991)	The absence of a mother may cause poor academic performance by children.	Some children performed poorly academically in the absence of their mothers, despite being left with financially stable fathers.

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Ermisch and Francesconi (2001a) Størksen *et al.* (2006) Smit (2010) Björklund and Sundström (2006) Ermisch *et al.* (2004)	The absence of one parent may limit the ability of the other parent to concentrate on children's academic development.	The absence of one parent (father) reportedly overburdened the other parent (mother) and weakened her ability to concentrate on children's school affairs.
Albertini and Dronkers (2009)	The negative effects of divorce on the academic performance of children are worse if the mother is uneducated.	In this study children who remained with less or non-educated custodial mothers generally performed poorly; had to repeat a grade or dropped out.
Amato, Loomis and Booth (1995) Björklund and Sundström (2006) Fronstin, Greenberg, & Robins (2001)	Parental conflict will negatively impact the learning atmosphere of the children.	Conflict between parents had negative effects on children's learning in this study.
Sub-theme 2.2: Effect on early adolescents' psycho-social well-being		
Rivara and Grossman (1996) Johnson, Hoffmann and Gerstein (1996) Masse and Tremblay (1997) Lugalla and Mbwambo (2005) Elkind (1998) Ahrons (1999) Conger and Chao (1996) Emery (1999) Hetherington and Stanley Hagan (1999)	Children are at risk of problem behaviour, gang activity, early pregnancy and they experience emotional difficulties as a result of parents' separation or divorce.	Children from broken families displayed a range of problem behaviour, which apparently jeopardised their social and psychological well-being. The behaviour problems that were mentioned are, namely, truancy, stealing, hurling insults, drug use and early sexual activity.
Conger and Elder (1994) Stice, Presnell and Bearman (2001) Johnson and Wiechers (2002)	Parents' separation, typically, causes anxiety, stress, sadness and low self-confidence among early adolescents.	Children experienced a number of emotional challenges including sadness, anxiety, stress, and perceived low self-confidence following marital dissolution.
Bowlby (1982) Hinde (1982) Bowlby (1982; 2008) Bakermans-Kranenburg and Van IJzendoorn (2007) CPR (2006) Kennedy and Kennedy (2004) Laursen (1996) Amato and Gilbreth (1999) Dunn *et al.* (2004)	Being close to an attached figure (a model parent) may promote learning and a positive parent-child relationship while detachment may have a negative psychological effect on a child (Attachment theory).	Children who remained with an attachment figure reportedly displayed positive development in terms of academic and psycho-social well-being. Those who were detached from a loved parent (a model parent) displayed a negative attitude and problem behaviour.
Papalia, Olds and Feldman (2002) Kurtines and Gewirtz (1995) Roeser, Eccles and Sameroff, (2000) Hetherington (1999) Pruett *et al.* (2003)	The absence of an authoritative figure at home will lead to behaviour problems among adolescents, following the divorce of their parents.	Being away from the father after separation increased problem behaviour among the majority of the child participants in this study.

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Johnson and Wiechers (2002) Barrett (2000b) Turner and Avison (1992) Caplan (1964) Conger and Elder (1994) Elder (1998a) Burr (1973) McCubbin (1979)	Divorce is experienced as a traumatic incident by children, yet related incidents that follow will further add to their vulnerability.	After experiencing traumatic incidents following marital dissolution child participants became more vulnerable compared to those who did not experience these incidents.
Adams (2004) Cherlin (2004) Fincham and Beach (2010)	An increase in the number of divorces may result in people losing hope for marriage.	Some participants in this study displayed a negative perception about marriage and relationships following marital dissolution.
Issa Michuzi (2011; 2013)	Parents' separation may result in child labour.	Child labour was one of the effects of marital dissolution reported in this study.
Amato and Keith (1991) Sun (2001) Størksen *et al*. (2006) Lipman, Offord and Boyle (1994) Strohschein (2005) Amato and Keith (1991) Booth and Edwards (1990); Amato (2000) Riggio (2000)	Parents' conflict will have a psychological impact on early adolescents, such as poor parent-child relationship.	When parents were in continuous conflict early adolescents seemed to suffer and the parent-child relationship was harmed.
Barrett and Turner (2005) Teachman (2002) Hetherington and Stanley-Hagan (1999) Riggio (2004) Ahrons (2007) Laumann-Billings and Emery (2000) Wade and Travis (1993) Sun (2001)	The negative effect of marital dissolution implies long-term or short-term effects on early adolescents' lives.	Some early adolescents continued to experience the negative effects of marital dissolution throughout adulthood – as indicated by parent participants experiencing marital dissolution as children while others experienced it for a short period.
Cherlin (1999) Amato (2006) Martinot and Monteil (2000) Molepo *et al*. (2010) Amato and Ochiltree (1987) Bojuwoye and Akpan (2009a) Hill, Yeung and Duncan (2001) Hetherington (2006) Conger and Elder (1994)	The effect of marital dissolution on early adolescents differs according to gender, age of the child, and the child's coping ability.	Age, gender of the child and the child's coping ability were mentioned in determining the effect of marital dissolution on early adolescents.

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Smart, Neale and Wade (2001) Cashmore and Parkinson (2008) Parkinson, Cashmore and Single (2005) Smith, Taylor and Tapp (2003) Sanchez and Kibler-Sanchez (2004) McIntosh (2000) Saposnek (2004)	Children have a need to be informed of separation decisions as it often benefits them.	Participants in this study expressed the need and benefits of being involved in the separation processes and being able to give their views. They, however, reported that this need was seldom met.
McIntosh (2000) Parkinson, Cashmore and Single (2005)	When informing their children about their separation, their age and readiness should be considered.	Participants indicated that the disclosure of the separation decision needs to be determined by a child's level of maturity
THEME 3: TRENDS FOLLOWING MARITAL DISSOLUTION		
Sub-theme 3.1: Positive effects of marital dissolution		
Amato and Hohmann-Marriott (2007) Amato (2010) Kelly and Lamb (2003) Kelly (2007)	Parents' separation and divorce may free parents and children from conflict and oppressive family relationships.	Some children and parents in this study indicated relief to be freed from a hostile environment after marital dissolution.
Amato (2000) Hetherington (2003) Wiseman (1975) Turner and Avison (1992)	Children's well-being may improve after parents' separation as new opportunities emerge.	Marital dissolution resulted in new opportunities for some of the child participants, for example, academic and vocational education at the centres.
Gruber and Colabella (2008) Bojuwoye and Akpan (2009a)	Divorce might benefit parents but still be a crisis for the children.	Although some parents were happy after the marital dissolution, the children were generally reported to experience feelings of sadness in missing their non-resident parents.
Sub-theme 3.2: Change in living arrangements		
Rwebangira (1996; 1998) Rwezaura and Wanitzek (1988) Mbilinyi (1972)	Child maintenance implies certain challenges.	Accessing child maintenance was indicated as a great challenge in this study.
Bojuwoye and Akpan (2009) Neuman and Romanowski (1998)	Inconsistencies in living arrangements may impair parenting abilities.	Mismanagement of visits and contact appeared to hamper disciplining children.
Dunn and Deater-Deckard (2001) Dunn *et al*. (2004) Amato and Booth (1991) Kelly (2007) Neale and Flowerdew (2003b) Booth and Amato (2001)	Parent-child relationships, the child's age, conflict, and distance will determine contact and visits to the non-resident parent.	In this study parent-children relationships, conflict that existed before marital dissolution, the children's ages and distance determined visits and contact with non-custodial parents following marital dissolution.
Kelly-Plate and Eubanks (1997) Neale and Flowerdew (2007)	Parents fighting over custody and access to children may result in children being vulnerable.	Parents' battles over access and custodianship in this study had a negative effect on children.

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Hetherington and Kelly (2002) Kelly (2007) Collins *et al.* (2000) Breivik and Olweus (2006) McLanahan and Sandefur (1994)	Changed socio-economic status of a custodial parent may result in frequent relocations, thereby adding to the negative effects on the children.	Custodial parents in this study frequently moved from one place to another in search of low cost accommodation and, reportedly, harmed the children's well-being.
Sub-theme 3.3: Other related changes negatively effecting children		
Glasgow *et al*. (1997) Santrock (2001) Cherlin, Chase-Lansdale and McRae (1998) Fagan and Rector (2000) Stahl (2007) Amato (2000; 2010) Liu and Umberson (2008) Amato, Loomis and Booth (1995)	Divorce may affect parenting style when a parent experiences emotional difficulty.	In this study, emotionally challenged parents were unable to practice effective parenting and some even abused the children.
McCarthy, Edwards and Gillies (2003) Amato (2010)	Divorce will cause a number of social and family problems that will, in turn, affect the people involved.	Challenges brought about by marital dissolution negatively impacted on the children in this study – caused by their parents.
Solivetti (1994) Hetherington and Kelly (2002) Anderson and Greene (2005) Bray (1999) Elder, Johnson and Crosnoe (2003) Cicchetti, Rogosch and Toth (2006)	The decision of a custodial parent to remarry may initiate another life course incident for the children and, hence, add to their vulnerability.	A number of children in this study experienced hardship and increased vulnerability when their custodial parents started engaging in a post-divorce relationship.
McLanahan (1999) Pong and Ju (2000) Sun and Li (2002) Acklin (2008) Spencer *et al.* (2002) Papalia, Olds and Feldman (2002) McLoyd *et al.* (1994) Barber and Eccles (1992)	Poor socio-economic status of a custodial parent will increase the negative effects of divorce or separation on the children.	Children who stayed with a financially challenged parent experienced a number of problems.
Atwood, Schuster and Tempestini (1994) Bojuwoye and Akpan (2009a) McIntosh and Chisholm (2008) Neuman and Romanowski (1998) Thayer and Zimmerman (2003) Amato and Rezac (1994) Hetherington (1999) Kelly (2007)	Post-divorce conflict poses great risks to children.	Children in this study explained how they were affected by their parents' post-divorce conflicts by, for example, being denied freedom to visit their non-resident parents, resulting in deterioration of parent-child relationships.

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Longmore, Manning and Giordano (2001)	Lack of close parental care may trigger children's deviant behaviour and academic problems.	Children who were left to be raised by grandparents or other relatives rather than their parents showed more behaviour and academic problems than others.
THEME 4: MANAGING MARITAL DISSOLUTION IN TANZANIA		
Sub-theme 4.1: Minimising the effect of marital dissolution on children		
Gottman *et al.* (1998) Rogge *et al*. (2006) Strohschein (2005)	In order to minimise conflict that may lead to separation couples should know how to manage their differences.	In this study couples' ability to manage conflict was mentioned as a way of reducing incidents of marital dissolution.
Relying on systemic support structures		
Burr (1973) McCubbin, Dahl and Hunter (1976) McCubbin (1979) McCubbin and Patterson (1983) Dong *et al*. (2012)	The absence or presence of social support plays a role in determining the effects of marital dissolution on the children.	Families that appeared to have good connections with friends, relatives and neighbours experienced less impact when compared to those who lacked these systemic support structures.
Sub-theme 4.2: Potential role of the Tanzanian government		
Rwezaura and Wanitzek (1988)	Due to ignorance some women may be reluctant to insist on their rights.	Women in this study had misconceptions regarding the process of a legal divorce.
Rwezaura (1994) Howland and Koenen (2011) Mpuya and Lubeja, 2012	Some weakness and shortcomings exist in terms of existing laws and policies in Tanzania.	In this study the general population's lack of awareness of laws and policies related to marriage and children's well-being apparently added to the negative impact of marital dissolution on the children.

5.2.1 REASONS FOR MARITAL DISSOLUTION

As marital dissolution is on the increase in almost every part of the world, it is important to understand the causal factors for this phenomenon. Even though causes vary from one marriage to another, some determining factors seem common across cultures, namely, alcoholism, abusive behaviour and parents' conflict (Lugalla, & Mbwambo, 2005; Rwebangira, 1998). In support of the existing literature, I found that alcoholism resulted in parents being abusive and, hence, increased parental conflict – a situation that caused many participating parents to end their marital relationship. Following increased parental conflict and while couples were preparing for separation, Pillay (1999) and Zieman and Baker-Randall (2000) found that many children would still have preferred a hostile environment with both parents rather than their parents moving apart. Information in the existing literature correlates with what I found in my study where a few children indicated that they would accept their parents' fighting if they would just not separate.

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Infidelity among couples; misuse of family money; and family neglect are other commonly documented reasons for divorce (Omari, 1988; Kitson, & Holmes, 1992; Amato, & Rogers, 1997; Emery, 1999). The findings of my study correlate with this, as extra-marital affairs and family neglect were mentioned as causing frequent conflict between couples and resulting in many couples separating. Along the same line of argument Cherlin (1992) and Amato and Rogers (1997) add that couples' ages during marriage, their social class and difference in religion may result in a couple's separation. Similarly, my study indicates that Tanzanian couples who married while they were immature were often unable to withstand the challenges that emerged during married life, resulting in early marital dissolution, when compared to couples who married when they were of a more mature age.

In terms of economic and personal factors that may cause divorce (Amato, & De Boer, 2001; Teachman, 2002; Rogers, 2004; Sweeney, & Phillips, 2004; Kesselring, & Bremmer, 2006), my research also supports existing literature. In this study several custodial parents (usually the mothers) were unable to continue with their marriages because of their husbands' inability to financially provide for their families. Subsequently, members of the family did not have money for food and the children tended to drop out of school because of economic hardships. Similarly, in circumstances when a woman rather than her husband had an income or possessed some assets, it could create tension that may result in marital dissolution – as indicated by Amato (2010) and Rogers (2004).

In Amato and Rogers' (1997) classification of distal and proximal causes of marital dissolution they add prior cohabitation; couple's levels of education; and race (in this context cultural difference) as other potential reasons for marital dissolution. They also regard personal behaviour, such as jealousy, dominance and criticism as contributing factors to couples' separation. In this regard I observed that the majority of the custodial parents were not educated, with only two of the parents having a tertiary education. Furthermore, some parents (the mothers) reported that they were exposed to physical abuse, such as being bitten by their husbands which was caused by jealousy. Feelings of jealousy arose from the assumption that one of the spouses was involved in an extra-marital relationship.

Generally, findings considering the reasons for marital dissolution as reported by the participants of this study confirm the findings of Amato and Hohmann-Marriott (2007) which indicate that when interpersonal and demographic factors accumulate, conflict and feelings of unhappiness may increase among couples and, hence, reduce the commitment to the marriage

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which may result in separation. As found in a study by Amato and Rogers (1997), I also discovered that marital dissolution in the Tanzanian context was caused by either distal or proximal factors, including personal, demographic and economic factors.

5.2.2 Potential Positive Effect of Marital Dissolution on Early Adolescents

The works of Kelly and Lamb (2003), Amato and Hohmann-Marriott (2007), Kelly (2007) and Amato (2010) support the findings of this study that marital dissolution, occasionally, implies positive consequences for the parents and the children. It can, for example, set members of a family free from a hostile environment, especially when the non-resident parent was a source of abuse and caused pain in the family – as indicated in both existing studies and in my research. A contrary view, however, which is supported by Gruber and Colabella (2008) as well as Bojuwoye and Akpan (2009b) maintains that even though marital dissolution may free parents from a hostile environment, the children may still experience feelings of anger and grief when one parent leaves home. The participants in my study confirmed this possibility by highlighting the idea that marital dissolution may be beneficial to parents, but may harm the children.

Apart from marking an end to a hostile situation within the family, marital dissolution has been found to hold potential opportunities for children and parents to develop and gain skills following their separation, such as coping skills. In addition, separation could improve the children's well-being; free them from conflict; and allow them to remain with a parent of their choice (Wiseman, 1975; Turner, & Avison, 1992; Amato, 2000; Hetherington, 2003). In this regard I found that the skills and knowledge the children obtained at the centres where they were placed following the marital dissolution of their parents were expected not only to change their lives but, potentially, also those of their siblings and poor custodial parents. Some children reported on their goal to start a tailoring business and others to become mechanics; wanting to send some money home once they started earning an income. Generally, children centres were often seen as a solution for children from broken homes as they provided for their basic and psycho-social needs. Furthermore, some children in this study gained from their parents' marital dissolution in the sense that they were equipped to become responsible couples and parents in future. The findings of this study, thus, indicate the possibility of children benefiting from the separation of their parents, despite experiencing several negative effects which are discussed next.

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5.2.3 NEGATIVE EFFECT OF MARITAL DISSOLUTION ON EARLY ADOLESCENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Marital dissolution may negatively impact on children's academic performance in a number of ways. Studies by Jimerson *et al.* (1999) as well as Friedman (2000) highlight factors that could contribute to children's poor performance, such as poor socio-economic status, a compromised quality of home environment and a lack of parental involvement in their children affairs. My findings correspond with this as these factors were mentioned as some of the outcomes of parents' separation in my study. I found that the departure of the non-resident parent (usually the father) who was supporting the family financially prior to the separation caused a dramatic change in the socio-economic status of the custodial parent. This often resulted in the family not being able to meet school requirements, such as food for school, bus fare, school uniforms and school fees, as also indicated in the findings of Downey (1994) and Martinot and Monteil (2000). In addition, I found that post-divorce conflict was prominent among the majority of couples in this study, resulting in them not being optimally involved in their children's academic affairs and progress. In support of these findings studies by Amato, Loomis and Booth (1995), Björklund and Sundström (2006) and Fronstin, Greenberg, & Robins (2001) indicate that continuous parental conflict may impair a positive learning atmosphere, and negatively impact on the children's performance.

Alternatively, mothers' absence from their children's lives due to marital dissolution may result in a poor academic performance – as indicated by Belsky (1988), Desai, Chase-Lansdale and Michael (1989) and Baydar as well as Brooks-Gunn (1991) and supported by the findings of my study. I found that children who remained in the care of financially stable custodial fathers still performed poorly in their academic work – despite a stable financial situation – due to the fact that their mothers who had been involved in their day-to-day school matters, such as hygiene, food preparation and homework, were no longer available to assist. Consequently, as viewed by Ermisch and Francesconi (2001b), Størksen *et al.* (2006), Björklund and Sundström (2006) and Smit (2010) and supported by the findings of my study, the absence of one parent – as a result of marital dissolution – may limit the ability of the other parent to focus on the children's academic development. It follows that marital dissolution may directly or indirectly hamper children's academic performance, whether it is because of a decreased involvement in the children's school work; related to emotional challenges experienced by the children (see Section 5.2.4); or the result of a combination of these factors.

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In line with this argument, the findings of my study correspond with those in a study by the Carnegie Council (1995) which indicates that children's behaviour problems often result from the challenges they experience following their parents' separation which, in turn, could lead to poor academic performance. In my study some children were suspended and others expelled from school because of behaviour problems. I further found that children's performance decreased when they lacked motivation to learn, especially when the hardships that had resulted from their parents' separation overshadowed their hopes for the future. This finding corresponds with what Dryfoos (1998), Wentzel (1991) and Masten and Coatsworth (1998) found in their studies, namely, that when children consider their parents' separation as the end to their hopes for the future, their dreams tend to shut down and their motivation for life diminishes.

Albertini and Dronkers (2009) suggest that the negative effect of marital dissolution on children's academic performance will be worse when the children are left with a less educated or uneducated custodial parent. The same idea was highlighted during my research where the majority of the children from broken families who lived with uneducated or less educated custodial parents performed poorly in class – some repeating classes several times and others dropping out of school. Generally, by reflecting on the findings of Kail (1997), Elkind (1998) and Papalia, Olds and Feldman (2002) that summarise the cognitive abilities of early adolescents, including abstract reasoning; the ability to plan realistically; and an ideal imagination, it can be concluded that the children participating in this study were negatively affected by marital dissolution in terms of their academic development. The majority of them displayed learning problems, such as problems with simple mathematics, spelling, punctuation, hand writing and other scholastic activities. The question, however, remains as to whether or not these learning problems were the direct outcome of the marital dissolution or, possibly, the effect of emotional difficulties experienced during the time or, more probably, a combination of these.

5.2.4 Negative Effect of Marital Dissolution on Early Adolescents' Psycho-Social Well-Being

As mentioned earlier, the existing literature suggests that children from broken homes are at risk of engaging in problematic behaviour, such as gang activities, as well as experiencing internalised and externalised emotional problems. When this occurs during early adolescence (the target phase of this study), adolescents may end up engaging in early at-risk sexual activity, with the girls risking early pregnancies (Amato, 2000; 2001; Remez, 2000; Anderson,

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2002; Kelly, & Emery, 2003). In my study children, especially those who once lived on the streets, were found to display numerous behaviour problems, including aggression, theft, bullying, hurling insults, selling drugs and early sexual activity. Some girls were unable to continue with school due to early pregnancies while others were filled with anxiety, loneliness and sadness – especially those who ended up living with stepparents.

Custodial parents mentioned that problem behaviour increased among children soon after the departure of the fathers from the home. Children apparently took advantage of their mothers' weak parenting and inability to be as strict as their fathers during the period following marital dissolution. Similar tendencies were found by Hetherington (1999), Roeser, Eccles, & Sameroff (2000) as well as Papalia, Olds & Feldman (2002), indicating that children's behavioural problems may be caused by many factors from both inside and outside the home. Among these factors is the absence of one parent from home for a long period of time (due to marital dissolution) which may weaken the ability of the other parent to raise and positively parent the children.

I further found that detachment from a parent – especially where emotional attachment existed between the children and the non-resident parent – caused emotional pain, anxiety and sadness among the children. Some children displayed feelings of fear and insecurity whilst others were sad, having a negative attitude towards the parent who they considered caused the separation. In support of this finding, attachment theorists explain that when attachment between a parent and a child is affected by incidents, such as parents' separation, a child may display social, emotional and academic problems. A child may, for example, withdraw from others and may be sad and perform poorly in class (Bowlby, 1982; 2008Hinde, 1982; Kennedy, & Kennedy, 2004).

Another known negative effect on children resulting from parent-child detachment is the deterioration of parent-child relationships (Seltzer, 1991; Amato, & Gilbreth, 1999; Braver, Ellman, & Fabricius, 2003; Dunn *et al*., 2004). In some cases in my study the children were angry with both parents, a situation that resulted in some children choosing to live on the street and, subsequently, ending up at the children's centres. This finding indicates that the negative effect of parents' separation on children may be determined by the nature of parent-child relationships that existed previously. If the child was well-connected to a parent who becomes a non-resident parent, the negative effect will be more intense. Poor parent-child relationships were also related to continuous parental conflict in my study. This finding is in

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line with the conclusions of Amato and Keith (1991), Sun (2001) and Størksen *et al*. (2006) that suggest that when children continuously observe their parents fighting or abusing each other, it may affect their perception of one or both parents and, in turn, hamper healthy parent-child relationships that existed before.

In line with Johnson and Wiechers' (2002) view that parents' separation is, generally, a traumatic event in children's lives, I found that parents' separation may set in motion a series of negative experiences in the lives of children from broken homes. These negative experiences include relocations, living with stepparents, abuse, neglect and life on the street. Other negative effects of parents' separation – expressed by the participants of this study – are related to children's negative perceptions of marriage and family, child labour, and child abuse. Correlating with this finding, Laursen (1996), Adams (2004) and Cherlin (2004) feel that the negative effect of marital dissolution may affect children for a short period of time or throughout their lives. This possibility is evident in the data provided by participating parents who experienced marital dissolution as children. They confessed that some of the marital problems that caused their marital dissolution could be related to the effect of their parents' separation throughout their life-span.

5.2.5 INDIRECT EFFECTS OF MARITAL DISSOLUTION ON EARLY ADOLESCENTS

When marital dissolution occurs in the family the children are not only affected directly but also indirectly by various intentional and/or unintentional circumstances. An example of these circumstances is the changed socio-economic status and poverty of the custodial parent (McLanahan, 1999; Breivik, & Olweus, 2006; Sun, & Li, 2002; Acklin, 2008). The findings of this study support the existing body of knowledge concerning the indirect effects of marital dissolution on children as custodial parents and children, for example, cited frequent relocations from one place to another in search of cheaper accommodation because they were financially challenged and needed to make ends meet. In further support, studies by Emery (1999), Hartup and Stevens (1999), Amato (2000), Hetherington and Kelly (2002) as well as Kelly (2007) indicate that the frequent relocations of a custodial parent may have a negative effect on the children. When moving frequently from one residence to another in search of low cost accommodation, children have to change schools and make new friends which will affect their academic and social development. Equally, in this study I found that the child participants experienced academic and psycho-social negative effects caused by frequent relocations that started to occur soon after the dissolution of the marriage. The children, specifically, spoke about the negative effects of losing friends from their neighbourhood and

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at school when they had to change schools and, subsequently, some had to repeat their grades after changing schools. Generally, having to repeatedly cope with a new residential environment was experienced as a challenge by the majority of the child participants.

Furthermore, existing studies suggest that the experience of marital dissolution as a crisis for, and family stressor on, a custodial parent may result in the parent experiencing emotional challenges (McCubbin, & Patterson, 1983; Crosbie-Burnett, 1989; Turner, & Avison, 1989; 1992). The lack of the everyday assistance, companionship and encouragement of a partner could further add to the challenges experienced by the custodial parent (Longmore, Manning, & Giordano, 2001). A parent's emotional instability may, in turn, impair his/her ability to properly parent his/her children. A parent who is under stress and is depressed may, for example, directly affect the children by abusing or neglecting them or indirectly harm them by neglecting positive parenting (Glasgow *et al*., 1997; Cherlin, Chase-Lansdale, & McRae, 1998; Santrock, 2001). In line with the findings of these scholars, my study revealed that children who were left in the care of an emotionally challenged custodial parent were, occasionally, abused and neglected because of unstable parenting. This resulted in the children displaying deviant behaviour, which could be related to a lack of close parental control. Examples of such behaviour include at-risk sexual behaviour, involvement in gang activities, aggression, frequently running away from home and substance abuse.

Closely related, the decision of a custodial parent to remarry, cohabit or date may be considered by parents as a means of adjusting after marital dissolution but such a decision could have a negative impact on the children (Solivetti, 1994; Bray, 1999; Hetherington, & Kelly, 2002; Anderson, & Greene, 2005). Children may, as a result, end up living with a step-parent who may harm them either physically or on a psycho-social level. A parent who engages in a post-divorce relationship may loose focus on the children and direct available resources, such as money and time, to the new relationship, thereby negatively affecting the children. In support of the relevant existing literature, some of the participating children who were living with stepparents reported that they were physically, verbally or sexually abused. Some children ended up living on the street after being unable to cope with living under the same roof as a stepparent. For this reason, the decision of a custodial parent to engage in a post-divorce relationship is considered by life course theorists as a life course event that may, potentially, jeopardise the future of children due to the fact that it exposes them to added risks, as well as to their parents' separation (Elder, Johnson, & Crosnoe, 2003; Cicchetti, Rogosch, & Toth, 2006).

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With regard to the indirect effects of marital dissolution on children, I found that the majority of the parents who participated were involved in post-divorce conflict for a number of reasons, including property possession, child maintenance and non-agreement concerning the custody of the children. Post-divorce conflict had several negative effects on the participating children, namely: it damaged parent-child relationships; reduced children's visits and contact with non-resident parents; and delayed the children's adjustment to the marital dissolution. In line with my findings, the severity of post-divorce conflict on children's well-being is emphasised in the works of Atwood, Schuster and Tempestini (1994), Bojuwoye and Akpan (2009a) and McIntosh and Chisholm (2008). These researchers emphasise the fact that when parents are in constant conflict following marital dissolution they often lack the necessary time to focus on the well-being of their children – a situation which adds to the severity of the negative effects of separation on the children.

Another factor which may indirectly affect children following their parents' marital dissolution relates to the parents' decisions about living arrangements. In this study I found that very few couples followed the legal route to obtain a divorce which means that custodial arrangements were largely informal and characterised by frequent battles between the parents arguing about custody of the children. In some cases, gaining access to the children implied conflict that increased the negative effects of marital dissolution on the children. In one case, fighting between the parents even led to a child's death. In support of these findings Kelly-Plate and Eubanks (1997), and Neale and Flowerdew (2007) maintain that parents' misunderstandings concerning issues of access or custody may harm the children.

Similarly, the informal nature of custodial arrangements among Tanzanian couples apparently had an impact on children's contact with, and visits to, their non-custodial parents. Studies by Booth and Amato (2001), Dunn and Deater-Deckard (2001), and Dunn *et al*. (2004) show that parent-child relationships, children's ages, parents' conflict and distance determine the contact between children and the non-custodial parent visits. In correlation with what is indicated by the existing literature, participants in this study emphasised that poor parent-child relationships impaired the contact between children and their non-resident parents. As the majority of the children lived with their mothers, a continuation of post-divorce conflict reduced their chances to visit non-resident parents which added to the negative effects of marital dissolution on the children. Furthermore, some parents – especially those who were poor – could not afford the bus fare to visit their children or invite their children to visit them.

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As already indicated, I found custodial arrangements to be largely informal in nature in Tanzania. The social and psychological environment of potential custodial parents was, occasionally, considered in determining where the children should stay. This implied the possibility of jeopardising discipline and the children's well-being as core factors when making such a decision. Similar findings were obtained by Neuman and Romanowski (1998) as well as Bojuwoye and Akpan (2009a), indicating that parents' psychological and emotional states should be considered when deciding on custodial arrangements; as a custodial parent who experiences social, psychological and emotional difficulties may not be able to raise their children properly. Generally, marital dissolution may result in a number of social and family problems that might affect all those involved (McCarthy, Edwards, & Gillies, 2003; Amato, 2010) and that require consideration when making decisions about custodial arrangements.

Numerous studies highlight the fact that all children are not affected in the same way and that various factors may determine the effect of marital dissolution on the children (Wade, & Travis, 1993; Wallerstein, & Blakeslee, 2003). The first category of determinants relates to children's ages and gender – as pointed out by Cherlin (1999), Amato (2006) and Martinot and Monteil (2000). These authors found that the ages and gender of the children may determine how they are affected by their parents' separation. Similar findings are presented by Sun (2001) and Sun and Li (2002). In support of the existing literature, participants in this study reported that younger children (under 5 years of age) were perceived not to remember the experiences of their parents' separation in detail, resulting in them not experiencing the separation as detrimental as their older brothers and sisters. In terms of gender, boys were reported to be at greater risk of behaviour problems while girls, generally, internalised problems. In confirming this, boys were found to account for the majority of children residing at the children's centres.

Finally, in my study I found that children who had been exposed to a series of negative incidents that threatened their well-being were more vulnerable to the negative effects of their parents' separation than those who had not experienced threatening events. For instance, children from broken homes who lived with their custodial parents instead of on the streets seemed emotionally healthier than those who ended up living on the streets and were, subsequently, taken in by the children's centres. Likewise, children who lived with their biological custodial parents were healthier when compared to those who lived with stepparents. This finding correlates with those of Caplan (1964), Turner and Avison (1992) and Barrett (2000a) which explain the concept of life course and multi-transitional theory on

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how children may be vulnerable by experiencing negative incidents. The negative effects that children incur may be short-term or long-term – continuing for a life time in some individuals (Hetherington, & Stanley-Hagan, 1999; Teachman, 2002; Barrett &Turner, 2005).

5.2.6 MANAGING MARITAL DISSOLUTION MORE EFFECTIVELY

The existing literature shows that when couples are able to deal with their differences by using effective conflict management skills, the chances are high that they will continue with their marriage and not separate (Gottman *et al.*, 1998; Rogge *et al.*, 2006; Strohschein, 2005). Participants in this study indicated that marital dissolution was largely caused by couples' inability to manage conflict themselves.

Furthermore, when marital dissolution occurs in a family – particularly when the children remain with a custodial parent – the extent of the negative effects may be less if the family has some social support. On the other hand, if a family has limited or no social support from relatives, friends or neighbours, the negative effects of marital dissolution are, typically, more severe (Burr, 1973; McCubbin, Dahl, & Hunter, 1976; McCubbin, 1979). In line with the existing studies, I found that custodial parents who had strong social support experienced less pain from marital dissolution than those who did not have sufficient social support. Social support was provided by religious leaders, friends, neighbours and relatives. Participants reportedly received food and stationery from neighbours, while relatives supported couples during early reconciliation family meetings. Religious leaders counselled or referred couples to other authorities when separation was inevitable. In the same way the participating children indicated that the memories of their parents' separation were more painful and disturbing when they were alone than when they were in the company of their friends.

In addition, public awareness of laws and policies related to marriage and children seems to be lacking in Tanzania – according to the participants of this study. The participants were unaware of the procedures for a legal divorce and of existing policies in support of children from broken homes. Due to their ignorance of laws and policies, some women had misconceptions of legal divorce processes, thinking that they would be regarded as disrespectful by the community if they opted for a legal divorce. Reportedly, this belief contributed to the majority of Tanzanian couples deciding to separate rather than undergo a legal divorce. In support of these findings, the existing literature indicates weaknesses in current Tanzanian laws and policies regarding marriage and children – specifically in terms of the procedures related to child maintenance, custodianship and living arrangements.

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A lack of awareness in the public may put people at risk, especially when they need to assert particular rights or receive assistance (Rwezaura, & Wanitzek, 1988; Rwezaura, 1994). To be more specific, according to Howland and Koenen (2011), a number of issues are not properly addressed in the Tanzanian Law of Marriage Act (1971). It follows that the negative effects of marital dissolution in the Tanzanian context are, seemingly, intensified by custodial parents being ignorant of laws and policies that could protect their well-being as well as that of their children. Correlating with this finding, Mpuya and Lubeja (2012) highlight a weakness in current policies, especially in terms of incorporating marriage and divorce information collected from agencies into current policy and making the public aware of it. As a result, Tanzania seems to lack open access to accurate information concerning marriage and divorce when compared to other countries.

The existing literature shows that in order to reduce the harmful effect of marital dissolution on their children, parents need to consider their well-being throughout the entire process of separation (Corner, & Calendar, 2013). Amongst other things, this involves the ability of the parents to realise the impact of conflict on their children when it is inevitable (Arnett, 1999; Saposnek, 2004). Parents should also communicate their decision to separate with their children and listen to their views (Smith, Taylor, & Tapp, 2003; Parkinson, Cashmore, & Single, 2005). In this study some participating parents indicated that they did not consider the effects of their conflict and separation on their children before the separation occurred. Another group of the parents indicated that they were aware of the risks and dangers of the processes preceding the separation and that they did not wish to go through these processes but that they were overwhelmed by continuous conflict, thereby making marital dissolution unavoidable.

Closely related to this, the children who participated in my study expressed their desire to be informed of their parents' decision to separate and about the processes that were to follow after the separation as these would affect them in some way or another. Among other things, the children discussed the need to understand the reasons for separation; to know when one parent would be leaving home; what custodial arrangements had been made; and whether or not they could make a contribution to these decisions. The caregivers and teachers added that the disclosure of the impending separation implied more benefits than losses for the children. These findings support the research of Saposnek (2004), McIntosh (2000) and Sanchez and Kibler-Sanchez (2004) who suggest that by allowing children to contribute to their parents' decisions when separating, parents may sometimes rethink their ideas and change them into

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something more positive. Subsequently, the children may feel valued and respected when their voices have been heard and they may, then, be able to adjust more easily and positively.

Furthermore, parents who participated in this study showed an understanding of the essence of having an insight into the effect of marital dissolution on their children, implying the parents' readiness to fully involve themselves in the lives of their children regardless of what they were going through themselves. Along the same line of thinking Kelly (2007) suggests that parental care for children involves the parents' determination to continue supporting their children. Only a few children who participated in this research did not view the idea of their parents sharing information about the separation with them as positive. They felt that in cases where the children were not involved it could hurt and destabilise them – especially those who were still young. For this reason, such disclosure needs to keep the children's readiness as well as their level of maturity in mind. Similar findings can be found in the works of McIntosh (2000) and Parkinson, Cashmore and Single. (2005) which show that if children are informed about their parents' decision to separate when they are too young and immature, they will be overly alert to potential danger in the future and, hence, be negatively affected.

5.3 FINDINGS THAT CONTRADICT EXISTING LITERATURE

In this section I discuss areas where my findings contradict those found in existing literature. Throughout I identify possible explanations for such contradictions. After providing an overview of these findings in Table 5.2, I discuss each of the findings in the sections that follow.

Table 5.2: Results that Contradict Existing Literature

Author and year	Existing knowledge	How what I found contradicts what is known	Interpretive discussion: Possible explanations of the contradiction
THEME 2: EFFECTS OF MARITAL DISSOLUTION ON EARLY ADOLESCENTS' FUNCTIONING			
Sub-theme 2.2: Effects on parent-child relationships			
Dunn *et al*. (2004) Dunn and Deater-Deckard (2001)	Positive father-child relationships will minimise the effect of marital dissolution on children.	The majority of children had poor parent-children relationships with their fathers, which increased the negative effects of marital dissolution on them.	Poor parent-child relationships may be intensified by continuous parental conflict; the inability of parents to maintain positive relationships with children and the loss of contact with non-custodial parents.

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Sub-theme 2.2: Variations in the effects of marital dissolution on children			
Kantrowitz and Wingert (1992) Johnson and Wiechers (2002)	The effect of marital dissolution on children is, *inter alia*, determined by how children conceptualise the breakup before it occurs.	Most children did not conceptualise the separation before it occurred, and only did this after marital dissolution. As a result the effects could not by reduced by this factor.	Most children were not aware of the marital dissolution that was about to occur. Also, participating children's ages and maturity, perhaps, did not allow them to conceptualise their parents' separation before if occurred. Such lack of awareness may be linked to the tendency of parents in Tanzania not to discuss such matters with their children.
Sub-theme 2.2: Early adolescents' adjustment following marital dissolution			
Kelly (2000) Kelly and Emery (2003) Booth and Edwards (1990) Amato and Keith (1991) Amato and Gilbreth (1999) Kelly (2007) Nord, Brimhall and West (1997) Neale and Flowerdew (2007)	Frequent visits to non-resident parents; absence of post-divorce conflict; and parents' involvement in children's lives can help children to adjust positively.	Visits to, and contacts with, non-resident parents were undeterminable and post-divorce conflict increased, preventing parents from being involved in their children's lives.	Parents' ignorance about their children's well-being after separation and parents' focus on their own pain may have contributed to this problem. In addition, due to parents often not opting for a legal divorce, stipulations for visits to the non-resident parent were perhaps not carefully thought out or formalised.
Sub-theme 2.3: Limited insight into the effects of marital dissolution on their children			
Kelly-Plate and Eubanks (1997) Hetherington and Kelly (2002; 2007) Johnston (2006) Cashmore and Parkinson (2008)	When divorced parents collaboratively decide about issues related to children's well-being, the negative effects of the separation are minimised.	Most parents did not consider or discuss the well-being of their children when making the decision to separate.	Post-divorce conflict between couples possibly resulted in them not being concerned about their children's affairs.
Sub-theme 2.3: Children's desire to be informed			
Dunn and Deater-Deckard (2001) Dunn *et al*. (2004) Kelly (2000; 2007)	When children are involved in the separation process and their views are being heard they tend to adjust more positively.	No child participant was informed or heard during the separation processes.	Tanzanian parents' ignorance about the importance of involving children in separation processes as well as continued conflict may have contributed to this contradictory finding. In addition, the tendency to merely separate and not get a legal divorce may also provide an explanation.

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THEME 3: TRENDS FOLLOWING MARITAL DISSOLUTION			
Sub-theme 3.2: Nature of custodial arrangements			
Urassa *et al.* (1997) Mbilinyi (1972)	Children often remain with their fathers after marital dissolution.	The majority of children lived with their mothers or in children's centres after the separation.	The majority of children end up in the custody of their mothers due to a belief often held in Tanzania that fathers are unable to raise children without mothers.
Sub-theme 3.2: Change in living arrangements; Visits to non-custodial parent			
Chen (2008b) McLanahan (1999) Neale and Flowerdew (2003a; 2007) Parkinson and Smyth (2004) Kelly (2007)	Frequent contact between the children and their non-resident parents, and visits to them need to be prioritised.	Contacts and visits were largely informal, unstructured and undetermined.	The informal nature of Tanzanian separation and subsequent living arrangements may have affected the visits and contact with non-resident parents. Poor parent-child relationships may also have contributed.
THEME 4: MANAGING MARITAL DISSOLUTION IN TANZANIA			
Sub-theme 4.2: Lack of awareness about policies by Tanzanian citizens			
Pillay (1999) Mukesh (2003) Bojuwoye and Akpan (2009b) Bhebhe and Mosha (1996) Maundeni (2000b)	Marriage and divorce can be described in terms of accurate and reliable statistics.	Formal details and information on marriage and divorce in Tanzania is inaccurate and unreliable.	The majority of Tanzanian couples do not go through a legal divorce. There is no proper follow-up system on marriage details by Tanzanian authorities. In addition, the weaknesses of the law in enforcing this matter may contribute to such informality.
Sub-theme 4.2: Need for revised laws and policies related to children from broken families			
Amato and Booth (1991) Amato and Gilbreth (1999) Størksen *et al.* (2006) Melkiory and Kanyabuhinya (2011) Størksen *et al.* (2005) Emery (1994) Kelly (1993; 2004; 2007)	Stable laws and policies are important to protect the well-being of children coming from broken homes.	A lack of policies and stable laws to protect the well-being of the children from broken homes is evident in Tanzania.	It is possible that laws exist that people are unaware of, due to the government not publicising policies and existing laws.

5.3.1 PARENTS' INVOLVEMENT IN CHILDREN'S LIVES FOLLOWING MARITAL DISSOLUTION

Various authors emphasise the need for parents to remain involved in their children's lives throughout and following a separation process. Studies such as those by Hetherington and

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Kelly (2003) as well as Johnston (2006) stress the importance of parents making collective efforts in terms of their children and discussing relevant issues with them – even in the midst of their differences and conflict. The suggestions captured in these findings are contrary to what I found in my study, where parents indicated that they did not consider their children during the separation processes and that there were no specific meetings between them and their children which were aimed at discussing the well-being of the children. Tanzanian parents' apparent lack of insight into the effects of separation and marital dissolution on their children and their lack of engagement with their children during this process may, potentially, be ascribed to the intense continuation of post-divorce conflict that was reported by the participants. Such conflict may have broadened the gap between the custodial parent and the non-resident parent even further, resulting in the non-resident parent losing contact with the family. In addition, constant post-divorce conflict could result in parents feeling emotionally drained with no energy left to focus on their children and their needs. These are, however, mere hypotheses which require further investigation.

In line with the parents' tendency not to consider their children's well-being during the separation process, children were generally not informed or involved in the processes prior to and during the separation, yet they indicated a desire to be made aware of what was happening in their parents' and – by implication – their own lives. They wanted to be informed about the reasons for the marital dissolution and the living arrangements that would follow the separation. They indicated the need to also have a say in such decisions. Contrary to the child participants' desires in this study – as also suggested in existing literature (Kelly, 2000; 2007) – no child participant was, indeed, informed about separation decisions nor were their views heard. The work of Dunn and Deater-Deckard (2001), Dunn *et al*. (2004) and Saposnek (2004), however, emphasise the need and importance of parents involving their children in separation processes and in considering their children's best interests. Various factors may account for this contradictory finding, such as ignorance by the majority of Tanzanian parents about the benefits of involving children in family decisions; parents focusing on their own emotional pain rather than on their children; custodian parents struggling to meet their own basic needs; and an increment of post-divorce conflict. These hypotheses require on-going research.

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5.3.2 NATURE OF CUSTODIAL ARRANGEMENTS

The existing literature dealing with custodial arrangements following marital dissolution indicates that custodial decisions need to be made carefully as they may affect the children positively or negatively (McLanahan, 1999; Neale, & Flowerdew, 2003a; Chen, 2008b). Custodial arrangements in this study were in most cases informal, with no guidelines or procedures being followed in order to ensure the safety and well-being of the children. Parents reportedly remained involved in struggles concerning the custody of the children. Children who ended up on the streets and, subsequently, at children's centres expressed their dissatisfaction with their parents' struggles for custody as some of these struggles resulted in them running away from home. In this way, the struggles between parents who have separated can jeopardise the well-being and safety of their children.

Closely related, a study by Urassa *et al.* (1997) which was conducted amongst a tribe on the mainland of Tanzania shows that the majority of the children remained with their fathers following separation, allowing the women to remarry when they wanted to do so. Initially, some children would stay with their mothers and later move to their fathers when they turned seven. Contrary to these findings, all the children – except one – in my study lived with their mothers, although some started by living with their fathers but were later taken in by their mothers. Even those who lived at the centres initially came from their mothers' custody – apart from one child. A lack of enforcement of policies and proper procedures concerning custodial arrangements as well as the fathers' inability to take responsibility may be a reason for these contradictions. However, further research is needed to investigate how the lack of enforced stable policies and fathers' irresponsibility may affect the outcome of the parents' separation in terms of living arrangements.

In addition to custodial arrangements being informal, visits and contact with non-resident parents were also found to be informal and unstructured in this study. Parents appeared not to care whether or not the children wanted to visit their non-resident parents, while some children did not see the need to visit or contact the non-resident parent (usually the father) who was often not involved in their lives. Some custodial parents prohibited their children from visiting their non-resident parents – or even mentioning them. Even though some children wished to visit their non-resident parents they sometimes did not know how to locate them. Contrary to these findings, Parkinson and Smyth (2004), Kelly (2007), and Neale and Flowerdew (2007) emphasise the importance of parents prioritising visits and contact between

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children and non-resident parents. Once again, the lack of enforced stable policies on custodial arrangements; poor parent-child relationships; and post-divorce conflict may have resulted in this opposing finding which should be confirmed by means of follow-up research.

5.3.3 CHILDREN'S ADJUSTMENT FOLLOWING MARITAL DISSOLUTION

Despite the fact that marital dissolution, generally, implies several negative consequences for the children, there are various factors evident in the existing literature that may determine children's ability to adjust, following their parents' marital dissolution; such as a positive parent-child relationship (Dunn, & Deater-Deckard, 2001; Dunn *et al*., 2004). In this study the majority of the children spoke about poor relationships with non-resident parents, some also mentioning that it was the same with their custodial parents. For this reason the negative effect of marital dissolution seemed more intense for these children when compared to children who experience positive parent-child relationships. Possible reasons established in this study for poor parent-child relationships relate to the continuous conflict between parents that, in turn, could result in the children having a negative view of their parents, or in the parents' ignorance and inability to initiate and maintain positive relationships and open communication with their children prior to, and during, the separation process – from focusing on their own needs rather than on those of their children. Permanent loss of contact by non-resident parents with their families may also contribute to poor parent-child relationships.

Another factor that may help children to adjust positively following their parents' marital dissolution is the opportunity for frequent visits to, and contact with, non-resident parents. Studies by Amato and Keith (1991), and Booth and Edwards (1990) suggest that children who are given the freedom to visit their non-resident parents may cope better with the negative effects of marital dissolution. Within the context of this study the children did not report frequent visits and contact with their non-resident parents for a number of reasons – as mentioned previously.

In addition to contact with the non-resident parents, the absence of post-divorce conflict and parents' involvement in the lives of their children are other factors that will determine children's ability to adjust following their parents' separation (Amato, & Gilbreth, 1999; Riggio, 2004; Kelly, 2007). Contrary to these indicated factors, as important determinants in the adjustment of children, the children in this study experienced strong negative effects of their parents' marital dissolution as the majority of their parents were involved in post-divorce

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conflict that, probably, widened the gap between the parents and reduced the chance for them to be involved in the lives of their children. Children at the centres mentioned this as a factor resulting in their decision to live on the streets. In addition, existing literature (Størksen *et al.*, 2006) – especially the literature on research in developed societies – indicates the importance of implementing and enforcing stable policies; of parents being aware of the negative effects of separation; and their involvement with their children – even in the midst of conflict. Such an approach is, however, hardly found in the context of Tanzania due to reasons, such as continued post-divorce conflict between couples that may, in turn, result in poor parent-child relationships. However, these possible reasons are mere hypotheses that require further investigation.

Moreover, the findings of this study are in contrast to studies by Kantrowitz and Wingert (1992) and Johnson and Wiechers (2002) that maintain that children from broken homes may adjust positively or negatively depending on how they conceptualise the breakup before it occurs. I found that no child participant conceptualised the separation of their parents prior to its occurrence. The majority of the child participants indicated that the separation took them by surprise. Some children said that despite living in a conflicting and hostile environment they did not expect their parents to separate. Most children, therefore, started to experience negative effects at the time of the dissolution. A few others considered the separation as positive, due to their being freed from hostile environments. In this regard, only the children's levels of maturity and their culture may have influenced their ability to pre-conceptualise their parents' separation. However, this hypothesis is subject to in-depth research.

5.3.4 Perceived Limitations in Laws and Policies Related to Marriage and Children

The laws and policies in many countries allow for the collection of appropriate, timely and accurate information regarding marriage and divorce. Amato and Rogers (1997) provide details of marriage and divorce in the western context while Pillay (1999), Maundeni (2000a) and Mukesh (2003) give information from Botswana and South Africa. In South Africa, for example, statistics show that 31,592 of the 148,188 separations registered in 1995 ended in divorce while in Botswana the divorce rate has increased over the last two decades. Contrary to these available figures and authors' findings, Tanzania lacks reliable and accurate statistics on marriage and divorce. Even though couples' separation is on the increase there is no statistical evidence for this. During my discussions with authorities, some officials indicated

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that there were no strict measures to follow-up on details in terms of divorce statistics and that ignorance and reticence exist among the majority of stakeholders concerning the accurate and timely processing and submission of this kind of information. Another contributing factor is that the majority of Tanzanian couples do not follow the legal route when separating. Nevertheless, all these scenarios need more investigation to obtain an accurate explanation.

Furthermore, unlike many other countries where stable and workable laws and policies are in place to protect the rights and well-being of children from broken homes as well as of custodial parents (Amato & Keith, 1991; Amato, & Gilbreth, 1999; Størksen *et al.*, 2006), the Tanzanian situation seems to be different. In this study the children from broken families and their custodial parents (usually their mothers) struggled to obtain child maintenance. An absence of policies that enforce matters, such as child maintenance, custodial arrangements and regular visits to, and contact with, non-custodial parents (Størksen *et al.*, 2006) may result in children becoming even more vulnerable due to the negative effects of marital dissolution. These hypotheses require on-going investigation.

Closely related, participants of this study were, apparently, unaware of laws and policies regarding divorce and the rights of children from broken homes. Such ignorance and lack of awareness increased the risks for parents and their children when marital dissolution occurred. For example, difficulty in accessing child maintenance following marital dissolution resulted in some custodial parents abandoning their children while other children were expelled from school because of unpaid school fees. This is contrary to findings of Størksen *et al.* (2005) and Kelly (2007) that stress population awareness of issues concerning divorce and the rights of children. Several reasons may account for this opposing finding, such as the ignorance of the majority of Tanzanian citizens concerning existing laws and policies, bureaucracy and corruption in processing legal divorce or in enforcing the payment of child maintenance. These possibilities, however, require further investigation.

5.4 SILENCES IN COLLECTED DATA WHEN COMPARED TO EXISTING LITERATURE

In comparing the findings from my research with those of the existing literature, I identified a few silences. Table 5.3 provides a summary of these, followed by related discussions.

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Table 5.3: Silences in the Data When Compared to Existing Literature

Trend	Author and year	Interpretive discussion
THEME 2: EFFECTS OF MARITAL DISSOLUTION ON EARLY ADOLESCENTS' FUNCTIONING		
Sub-theme 2.1: Effects of marital dissolution on early adolescents' psycho-social well-being; In some cases children feel guilty of being the cause of their parents' separation.	Amato (2001) Ward, Spitze and Deane (2009) Kelly-Plate and Eubanks (1997)	Children blamed their parents for being responsible for the pain caused by the separation. Blame was often directed to non-resident parents. No children blamed themselves for the marital dissolution.
Sub-theme 2.2: Emotional pain and its consequences on early adolescents' perceptions: Teachers' and caregivers' attachment styles may have an effect on early adolescents.	Kennedy and Kennedy (2004) Dozier *et al.* (2001)	My study focused on attachment between children and their parents. Teachers and caregivers' attachment styles were not included in this study.
Sub-theme 2.3: Children's desire to be informed: Informing, involving and considering children's views will minimise the negative effect of marital dissolution on children.	Smith, Taylor, & Tapp (2003) Cashmore and Parkinson (2008).	Parents were ignorant of the importance of informing and involving children in the separation process. Some were overwhelmed by continuous conflict with the other parent.
THEME 3: TRENDS FOLLOWING MARITAL DISSOLUTION		
Sub-theme 3.2: Visits to non-custodial parent: Parents need to prioritise children's contact with, and visits to, non-resident parents.	Neale and Flowerdew (2007)	Parents in this study did not prioritise visits to, and contact of children with, non-resident parents. Some were engaged in post-divorce conflict.
Sub-theme 3.3: Effects of parents' emotional states on children: A custodial parent's mental illness can add to the negative effects of separation on the child.	Kelly (2007) Neale and Flowerdew (2007)	Some custodial parents in this study experienced emotional challenges but no one had difficulty in dealing with this.
THEME 4: MANAGING MARITAL DISSOLUTION IN TANZANIA		
Sub-theme 4.2: Need for revised laws and policies related to children of broken families: In case of life hardship of custodial parents, government intervention is important. Services, such as counselling for custodial parents and day-care for children from broken homes need to be provided.	Størksen *et al.* (2005)	In Tanzania policies and laws are not enforced to protect the well-being of children from broken homes. No structured government interventions are in place for custodial parents or children from broken homes.

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5.4.1 SILENCES IN TERMS OF THE EFFECT OF MARITAL DISSOLUTION ON EARLY ADOLESCENTS' PSYCHO-SOCIAL WELL-BEING

As indicated in Section 5.2, the majority of my findings on the effects of marital dissolution on early adolescents' psycho-social well-being support the findings captured in existing literature. However, a few silences could be identified. One of these silences relates to the findings of Kelly-Plate and Eubanks (1997), Amato (2001) and Ward, Spitze and Deane (2009) that suggest that children may feel guilty about being the perceived cause of their parents' separation. No feelings of guilt were reported in this study. The children who participated in this study, rather, blamed one or both parents for being the cause of the pain they were going through and not themselves. This may be due to the fact that some children observed constant conflict and fighting between their parents, thereby relating conflict to the causes of the separation. In such cases they, typically, knew which parent to blame.

Another gap is related to the works of Dozier *et al*. (2001) as well as Kennedy and Kennedy (2004) which show that children's attachments may be affected by the dynamics of attachments with teachers and caregivers previously experienced. This implies that if teachers and caregivers had, for example, experienced problems with attachments with their parents the teachers/caregivers may transfer some negativity to the children in their care and not treat them optimally. Participants in this study did not mention this possibility. This silence may be ascribed to the focus of the study being the attachment between children and their parents and not between children and their teachers or caregivers. A follow-up investigation focussing on how teachers' and caregivers' attachment may affect children's academic and psycho-social development will shed more light on this matter. Closely related to this, a study on how parents' experiences as children undergoing the marital dissolution of their parents may affect their attachment with their children can also add to this knowledge base in the parent-child relationship context.

Furthermore, existing literature highlights children's desire to be informed of parents' decision to separate and the benefits following such disclosure. The literature indicates how important it is that children should have an opportunity to contribute to decisions surrounding separation (Smith, Taylor, & Tapp, 2003; Cashmore, & Parkinson, 2008). According to this study, no child was informed about the decisions of their parents to separate prior to the commencement of the process of separation. Furthermore, no participant reported that his/her views about the separation were listened to. Possible reasons for this may be the parents'

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ignorance of the importance of disclosing information about separation to their children and a lack of parents' insight into the negative effects of their separation on the children. Nonetheless, these reasons are mere hypotheses which need to be explored in-depth.

5.4.2 Silences in Terms of Certain Challenges Experienced by Early Adolescents Following Marital Dissolution

Various factors are suggested in existing studies that may inhibit visits to and contact between children and non-resident parents. For example, visits and contact may decrease when children approach adolescence and they are comfortable staying with their custodial parents and when they engage with other interests that occupy their time (Neale, & Flowerdew, 2007). However, in the context of this study no mention was made of these factors or of children reducing their visits to, and contact with, non-resident parents. Visits and contact in this study were informal and unstructured and – in most cases – these were negatively affected by continuous post-divorce conflict, poor parent-child relationships and occasionally the disappearance of the non-resident parent. It should, however, be noted that this study involved early adolescents, aged 12 to 15 years, and not adolescents older than 15. Further investigation on how visits to, and contact with, non-resident parents may change as children grow older or become satisfied with staying with custodial parents is needed.

Finally, despite other challenges that the children in this study encountered when being left in the care of emotionally challenged custodial parents, no custodial parents were identified as mentally unstable – a possibility which is highlighted in the work of Kelly (2007) as well as that of Neale and Flowerdew (2007). It may be viable for future researchers to investigate how custodial parents' mental illness may affect the well-being of their children following marital dissolution in the context of Tanzania – if such cases are identified.

5.4.3 Silences in the Potentially Supportive Role of Local Government

Størksen *et al.* (2005) maintain that laws and policies are meant to protect the well-being of children and their custodial parents in all spheres of life. These authors suggest government intervention in terms of financial assistance to custodial parents when a father fails to do so; the provision of counselling services for custodial mothers; and day-care to younger children from broken homes. Such interventions were briefly referred to as needed by the participants of this study even though they reported no experience of them. This gap may, potentially, be ascribed to limitations in terms of stable enforced laws and policies in Tanzania or a weak

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economy when compared to other countries. Nevertheless, further investigation is needed to confirm or reject these potential reasons.

5.5 NEW INSIGHTS OBTAINED FROM THIS STUDY

In the final section of this chapter I discuss new insights revealed by this study pertaining to the effect of marital dissolution on early adolescents' academic and psycho-social development. Table 5.4, below, presents a summary and my interpretive views on these insights.

Table 5.4: Comparing Results of this Research with Existing Knowledge: New Insights

Themes	Description	Interpretive discussion
Reasons for marital dissolution: **Sub-theme 1.3:** Influence of others	Marital dissolution may be a result of personal and demographic factors, including the influence of in-laws and other relatives.	Lack of support and potential negative influence of in-laws and other relatives may result in marital dissolution.
Effects of marital dissolution on early adolescents' functioning: **Sub-theme 2.2:** Effects on early adolescents' psycho-social well-being	Parent-child relationships will be affected by detachment from a non-resident parent and a negative perception of the parent who is perceived to have caused the separation.	The effects of marital dissolution on parent-child relationships were worse in cases of contact being lost between non-resident parents and their family.
	The effects of marital dissolution on early adolescents were determined by various factors, such as age, the custodial parent's socio-economic status, parent-child relationships, children's involvement in the process and whether or not a child experienced any other life course incidents.	Continuous marital conflict and circumstances where children observed parents' negative behaviour before separation could determine the effects of marital dissolution on the children.
	The effects of marital dissolution on early adolescents may be short-term, long-term, or even across a life span.	Despite the effects being continuous, short-term, long-term or life long, the effects of marital dissolution on early adolescents are interrelated and cyclic in nature.
Effects of marital dissolution on early adolescents' functioning: **Sub-theme 2.3:** Parents' insights into the effects of marital dissolution on their children	The negative effects of marital dissolution on early adolescents can be reduced by involving the children in decisions and processes that follow the separation and by parents having insight into the effects of marital dissolution on the children.	Tanzanian parents have misperceptions concerning the disclosure of separation and related decisions to their children and do not realise the negative effects of this trend on the children.

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Trends following marital dissolution: **Sub-theme 3.1:** Positive effects of marital dissolution	Marital dissolution may have positive effects on early adolescents, for example, being released from a hostile environment, gaining emotional stability and increasing attachment to a parent.	Apart from children being set free from hostile environments, marital dissolution may result in children experiencing personal development and acquiring skills that may equip them for life.
Trends following marital dissolution: **Sub-theme 3.2:** Change in living arrangements: Visits to non-custodial parent	Contact and visits between children and non-resident parents will co-determine the effects of marital dissolution on the children.	When visits and contact between children and their non-resident parents are uncertain and mismanaged the effects of marital dissolution on them may increase.
Trends following marital dissolution: **Sub-theme 3.3:** Other related changes negatively affecting early adolescents	Several changes related to marital dissolution may affect early adolescents' way of coping with the separation.	Custodial parents' increased dependency on relatives may add to the negative effects of marital dissolution on early adolescents.

5.5.1 CAUSES OF MARITAL DISSOLUTION IN THE TANZANIAN CULTURE

In exploring existing knowledge on the effects of marital dissolution on children, the causes of separation are seen to be related to both personal and demographic factors, such as levels of education, differences in faith, early marriage and income. Other contributing factors include jealousy, anger management problems, constant criticism and infidelity (Amato, & Rogers, 1997; Amato, 2010). In this study, participants added a factor that may lead to marital dissolution, namely, the influence of in-laws or other relatives.

This finding can, possibly, be related to the extended nature of families in Tanzania where relatives and in-laws play a central role in the lives of the families. When relatives, for example, observe that a woman will be marrying into a clan or family that does not fit their interests they will assert pressure and make an effort to ensure that the marriage does not take place (Howland, & Koenen, 2011). If the marriage does take place, pressure will be put on the couple to make sure that they separate. In the same way, in-laws and relatives will get involved when they become aware of a partner being abused or facing the possibility of marital dissolution by either calling reconciliation meetings or by influencing one of the partners to leave the abuser (Howland, & Koenen, 2011). This seems contrary to western practices – where the majority of existing research on marital dissolution is based.

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5.5.2 EFFECTS OF MARITAL DISSOLUTION ON EARLY ADOLESCENTS IN TANZANIA

As previously stated, marital dissolution does not affect every child in the same way. The effects are determined by factors, such as age, the custodial parent's socio-economic status, parent-child relationships, the children's involvement in the separation process and whether or not a child has experienced other life course incidents (Turner, & Avison, 1992; Bojuwoye, & Akpan, 2009a). Based on the findings of this study I suggest three additional factors that will determine the effects of marital dissolution on children, namely children's insight of the parent whose behaviour caused the separation; the presence or absence of laws and policy in support of children's well-being; and children imitating parents' behaviour. In terms of children's insights into the cause of the separation, children may become negative towards a parent whose alcohol abuse, infidelity or abusive behaviour caused the marital dissolution. In terms of laws and policy, this factor specifically applies to the Tanzanian context as current laws and policy seems to be ineffective. Children who observe their parents' negative behaviour or those who are influenced by their parents may, in turn, experience problems in their own relationships as adults with the possibility of their marriages also ending in dissolution.

In terms of the effects of marital dissolution on children's psycho-social well-being, the negative impact on parent-child relationships is often emphasised which is caused by factors such as detachment from a parent; negative perception of a parent following marital dissolution; and how the child contemplate the entire scenario of marital dissolution (Dunn *et al.*, 2004; Chen, 2008a). Elaborating on this aspect from the existing body of knowledge, this study revealed that the effects of marital dissolution on parent-child relationships will be more intense when a non-resident parent (usually a father) permanently looses contact with the child. In this regard children will have negative perceptions of non-resident parents or even of custodial parents, thinking that they were the reason for a parent's departure. Children's negative perceptions may also be related to both parents.

The effects of marital dissolution on children may be short-term, long-term, or even life long (Wade, & Travis, 1993; Wallerstein, & Blakeslee, 2003). The effects are described in the existing literature as linear – starting from somewhere and expected to reach somewhere else. As a contribution to the body of existing knowledge, I argue that despite the effects of marital dissolution on early adolescents being continuous, all negative experiences are interrelated and cyclic in nature. This means that in some cases the effects on psycho-social well-being

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may intensify the effects on academic functioning and *vice versa*. Similarly, what seems to be the effects of marital dissolution on the early adolescents of today may become the breeding ground for a potential environment for another marital separation for the children of tomorrow when the continuous cycle of negative effects is not effectively dealt with.

5.5.3 Reasons for Parents' Reluctance to Discuss Marital Dissolution With Children

Several studies (McIntosh, 2000; Sanchez, & Kibler-Sanchez, 2004) report that one way for parents to gain an insight into the effects of marital dissolution on their children is by informing their children of the decision to separate and to consider their input. In this study I explored why Tanzanian parents seem reluctant to disclose separation decisions to their children. I found that the majority of the parents had specific perceptions about disclosing information related to marital dissolution to their children which determined their behaviour. For example, parents reported that they could not disclose the reasons for separation as these would cause the children to disrespect them when, for example, the separation was based on shameful reasons, such as extra-marital relationships and rape. Other parents feared their children's reactions to the disclosure that they were separating. Some parents viewed the disclosure of marital dissolution to children as being against African culture. Children's levels of maturity and poor parent-child relationships were also among reasons for parents' reluctance to discuss separation with their children.

In addition to these misconceptions, I observed that some couples avoided reconciliation meetings and legal divorce procedures as they believed that these would expose their marital issues to strangers – something that is considered as being disrespectful, especially for the woman. Based on these perceptions parents avoided talking to children and, thereby, added to the negative effects of marital dissolution on them.

The majority of the parents in this study showed limited insight into the effects of marital dissolution on their children for many reasons, such as continuous marital conflict; post-divorce conflict; couples' immaturity; and a lack of counselling services that could, potentially, increase parents' insights into this matter. However, a few parents – particularly those who grew up in broken families – reported an awareness of the potential effects of marital dissolution on their children, but they seemed to be overwhelmed by the pressures of their dysfunctional marriages that made marital dissolution inevitable.

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5.5.4 Other Factors Determining the Effect of Marital Dissolution on Early Adolescents in Tanzania

When contact and visits between children and non-resident parents increase the effect of marital dissolution on the children can be reduced, particularly when there is a healthy parent-child relationship (Dunn, & Deater-Deckard, 2001; Dunn *et al*., 2004). Participants in this study indicated that children's contact with, and visits to, their non-resident parents were largely informal and uncertain with rampant post-divorce conflict between parents accounting for this uncertainty. While communication between divorced parents was, generally, limited due to conflict and made the management of their children's whereabouts difficult, some children reportedly took advantage of the situation by requesting permission to spend the night with a non-resident parent but actually visiting a boy/girlfriend and, as a result, several young girls fell pregnant. In this way, conflict between parents may become a breeding ground for children engaging in at-risk behaviour – with disastrous effects in certain cases.

Another risk of unmanaged visits and contact is related to children taking advantage of unbalanced and inappropriate parenting by the conflicting parents and developing some unhealthy behaviour which goes unnoticed. Such situations tend to exacerbate the negative effects of marital dissolution on children. For example, some children desired to spend time with the more lenient parent to prevent their academic progress being strictly followed.

Other related changes that may affect children, following marital dissolution, include a decline in the custodial parent's socio-economic status, remarriage and living with an emotionally challenged custodial parent (Bray, 1999; Anderson, & Greene, 2005; Kelly, 2007). Moreover, based on the participants' responses in this study, I argue that an increased dependency on relatives following marital dissolution may add to the negative effects of the separation on the children. For example, despite some children continuing with school while residing with their relatives, they ended up being abused while others dropped out of school to start earning an income. In other instances, children took to the streets and, subsequently, ended up at the children's centres. Based on these findings, I posit that visiting and custodial arrangements which are not well-planned and structured may result in several negative outcomes which will intensify the negative effects of marital dissolution on early adolescents in Tanzania and damage their academic and psycho-social development.

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Despite general negative effects of marital dissolution on children, they are not always negative (McCubbin, & Patterson, 1983; Dong *et al.,* 2012). Several studies report on positive experiences, such as children being freed from a hostile environment; increased emotional stability in the home; and increased attachment, following their parents' separation. By conducting this study at children's centres I realised that some children profited in terms of experiencing personal development and skills acquisition as a result of their parents' separation and their subsequent placement at a children's centre. For example, some children reported that the hardship they experienced following their parents' separation taught them the lesson of being committed to their families and becoming responsible parents. Other children spoke about positive changes when compared to their previous lives on the streets. Furthermore, academic and vocational programmes at the centres changed the children's lives for the better with the additional advantage of them being able to support their parents and siblings once they started earning an income.

5.6 CONCLUSION

In an attempt to build on existing knowledge, I related my results to the existing literature in this chapter. I highlighted areas where my findings support the literature and also areas where contradictions became evident in terms of what was known prior to this study. I also discussed the silences that I identified when presenting my results in Chapter 4 and I interpreted these against the background literature I discussed in Chapter 2. I concluded my discussion by foregrounding new insights gained from the findings of this study.

In the following final chapter I provide a summary of the preceding chapters and reflect on the research questions which guided this study. I draw conclusions in terms of the contributions of my study and identify the limitations and challenges I faced. I conclude the thesis by making recommendations for further research and for training, for practitioners and for policy-makers who deal with children's affairs in Tanzania.

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CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter I presented the findings of my study by relating the results I obtained concerning the effect of marital dissolution on early adolescents' academic and psycho-social development in Tanzania to the existing literature. In this chapter I reach conclusions in terms of my research questions – based on the findings I obtained. I also reflect on the study in terms of the contributions it makes to existing knowledge; the challenges I experienced; as well as the limitations of the study. Finally, I make recommendations for future research, training, practice and policy implementation.

6.2 OVERVIEW OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS

In Chapter 1 I introduced my area of focus and provided an overview of the study. I explained the rationale for focusing on this particular phenomenon and stated the assumptions with which I approached the study. I presented the aim of the study, namely, to investigate the effect of marital dissolution on early adolescents' academic and psycho-social development in the Tanzanian context. I formulated related research questions, clarified key concepts and introduced my conceptual framework and selected paradigmatic perspectives. I also provided a broad overview of my selected methodological strategies.

In Chapter 2 I discussed the relevant existing literature on marital dissolution and its potential effect on children in terms of a global perspective as well as within the Tanzanian context. I explored the developmental characteristics of early adolescents as this is the selected age group of children involved in this study. I also discussed the underlying theories on which the study is based, namely, attachment theory, crisis theory, family stress theory and life course theory. I concluded the chapter with a discussion of how I integrated the underlying theories into my conceptual framework.

In Chapter 3 I presented the methodological strategies and the processes used in the research. After explaining the paradigmatic perspectives that governed my research, I explained the research design – an instrumental case study design; the research context – Dar es Salaam

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Tanzania; and how I, purposefully, selected the participants for this study. I then discussed my data collection methods and analysis procedures. Throughout, I referred to the strengths and challenges of the procedures for this study and justified the choices against the background of the purpose of the study. I concluded the chapter by discussing how I attempted to maintain rigor and ensure ethical standards in undertaking the study.

Chapter 4 contained my presentation and report on the results in terms of the themes and sub-themes identified during data analysis. The main themes were (1) Reasons for marital dissolution; (2) Effects of marital dissolution on early adolescents' functioning; (3) Trends following marital dissolution; and (4) Managing marital dissolution in Tanzania. My explanation of the themes, sub-themes and categories was enriched by *verbatim* quotations from the interviews, children's narratives and focus group discussions. In addition, I used excerpts from my field notes, research diary and children's academic documents (visual data) to support my discussion of the themes.

In Chapter 5 I related the results of this study to the existing literature – as presented in Chapter 2. I discussed the findings in terms of the theories and the conceptual framework underlying this study in order to reach conclusions concerning the research problem. I highlighted areas where my findings corresponded or contradicted the existing literature and indicated the silences I noticed when comparing the results of the study to the existing literature. I also pointed out where this study added to the existing body of knowledge in terms of new insights.

6.3 CONCLUSIONS IN TERMS OF THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In this section I address the secondary research questions I formulated in Chapter 1. Based on these discussions, I reach final conclusions in Section 6.4 where I revisit my primary research question.

6.3.1 SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTION 1: Which factors contribute to marital dissolution in Tanzania?

Marital dissolution in Tanzania can be ascribed to a number of factors, including alcoholism, abusive behaviour, continuous conflict and extra-marital relationships. In addition, factors such as couples' immaturity, poverty, external influences and family neglect may result in couples' separating. Although each of these factors seems to be independent, they are

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interrelated as one factor may cause another or be dependent on other factors. For example, families where one or both parents abused alcohol, typically, experienced a number of problems, such as the parent/s not spending time at home, abusive behaviour and poor financial management. Furthermore, the excessive use of alcohol also created environments characterised by extra-marital relationships, reduced intimacy between couples and continuous conflict.

In connection with this, when one parent engaged in an extra-marital relationship, a series of other related factors were likely to occur; for example, in the cases included in this study, family money was spent unwisely, leaving the family to suffer. Another scenario is where parents were absent from the home, it affected the children and the intimacy between couples and resulted in continuous conflict. In analysing the factors that may contribute to marital dissolution in Tanzania I discovered that couples could tolerate abuse, alcoholism, conflict and related factors but not extra-marital relationships. In most cases male parents were, subsequently, blamed for being the cause of marital dissolution because of their involvement in extra-marital relationships.

Apart from the factors mentioned above, which directly resulted in marital dissolution, I also considered circumstances, such as one or both of the spouses being uneducated; differences in religion and faith; jealousy; anger management problems; and parental divorce as contributing to marital dissolution. Besides my conclusion that causal factors are interrelated, I postulate that factors causing marital dissolution are also cyclic in nature, creating a spiral whereby a girl who drops out of school is, for example, likely to enter an early marriage and later separate from her husband due to factors including immaturity and a lack of education. If she were to separate after having children, their circumstances may hinder them in completing a proper education, creating a situation where they, in turn, may enter into early marriage and not be sufficiently educated. The fact that the parents of these children had separated is, in itself, a factor that may prevent them from viewing marriage in a positive light and show the necessary commitment to prevent marital dissolution.

Marital dissolution is explained by family stress theorists as a stressor that can cause stress to both parents and children. Based on the findings of this study in terms of the factors that may cause marital dissolution, I conclude that family members (parents and children) will not only experience stress after the occurrence of marital dissolution but also during the initial phases of the process of separation. For example, circumstances such as not having an income; one

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parent engaging in extra-marital relationship; having a child or children outside wedlock; and a family being neglected due to alcoholism and/or continuous conflict between couples will, inevitably, create stress in the family that will become acute and add to the family being vulnerable to a crisis – as explained by crisis theorists (Turner, & Avison, 1989; 1992).

6.3.2 SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTION 2:

Which processes (traditional or legal) are followed when Tanzanian parents decide to separate?

In this study I found that the majority of Tanzanian couples follow an informal approach to marital dissolution. Only a few couples undergo the process of a legal divorce possibly because of bureaucracy, the cumbersomeness of the process and a lack of enforced policy implementation during the divorce process. I maintain that couples will avoid the lengthy and cumbersome processes of legal divorce which may typically result in marital disputes being discussed during family meetings where in-laws from both sides as well as other relatives listen to both partners. These meetings, however, do not seem to have positive effects. Local government leaders and social welfare officers may, occasionally, be involved – especially in cases where one of the parents displays abusive behaviour or family neglect. Based on this, I have come to the conclusion that Tanzanian couples are either uninformed about legal procedures or do not respect the current laws related to marital dissolution. I argue that they opt for the easiest way out, ignoring the effects of such decisions and creating a situation where the parent who has custody of the children and is responsible for their well-being is not supported by the spouse who leaves or by the Tanzanian government.

Even though relatives, local government leaders, social welfare officers and religious leaders may occasionally become involved during marital dissolution, they will, typically, attempt to reconcile the marriage and counsel the couple. Unfortunately, male parents do not always cooperative during such attempts in support meetings. Furthermore, in this study not every couple decided to attend such meetings with relatives and religious leaders. I found that the majority of Muslim couples, for example, simply used ‘talaka’ which was given to a wife once the husband decided not to continue living with her. As mentioned before, trends like these confirm Tanzanian citizens’ ignorance and lack of awareness of laws and policies related to marriage. In my view this situation has created an environment for corruption where citizens’ lack of adherence to laws and policies forms a breeding ground for the easy dissolution of the family which is the core of society. Religious and cultural beliefs, such as those of the Muslim

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religion, further enhanced this trend to merely separate rather than be exposed to public processes like reconciliation meetings.

As already stated, I found that very few couples in this study divorced legally by going through the district social welfare offices, a reconciliation council and the courts if the other options had failed to restore harmony in the marriage. Besides the reasons already given for not obtaining a legal divorce, the processes would presumably also consume a couple's money, time and energy. Unfortunately, based on the formalities and difficulties in legally processing marital dissolution, the children are the victims of circumstances as the parents, typically, immerse themselves in their own problems and emotions and do not focus on the well-being of the children. In this regard I conclude that the effects of marital dissolution on children in Tanzania are, possibly, enhanced because of the lack of formal procedures or authorities being involved that may consider children's rights and their interests.

6.3.3 SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTION 3:

What is the effect of marital dissolution on children's academic and psycho-social functioning?

Marital dissolution may result in positive and negative effects although the negative effects typically outweigh the positive experiences. The focus of this study was specifically on the effect on children's academic and psycho-social development. In terms of academic functioning, the majority of the children from broken homes reported poor school attendance and some dropped out of school due to various reasons, such as an inability to pay school fees or buy stationery; a lack of money for transport; not having a lunch box; child labour; and children looking after siblings while the mother was searching for food. Some of the reasons for poor school attendance and dropping out of school were present well before the marital dissolution itself when one of the parents – often the father – would start neglecting the family because of, for example, alcoholism and/or extra-marital relationships. The situation was worse in families where the non-resident parent had been the bread winner and the custodial parent (typically, the mother) was, subsequently, unable to provide for the family.

Furthermore, children from broken families experienced concentration problems and were characterised by poor academic performance. This was apparent both before and after marital dissolution. When children observed their mothers being abused by their fathers they would not be able to concentrate in class and the children who were emotionally attached to the

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parent who became the non-resident parent usually lost concentration – thinking only of the detachment and life without the loved parent. Furthermore, the drop in socio-economic status of the majority of custodial parents (often the mothers) resulted in a number of challenges that led to the children losing concentration and, therefore, performing poorly in class. For example, some children lost hope for the future while others slept in class which was caused by not having enough to eat. Additionally, some children experienced poor study skills and specific learning problems, such as poor hand writing, spelling problems, and problems with arithmetic and simple punctuation skills due to delayed learning. Factors, such as abuse by stepparents or poverty contributed to delayed learning and were related to the children ending up on the streets after their parents' separation.

In addition to the negative effects of marital dissolution on children's academic functioning, marital dissolution also negatively affected the children's psycho-social well-being in a number of ways. For example, it harmed parent-child relationships – especially when children considered one of the parents as the cause of the pain they were going through following the marital dissolution. Detachment from an emotionally attached parent, child neglect and potential child abuse would result in emotional pain and, in turn, negatively affect the children's perceptions of their parents, families and life, in general.

Being raised in a dysfunctional family, experiencing improper parenting and living on the streets resulted in children from broken families displaying a variety of acting out behaviour, such as stealing, substance abuse, early sexual activity and aggressiveness. In addition, children also used abusive language and they were anxious or depressed. Despite such negative effects of marital dissolution, all the child participants were not affected in the same way – due to a number of factors, such as their ages during marital dissolution; levels of attachment between the children and their non-resident parents; socio-economic status of the custodial parents; the children's perception of the separation and whether or not they experienced other traumatic incidents in life.

In a few cases marital dissolution resulted in a positive effect on the children, especially when it ended a continuous period of animosity between children and non-resident parent. Living at children's centres following parents' marital dissolution opened new opportunities for some children in learning new skills, unleashing their potential and positioning them to achieve their dreams. In my view learning, guidance and modelling at the centres had the potential to positively impact on children's development.

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6.3.4 SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTION 4:

What insight do Tanzanian parents have concerning the effect of marital dissolution on their children?

I found that the majority of Tanzanian parents showed limited insight in terms of the effects of marital dissolution on their children. A few parents were concerned that their children may end up living with stepparents, which could suggest an environment of neglect or even abuse. Some mothers were not ready to allow their children to be raised by the fathers – based on their opinion that fathers may be irresponsible and careless. A specific area where parents displayed insight in terms of the effect of marital dissolution on their children relates to their idea that marital dissolution would cause children to loose direction in life when they cannot continue with school and end up with a poor quality education when they are not raised by both parents with the possibility of them becoming street children.

In the quest to understand the reason for the majority of Tanzanian parents' limited insight concerning the effect of marital dissolution on their children, I found that parents were so involved in marital conflict and the process of separating that they did not consider the well-being of their children. Female parents, somehow, attempted to maintain a balance between the pressures of a dysfunctional marriage and the well-being of their children when compared to male parents. In addition to focusing on their own experiences, the parents' insight concerning the effect of marital dissolution on children was also, seemingly, influenced by their level of education. In this regard, I can conclude that a lack of education and being informed may limit parents' insight in terms of the effect of marital dissolution on their children.

As indicated earlier, some couples entered into marriage at an immature age because of a number of reasons, such as poverty, early pregnancy and arranged marriages. Immaturity was identified as another reason why parents often did not show the necessary insight into the effect of their marriage's dissolution on their children. Furthermore, limited insight can be related to the majority of Tanzanian couples not receiving premarital, marital and/or community counselling, resulting in them entering into marriage with limited knowledge and skills concerning issues related to marriage and family. To this end, I argue that firmly established counselling services and marriage guidance may assist people to better understand themselves, their children and their families – more specifically in terms of the potential effects of crises on family members and children of various ages.

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I further propose that insight on the part of parents who are deciding to separate holds the potential of reducing the negative effect of marital dissolution on the academic and psycho-social functioning of the children as parents will be able to plan to counteract effects and support their children in this regard. Alternatively, they may seek help from others if they are not able to support themselves. In this way, the spiralling of negative events following a marital dissolution may be prevented. However, in the Tanzanian context which is characterised by poverty and limited opportunities for non-custodial parents who lose the financial support of a spouse, this seems challenging. On the other hand, knowledge and insight in conjunction with support from the legal system will enable parents to support their children in coping with this stressor when they are faced with it.

6.3.5 SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTION 5:

To what extent do Tanzanian parents consider the effect of marital dissolution on children during their decision to separate?

As stated in the previous section, a limited number of parents in this study considered the effect of marital dissolution on their children prior to, or during, their decision to separate. Unfortunately, even the few who did consider their children and tried to prevent marital dissolution from occurring were overwhelmed by the pressures of their dysfunctional marriages, resulting in separation and its aftermath being inevitable. However, the majority of the children started experiencing the negative effect of marital dissolution even before the actual separation occurred.

Similarly, as also explained in the previous section, female parents were apparently more aware of the potential effect of marital dissolution on their children than male parents. By considering the effect of marital dissolution on their children even before separation, some of the parents sent the children to their grandparents or to other relatives where they could continue with school and not be exposed to their parents' continuous conflict. However, not every child excelled while living with relatives as some were allegedly abused and others ran away and ended up on the streets. By holding the perception that male parents are not able to take care of the children, the majority of female custodial parents fought with their husbands in order to ensure that the children remained with their mothers. In a few cases even after following procedures where authorities (court or family meetings) gave custody to the fathers, the mothers would continue to fight for their children. I have two concerns about this practice: Firstly, as mothers who take care of children often experienced difficulty in coping

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financially, one has to wonder whether the placement of the children with the mother is in the best interest of the children; and, secondly, continuing conflict between a mother and a father may, possibly, prevent children from dealing with the effects of the separation.

Furthermore, disclosing information about separation decisions to children is one way for parents to consider the effect of marital dissolution on their children. In this study I found that there was no such culture among Tanzanian parents as parents' separation took the majority of the participating children by surprise. A number of reasons can account for parents' reluctance to discuss separation decisions with their children, such as the children's levels of maturity; shameful reasons behind the separation, such as rape or infidelity; poor parent-child relationships; and the disclosure of marital issues to children being considered to be against African culture.

6.4 FINAL REFLECTIONS IN TERMS OF THE PRIMARY RESEARCH QUESTION

In this section, I present the potential contributions of my study to the existing body of knowledge by reflecting on the primary research question I formulated in Chapter 1, namely: *How can insight into marital dissolution in Tanzania broaden our knowledge on its effect on children?* I conclude the section by reflecting on the limitations of the study and the challenges I experienced while conducting this research.

6.4.1 THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTION: How can insight into marital dissolution in Tanzania broaden our knowledge on its effect on children?

Tanzania, as many other countries in the world, experiences an acute increase in marital dissolution; the difference that many Tanzanian couples separate rather than divorce as very few couples follow the legal route of divorce. Based on my findings, I relate possible reasons for this trend to bureaucracy, corruption, the cumbersomeness of the processes, misperceptions about the divorce process and a lack of awareness on the part of the population of laws and policies related to marriage and family. From the findings of the study it seems clear that Tanzanian couples view the nature of separation in terms of two dimensions, namely, as an internal and an external separation.

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Internal separation occurs when the intimacy between married couples fades due to factors such as continuous conflict and lack of communication between the partners. External separation is marked by a couple disclosing their conflict to other people and starting the process to separate which results in a parent leaving the home – with or without the children. Several existing studies focus on the effect of marital dissolution on children with many focusing on the short and long-term effects following the separation. In my study, however, much attention was given to the effect of the situation preceding the separation of the parents. As such, I posit that both the internal and external separation of parents will have a negative effect on children, culminating in a combination of short and long-term consequences for children who once formed part of a family that ended in separation.

Reflecting on the various known reasons for marital dissolution, the findings of this study indicate that in-laws and other relatives contributed in different ways to couples separating, especially when they decided to take sides when couples were fighting instead of helping them resolve their differences. Closely related to this, custodial parents sent their children to grandparents and other relatives following a sudden lowering of socio-economic status which resulted from marital dissolution. Another extenuating factor I identified is the lack of enforcement of laws pertaining to the payment of child support, further adding to the level of financial challenges experienced by an often unemployed custodial parent. As a result many children may subsequently end up in negative circumstances, being exposed to abuse and torture and, eventually living on the streets. In this regard I conclude that the involvement of in-laws and relatives in couples' marital problems will be influenced by the nature of extended families in Tanzania compared to western societies, where the majority of research on marriage and separation has been conducted.

Despite the acute increase in marital dissolution in Tanzania, the majority of the people in the country show limited insight concerning its effect on children. More specifically, parents' lack of insight into the effect of marital dissolution on their children is one factor determining the extent of the negative effects of parents' marital dissolution on children. Children in the context of this study often experienced negative effects following marital dissolution intensively because their parents did not consider them and prepare them to cope with the separation. In reflecting on the underlying theories of this study, limited insight by parents about the effect of marital dissolution on children negatively affected them in a number of ways. For example, by not creating a conducive environment for contact with and visits to their non-resident parents, the children were separated from the parents they loved, especially

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when these parents became non-resident parents (see attachment theory, Bowlby, 1982, & Hinde, 1982).

Parents' failure to talk to their children and inform them about what was going on before the separation instilled in them a sense of no confidence and false hope by not allowing them to gradually be part of their separation. Subsequently, the majority of the children experienced stress before and after marital dissolution. Before the dissolution, their distress was typically caused by continuous conflict and feelings of not knowing what is going on. After marital dissolution, the fact that parents actually separated caused stress, as this typically took children by surprise. When relating this to family stress theory (Crosbie-Burnet, 1989), which explains how stressful incidents before and after marital dissolution can negatively affect children, I can conclude that children are not only stressed by seeing their parents part, but also while they are trying to understand what life will be like following the departure of one parent.

In terms of crisis theory (Turner, & Avison, 1989; 1992) and based on the typical practices related to marital dissolution followed in the country, Tanzanian parents are not able to protect their children from being vulnerable to the potential risks of marital dissolution. However, even before separation the majority of the children participating in this study perceived their parents' separation as an obstacle and a challenge to their future – thereby experiencing a crisis. As such, I can conclude that the effect of marital dissolution as a crisis incident will come into play prior to, during and after, the separation.

Furthermore, by disclosing separation information to the children beforehand and providing them with an opportunity to contribute to discussions on living arrangements, they would be able to prepare themselves for some of the changes following marital dissolution. The findings of this study indicate the causes for some parents' reluctance to discuss issues surrounding the separation with their children to be related to the reasons for separation, such as infidelity and rape; fear of the children's reactions following the disclosure; and the disclosing of marital issues to children being against the African culture. An absence of this practice among the majority of Tanzanian parents has resulted in many children ending up in living conditions that they experience negatively, such as living with stepparents which has resulted in many children fleeing onto city streets in recent years. Besides these conditions resulting in children living on the streets, this study shows that in households where the custodial parents experienced financial strain the children often also ended up on the streets or at children's

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centres in looking for a solution for the poverty they faced at home. Such experiences launch a series of negative life course incidents that add to the continuous detrimental effects of marital dissolution on children. In terms of life course theory (Conger, & Elder, 1994; Elder, 1998a) I can conclude that the effect of marital dissolution on children may be fewer when the series of traumatic events in the children's lives are reduced.

I found that several factors accounted for parents' limited insight into the effect of marital dissolution on children in Tanzania, such as rampant post-divorce conflict among parents; the lack of appropriate policy for enforcing existing laws on marriage and children; the lack of a stable and reliable counselling service; and poor parent-child relationships. In considering the effect of this lack of insight by parents in terms of life course theory (Conger, & Elder, 1994; Elder, 1998a), I argue that an increased vulnerability of the children as a result of passing through a series of traumatic incidents may be reduced by parents having insight into the effect of marital dissolution on children.

In this study I found that the scope of understanding the effect of marital dissolution on children is broad and entails various characteristics. For example, the effect of marital dissolution on children can be positive or negative as well as short-term or long-term. I also found that the effect of marital dissolution on children was not discrete but interrelated and cyclic by nature. In Figure 6.1 I summarise this idea.

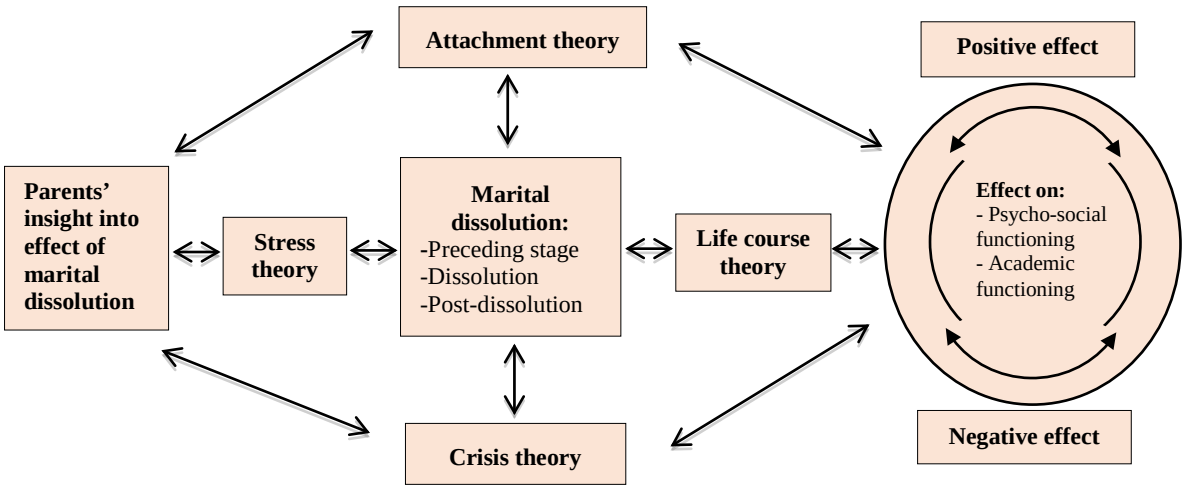

Figure 6.1: Continuous, Interrelated and Cyclic Nature of the Effect of Marital Dissolution on Children

Figure 6.1 summarises the contribution of this study to existing literature in terms of the effect of marital dissolution on children. It highlights how parents' insight concerning the effect of

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marital dissolution implies parents' knowledge of how marital dissolution may harm children's attachment; cause family stress; and a series of crises as well as initiate life course incidents that may increase the vulnerability of the children. If parents were to have sufficient insight into the effect of marital dissolution before and after the separation, the intensity of the effect may be reduced. Figure 6.1 shows that the effect of marital dissolution is interrelated and cyclic in nature and that children can experience the effect before, during and after marital dissolution.

In providing an example to the above, the negative effect of marital dissolution on children's academic functioning is related to the negative effect on their psycho-social well-being and *vice versa*. When children are emotionally destabilised (psycho-social effect) they cannot concentrate in class and will perform poorly (effect on academic performance). When a lack of concentration and poor performance persist children may drop out of school which, in turn, will impact on their psycho-social functioning. Girls in this study, for example, went back home while some boys ended up on the streets. By being at home idle some girls started engaging in early sexual activities and fell pregnant while some others entered into early marriages. Boys who decided to embrace street life became involved in all sorts of anti-social behaviour and some ended at children centres. Early marriages are, in turn, a renewed breeding ground for marital dissolution as the majority of children who are born into such families tend to continue with this cycle which is referred to as the divorce cycle (Amato, 2010).

Closely connected to the divorce cycle, I found that children will not only reproduce what they learn from their parents after marital dissolution but also what they had observed before marital dissolution. This produces another cycle of behaviour that may again jeopardise their future marriages. For example, children who observe physical, verbal or sexual abuse and alcoholism and infidelity in parents will be more likely to also be abusive, abuse alcohol and be unfaithful. The findings of my study confirm the trend that parents' negative behaviour will be transferred from parents to children through social learning or by a parent's intentional influence.

In this regard I can conclude that the circumstances of children who observe their parents' negative behaviour before marital dissolution will be determining factors for the way they deal with the marital dissolution when it occurs. Other determinant factors include the presence or absence of suitable laws and policies in protecting children's well-being following marital

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dissolution as well as parents' awareness of such laws and policies. Similarly, circumstances such as losing contact with a non-resident parent; post-divorce conflict; mismanaging children's contact with, and visits to non-resident parents; as well as informalities during marital dissolution processes determine the effects of the separation on the children. Finally, religious and cultural practices may predetermine certain outcomes following marital dissolution, specifically in terms of its effect on children.

Adding to the interrelating and cyclic nature of the effect of marital dissolution on children, I found that some children will focus on the potential positive effects of marital dissolution in an attempt to soften the negative effect. For example, children may attempt to perform better at school in order to succeed in life and show the parents that they can succeed despite the pain the separation had caused. This study highlights the potential positive effects of marital dissolution that may change the lives of the children for the better; for example, when children learn to be responsible following marital dissolution. In addition, children may acquire specific skills when placed at children's centres, such as tailoring, academic, computer and mechanical skills.

In conclusion, my study also contributes to the existing literature by adding to the determinants of the effect of marital dissolution on children, namely: parents' insight into the effect of marital dissolution on their children; the presence or absence of laws and policies on marriage and children; as well as whether or not children observe the parents' negative behaviour prior to separation. I also add the concepts of internal and external separation and the interrelatedness and cyclic nature of the effect of marital dissolution on children to the existing body of knowledge. With reference to existing theories, the findings of this study add to family stress theory in that stressful circumstances that may negatively affect children do not only come into play after marital dissolution, but already do so prior to the process. Tanzanian children seem to experience parents' separation as an acute crisis incident due to the fact that the majority of the families are poor and that the provider (often the father) usually ends up being the non-resident parent. In terms of life course theory, my contribution is that parents' insight into the effect of marital dissolution on their children may reduce the possibility of the children going through a series of traumatic incidents that may, in turn, add to their vulnerability.

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6.4.2 METHODOLOGICAL CONTRIBUTION:

How can a social constructivist approach and narrative data collection technique support research involving children in Tanzania?

In exploring how children in Tanzania are affected by marital dissolution I found that semi-structured interviews were suitable for use with parents, teachers and caregivers, but not with children when used in isolation. Narration – as a supportive data collection strategy, however, allowed children to narrate important incidents in their lives, using a story form rather than answering questions. This method allowed children to share their experiences and their ideas could flow freely by not being limited to structured questions. In this manner I was able to gain an insight into the sequential flow of stress, crisis and life course circumstances that followed parents' marital dissolution and affected the children. In this regard I view narration as a suitable data collection technique for doing research with children during the early adolescent phase of their lives who have been exposed to negative experiences or trauma. As most of the children had been exposed to negative emotions, narration allowed them to talk about these feelings and experiences when they were ready and at their own pace without being pressured by structured questions.

Another methodological contribution relates to the use of a social constructivist paradigm in this study. Social constructivism allowed the participants to explain the concept of marital dissolution and its effect on children in the way they perceived it and in their own context. Due to the fact that in social constructivism meaning and reality are socially constructed, I was able to gain insight into the different views on marital dissolution and its effect on children in terms of the way in which the children, parents, teachers and caregivers constructed their views and experiences based on their unique contexts. Through social constructivism I was able to obtain rich and in-depth information on the effect of marital dissolution on early adolescents' academic and psycho-social development in Tanzania. In this regard social constructivism seems to be a suitable lens to utilise when researching topics of this nature or where a phenomenon is explained in terms of unique meanings and realities typical to a specific context.

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6.4.3 PROFESSION-RELATED CONTRIBUTION:

How might educational psychologists and counsellors gain from the findings of this study?

By providing a range of perceptions on the effect of marital dissolution on children's academic and psycho-social functioning – as seen through the eyes of children, parents, teachers and caregivers – this study may assist educational psychologists and counsellors in understanding how family dynamics can have either positive or negative effects on children's academic and psycho-social functioning. As such, the findings of the study might assist educational psychologists, counsellors as well as other educators in dealing with children as unique individuals who have been positively or negatively affected by family problems (crises), when trying to understand children's behaviour and emotional states. In addition, educational psychologists and counsellors may rely on the findings of this study when doing parent guidance or assisting teachers or caregivers on how to support children experiencing the effect of the marital dissolution of their parents.

Furthermore, in terms of the potential negative effect of marital dissolution on the emotional state of parents, educational psychologists and counsellors could advise that children should not be placed in the care of parents experiencing emotional instability at the time. Social workers can also be informed about being more careful when making custodial arrangements. In an attempt to reduce the effect of marital dissolution on children, counsellors and educational psychologists could present information sessions or seminars to parents to support them in gaining insight into the effect of marital dissolution on their children before the marital dissolution occurs rather than dealing with the negative effects after the dissolution, when it is often too late and the effect is more detrimental.

Finally, by contemplating how attachment theory, crisis theory, family stress theory and life course theory can explain the negative effect of marital dissolution on children, educational psychologists and counsellors may build on my theorising in understanding the nature of marital dissolution as an incident and the repercussions that follow. Practitioners may find this knowledge to be useful when guiding parents who are planning to separate in terms of preparing their children and involving them in the dissolution. Educational psychologists and counsellors can also rely on this knowledge when supporting children prior to, or following, the marital dissolution of their parents.

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6.4.4 REFLECTING ON CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In this study I found it difficult to involve the parents of children at the children's centres as participants due to the fact that the majority of these parents lived in the country's mainland regions – with some children having lost contact with their parents. However, I did attempt to involve as many parents as possible. Furthermore, some custodial parents opted not to participate in the study but allowed their children to participate. In addressing this challenge I decided to implement snowball sampling by requesting each parent participant, including those who refused to participate, to suggest other parents who could participate in the study. Based on the rich data I obtained, I am confident that the findings sufficiently reflect the experiences of parents who had experienced marital dissolution.

A second challenge I faced relates to the children who participated and the array of negative experiences they had faced subsequent to the parents' marital dissolution. The backgrounds of these children were complicated, resulting in them becoming emotional at times, when past memories were recalled. I addressed this challenge by constantly being alert to signs of discomfort and by ensuring that the centre's counselor or a social worker was around and ready to provide support when a child needed this. In addition, I was prepared to discontinue any session that would cause emotional upset to the children as well as the parents, debriefing them and then continuing at a later stage. Fortunately, no such incidents occurred, perhaps because of the prolonged time I spent in the research field and the relationships of trust I established with the participants prior to collecting any data.

The selected age range of the participating children (12 to 15 years) also posed some challenges. Since children reported on their own experiences, I initially wondered to what extent young participants would be able to express their feelings verbally. However, my decision to use narration to supplement the information I obtained during interviews addressed this challenge as the children could express their experiences of their parents' separation in the form of stories without being restricted by structured questions. In addition, the children's narratives were paralleled with the responses of the parents, caregivers and teachers.

Another limitation relates to the fact that the majority of the custodial parents who participated were mothers. The question arises as to what the fathers' views would be on the issues investigated in this study. The absence of fathers' voices may have limited the findings of the study as they are limited to the perceptions of custodial parents and not representative of non-

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resident parents' views. In addition, as I only focused on children whose parents had separated within the past five years, I excluded any single parenting other than that related to marital dissolution. Also, as this study only focused on attachments between 12 to 15 years old children and their parents following marital dissolution, I excluded any other form of attachment, such as the attachment between the teachers or caregivers and the parents or the effects of attachment on children outside the specified age range. To compensate for this I did, however, clearly describe the specific context I focused on in this thesis.

Next, the findings of this study are limited as they cannot be generalised to other contexts and participants. The primary goal was not to generalise as qualitative research focuses on understanding a specific phenomenon in a specific context or social setting. By carrying out the study utilising social constructivism as an epistemological lens, the meanings, interpretations and perspectives of the participants could be presented, specifically against the background of the unique context of Tanzania. In an attempt to ensure that I presented the view and perceptions of the participants, I used member checking after analysing the data and before finalising my interpretations. The findings may, however, be transferred to similar contexts which the reader may deem fit – based on the comprehensive descriptions I provided on the context of, and background to, the study and its participants.

Collecting and handling qualitative data was another challenge I faced due to the bulk of the data and the time it took to complete interviews, focus group discussions, transcriptions and data analysis. In response to this challenge I allowed myself ample time to complete transcriptions and data analysis. I also included member-checking sessions, in support of the data analysis I completed. Closely related, some participants seemed to influence others during focus group discussions, especially when the first speaker was considered to be senior. In minimising this challenge I requested other participants to speak first and invited contributions from all. I also emphasised that there was no right or wrong views and that I would prefer to hear all the voices, despite potential differences.

Considering the fact that this study was apparently the first of its nature in the context of Tanzania, I experienced a challenge in accessing relevant literature related to divorce and separation in a social and/or psychological field in this country. The literature reflecting the existing body of knowledge on this topic as related to the Tanzanian context is, largely, in a legal setting. As such, the information I managed to obtain assisted me in synthesising the way divorce and separation are perceived and addressed in the legal field, creating a platform for a

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social and psychological perspective during my field research. It also provided me with the necessary background against which I could make recommendations pertaining to potential policy implementation in Tanzania. In my search for information and to address this limitation, I engaged in several discussions with people in the Faculty of Law at the University of Dar es Salaam; at the Kinondoni social welfare office; and at RITA who informed me about current practice and statistics in Tanzania. In connection to that, although this study employed a conceptualisation of well-being as described on page 1, my arguments have not been informed by a well-being perspective as described by Ryff and Keyes (1995) but rather by a human development perspective. I therefore recommend that future researchers consider incorporating Ryff and Keyes' (1995) well-being perspective in studies related to this one.

Furthermore, I acknowledge that entering the field as a trained counselling practitioner posed a challenge, particularly when I had to set some parameters between interviewing and listening as a researcher and not as a counsellor. In guarding against potential role conflict I relied on the use of the children's centres' social workers and counsellors when I needed help concerning the children's behaviour or emotional states, so that my counselling expertise would not interfere with the data I obtained as researcher. I also relied on reflections in my research diary, frequently sharing the findings with my supervisor and continually remaining aware of my role as a researcher.

Finally, as I prepared my data collection instruments while I was in South Africa – in consultation with my supervisor – I was concerned whether or not these instruments would be perceived as suitable by the people in Tanzania. In addressing this potential limitation, I administered the instruments with an MA Applied Social Psychology class at the University of Dar es Salaam before entering the research field. The university students were not the parents, teachers, caregivers and children who participated in the study, but they had sufficient experience of the Tanzania context to fulfil this role. Additionally, my intention to use the MA (ASP) class was not to explore their perceptions as, amongst others, adolescent participants but as fellow researchers, who are familiar with the Tanzanian context, and have been trained in issues related to child and adolescent development Even though they were thus older than the child participants of the study, I am comfortable that they possessed sufficient knowledge to provide feedback on the suitability of the intended data collection measures. In ensuring that the findings I present captured what the participants intended to communicate during data

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collection and that my findings were authentic and consistent, I made use of member-checking, an audit trail in this thesis and frequent reflective discussions with, and supervision from, my supervisor.

6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

In concluding this study, I make some recommendations for future research, practice, training and potential policy implementation.

6.5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Building on the findings of this study, I recommend that follow-up studies focus on:

- The effect of marital dissolution in Tanzania on other age groups, such as children younger and older than 12 to 15 years.
- The effect of parent conflict on children in Tanzania prior to, and following, marital dissolution.
- The effect of marital dissolution on parents.
- Children's various ways of coping with marital dissolution and whether or not these variations are context determined.
- Step parenting and its potential effect on children in Tanzania.
- The potential link between the enforcement of existing laws and policies and the economic instability of families following marital dissolution.
- The nature of factors determining children's ability to pre-conceptualise parents' separation in the Tanzanian context.
- Factors and reasons for Tanzanian parents' reluctance to disclose separation decisions and to discuss family challenges with their children.
- Challenges related to formal divorce processes and the submission of divorce information to relevant authorities in Tanzania.
- How teachers' and/or caregivers' attachments with parents may influence their relationships with the children who live with them.

6.5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE

In circumstances where marital dissolution seems inevitable, custodial parents should support contact between their children and non-resident parents and attempt to reduce or minimise post-divorce conflict. An awareness of the importance of actions like these may be raised

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amongst parents by means of parent groups, guidance groups and information sessions for the public. Additionally, educational psychologists, counsellors and social workers could undertake joint efforts in pioneering population awareness on issues related to marriage and the family, constructively dealing with family conflict and the potential effect of conflict and separation on children.

Furthermore, I propose the extension of counselling services in Tanzania in the form of pre-marital, marital and community counselling. The Ministry of Social Welfare should mobilise the necessary resources to ensure that this service reaches the majority of the population. Counsellors should use the findings of this study in understanding the varied nature of the effect of marital dissolution on children; for example, on how children are likely to be negatively affected by living arrangements; a lack of parents' insight into the effect of their separation on their children; emotionally challenged custodial parents; and detachment from one parent. The media could be used to convey this message to the broader public, for example, in the form of television shows, radio programmes and public presentations.

Based on the finding that some children from broken homes may end up at children's centres where they can acquire a good education, vocational training and behaviour modification interventions, I recommend that the Ministry of Social Welfare undertakes the improvement of children's centres. Currently, these centres are not always conducive to the optimal well-being of children. Government assistance could be extended to private and faith-based centres, which may serve the same purpose in supporting vulnerable children. Such assistance may include the provision of funds, introducing structured academic and vocational programmes at the centres and employing skilled staff members. In this manner, marital dissolution will not, necessarily, imply a bleak future for children who end up at children's centres, but may potentially open up new opportunities for them for the future.

6.5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TRAINING

Based on the conclusions I came to in this study, I recommend that more educational psychologists, counsellors and social workers should be trained to curb the growing demand for support to children and parents undergoing separation in the Tanzanian context. Counselling and social work programmes could be revised at a tertiary level in order to increase the delivery of trained counsellors and social workers in Tanzania. Courses on marriage, family, parenting and care for children may be incorporated in the curriculum, adding to the current training modules of educational psychologists, counsellors and social

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workers primarily focusing on aspects such as HIV/AIDS. An inclusion of broader topics could in turn assist in meeting the need for trained professionals working at children's centres in the country.

In support of the Tanzanian government's vision of producing more teachers to meet the growing demand for quality teaching in the country, basic counselling skills could be included in the programmes for teachers to make them aware of children's vulnerability in cases of disharmonious family dynamics, such as marital dissolution. With knowledge of this nature teachers will be a benefit to parents and the entire community, especially in rural areas where counsellors and social workers might not be available. Similar training on basic counselling skills, especially to support vulnerable children, should be provided to in-service teachers to make them aware of how family dynamics (marital dissolution) may affect children's learning and that children's academic performance does not only depend on intellect but on the holistic well-being of the children.

6.5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POTENTIAL POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

The negative effect of marital dissolution on children in Tanzania seems clear based on my finding that strong policies are not currently enforced that focus on the well-being of children during and after the process of marital dissolution. There is a need for the country to put favourable and workable policies and directives in place that can incorporate children's needs and ideas in matters related to marital dissolution. Arising from this study other identified areas that require policy implementation include the need to improve the socio-economic circumstances of broken families; the need to reduce – if not eliminate – children's exposure to parental violence and abuse; and the need to educate parents about how they can support their children to cope with parental separation.

Closely related to this, laws and policies in Tanzania should, more specifically, address issues such as children's involvement in family discussions that may affect them in one way or another; visiting rights and contact with non-resident parents; child maintenance processes; as well as co-parenting following marital dissolution. Speeding up divorce processes is another important focus area for policy-makers in order to prevent children from ending up as victims of circumstances. In my view, if policies and laws are in place and enforced the divorce process could be streamlined, resulting in parents making informed decisions about child custody. If payment of child maintenance is enforced the effect of marital dissolution on

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children may be less intense and allow them to cope more easily with this traumatic incident and perform better academically, while being healthier on a psycho-social level. This does not imply that children will not experience any negative consequences, it may merely decrease the intensity of the effect of marital dissolution on them.

6.6 CONCLUSION

In conducting this study I gained insight into several issues related to the varied nature of the effect of marital dissolution on children. Tanzania is, seemingly, experiencing an acute increase in marital dissolution although current statistics do not reflect the reality of the situation. This increase goes hand-in-hand with the increased negative effects on children due to factors such as parents' limited insight concerning the negative effect of marital dissolution on their children and a lack of awareness by the people about issues related to laws and policies on children and marriage.

The findings of this study revealed that the effect of marital dissolution on children is continuous, interrelated and cyclic in nature. This finding implies that marital dissolution will be detrimental to children and the family if the various role-players are not informed and supportive of the children during this challenging time. As such, the negative effect of marital dissolution on children can potentially be reduced if deliberate and sustainable efforts are made by government, families and individuals.

Therefore, bringing about change in children's well-being in Tanzania does not, necessarily, require foreign assistance. If the people of Tanzania could be made aware of the negative effect of marital dissolution on children and they change their mind set towards the essence of the family while strengthening family commitment, change could be achieved. Members of the family, especially the two parents, should always consider that bringing harmony into the family and fostering the positive well-being of children requires joint efforts, advocacy and responsibility. However, efforts to ensure proper living arrangements; managing visits and contact between children and their non-resident parents; reducing or eliminating post-divorce conflict; as well as formalising divorce processes could promote the well-being of the children when marital dissolution seems inevitable.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A
Consent and Assent Forms

Appendix B
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APPENDIX A

CONSENT AND ASSENT FORMS

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA
Faculty of Education

Date ……

INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPANTS (TEACHERS/ CARE GIVERS

INTRODUCTION

I am a PhD candidate in the Department of Educational Psychology, University of Pretoria. I am working on a study titled **"Effect of marital dissolution on early adolescents' academic and psycho-social development".** The study focuses on the potential effect of marital dissolution (both positive and negative) on children's academic and psycho-social development in Tanzania. Amongst other participants, children who reside in the centres where you work, or who you teach, will participate in the study.

For the purpose of this study, I kindly request you to participate in an interview/focus group discussion. Your participation will facilitate the collection of relevant information in order to reach the intended goal of the study. Kindly read the information provided below to guide you in making an informed decision regarding your participation in this study.

RESEARCH PROCEDURE

***1. Title*: "Effect of marital dissolution on early adolescents' academic and psycho-social development"**

***2. Purpose of the study*:** The purpose of the study is to explore, describe and explain marital dissolution in the context of Tanzania, specifically focusing on the effect on early adolescents' academic and psycho-social development.

3. Procedures: Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions will be conducted of 60 to 120 minutes each. You are allowed to withdraw either yourself and/or your contribution any time you wish to do so. You will not be forced to provide information related to this study. All information you supply will remain confidential and your identity will not be revealed to other participants or in the final report. Furthermore, with your consent I will record our conversation to allow me to capture all useful information and to be able to cross-check the authenticity of the recorded information.

4. Benefits: The findings of the study may be useful to parents, families, children's centres, policy makers, as well as other relevant stakeholders in children's affairs.

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DECLARATION

I..... (Name) of..... (Address) agree to participate in the study mentioned above. I understand that I have the right to withdraw from participating in the study at any time if I wish to do so.

YES	**NO**

I understand that my personal information and identity will be kept confidential and it will not be disclosed without my authority.

YES	**NO**

I am giving my consent fully aware of the possible risks that may be associated with this study.

YES	**NO**

Participant's name.....Signature.....Date.....

Chrissiona Mauki **Signature.....**
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UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
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Faculty of Education

Date ……

INFORMED CONSENT TO GUARDIANS (HEADS OF CENTRES)

INTRODUCTION

I am a PhD candidate in the Department of Educational Psychology, University of Pretoria. I am working on a study titled **"Effect of marital dissolution on early adolescents' academic and psycho-social development".** The study focuses on the potential effect of marital dissolution (both positive and negative) on children's academic and psycho-social development in Tanzania. Amongst other participants, children who reside in the centres where you work will participate in the study.

For the purpose of this study, I kindly request you to allow your child/children in your care to participate in the study. They will be involved in interviews and narrative discussions, and I will also analyse their school work and academic performance. Your permission for their participation will highly be appreciated. Kindly read the information provided below to guide you to make an informed decision regarding your child/children in your care's participation in this study.

RESEARCH PROCEDURE

***1. Title*: "Effect of marital dissolution on early adolescents' academic and psycho-social development"**

***2. Purpose of the study*:** The purpose of the study is to explore, describe and explain marital dissolution in the context of Tanzania, specifically focusing on the effect on early adolescents' academic and psycho-social development.

3. Procedures: Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions will be conducted of 60 to 120 minutes each. You are allowed to withdraw either yourself and/or your contribution any time you wish to do so. You will not be forced to provide information related to this study. All information you supply will remain confidential and your identity will not be revealed to other participants or in the final report. Furthermore, with your consent I will record our conversation to allow me to capture all useful information and to be able to cross-check the authenticity of the recorded information.

4. Benefits: The findings of the study may be useful to parents, families, children's centres, policy makers, as well as other relevant stakeholders in children's affairs.

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DECLARATION

I..... (Name) of..... (Address) agree to participate in the study mentioned above. I understand that I have the right to withdraw from participating in the study at any time if I wish to do so.

YES	**NO**

I understand that my personal information and identity will be kept confidential and it will not be disclosed without my authority.

YES	**NO**

I am giving my consent fully aware of the possible risks that may be associated with this study.

YES	**NO**

Participant's name.....Signature.....Date.....

Chrissiona Mauki **Signature.....**
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Date ……

INFORMED CONSENT TO CUSTODIAL PARENTS

INTRODUCTION

I am a PhD candidate in the Department of Educational Psychology, University of Pretoria. I am working on a study titled **"Effect of marital dissolution on early adolescents' academic and psycho-social development".** The study focuses on the potential effect of marital dissolution (both positive and negative) on children's academic and psycho-social development in Tanzania. Amongst other participants your child/children will participate in the study.

For the purpose of this study, I kindly request you to allow your child/children in your care to participate in the study. They will be involved in interviews and narrative discussions, and I will also analyse their school work and academic performance. I would also like to request you to participate in this study. Your permission and your participation will highly be appreciated. Kindly read the information provided below to guide you to make an informed decision regarding your child/children in your care's participation in this study.

RESEARCH PROCEDURE

***1. Title*: "Effect of marital dissolution on early adolescents' academic and psycho-social development"**

***2. Purpose of the study*:** The purpose of the study is to explore, describe and explain marital dissolution in the context of Tanzania, specifically focusing on the effect on early adolescents' academic and psycho-social development.

3. Procedures: Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions will be conducted of 60 to 120 minutes each. You are allowed to withdraw either yourself and/or your contribution any time you wish to do so. You will not be forced to provide information related to this study. All information you supply will remain confidential and your identity will not be revealed to other participants or in the final report. Furthermore, with your consent I will record our conversation to allow me to capture all useful information and to be able to cross-check the authenticity of the recorded information.

4. Benefits: The findings of the study may be useful to parents, families, children's centres, policy makers, as well as other relevant stakeholders in children's affairs.

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DECLARATION

I..... (Name) of..... (Address) agree to participate/allow my child/children to participate in the study mentioned above. I understand that I/they have the right to withdraw from participating in the study at any time if I/they wish to do so.

YES	**NO**

I understand that my personal information and identity will be kept confidential and it will not be disclosed without my authority.

YES	**NO**

I am giving my consent fully aware of the possible risks that may be associated with this study.

YES	**NO**

Participant's name.....Signature.....Date.....

Chrissiona Mauki **Signature.....**
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UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA
Faculty of Education

Date ……

INFORMED ASSENT BY CHILDREN

I am a student at the University of Pretoria. I am trying to find out what happens when parents separate, like in your case. I would like to involve you in some activities focusing on how you feel about your parents' breaking up and you now living with a single parent/in the children's centre. The activities will include interviews and narrative accounts.
During our session/s you can stop at any time when you do not want to continue. Everything that we share here will be between you and me. No one else will know your name.

You are free to decide to participate or not. I will appreciate it very much if you agree to take part in the sessions, as I believe that this can help other families and children who are in the same situation as you.

Please mark one of the faces below to show me if you will participate or not.

Chrissiona Mauki **Signature.....**

Prof. Ronél Ferreira **Signature.....**

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APPENDIX B

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA
Faculty of Education

Date ……

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CHILDREN (OVER 12 YEARS)

The following interview guide seeks to determine the views from children on their experiences regarding life after their parents' separation and what they think are the effect of the separation on them. Among other things, during the interviews, children will be requested to express their views on whether their parents had insight into the effect of marital dissolution and how it has impacted them.

Draft questions:

1. Tell me about your family before your parents decided to separate, e.g. in terms of:
   - Education level of parents/children
   - Number of children in the house
   - Socio-economic status

2. Why do you think your parents decided to separate?

3. At what stage and how did your parents inform you about their separation?

4. How is your performance in school before and after your parents' separation?

5. How do you feel after the separation of your Dad and Mum?

6. Tell me about any conflict between your parents before and after they broke up.

7. Are you allowed to visit your parent/s? If yes, how often? Are you satisfied with visitations?

8. What was hard about your parents' separation?

9. Is there any positive thing you can comment on as a result of your parents' separation?

10. What do you think your parents could have done differently during this process of breaking up?

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SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CUSTODIAL PARENTS AND PARENTS OF CHILDREN AT CENTERS

The following interview guide seeks to explore the views of parents after marital dissolution, specifically in terms of the effect of the breakup on the children. Parents are expected to possess the necessary knowledge of the challenges encountered by their children in terms of academic and psycho-social development. They are also expected to hold specific views and perceptions about their insight into the effect of marital dissolution on children and if their separation had some impact on their children.

Draft questions:

1. Why did you decide to separate?

2. Which processes did you follow when you decided to separate?

3. To what extent did you discuss this decision with your children?

4. What were your considerations regarding the future of your children during your decision to separate from your spouse?

5. In your opinion, how was your children's academic performance affected by your marital dissolution?

6. In your opinion, what were the psycho-social emotional effects on your child/children?

7. Did you consider the potential effect of marital dissolution on your children during your decision to separate?

8. How did it happen that your child/children remained with you/ were placed in a children's centre?

9. Comment on your pre - and post-divorce conflicts? What do you think was the effect of this on your children?

10. How often are the children allowed to visit their non-resident parent? Are they satisfied with the visitations?

11. In your opinion what are the positive effects of marital dissolution on your child/children?

12. In your opinion, is there anything parents can do to prevent their children from being negatively affected by parents' separation?

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FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR TEACHERS/CAREGIVERS

The following interview guide seeks to explore the views of teachers and caregivers who deal with children coming from broken homes. Among other things, participants will be requested to express their views on the effect of marital breakup on children, as well as the possible consequences of parents' insight into such effect.

Draft questions:

1. Why do you think parents in this country decide to separate?
2. In your experience, which processes are followed when Tanzanian parents decide to separate?
3. How is children's academic performance affected by parents' separation?
4. What are the consequences in terms of psycho-social effects on children?
5. In your opinion, to what extent do Tanzanian parents consider the effect of marital breakup on children during their decision to separate? Do you think such a consideration (or lack thereof) will have any impact on children?
6. Why do you think are parents seemingly reluctant to make children aware of their decision to breakup? In which way can such reluctance affect children?
7. Which factors determine custodianship? To what extent are children affected by custodial decision?
8. To what extent are the effects of marital breakup on children different for different ages and genders?
9. Can you identify any positive effects for children based on their parents' separation?
10. Which policy or law in the country do you know of that govern the welfare of children during and after marital breakup? What does this law/policy state?
11. How do you think the negative effects of marital breakup on children can be minimised by involving parents, community and policy makers?

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DOCUMENT ANALYSIS GUIDE

Documentary evidence was important in this study because it enabled me to explore the behaviour and academic trends of children who are victims of marital breakup. Children's documents and the documents available in schools as well as in centres were analysed. The following documents were be explored:

- Children's exercise books
- Behaviour/discipline record books
- Attendency registers
- Children's academic reports
- Children's diaries
- Chilren's stories and drawings

The following criteria guided my analysis of the documents:

- Ability to read and write compared chronological age
- Attendance to school or truancy records
- Teachers'/caregivers' written comments
- Types and frequency of behaviours noted
- Academic performance compared to the number of children in the class
- Children's personal expressions in writing

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APPENDIX C

RESEARCH PERMIT AND LETTERS TO CHILDREN CENTRES

UNIVERSITY OF DAR-ES-SALAAM
OFFICE OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR
P.O. BOX 35091 ♦ DAR ES SALAAM ♦ TANZANIA

Ref. No: AB3/33)
Date: 11th June, 2012
To: The Regional Administrative Secretary,
Dar es Salaam Region.

UNIVERSITY STAFF AND STUDENTS RESEARCH CLEARANCE

The purpose of this letter is to introduce to you **Mr. Chrissioner Mauki** who is a bonafide staff of the University of Dar es Salaam and who is at the moment conducting research. Our staff members and students undertake research activities every year especially during the long vacation.

In accordance with a government circular letter Ref.No.MPEC/R/10/1 dated 4th July, 1980 the Vice-Chancellor was empowered to issue research clearances to the staff and students of the University of Dar es Salaam on behalf of the government and the Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology, a successor organization to UTAFITI.

I therefore request you to grant the above-mentioned member of our University community any help that may facilitate him to achieve research objectives. What is required is your permission for him to see and talk to the leaders and members of your institutions in connection with his research.

The title of the research in question is **"An Investigation into Marital Dissolution in Tanzania"**.

The period for which this permission has been granted is **June, 2012** to **December, 2012** and will cover the following areas/offices: **Dar es Salaam Region.**

Should some of these areas/offices be restricted, you are requested to kindly advise him as to which alternative areas/offices could be visited. In case you may require further information, please contact the Directorate of Research, Tel. 2410500-8 Ext. 2087 or 2410743.

VICE CHANCELLOR
UNIVERSITY OF DAR-ES-SALAAM
P.O. BOX 35091
DAR-ES-SALAAM

Prof. Rwekaza S. Mukandala
VICE-CHANCELLOR

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LETTERS TO CHILDREN CENTRES

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA
Faculty of Education

Date……

HEAD/DIRECTOR
XXX
P.O. BOX XXX
DAR ES SALAAM
TANZANIA

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT YOUR INSTITUTION

I am a PhD candidate in the Department of Educational Psychology, University of Pretoria. I am working on a study titled **"Effect of marital dissolution on early adolescents' academic and psycho-social development".** The study focuses on the potential effect of marital dissolution (both positive and negative) on children's academic and psycho-social development in Tanzania.

The findings of this study are expected to be useful to policy makers and other stakeholders who deal with children affairs in ensuring children's well-being especially after parents' separation. Moreover, the children's centres involved in the study will be well informed of the reasons behind some behaviours and reactions of children who have been victims of marital dissolution. Such understanding may be useful in helping children in the centres to live and thrive well.

With this letter, I request you to allow me to conduct informal assessment sessions/interviews with four children between 12to 15 years who come from broken families' background and currently reside in your centre. I also request permission to conduct interviews/focus group discussions with three caregivers and three teachers who deal with these children. I am

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expecting to obtain information about the participants' experiences on marital dissolution and its effect on children's academic and psycho-social development. The research is conducted under the scrutiny of the University of Pretoria's ethical guidelines with regard to the principles of confidentiality, anonymity, voluntary participation, trust and protection from harm.

Your positive consideration and written feedback to this request will be highly appreciated.

Yours Sincerely,

Chrissiona Mauki **Signature.....**
PhD (Educational Psychology)
Faculty of Education
University of Pretoria
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Prof. Ronél Ferreira **Signature.....**
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Faculty of Education
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ACCEPTANCE TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH IN CHILDREN CENTRES

KINONDONI MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

ALL CORRESPONDENCES TO BE ADDRESSED TO THE MUNICIPAL DIRECTOR

Tel: 2170173
Fax: 2172606

In reply please quote:

Ref. KMC/R.18/1

MUNICIPAL DIRECTOR
KINONDONI MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
P. O. BOX 31902
DAR ES SALAAM

Date 27th June, 2011

Mauki Chrissioner,
University of Dar es Salaam,
P. O. Box 35048,
DAR ES SALAAM.

RE: **RESEARCH PERMIT**

Refer to the above heading.

I am pleased to inform you that your above request has been considered by the Municipal Director, and has offered you a place to research permit.

Upon receipt of this letter, please report to the **Municipal Social Welfare Officer** for commencement of your research permit.

Hoping to see you soon.

G. Mbogo
For: **THE MUNICIPAL DIRECTOR**
KINONDONI

For: MUNICIPAL DIRECTOR
KINONDONI MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
DAR-ES-SALAAM

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UNIVERSITY OF DAR-ES-SALAAM
OFFICE OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR
P.O. BOX 35091 ♦ DAR ES SALAAM ♦ TANZANIA

Ref.No: AB3/3(B)

Date: 11th June, 2012

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RESEARCH CLEARANCE

The purpose of this letter is to introduce to you **Mr. Chrissioner Mauki** who is a bonafide staff of the University of Dar es Salaam.

Mr. Mauki has been permitted to conduct research entitled **"An Investigation into Marital Dissolution in Tanzania".**

The period for which this permission has been granted is from **June, 2012** to **December, 2012.**

It will be appreciated if you will grant the researcher any help that may facilitate him to achieve research objectives.

VICE CHANCELLOR
UNIVERSITY OF DAR-ES-SALAAM
P.O. BOX 35091
DAR-ES-SALAAM

Prof. Rwekaza S. Mukandala
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APPENDIX D

TRANSCRIPTS OF INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Child 1: 14 years of age

Date: 15th November, 2012

KEY OF ABBREVIATIONS

R: Researcher

C: Child

My study aims to explore how children like you have been positively or negatively affected by the separation of your parents. Throughout the narration of your story and the way in which you respond to my questions I will be able to measure the extent and effect of your parents' separation. Feel free to give details of your life and your experiences because your responses are going to help other children.

R: Tell me about your family before your parents decided to separate, such as

- **the educational level of your parents/brothers and sisters**
- **the number of children in the house**
- **the family's socio-economic status.**

C1: There are six people in our family, my two elder brothers and two sisters who live with my mother. The eldest sister who was the first born died. This is my first year at the Centre; I joined the centre when my mother was unable to take me to school after their separation. My brother who was also here made arrangements for me to be assisted by the Centre.

Both my older brothers passed through this Centre and currently there are two of us in the Centre. I am not very sure of my parents' education but I think my father had a secondary education.

My father left when I was in Grade 3. Life was not easy at home

Effect on academic: effect on school attendance

Centres as support to parents

Effect: more boys than girls in centres and in streets

Family background: Children not sure of parents' education

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and food was a problem, we could no longer be able to go to school, my elder brother fled to the street and finally he ended up in this Centre. He is the one who made some arrangements for me and my little brother to also come here. Life was extremely hard.

Effect: according to age of a child
Effect: poverty after separation, lack of basic needs

R: Why do you think your parents decided to separate?

C1: My father was involved with another woman; he was doing things that should not be done to our mother. He used to come home late and beat my mother. Later he decided to leave us completely. I don't know any other reason for what went wrong or the root cause of their separation.

Reason for separation: Extra marital affair
Conflicts: violence and physical abuse
Informing children: children limited insight into cause of separation

R: At what stage, and how, did your parents inform you about their separation?

C1: I was not informed of their separation but I saw my brothers meeting with our mother and discussing what was happening. When our mother was asked, she used to say that she didn't know what was going on in our father's life. So, generally, I wasn't informed about anything. I just observed how things went and their final separation was a surprise to me.

Informing children: Children unaware of separation
Informing children: Parents hiding the cause
Unaware of separation
Informing children: Separation as a surprise

R: How has your performance been in school before and after your parents' separation?

C1: Before their separation I was doing well in school as I was supported by both parents. After their separation my performance deteriorated each day. Whenever I ask my mother where my father

Effect: academic performance
Effect of parents
Effect: missing father's provisions

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was she just began to cry. I asked many questions as I was missing a lot of things. I wasn't able to pay for my exams and the situation was becoming worse each day. Concerning my life at school one day I had a fight with my teacher, I wanted to stone him so the disciplinary committee decided to suspend me for one month, this is not the first time they warn me

Effect on academic: inability to pay for exams

R: **How did you feel after the separation of your dad and mom?**

C1: I felt bad because I was young. I was loved by both parents and we used to sit together outside our home sharing stories, but when my father left my mother cried all the time. She didn't have time to go in search of food and when we saw her crying we also cried.

Effect: sad feeling
Psycho-social effect: Feelings of losing love

Effect on parents
Effect: a stressful custodial parent affect children

I sometimes remember the hard times we had been through and, sometimes, it is replayed in my dreams and this makes me feel very bad. However, when I am with my friends I at least forget but when I am alone again I must start thinking back and if I remember home I remember the whole situation again which is so painful. My dreams sometimes give me mind pictures of us not eating, going to sleep hungry and my mother being beaten *(crying)*. What my father did just tortured our minds: he might go to work and not come back for three days and when he did come back, he didn't care about what we had to eat or drink before he left again. He sometimes came home drunk and he beat Mother - every time he was getting worse.

Psycho-social effect: feelings of sorrow

Social support: in minimizing and coping

Effect. Feeling sad
Psycho-social effect: past pains, abuse

Effect: negative towards father

Reason for separation: Father's irresponsibility after having an affair

Reason for separation: Alcoholism, violence, physical abuse to wives

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	He told us that he was going to work but we sometimes saw him around. We also knew where he was living with his woman and he would become angry with us because we would tell Mother about everything we saw. Father wasn't happy at all. He beat us, calling us dogs and many other bad words. This continued until he decided to leave the house.	Effect: feelings of mistrusting the father Effect: aggression by father Effect: Physical and verbal abuse on children
R:	**Tell me about any conflict between your parents before and after they broke up.**	
C1:	There were many fights before they separated, but after separation we didn't see any conflict between them. We spoke to him on the phone. We started questioning our mother about Father, especially when our little sister who didn't know Father insisted that she wanted to know him. Sometimes we talked to Father on the phone although our mother couldn't afford to talk to him.	Conflicts: more pre and less post - divorce conflicts Effect: according to age of a child Effect: Post-divorce poor communication as a result of pain
R:	**Are you allowed to visit your parent/s? If yes, how often? Are you satisfied with the visits?**	
C1:	We can't visit our father because we don't know where he is - even when we rarely talk to him on the phone, he doesn't disclose his whereabouts.	Effect: father disconnection affect visits
R:	**What was hard about your parents' separation?**	
C1:	The situation of not valuing my father because of what he did to us is hard but I have to accept it. The torture and the suffering we have been through as a family which was caused by my father is so painful. I have suffered as if my father was dead, while he is still	Effect: feelings of disrespect on their fathers Effect: considering fathers as a reason for suffering Effect: painful experience

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breathing - alive and well. I don't think if I will ever help him in anything, even if I was a very good person. We have talked to him but he still tells us lies. This pains me very much and I can't respect him at all. Even if I meet him today or he calls me I will never respond *(crying)*. When I see him in my mind I see him as my great enemy. If he would be there for us it wouldn't be this way.

Effect: Feelings of revenge
Effect: lack of trust towards father
Effect: feelings of disrespect on fathers
Effect: feeling sad
Effect: feelings of animosity on fathers

R: **Is there any positive thing you can comment on as the result of your parents' separation?**

C1: Nothing good has come from this experience. Only by our coming to the Centre can our mother at least breathe.

Effect: No positive experience
Effect: Children being in streets or in centres relieves poor custodial mothers

R: **What do you think your parents could have done differently during this process of breaking up?**

C1: There is nothing that could have been done to change the situation because my father, himself, decided to leave home. He decided to prove his failure as a father and accept that he had failed to take care of us; to raise his own family; and, finally, to leave home. I have no good advice for this kind of person. He left with nothing, he left everything behind.

Process: Hard to change the decision of divorcing parents
Effect: Non-resident fathers as failures
Effect: feelings of hostility

R: **If you were informed earlier of your parents' separation, what do you think you could have done?**

C1: I think it would have helped if we knew about their plans to separate earlier. If I had known about it before I would have consulted with my uncles to come and help. Even at my young age I would have

Informing children: early information helps
Informing children: potential role of children in advising

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advised them not to separate - to do anything rather than to part ways. We would have known who was responsible for the problem and we would have known if our father was just tired of raising us. By telling us earlier each child would have been able to choose where to go or who to live with, but because Father just left without our knowledge we could only conclude that he had failed to take care of us. Even if my mother was the problem it is hard to accept that now as we all have a negative perception towards our father. We remained with our mother. She has stayed with us even through the bad experiences and she is still looking after us. She has never let us go or run away from us.

Informing children: Children quest for the causer

Informing children: a need to choose who to live with

Effect: father's decision to leave father is failure

Effect: Negative attitude towards non-resident parent

Positive: Children appreciation for custodial parent

R: What have you learnt from this entire scenario?

C1: The experience I got from my parents has taught me a lesson. I will never do this to my own wife or to my children. My life will be like a movie in which I am the main actor. I will tell my children about the life I had; the need to be strong; to persevere; and to look forward. I have learnt a lot. I will always be there for them and correct my children when necessary because of my previous experience.

Positive: a lesson learned

Positive Effect: learning from experiences of marital dissolution

R: Is there anything you would like tell parents in the rest of the world?

C1: Parents should live together with love no matter what happens in their relationship. Problems should be solved so that they remain together and do not separate. Even when separation is inevitable, parents should think of their children because whenever parents part

Preventive/minimize 1.love to surpass the differences, 2. Better ways of solving conflicts

Insight on children: even when separation is

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the suffering is inflicted on the children who are involved.

inevitable
Effect: children suffering

Children who stay with housewives or jobless mothers suffer more than those who are left with employed mothers. Fathers should not think that they are punishing their wives by separating; they are actually punishing their children. By the way, sometimes separation is not a solution. Although separation may be of benefit to one - or both - of the couple it is not necessarily of benefit to the children. Children continue to suffer when their parents are separated. Parents, your children still need you even when you don't need one another.

Effect: Children of the poor custodial parents "suffer" most

Effect: Separation as a punishment to children

Effect: may be positive to parents but negative to children

Effect: children suffer

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PARENT 4

30th November, 2012

KEY OF ABBREVIATIONS

R: Researcher

P: Parent

NARRATION:

The background of being a victim parent of the divorced family (divorce circle)

I got married when I was seventeen years old, I was very young and I was just forced by the circumstances, my parents also separated when I was very young 5years. I remember some issues they were fighting because my father was a womanizer. He had money; he was working with the bank, he used to come home with his women and make love with them in the house. My mother got fed up and decided to leave, we were four in our family.

Reason for separation: parents' early marriage
Reason for separation: divorce circle
Reason for separation: extramarital affairs

My father used to love me, but my mother was so angry person. I knew if she knew the incident she would kill me. She once cut me with a bush knife when she saw me standing with that man. After the incident when my father discovered that I was seven months pregnant, they neglected me and forced me to get married to that man. At this time I was staying with my father and the step mother. Our step mother hated us so much; she pretended to laugh when father was around, but so dangerous when father was out.

Effect: damages Parent-child relationship
Effect; child physical abuse
Reason for separation: forced marriage
Effect: hate and hypocrisy by step mother

The fact that my parents also separated has made me a pure victim of marital dissolution. It has really affected the way I relate and the way I have perceived the separation itself. Every time I was telling myself that I am not the first person to leave my husband. My mother did the same, she

Effect: on perception and how one's relates

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was not divorced she just left so it is ok for me to do it as well. I think these things can transfer from one generation to the next, it is like inheritance. I do pray every rime for my daughter not to pass this way. I talk to her the positive about marriage;

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I'll never allow my children to inherit what I went through. I will be there to provide a shoulder on their relationships so that they don't get through this way. — Prevent: parents involvement in children lives

I was much affected from my parents separation because I was much loved by my father, I was so hurt by my stepmother's effort in distancing me away from my father. Another thing that pains me was that everything I saw my father doing to my mother, for example; coming with women in our house, sleeping with them in the next room or in the sitting room, having several affairs and many children was exactly happened in my marriage. I hated what father used to do to my mother. I saw my mother leaving home with tears; I was a victim because it was the same my husband was doing to me. Seeing my children also becoming victims like I did would be the hardest thing ever. — Effect: feelings of losing parents love; Effect: step mother keep children far from their fathers

This experience has made me hate men and removing them in my life. I don't think I will and I have never plan to love again. I have lots of negative experience about relationships. From 17years and now am 33years am happy alone. — Psychosocial effect: negative attitude on men and on relationship

I am scared that if I relate again I will be rude to my man because of what has been invested in my heart by his fellow men. I have never enjoyed marriage, I have never enjoyed relationship, I have never enjoyed sex, in fact I even don't know if it is something to enjoy. I have lots of bitterness within me; it has been built up for long time by different male characters. — Psychosocial effect: negative attitude on men; Reason for separation: background of being a victim of separation

R: Why did you decide to separate?

P4: My husband and I have never loved each, he raped me at first place and I — Reason for separation: wrong

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got pregnancy, nobody knew including my parents. The incident was a setup between the man and one of my girlfriends. — reason for marriage (no love, pregnancy)

I was later forced to get in the church for a wedding; the wedding plans were set up without my awareness by this man, his family and my parents. — Reason for separation: a forced marriage

After the wedding life wasn't easy, he was bringing other women in our home; he could leave me in our bedroom and make love with another woman or a house maid in the next room. — Reason for separation: womanizing behaviours

When I wanted to leave the house he locked me and my two children in a room, he poured kerosene wanted to burn us down. — Reason for separation: brutality

I later got pregnancy when my first son was just eight months. I wanted to abort it, I consulted many people, I drank various medicines with the intention to abort it but couldn't come out, and finally I got my little daughter. All my marital cases were known in the church, my pastors helped me so much although they also experienced some difficulty with my husband. — External support: religious leaders involvement

When we left each other he didn't care anything about the children, I was struggling myself, and my mother was giving some help. My husband just loved to walk around with his son and daughter but can't afford to help them with anything. — Effect: carelessness and lack of children maintenance

R: Which processes did you follow when you decided to separate?

P4: After church leadership was unable to settle our disputes one of my pastor's wife connected me to the district social welfare office, when he — Process: meetings with religious leaders

was asked to give the divorce so as to leave me free he denied. So we went to the primary court where I was allowed to divorce him with a restriction that I should never ask any property, they gave me a paper to sign, and — Process: legal procedures for separation

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there I divorced him. In connection to that, he was about to be taken to jail because he stopped me from schooling and he was not taking care of the children. The document ordered us to give each other space and allow anyone to get married when need arise.

Reason for separation: early marriage
Effect: limited children maintenance

This man stopped me from schooling, I was grade seven, I passed my grade seven national exams and I was selected to join Jangwani secondary school but I ended up getting married without knowing that this marriage was arranged by the two families , I was so blind of issues of marriage I think that's why we couldn't stay longer . That was the end of my school life, today I am 33years, and he really messed up my whole life. If my parents were all together all this wouldn't happen, they would take me to secondary school but unfortunately they were far from each other, each one carrying his/her own life. They splinted the children among themselves; I and my brother were taken to the father while my two sisters remained with mother. All these happened because of the life I was living which was also a result of circumstances.

Reason for separation: early marriage

Effect on academic: blocks academic development

Effect: division of the children among parents

Because I didn't have education I ended up doing low paying (per day) jobs like watering the walls in the construction sites. When I got these jobs I managed to rent a single room with my two children. When my ex-husband heard that I am starting my own life again he came from Arusha and forced to stay in the house,

Post-divorce conflicts: forcing to share a house

I reported to the matter to the local administrative leader because I wanted him out by morning. To my surprise, right in the morning he reported me to the police station that I wanted to escape with his children. He even

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distributed our photos to the bus terminal. He was a problem even to my working place to the extent that I was told to stay at home until I first solve my family issues. He later decided to stay in that single room with us, when the days passed I decided to take my children and go away. I left him to continue paying the rent if he wanted to stay there. I got the report that he was exchanging women at that little room and finally he wasn't able to pay the rent, he left.

Post-divorce conflicts: affecting career

Reason for separation: womanizing behaviours

Because of his problem I wasn't able to continue working at my first office, so I started working at another place, what pain me is how he have been trying hard to spoil my children, whenever I take them to school, and after I made some payments he would come and take them away to his mother (my children's granny) I have wasted a lot of my money because of his stupidity. My daughter is close to his father, she often visits him, but my son is angry with his father, he actually told him once that he was not his father. They only visit him when they are ok. Even yesterday my son went to sleep at his father's place.

Post-divorce conflicts: affecting career

Effect on academic: battles over children

Effect: father-child relationship determine visits

R: To what extent did you discuss this decision with your children? What were your considerations regarding the future of your children during your decision to separate from your spouse?

P4: I never thought that my children will suffer because of my decisions to separate but later I saw it with my own eyes. When he was there despite all his nonsense and adultery behaviours he was bringing food on the table. But his absence made a huge difference. My children never knew anything about my intention though later I shared with them in a nutshell; I couldn't tell them the whole stinking habits of their father, it is a shameful thing.

Insight on children: being blind of the effect

Effect: impact of an absent father

Informing children: reserving information

Informing children: factors hindering disclosure, bad

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behaviour on one parent

R: In your opinion, how was your children's academic performance affected by your marital dissolution?

P4: My son was doing very well in class, he was passing his exams but our separation came to really affect their education. They couldn't settle at one school because of their father's disturbances, they started moving from one school to another. I also shifted them because each time I moved to another place I had to leave with them. My son couldn't continue with secondary school, he just ended up in form two. He never wanted school anymore he just wanted to do short courses on computers. My daughter has exactly become like her mother, she ended up in primary school. The daughter was more affected because she was close to her father

Effect on academic: dramatic drop in performance

Effect on academic: frequent change of schools

Effect on academic: losing motivation for schooling

Effect on academic: detachment affect schooling

R: In your opinion, what were the psychological effects on your child/ren?

P4: My daughter is affected much because she was close to the father, she always curious to know what happened between us. My son is often fighting with his father; he has lots of negative perceptions about him. My husband was doing bad things in front of the children which might negatively influence them, for instance; he would come with prostitutes and ask his son to comment if that woman would fit him. The son would always say "no" but when he asks the daughter she would want to please the father. He was even going to entertainment places with her, she was about to be spoiled by the father. My daughter started behaving like her father, she would think nonsense, talk nonsense, and accept nonsense but I thank God they later became stable.

Effect: removal of an attached parent

Informing children: a need to know the cause

Effect: father-child animosity

Effect: behaviours of divorcing parents impacts children

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R: Did you consider the potential effect of marital dissolution on your children during your decision to separate?

P4: I had never thought of the effect that my children might face, I started to see them when days were passing.

Insight on children: parents blind of the effect

R: How did it happen that your child/children remained with you/ were placed in a children's centre?

P4: The court ruled that he should take the custodianship of the children, but I came to discover that my children were going hungry, they had nothing to eat, and they used to ask for food from the neighbourhood. They were living like street children. I asked him to allow them to visit me for few days but I knew that I will never take them back to that life. He told me not to ask any assistance from him because I decided to take the children without his consent. I agreed to be with them for better or for worse, they will eat the little I eat and sleep where I sleep. I couldn't afford seeing them suffering the way they did. I really had a difficult time raising them; nobody knew except my mother, I thank God that my children understand how I have suffered for them.

Custodianship: legally determined
External support: neighbours
Custodianship: mother unsatisfied with father's custodianship
Effect: custodianship by force
Effect: difficulty in raising children as single
Effect: suffering to a poor custodial parent

R: Comment on your pre and post-divorce conflicts? What do you think was the effect of this on your children?

P4: My husband was very abusive, he was beating me almost every day and one day he locked my children and me in the room so as he can set the fire. Our conflicts always were based on his behaviours, coming with women at home and make love to them while I was in the house. After separation we have been fighting over the commitment on our children.

Pre-divorce conflicts: abuse and extra marital affairs
Post-divorce conflicts: children maintenance

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R: How often are the children allowed to visit their non-resident parent? Are they satisfied with the visitations?

P4: Sometimes my children visits their father, the daughter do it more often than the brother although sometimes they can stay for so long without visiting their father, in case this happen, I would remind them to go. Unfortunately my husband's children from other women do not want to visit him often, they would rather come to my place, and I have two of them living in my house currently. Visits: determined by parent-child relationship

When my ex-husband gets problems he sometimes goes to my mother for help, wonderful enough, he sometimes takes his women there and tells them that the old woman was his mother.

R: In your opinion what are the positive effects of marital dissolution on your child/children?

P4: There is no any benefit in this; it has been a loss to my life and to my children. Effect: more damages to children and parents

R: In your opinion, is there anything parents can do to prevent their children from being negatively affected by parents' separation?

P4: When one parent engages in extra marital affairs it risks the whole family. His sexual relationships with my house girls made them to disrespect me; I was angry to the extent that I once pour kerosene to one of the maid and started fire on her. I don't know if she is alive or not. Prevent: avoid extra marital affairs

Some bad behaviour of one or both parents may easily spoil the children through how they learn every day. Parents should not transfer negativity about their difficult marriages to their children. However' despite of the Prevent: 1. parents need to respect themselves and children as well 2. never displace problems on children 3. honestly and

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hardship they are going through, parents should always be honest to their children and still help them to have a positive perception of the marriage institution. One parent should not tell bad stories about another.

timely informing children
4. impart in them a positive picture of life

Parents informing their children of their separation

It is good for parents to inform the children about the possibility of them to separate, sometimes the children may advise the parents to the extent that one may postpone the plan of leaving home. Children have their potential contribution to parent's relationships.

Prevent: informing children earlier
Prevent: involve children's views

Parents knowing the effect on children before separation

It helps when the parents know the effects that may hit children when the separation happens. Parents may think, rethink and make plans in favour of their children.

Prevent: having insight on children early

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FIELD NOTES BASED ON EXERCISE BOOKS OF CHILDREN

28th December, 2012

KEY OF ABBREVIATIONS

C: Child

C8: 10 years of age

Only three pages are written on in the Kiswahili exercise book; the child is trying to learn how to combine words to make a sentence.

Effect on academic: A delayed learning

Another exercise book seems to be used because when a mistake is made the child removes the page. During the time of analysis the exercise book had almost ten pages and none were written on.

Poor scholastic behaviours

The way these exercise books are kept is not acceptable at all.

Poor storage of academic materials

C6: 13 years of age

The child is still struggling to write his own name.

Effect on academic: 1.Delayed learning

One exercise book is a mixture of more than one subject.

2. poor recording of subjects matter

It is hard to follow the sequence in his exercise book, because there is no proper arrangement of topics.

3. Poor arrangement of topics and subjects

The child is permitted to decide from whichever end of the exercise book to write; in some parts he starts from the back to beginning and in some areas from beginning to back.

4. Poor arrangement of topics and subjects

Some exercises that have been completed in the past are not marked or commented on by the teacher. It is almost the year's end (it is December) but many books have only two or three written pages and some have less than ten pages.

Children works are unmarked

Reluctance of doing class works

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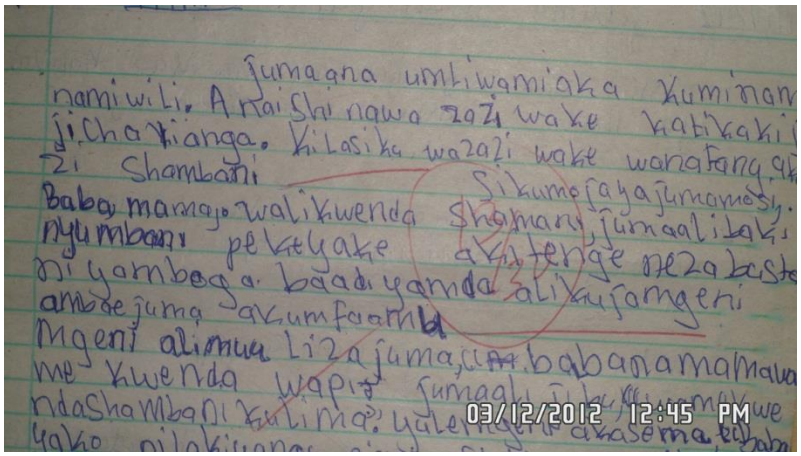
Composition by Child 6 who is 13 years is in Swahili language but it is difficult to understand what is written; it is hard to get a clue as to what a student intended to communicate. His sentences are not readable (Refer the photo below)

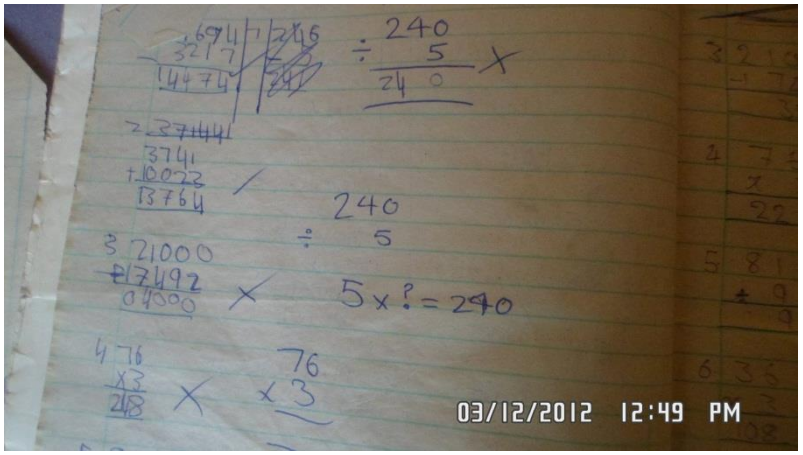
Delayed learning



C7:

13 years of age

Mathematics problem



He is still struggling to write his name. He has many spelling mistakes. He is also struggling with differentiating between the letters “L” and “R”.

Delayed learning

Learning problems

He also has problems with elementary skills in drawing; every picture that he has tried to draw the teacher has commented: “very bad”.

Poor scholastic performance

It seems that teachers are only concerned with the answers to the questions and not with spelling or the structure of the work because the majority of

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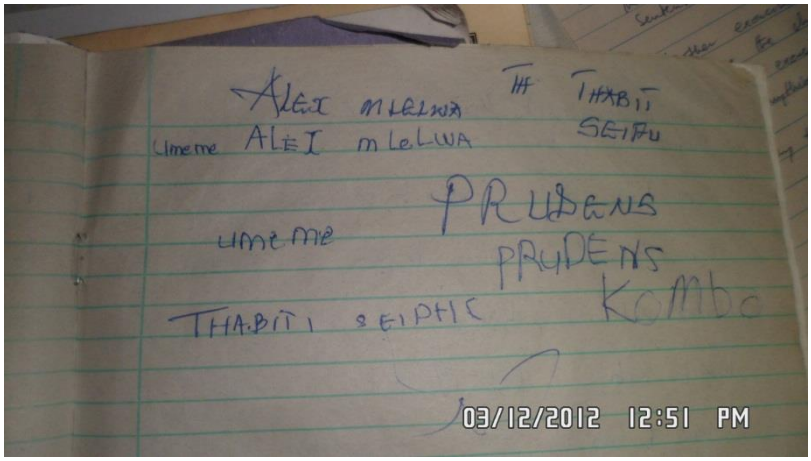
C4: 12 years of age

The way the page is poorly used — Insufficient supervision of teachers, unmotivated



He is deciding where to start writing; some places from front to back and other parts from back to front. — Poor arrangements of school materials

Some areas are complete a mess but the child scores 3/5 or 4/4 and he is given an "excellent" comment. — Insufficient supervision of teachers, unmotivated

It is almost the end of the year now but his Kiswahili exercise book has only three pages of writing. — Reluctance of doing class works

C3: 15 years of age

At the age of 15 Child 3 is trying to put well some simple mathematics and some formation of letters, but different subjects are mixed up in one exercise book. Despite having two different subjects in one exercise book, the whole exercise book has only five pages that are written on. — Delayed learning; Poor arrangements of school materials; Reluctance of doing class works

The Kiswahili exercise book has only two pages that are written on.

The child is trying to compose words like Mother, Father, and Sister in Swahili. — Delayed learning

C5: 12 years of age

Child 5 who is 12 years is at least doing well in trying to separate words in — Delayed learning

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a sentence and his sentences - especially in Kiswahili - can be read. However, the exercise book has only four pages that have been written on. Reluctance of doing class works

He is also trying to understand simple mathematics although what he is doing is quite easy in terms of his age. Delayed learning

Paper in this exercise book has been torn, but those pages which are intact easily give a picture of the work which has been done. Poor scholastic behaviours

There are no specific skills in learning English language but only direct translation of sentences from Kiswahili to English. For instance, *mama anapika* - Mother is cooking. Delayed learning and Insufficient supervision of unmotivated teachers

Most of these children's exercise books have very few pages which have been written on; different subjects are mixed up in one exercise book; and the arrangement of what has been written is very poor. Generally, there is no self-organization in class works and materials. Reluctance of doing class works
Poor arrangements of school materials

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FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION 1

TEACHERS AND CARE GIVERS AT CHILDREN'S CENTRE 1

Date: 10th January, 2013

KEY OF ABBREVIATIONS

FGD 1: Focus Group Discussion 1

R: Researcher

FP: Focus group participant

R: Why do you think parents in this country decide to separate?

FP1: Some parents do not let go of their children when they decide to get married. Mothers continue to have emotional ties with their sons and daughters. They keep following their children's lives even when they have their own homes. A wife in these circumstances becomes a victim and quarrels start - hence they might decide to separate.

Reason for separation: Holding ties with parents

FP3: When women seem to be strong economically or in social status - for instance, when they come from a well to do family or a strong family, this makes the wives stronger or causes husbands to feel insecure in some areas of their marriage.

Reason for separation: insecurity of husbands to wives economic power

FP2: Couples are driven by outsiders - people who are not part of their marriage, such as friends, in-laws and other relatives. Here couples listen to what others say and they make decisions based on these external influences. This includes issues concerned with marital conflict, as well as when couples or relatives take sides.

Reason for separation: external influences

FP4: Getting married by accepting their parents' decisions where the parents search for a woman or a man to marry their son or daughter. A reason

Reason for separation: Marriage due to influences from parents

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for this may be that the parents are friendly with another family and they would like their children to get married to someone from that family in order to make the bond between the two families strong.

FP: A very short time or a superficial friendship during courtship limits the time couples have to learn about each other; only later couples realize that they have married the wrong person and then problems start. — Reason for separation: a very short time of knowing each other

There is no proper lessons, preparation or counselling for people before they marry or even for the youth in general. Men need to be made aware of their responsibilities - as do women. The differences between the two genders need to be communicated to both partners as early as possible. — Reason for separation: no thorough pre-marital counselling

The inability of one or both of the couple to fully accept their responsibilities might also be a cause for separation. — Reason for separation: irresponsibility

R: **In your experience, which processes are followed when Tanzanian parents decide to separate?**

FP2: It is a cumbersome procedure to obtain legal divorce papers in Tanzania; it takes years and wastes a lot of time and money following up the process. Because of this the majority of couples do not even consider it. — Process: Cumbersome and bureaucratic process of legal divorce

FP3: Couples go through stages in separating; some start to separate emotionally and socially within the home, but nobody really knows about this. Children feel the differences between their parents even though people from outside may think that these couples are fine. This internal separation of couples - sometimes emotionally and sometimes — Process: internal separation, within the home

— Effect of internal separation, affect children

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not sharing a bed - might have a great effect on the children who expect their parents to set a good example. For these couples the physical departure of one parent is a second stage after the primary stage of internal separation.

FP5: The majority of couples do not know their rights following their desire to separate. Usually, couples consult relatives or are involved in family meetings and if those fail they just decide to part - each one living his/her own life.

Process: couples ignorance of the legal procedures

FP6: Sometimes when both parents are tired of each other it becomes easier. The situation ends with family meetings before they separate. However, if one parent insists on not separating, then it may involve a long process of more meetings as well as legal procedures.

Process: it's easier when both couples are tired of each other

Women easily share their problems and they are the ones who propose family meetings or meetings with religious leaders. It is more difficult for men to open up; they never want their marital problems to go outside the home which results in their reluctance to show up at reconciliation meetings or to cooperate when they do show up. (For example, the case of Child 2)

Process: male parents do not cooperate

When couples turn to their parents for help, some become discouraged because the parents - usually the wife's mother - may tell their daughter to tolerate the conflict because marriage is never easy and if they separate it will bring shame to her and to the whole family.

Process: not separating to avoid shame to in-laws

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R: How is the children's academic performance affected by parents' separation?

FP1: Children from broken homes are affected in both their formal education in the classroom and in their informal education where learning that takes place outside the classroom. Children are negatively affected in the way they learn from their environment as their minds are blocked by the hardships which have resulted from their parents' separation.

Effect on academic: life hardship impact children concentration

FP2: A few children do seem to perform well in class even after they experience the negative consequences of their parent's separation. Their intention is not to excel in education and in life but rather trying to make sure they succeed in life so that they can get an opportunity to take revenge on the non-residents parent or stepparent or anyone who has caused them pain.

Effect on academic: performing well for future revenge

Children from broken homes attend school but, in fact, they do not learn. Internally they are burdened - some look after their siblings and their minds are occupied with life's chores. As a result, they are in class physically with other students but they do not, actually, learn anything.

Effect on academic: attending school without learning

Older children are forced by circumstance to take care of their siblings by staying with them at home or by going out in search of food for them.

Effect on academic: staying at home taking care of siblings

FP5: Some children who live with their stepparents are overloaded with home chores to the extent that they can't attend school and if they do attend it's hard for them to learn. Sometimes it is not only being

Effect on academic: impact of step parent on learning

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overloaded by domestic chores, but children fail to accept their stepmothers' negative attitudes, oppression, lies told to the father, etc.

Sometimes these children face a double tragedy: not only do they suffer from their parents' separation but when they do badly at school their teachers beat them or give them other punishments, thinking that they are just lazy - without knowing about their domestic problems. *"Why has their performance dropped now when they were doing so well?"* They assume that the children have become involved with bad gangs. Here we see a great need for teachers to understand the ABC of a student.

Effect on academic: double tragedy, suffer from parents, suffer from teachers

Effect on academic: staying with a poor custodial parent

There is no way that students will not be negatively affected in their academic development when their parents separate, particularly when the non-resident parent is the breadwinner. Often children who are left with their father or custodial parent who is financially stable continue to do well in their studies, but there may be some psychological effects. However, some students who are left with their fathers seem to do well but the battle between the stepmothers forces them to escape from their homes onto the city's streets.

Psycho-social effect: even when a child is doing well academically

A mother's absence affects children greatly in their academic pursuits, because whereas the fathers pay the fees the mothers usually keep a close eye on every detail regarding the children - for instance, what they eat and drink at home and at school; their appearance; and checking their exercise books and home works, etc. So the progress of any child at school is determined by many other factors rather than just

Effect on academic: impact of mother's absence on learning

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the father's efforts to pay the fees. Despite the school fees being paid, or being in the custody of a well-to-do father, children who are separated from their mothers may negatively affected.

R: **What are the consequences in terms of psycho-social effects on the children?**

FP3: The psycho-social effects are determined by who the child remains with. Many times a child who is left with a person other than the mother has more chances of being vulnerable.

The children at the Centres are almost all affected in the same way, particularly those who are separated from their mothers when they are young: they become liars and thieves and are hard to trust. This is because the mother who is often considered to be a true teacher is not there with them.

Psycho-social effect: impact of mother's absence on behaviours

FP1: Children from broken families spend most of their time outside home, so they are at risk of being influenced negatively by their peers, particularly those who have end up on the streets.

The feeling of being neglected disturbs these children very much; they feel neglected by their parents, relatives and the community which sometimes stigmatizes or abuses them when they live on the street.

Psycho-social effect: feelings of being neglected

R: **In your opinion, to what extent do Tanzanian parents consider the effect of marital dissolution on children during their decision to separate? Do you think such a consideration, or lack thereof, will have any impact on the children?**

FP2: Women seem to consider the well-being of their children more than

Insight on children: mothers are more sensitive than fathers

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men do. Men always have the expectation that everything will be well and they can do everything - even if the children remain with them.

Men are not close and caring in the day-to-day needs of the children; this makes them somehow detached from the children with less feeling, especially during the separation.

FP1: It is important for the parents to know how to repair the negative effects of their separation on the children. It helps to start focusing the child on what might happen on their way towards their destiny; they should be shown the broad picture and start to see how they might fit in so that they are ready to face reality rather than being caught by the surprises of life.

Prevent: consider children's life in the midst of separation process

Informing children: help them know the reality and how to cope

FP3: By informing them beforehand, children may be able to offer their parents some advice or some of their views on what might be done to bring about some relief. Some of these children who were told, or who knew what was going to happen facilitate the reconciliation of their parents.

Informing children: considering their views and advice

Knowing the negative or positive effects of separation on their children helps parents to choose what is best for their children - for instance, parents may decide to separate when their children will benefit from their separation or they will protect their relationship from separation when there might be a negative impact on their children.

Insight on children: advantages of having insight on children

FP6: By protecting their relationship from a break up for the sake of their children will also give the children a lesson in how parents need to

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place their children first. It may make it easier for them to face the same circumstance when it occurs to them later in life.

It is easy for parents who have a good parent-child relationship to consider the children if they have a tendency to sit together and discuss issues related to their children. If they are only immersed in their fights, then the welfare of the children will always be at stake. New couples need to learn to sit together and discuss issues regarding their children's well-being and to consider the welfare of their children in the midst of their conflicts.

Insight on children: determined by a positive parent-child relationship
Insight on children: hindered by frequent conflicts
Prevent: considering children's wellbeing during divorce process

R: **To what extent do you think parents' insight into the effect of marital dissolution on children can be related to the number of street children and children in Children's Centres in Tanzania?**

FP1: When parents protect their relationship from break up, they are automatically protecting their children from ending up on the streets. They might not know it - thinking that they are just caring for their children - but actually they are doing a great job of reducing the number of street children.

Insight on children: reduces the influx of street children

Without considering the consequences for their children, separating parents are a good industry of producing street children. This means that the greater the rate of separation, the bigger the flock of children on the streets will be. Streets cannot give birth to children; only parents can give birth to children who, in some circumstances, may end up as street children.

Insight on children: reduces the influx of street children

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FP3: Not all children go onto the streets because of their parents' separation; some children have never had any reason for hope in their families and, therefore, they decide to search for it elsewhere.

Effect: hopeless life, a reason for street life

R: **Why do you think parents are seemingly reluctant to make children aware of their decision to break up? In what way can such reluctance affect children?**

FP2: Traditionally, marital issues are not shared with the children.

Informing children: 1. factors for not disclosing, tradition

In the life-system in Tanzania, as in many other African societies, families are not transparent in terms of various problems. Sharing information within the family about problems is not regarded as important.

2. no transparency

The majority of couples are full of anger and bitterness towards each other; they don't see any value in sharing what is in their hearts with their children.

3. avoiding disposing parents' pain into children

Sometimes couples are not honest; what makes them separate may not be communicated for various reasons; it is obvious that what is given as the reason in most cases is not. Because these parents are scared to communicate the realities to their children.

4. covering the shame of one or both parents from children

FP4: Parents should not tell their children lies when they decide to divorce - for instance, some mothers tell their children that their father is travelling and when they continue to question her she tells them to keep quite. When parents respond positively and honestly to children's questions it helps them cope.

Informing children: informing children helps coping

FP6: Some parents are scared of some reactions and difficult questions from

Informing children: factors for not disclosing, avoiding

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their children, such as if children ask their parents: "What was the reason you gave birth to us if you knew you will separate one day?" Parents are not prepared to hurt their children's feelings, so they keep it a secret. — negative reactions

FP1: Some children may seem happy after being told of their parent's decision to separate, but inside they do hurt and they can only accept it in a negative way. This hurt may continue into adulthood and to their later relationships. — Effect: long-term effect of separation on children

FP5: If parents discuss problems with children, they should not just share the problems with them in order to inform them but also allow them space for any ideas they may have. Parents should consider ideas given by their children; sometimes this helps the children from being too greatly affected by their parents' separation. — Informing children: considering children's views reduces the impact

Even if our culture does not allow parents to share marital problems with their children, especially when they plan to separate, they should know that involving and informing children about family issues especially during separation process helps them psychologically; it prepare them emotionally to face the reality which is sometimes inevitable. This makes them more emotionally and psychologically aware and prepared than if they were just caught by surprise. — Informing children: helps children to cope

R: **Which factors determine custodianship? To what extent are children affected by custodial decision?**

FP5: The majority of children automatically remain with their mothers, although in some families there are some fights and battles over the — Custodianship: majority remain with mothers

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custody of the children. These fights and misunderstandings sometimes affect the child. There are is an example of a child who have died mysteriously, as a result of witchcraft, when one parent was dissatisfied with the decision of not being the custodian of the child - they call it "*tukose wote*" or "let both of us miss it."

Custodianship: battles over children damages

FP2: Sometimes there are tribes that insist that the children remain with the father - for instance, the Chaga from Kilimanjaro - while other tribes, like the Nyakyusa, insist that the children to stay with the mother.

Custodianship: sometimes determined by tribes

No actual decisions are taken when it comes to living agreements; it is an automatic thing for the young children to choose to remain with their mother. Factors that determine this automatic response include closeness or an attachment of the children to the mother, her care and age.

Custodianship: factors for custodianship, age, care and attachment

FP1: When marital dissolution occurs, sometimes paternal relatives, such as aunts accept responsibility for the child/children just to show that the paternal side cares, but the reality is that they neither love these children nor are they planning to help them. The majority of these children face difficulties living with their paternal or maternal relatives; some are turned into houseboys or housemaids, while other become "shamba boys" who take care of the animals or garden. Some of these children escape to the streets when they are disappointed. It has happen many times that relatives choose to stay with the children of broken homes to make house-helpers of them.

Custodianship: disadvantages of remaining with relatives

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R: **To what extent do the effects of marital dissolution on children**

FP3: **vary according to age and gender?**

The effect will depend on who loved the non-resident parent most: if the non-resident parent, such as the father, was loved by his daughter, then the daughter will suffer and vice-versa; it depends which child was most emotionally connected to the non-resident parent. — Effect: depend on the extent of attachment to non-resident parent

In general, boys are mostly affected when their mother leaves home or when they are separated from their mother, while girls suffer when they are separated from their father. — Effect according to gender: determined by who leaves home

FP2: The culture in Tanzania nurtures girls to remain in the home and not want to be away from the home even in tough times. Boys, however, are free to move around and for this reason boys are at risk of negative peer influence and other negative behaviours which results in their taking to the streets because of their freedom to seek life outside the home. — Effect according to gender: boys are more vulnerable of behaviour problems

FP5: However, in these circumstances girls might be more affected than boys because boys may get some help, like being given food, when they go begging on the streets or eating in the neighbourhood. Girls may stay at home; go to sleep hungry; and be abused, but they try to tolerate it. (For example Child 6 left two sisters at home) — Effect according to gender: girls are affected more than boys

R: **Can you identify any positive effects on children based on their parents' separation?**

FP2: There are positive things, depending on how the family was structured. When parents (couples) from different religions decide to separate - and if religion was also an issue for their differences - the children may — Positive effect: children's freedom to choose religion

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get some relief by choosing between their father's and their mother's religion. (A personal experience from one of the caregiver)

If the relationship was characterised by frequent fights, the children may get some relief from the unfriendly and tension filled family environment when the noise, arguments and daily fights between parents come to an end. Some children who were highly disturbed by their parents' fights are happy living at the Centres.

Positive effect: relieved from continuous conflicts

FP2: There are children who have been in strong conflict with their fathers because of how they abused their mothers; this enmity between the children and the father makes children take their mother's side and they always take a stand against their father. In these kinds of families the enmity only ends when the parents decide to separate. In this scenario separation becomes a gateway to peace for both the mother and her children.

Positive effect: an end to unhealthy father-child relationship

FP4: Sometime children themselves take two antagonistic sides: those who side with the father and those who side with the mother. This situation increases the gap between the parents themselves and at this point separation can be a great relief.

Positive effect: an end to family antagonistic camps

FP1: In families where there is some conflict between the parents, the children sometimes aspire to an inheritance from the family's property - then property seems to be a catalyst in the children's battles. The parents' separation may, however, be a good indication to the children that they are not likely to get anything because the property will be distributed between the mother and the father and will not go to any child.

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If the separation occurs when children are at a very young age, it is a good thing because they will not be affected negatively by the abuse or bad behaviour of their parents. They will grow up experiencing peace and harmony at home rather than in an environment where they experience constant battles.

Positive effect: protecting young ones from negative social learning

R: **Which policy or law in the country do you know of that governs the welfare of children during and after marital dissolution?**

FP6: **What does this law/policy state?**

We do not deal much with policies or laws concerning children because no policies or laws work in this country; only international laws and policies seem to work. Tanzanian laws and policies are only on paper; they are not applied to the real environment.

Laws and policies: They are unimplemented and impractical

FP1: In dealing with children at the Centres, we are very disappointed with how laws and policies regarding children are enforced in this country. Tanzania, as a country, doesn't have its own views when it comes to the implementation of children's rights. Everything which is presented on Children's Day, and at other children's ceremonies, remains at the ceremony grounds. Political leaders just talk to please the people, but nothing is really implemented.

Laws and policies: They are unimplemented and impractical

FP2: We are just copying and pasting international laws and policies; nothing original is ours to reflect the real environment of our children.

Laws and policies: Irrelevant in Tanzanian context

R: **How do you think the negative effects of marital dissolution on children can be minimized by involving parents, the community and policy-makers?**

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FP5: The community needs to assume responsibility for the care of children; children should be owned by the community, not only by the family. Everyone needs to be responsible for other people's children; marriage and children's policies should back this up. — Prevent/minimize: community involvement and commitment

FP6: Policy should prioritize the affairs of the children because they are tomorrow's nation and this should be propagated with actions and sincere hearts - not just words and mere slogans. — Laws and Policy: Implementable and realistic in favour of children

FP3: Couples should ensure that they protect their relationships from breaking up; they should learn to deal with their problems as these problems belong to them as a couple - not to the community. Couples are the ones who make the community; everything that is done as a stimulus to any changes needs to be done at the family level. If families are damaged, then the clan is damaged as well as the community, the village, and the nation at large. If leader's, who makes decision and policies, are also from problematic families then we can expect nothing good from them. — Prevent: learn to deal with problems and differences; Prevent/minimize: family as source of change

FP4: There must be a good relationship and understanding between paternal and maternal in-laws. If these two sides relate well, then there are fewer chances that children will be affected when their parents separate. In cases where marital dissolution is inevitable the two sides of in-laws should ensure that the well-being of the children is respected and not abused. The in-laws have a great opportunity to protect the relationships of their sons and daughters; however, if they are also involved in conflict or misunderstanding, in-laws are a catalyst — Prevent/minimize: in-laws hands off in couples' issues

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in widening the social gap between the couples. They can sometimes be poisonous in couples' marriage if the couples are not very careful.

ADDITION INTERACTION DURING MEMBER CHECKING

Why Tanzanian parents decide to separate?

It is not easy for one parent carrying the burden of the family when one parent decide to concentrate in useless things outside home, for such reason many decide to separate rather than keeping on calling themselves married (FGD 1. P4). — Family neglect

When a woman is uneducated and her family is poor it is often very easy to get married at a young age and thereafter separating in no time (FGD 1, P6) — Poverty and low level of education

If a husband is uneducated, he cannot get a good job so he cannot bring food at home and even when he bring food his supply is often not consistent, this situation usually overburden the wives especially if she is also lacking any income (FGD 1. P2) — Lack of stable job

Some couples especially women decide to end marriage after realising that everything they ever wished for a marriage is no more there, the husband is poor, the family is struggling and no hope for the future, in this point it is easy for the two to call it off (FGD 1. P1) — Disappointment after being overambitious

Effect on children's psycho-social functioning

Even when children observe conflict between their parents, still they hate a parent who beat or abuse another (FGD 1, P2). — Effect of parent-child relationship

It doesn't matter how old are you but if you experienced hardships resulted from marital dissolution of parents you will continue feeling hurt and depressed (FGD1, P3)

Awareness on laws and policies about marriage and children

The Law of the child in Tanzania is like a toothless dog, it speaks a lot of things but there is not any policy to implement what is said into reality in helping the suffering of children and poor custodial parents following marital dissolution (FGD1, P4). — Impractical laws and policies

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APPENDIX E

ETHICAL CLEARENCE CERTIFICATE

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA
Faculty of Education

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**CLEARANCE NUMBER :** EP 12/06/02
DEGREE AND PROJECT	PhD Effect of marital dissolution on early adolescents' academic and psychosocial well-being
INVESTIGATOR(S)	Chrissioner Mauki
DEPARTMENT	Educational psychology
DATE CONSIDERED	12 March 2014
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	APPROVED

Please note:

For Masters applications, ethical clearance is valid for 2 years

For PhD applications, ethical clearance is valid for 3 years.

CHAIRPERSON OF ETHICS COMMITTEE Prof Liesel Ebersöhn

DATE 12 March 2014

CC Jeannie Beukes
Liesel Ebersöhn
Prof R Ferreira

This ethical clearance certificate is issued subject to the following condition:

1. It remains the students' responsibility to ensure that all the necessary forms for informed consent are kept for future queries.

Please quote the clearance number in all enquiries.

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APPENDIX F

EXCERPTS FROM RESEARCH DIARY AND FIELD NOTES

Custodial fathers' limited supervision and care

When children are left in the hands of custodial fathers they continue well with going to school though the performance might be questionable.

Effect on academic: custodial father limited care and supervision

Children's unawareness to parents' conflicts and cause

The majority of young children report that they rarely see conflict between their parents contrary to what was reported by parents themselves, it is assumed that children in the context of Tanzania do not get the opportunity to observe parents fighting. Conflicts are treated as confidential and children are left to be the victims of those conflicts. (Reflection following child interview 3 and 11 on 20 November, 2012 and December 14 2012)

Informing children: a need for parents to open up to children

Step mothers taking advantage of fathers' inability to proper parenting

The fathers do not seem to have time to check on the lives of their children when they are in the care of their stepmothers and so the stepmothers apparently take advantage of the situation by scheming and reporting negatively on the children. Sometimes the fathers seem to believe everything they are told by their wives (the stepmothers); the majority of these mothers seem to make negative comments about the children (Reflection following child interview 5 on November 20th 2012 and Parent interview 11 on 10 December 2012)

Effect: limited care form custodial father

Effect: false accusations from step mothers

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Negative impact of post-divorce intimate relationships on children's psycho-social well-being

Post-divorce relationships of custodial parents seem to affect children in many ways in that the focus of money and other spending seems to be focused on the woman/women and the children have behavioural problems - for instance, the display of early sexual activity especially when they are exposed to the unethical, intimate conduct of a custodial parent (Reflection following child interview 6 and 9 on 22 and 28 November 2012)

Effect: spending family resources in post-divorce affairs

Effect: post-divorce relationship may risk children morals

Children's feelings of fear and insecurity

The majority of children from broken families seem to be scared of harm - whether perceived or real - such as beatings, strong punishment and strong verbal reprimands. In order to avoid these they usually escape whenever they sense danger, harm or pain (Reflection following child interview 5 and 7 on 14 January 2013)

Psycho-social effect: feelings of insecurity

Children's guilty feelings

Some children suffer when assuming that they might be part of their parents' separation (Reflection following child interview 2 on 15 November 2012)

Psycho-social effect: feelings of guilty

The effect of being raised by grand parents

Children, who have been raised by their grandparents, seem to display more problems in terms of their academic development and their behaviour - due to improper parenting (Reflection following child interview 7 on November 20th 2012, parent interview 3 on December 3 2012 and parent interview 10 on 8 December 2012)

Effect: improper parenting from grand parents

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Causes of pre and post-divorce conflicts

Conflict between couples (whether pre- or post-divorce) appears to be caused mostly by the husband's/father's irresponsibility, cruelty and unfaithfulness (Reflection following parent interviews 1, 3,6,11 and 12)

Reason for separation: irresponsibility, unfaithfulness and abuse

A good number of women seem to be unable tolerating husbands who were coming home late or sleeping outside home because of alcohol, they were also tired of frequent illness of their husband due to alcohol and lack of eating (15 January 2013).

Alcoholism and unfaithfulness

The majority of the wives were able to tolerate a number of problems from their husbands, some problems were easily solved through discussions and family meetings but when marital unfaithfulness was mentioned almost every woman seemed unable to tolerate (Reflection following interviews with custodial parents (mothers): 12 January 2013)

Nature and prevalence of post-divorce conflicts in Tanzanian couples

It seems the assumption that divorced couples in Tanzania suffers post-divorce conflicts might be reversed, The majority of divorced couples do not appear to communicate after separation because the men usually forget about their children and the women give up fighting for child maintenance - this results in a total disconnection between the family and the father. The only misunderstanding reported after separation is when mothers' struggles for children maintenance to their ex-husbands, to majority mothers these struggles had never been productive. (Reflection following parent interviews 11 and 12)

Effect: disconnection of the non-resident father

Post-divorce conflicts: children maintenance

Impact of continuous marital conflicts on parent-child relationship

Children are not only affected by the physical separation of parents but also with constant conflicts and periods of turmoil that occurs when parents are heading to separation. These may affect both academic and psycho-social development of the children involved. (Reflection

Effect: continuous conflicts affects children academic and psycho-social

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following child interviews 1, 2, 10, and parent interviews 3, 11, and 12).

Post-divorce conflicts and enmity between separated parents increases the negative impacts of marital dissolution on the children involved. (Reflection following child interviews 9 and 6)

Effect: post-divorce conflicts increase impacts

In various circumstances of family problems it has been assumed that fathers are problematic, abusive, and source of conflicts but on a contrary there are families which mothers were unfriendly, abusive, and hostile to children. Children who were left in such custodianship suffered much on their psychological wellbeing (Reflection following child interviews 12)

Effect: more worse if children are left under abusive mother

Effect of parent-child relationship on visitations

The desire of the children to visit their non-resident parent seems to be determined largely by the child-parent relationship that existed before the separation; the majority of the children seem to be angry with their fathers because of the pain they caused them (Reflection following child interviews 11, 6 , and 9: 19 December 2012)

Visits and contact: determined by parent-child relationship

Advantages and disadvantages of children visitations

Advantage: Children reported to be happy when visit their non-resident fathers even if they knew that he was the source of conflict with their mothers or he was the cause to the pain they were going through (Reflection following parent interviews 2, 4, 6 and 12)

Visits and contact: determined by parent-child relationship

Disadvantage: Child visitations to the non-resident parent (usually the father) sometimes seem to be abused by the children. Some children

Visits and contact: unmanaged visits may jeopardize children welfare

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appear to have gone their own way (sleeping with boyfriends, girlfriends, and peers) when they pretended to visit their non-resident parents. These tendencies have, apparently, contributed to a lot of moral degradation (Reflection following child interviews 9, 10 and parent participant 1: 16 November 2012)

Young aged children and the impact of parent's separation

Children whose parents separated when they were under three years of age seem to remember less or nothing at all about the whole separation process and its impact on them (Interviews on 14 December 2012

Effect: according to age, young children remember less

Boys and girls tolerance over the effects of marital dissolution

Boys seem to have less tolerance than girls when parents are going through a process of separation and so they make an early decision to leave home. This might account for why there is a majority of boys on the streets and in the centres rather than girls as girls seem to remain at home and take care of their siblings and help the custodial parent (Reflection following child interview 6 and FGD 2: 11 January 2013).

Effect: according to gender, boys are more vulnerable

Boys outnumbered girls' in this study; at the first centre - despite accommodating both genders - only boys showed up as victims of marital dissolution. It seems that from broken families the boys who are on the street outnumber the girls. It appears that the majority of girls are left at home with custodial parents or step-parents (Reflection following FGD 1 and 2).

Effect: according to gender, boys are more vulnerable

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Custodial parent's socio-economic status and children's well-being

Effect: less to children under stable custodial mother

Children who remained with custodial parents (usually mothers) who are financially well displayed less academic and psycho-social impacts compared to those who remained with poor custodial parents. (Reflection following child interviews 4 and 11)

Effect: burden on the custodial mother parent

The majority of custodial mothers who are financially stable reported that raising children alone has been a very hard task - despite having money to support their children (Reflection following parent interview 2 and a debriefing session with parent of child 11)

Effect: low socio-economic status of custodial mothers

The majority of custodial mothers seem to be involved in petty businesses, such as selling fruit, khangas, vegetables, ground nuts, grilled maize and in weaving hair as well as in money circulation games, like 'upatu'. All these activities are done to just be able to afford to put food on the table and to keep the children alive after the husbands have left them - at this point school does not appear to be a priority. It seems that the mothers are forced to resort to these activities because the majority of the non-resident fathers are irresponsible (Reflection following parent interviews 3, 9, 10 and 12)

Effect: dependency on relatives

The majority of custodial mothers who were not financially stable ended up sending their children to relatives (brothers, uncles, grandparents, etc.) so that they could be assisted with their educational and life costs. This shows how the separation of parents may add an extra burden on relatives (Reflection following parent interviews 5, 6, 7, 10 and 11: 10 January 2013)

Is it about the money or the person? It is suggested that children of

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separated parents experience difficulties in their academic and emotional well-being even when they remain in the custody of a financially strong father. This may be due to the absence of a caring and loving mother who was always there - paying close attention to each detail related to the children's schooling, such as homework, cleanliness, communication with teachers, school, etc. (Reflection following FGD 1: 17 December, 2012. pg. 7).

Effect: an absent mother's effect

Positive effect of marital dissolution on children

Although the majority of the children seem to have suffered negatively from the impact of parents' separation, some seem to consider the separation as a positive challenge and take advantage of every opportunity that comes their way and are resourceful for the sake of their custodial parents and siblings. Some considered themselves to be fathers or heads of families and, therefore, were ready to assume all related responsibilities. This attitude seems to have extended them far above the level they would have achieved if their parents had been together (Reflection following child interviews 2 and 12: 18 January 2013)

Positive effect: positive challenge, an opportunity to learn

Some children related experiencing feelings of discomfort whenever their divorced parents thought of reuniting; these children claimed that they were better off without their non-resident parents. In such circumstances conflict may have arisen between the child and the custodial parent who was planning to allow the non-resident parent in

(Reflection following child interviews 4 and 11: 31 January 2013)

Positive effect: better without the non-resident parent

Even when children consider the separation of their parents very positively and where there is a positive impact on them, somewhere in

Effect: negative effect override the positive effect

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their heart/life they still acknowledge some negativity about their parents' separation (Reflection following child interviews 2, 4 and 11: 28 January 2013)

Effect of marital dissolution on parents involved, an indirect impact on children's well-being

Effect: stressful custodial parent, indirect effect on children

Custodial parents who are stressful as the result of marital dissolution and its consequences are reported to be the cause of physical, verbal and emotional abuse to their children. Children who are left in their hands are at great risk. (Reflection following child interviews 6 and 12: 19 January 2012)

Effect: negative influence from affected mothers

The majority of women who were emotionally disturbed following a marital dissolution seem to have had a negative influence on their children, especially the girls. For example: a mother who told her daughter "never [to] accept nonsense from a man, be strong to fight any man who makes any joke on you "mummy told me I should not let any boy beat me, I must fight back" (Reflection following parent interviews 2: 28 January 2013)

The impact of changes of living arrangements and relocations on children's academic development

Effect on academic: relocations

When relocating increases, the children appear to became frustrated with, and affected in, their school performance and most of these children have to repeat a class several times because of the relocations (Reflection following child interviews 8 and 9. 26 November, 2012)

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Importance of parents' insight on children during the process of marital dissolution

The majority of the mothers seem to be aware of, and seem to have considered, the potential effect of a marital dissolution on their children before they separated or during the process of separation but, apparently, they had no alternative to avoid the separation. In other words, for them separation at that time appeared to be inevitable or seemed to be for the best (Reflection following parent interviews 6,10, 11 and 12).

Insight on children: pressure to divorce goes beyond insight on children

Children involvement in the process of marital dissolution

The majority of the children seem to think that if they were informed of their parents' separation they would have been able to talk to them about it and advise them - regardless as to whether or not their parents took their advice. Some children appear to think that their advice would have changed the situation for better and some claim that they had the right to be informed of anything that happened in the family that might affect their well-being in one way or another; when parents treat the separation process as confidential, the children seem to create a different picture in their minds (Reflection following child interviews 6, 8 and 9: 9 January 2013).

Informing children: informing and considering children views

Majority children accept that it would be better if they were informed about the plan to separate and where will they live prior to the separation itself. There seems to be a reluctant acceptance with some children that they were aware of the conflict between their parents and had predicted a separation somewhere in the future, but when the

Informing children: a need to be informed

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physical departure of one parent took place they were shocked (Reflection following child interviews 6, 7, 8, 9 and 12). However, two children insisted that children should not be told anything about parents' separation process at a young age until when they are matured enough (Reflection following child interviews 10 and 11).

Informing children: only when they are matured

It seems that children not only desire to be informed about their parents' plans to separate but also about the series of events that follow the separation, such as relocation, plans to remarry, visitations rights (Reflection following child interview 5: 11 January 2013). Some children showed their readiness to live somewhere else than living under the same roof with a step mother. (Reflection following child interview 5)

Informing children: desire to know family's whereabouts

Effect: a need to be away from step mothers

Parents' battles over the possession of children

The fighting of parents over the custody of the children seems to have a detrimental effect on the children's academic and psycho-social development. The impact appears to be very intense when the child is very young, it also seems to increase the enmity between the parents and may result in the neglect of the child by the father (Reflection following parent interviews 1, 2, 11 and child 9)

Effect: battle for children are detrimental to children

The separation process in the context of Tanzania

Whenever family meetings, consultations with religious leaders, meetings with social welfare officers or attending a reconciliation council takes place, a problematic parent, apparently, refuses to cooperate or is reluctant to attend meetings (Reflection following parent interviews 3 and 12).

Process: male parents uncooperative

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Three types of parent separations are reported in this study: the first is separation by means of a legal divorce. Very few couples have managed to go through the legal process up to court level; the second is through the writing of a 'talaka' by couples from the Muslim community; and the third is a normal separation which does not involve any documentation (Reflection following parent interviews 1, 3, 11 and 12). In my study only two parents managed to go through the first type of separation and acquire legal divorce papers, majority couples ended their relationships through normal separation.

Process: variations in separation process

The effect of street life on children's well-being

Children who happened to be neglected following parents' separation displayed more academic, psycho-social and health problems than children who were just living with their custodial parents. For instance, children at Centre 2 were observed to have skin diseases which resulted from sleeping in the dirty environment in the street. (Reflection following child interviews 3, 6 and 12: 18 December, 2012)

Effect: impact of child neglect

First divorce as a doorway to multiple divorces/ Divorce circle

I have observed that parents who have separated before seem to have a higher chance of divorcing again when they remarry, which suggests that a first divorce might lead to another divorce in the future (Reflection following child interview 5, parent interview 1, 6, 7, 9 and 12)

Effect: divorce circle, 1st divorce open door for other divorce

Divorce circle; The majority of separated parents also seem to come from divorced families and some are of the opinion that what happened

Effect: divorce circle, 1st divorce open door for other divorce

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in their marriage was exactly what had happened in their parents' marriage (Reflection following parent interviews 4, 5, and 9: 30 January 2013) The fact that their parents divorced makes them justify the separation even when it is not necessary.

Children's contradicting view on pre-divorce conflicts and the separation

For the majority of the children, seeing their parents in conflict - but still living together - does not appear to be a bad thing but the memory of separation 'parents parting ways' appears to be the hardest thing that they can recall. A good number of the children seem content to see their parents living together at home. After separation, however, very few children seem to enjoy life (Reflection following child interview 3: 22 January 2013).

Effect: children's desire to be raised by both parents

Couples ignorance on proper divorce procedures and other legal matters

In Tanzania very few marital breakup end in divorce, it seem that majority lack knowledge on legal divorce procedures. Marriages between couples of Muslim community end by husbands writing a 'talaka' to the wife. (Reflection following parent interviews 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10)

Process: couples' ignorance on divorce legal procedures
Process: non-legal procedures

Majority of parents/couples go through family, meetings, and consultations with religious leaders as well as through local government officers during the separation process. Very few manage to go through social welfare offices, reconciliation council to the court for a legal

Process: meetings involved
Process: very few afford legal process
Process: non-legal procedures

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divorce. Muslim couples rarely go through family meetings because to them divorce only require a husband to write a small divorce letter 'talaka' that makes the end of relationship. (Reflection following parent interviews 3, 6, and 9)

Couples/children conflicting view over separation

Sometimes separation might be seen as a solution to one or both couples; it helps them to breathe again after a long period of turmoil but on the other hand it is still detrimental to the children involved. Children still need both parents in their growing up process even when couples do not need each other, unless when one parent is extremely unfriendly or harmful to the children. (Reflection following parent interviews 2 and 6)

Effect: positive to parents but negative to children

Children's quest for a father figure

When children are angry with their non-resident father who has caused them pain in some way it does not mean that they do not long for a father in the home. Some miss their fathers but hate the way in which they behave; they would love to have a father-figure who is different in their lives (Reflection following child interview 2)

Effect: feeling of missing a proper father figure

Variations in how children cope with effects of marital dissolution

While with some children the negative impact of parents' separation on their academic and psycho-social development seems to last for a short period of time after the separation, there are others who take a long time to heal or who seem to be able to manage these effects (Reflection following child interviews 10 and 11). It seems the resilience level in

Effect: variations in coping among children

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them is built differently, and that determine the way each child is able to cope with various life course events (parents separation being one of them) at different pace.

Effects of marital dissolution on children's relationship with non-resident parents

The majority of the children seemed to hate their fathers who either left them or who left them with their mothers; somewhere, somehow these children have come to experience difficulty and seem to blame their fathers (Reflection following child interviews 1, 2 and parent interview 12: 4 December 2014)

Effect: damage father-child relationship

Determinants of the effects of marital dissolution on children

Socioeconomic status of the custodial parent: Children who remained with custodial mothers who were not dependant on their husbands before separation are seen to do better academically and emotionally than those whose mothers were largely dependent on their husbands (Reflection following child interviews 10 and 11: 12 December 2012)

Effect: less to financially stable custodial parents

Insufficiency of the step parents' care

However good the step mother was, children seemed to prefer being under the care of their biological mothers (Reflection following child interview 7)

Effect: children longing to be raised by their biological mothers

Irresponsibility of the non-resident parent

Fathers were reported to be irresponsible in terms of child support - something that created a great deal of misunderstanding between the parents. It was reported that some fathers told the local authorities or

Post-divorce conflicts: irresponsibility to child maintenance

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social welfare offices that they were taking care of their children when they were not (Reflection following parent interviews 3, 6, 10, 11, and 12: 22 January 2013).

Predictors of marital dissolution

The majority of the parents – especially the mothers - who were married or started families at a very young age also, apparently, experience their first divorce at a younger age (Reflection following parent interviews 4, and 7: 12 November 2012)

Reason for separation: early marriage

The common reasons for separation were husband having an affair, an attempt to marry a second wife, irresponsibility and alcoholism (Reflection following parent interviews 4, 6, 8, and 12)

Reason for separation: affairs, irresponsibility, alcoholism

The women appeared concerned about their own well-being and that of their children if they continued living with abusive husbands (Research diary. 18 January 2013).

Of the other factors that seem to put a marriage at risk, poverty appears to add the most pressure on the wives to lose interest in their marriages (Reflection on the discussion with parent participant 12: 7 January 2013)

The majority of custodial mothers seemed to struggle to support every aspect of the family while their husbands were irresponsibly imbibing alcohol and having illicit liaisons with other women - even before separation. When the situation persisted these mothers reportedly got fed up and decided to separate (Reflection following parent interviews 4, 9, and 12: 11 November, 2012).

Reason for separation: affairs, irresponsibility, alcoholism

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At times when couples were in conflict or times when separation was once mentioned, often disputes were seemingly reported to in-laws. If the in-laws were supportive enough most likely couples would resolve but if in-laws took sides, conflict among couples seemed to escalate (Reflection following interviews with parent participant: 22 December 2012).

Influence of in-laws

Although a lack of support and influence from relatives does not appear to be a cause for many marriages falling apart, it does seem to be a major cause of conflict and friction among couples which exposes their relationships to the risk of breaking up (Reflection from caregivers: 22 December 2012).

Parents who reunited after a first separation with expectations that one might change his/her behaviours (irresponsibility, alcoholism, womanising and brutality) they later ended up in a permanent separation after one realized that the partner who was expected to change was becoming worse. (Reflection following parent 3, 6 and 12)

Effect: 1st divorce open room for other

Marital dissolution and issues related to living arrangement

The majority of the children often seem to remain with their mothers due to several reasons, including age, love and attachment to their mothers and irresponsibility and carelessness on the part of the majority of fathers. Even at times when court rulings granted custody to the father, there are times when the children ended up in the hands of their mothers - especially when the mothers were dissatisfied with the care they received from the fathers (Reflection following parent interviews 2, 4, and 8: 28 January 2013).

Custodianship: factors for living arrangements, age, attachment, father's irresponsibility

Effect: limited care from custodial fathers

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Cultural/tribal patterns in issues related divorce in Tanzania

I have observed some tribal patterns in issues related to marital dissolution in Tanzania. For instance, parent participants from southern regions, especially Lindi, do not stay with their wives or husbands for long; the majority have been married more than once; and there is a tendency to start with sexual activities at an early age (Reflection following parents interview 7, 8, 9, 10, and 12)

Reason for separation: tribal patterns on issues of divorce

FASCINATING FINDINGS

Types of parents' separation in Tanzania

Parents separation in families usually takes place in two forms (Internal and external separation of couples), the first form is when parents are separated physically, one being a non-resident parent and another a custodial parent, the second form is when parents are still living together under the same roof but they neither communicate nor sharing a bed, their sexual life is dead and they don't talk or share anything. If parents are in internal separation and if they engage in frequent conflicts, chances are higher that children would be more affected than when parents decide to part ways. (Reflection following FGD 1: 8 December, 2012)

Process: internal and external separation

Children's quest for revenge

Some children from broken families strive to perform well in school just to be successful in their life and use the opportunity to revenge to anyone (non-resident parent or step parent) that caused a pain in them in the past. (Reflection following child interview 1 and FGD1).

Effect: a quest for revenge

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Effect of marital dissolution on children's academic development

As marital dissolution seems to affect the children negatively, children from divorced families may end up attending school physically but not learning anything (Reflection following FGD 1)

Effect on academic: attending school but not learning

"Most of these children's exercise books have very few pages which have been written on; different subjects are mixed up in one exercise book; and the arrangement of what has been written is very poor, generally, there is no proper organization of class works and materials" (Reflection following the analysis of children's academic documents: 3 December 2012)

The mismatch between high rate of parent's separation and the increased street children

Not every child in the street is the result of marital dissolution or orphan hood; some children came in the street because of being lazy, running away from rural life (farming and keeping animals) which is perceived to be awkward. Some children started to hate school when they were still with their parents so it was easy to be negatively influenced by peers to flee to the city where they can make cheap money. Majority of these children pretend to be orphans or victims of parent's separation while it is not. This fact brings the mismatch between the increased rate of marital dissolution and the increase of street children. (Reflection following FGD 2)

Insight on children: insights on the effect do decrease street children

Double tragedy in children's academic development

The struggles, hardships and other negative impacts of parents separation experienced by children hinder them from performing well in

Effect on academic: double tragedy in school

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school (contrary to previous time). On the other hand, teachers by being unaware of what was going on in the life of these children, they punished them, whipped them, suspended them and sometimes expelled some children thinking that their poor performance was a result of groups and other bad behaviours. (Reflection following FGD 1)

Children in the hands of an abusive custodial mother

The father of Child 12 ran away from home - leaving the children with their stressful mother who was so abusive and problematic that the children desired to go with their father just to be far away from their abusive mother, but it was not possible. The situation for these children seems worse psycho-socially than for those who had an abusive father. This is contrary to the majority belief that many times it is the women who are the ones running away from abusive husbands and not the husband running away from an abusive and alcoholic wife (Reflection following child interview 12: 23 January 2013)

Effect: impact of living under hostile custodial mother

Laws and policies regarding children of broken homes

The majority of the parents appear to know little about issues of the law and of policies related to children. Few parents seem to bother to learn about them; apparently, only an educated few will discuss legal-related issues concerning children and this situation makes the majority of the population victims of circumstance. The situation may improve only if there are deliberate efforts to make people aware of laws and policies regarding marriage and divorce and their children (Reflection following interview with parent 3, focus group discussion 1 and 2: 19 November 2012)

Population unawareness on issues related to laws and policies on children and marriage

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Effect of stressful parents on the children

Marital dissolution affects parents as well. The majority of parents seemed to be confused and frustrated soon after they had separated and these frustrations made them abusive with their children – causing a great risk for the children in their custody (Reflection following interview with child 6 and 12: 17 December 2012).

Effect: indirect effect of marital dissolution on children. Parents frustration

ADDITIONAL INTERACTION DURING MEMBER CHECKING

Effect of parents conflict on children

When parents were in continuous conflicts everything that unfolds in the separation process becomes a surprise to children, this makes them more distracted (Reflection following a discussion with caregivers: 30 January 2013.)

Effect of parents conflict

Why Tanzanians couples decides to separate?

Lack of stable income due to being job less added pressure for separation to a lot of women even in times when they tried tolerating other behaviours such as infidelity and over drinking (Reflection following a discussion with parent participant 6: 25 January 2013).

Lack of job and stable income

Effect on children

Children who ended up on street displayed more negative impact of parent's marital dissolution than those who remained with custodial parents, likewise, the majority of children who lived with their custodial mothers were emotionally healthier than those who ended up with step parents (Reflection following the discussion with teachers and caregivers in Centre 2: 22 January 2013)

More negative effect on children who ended up on street

Disclosing marital dissolution to children

It seems that not a single child was informed about the possibility of their parents' separation and being involved in the processes following the separation. However, some children seemed to predict the separation before it occurred (Reflection following the interviews with parents: 26 December 2012).

No disclosure of separation to children

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Awareness on laws and policies about marriage and children

Un awareness of people on laws and policies

The majority of couples seemed to be less educated and are lazy in making effort becoming aware of laws and policies related to marriage and children (Reflection following interviews with custodial parents; 15 December 2013).

Participants in focus group discussion and parents seemed to be dissatisfied with how laws, policies and procedures are implemented regarding marital issues and children's well-being (Reflection following discussion with teachers and caregivers: 17 December 2013).

Role of the government and its leaders

Disappointment from local government leaders

The majority of couples seem to be disappointed consulting the local government leaders during initial processes of reconciliation because these leaders were reportedly telling couples 'if you are tired of each other just go away, why holding to a person who does not love you? (Reflection following interview with parent participant 12: 20 December 2013).

Government organs need some reformation

If the government from local to the central levels would have created conducive and amicable environment for couples' processing their divorce and child maintenance, the negative effect of marital dissolution that seems to exist would have been reduced to a large extent (Reflection from focus group discussion: 19 January 2014)

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APPENDIX G

INITIAL PHASE OF IDENTIFYING POSSIBLE CATEGORIES

Reasons for marital dissolution

Extra marital affair

Father's irresponsibility after having an affair

Alcoholism, violence, physical abuse to wives

Extra marital affair leading to separation

Torture and violence

Parent's antagonistic attitude

Dishonesty between parents

Frequent hurts

Reduced family support because of women

Superstitious belief

Superstitious belief

Clinging with parents, not ready to live far from parents

Superstitious beliefs

Clinging with parents, not ready to let parents go

Irresponsibility and carelessness

Diminishing of love

Substance abuse

Violence and abuse

A history of divorcing

Extra marital affair

Irresponsibility and carelessness

Irresponsibility and carelessness

Alcoholism

Early marriage

Pre-marital non-matured relationships

Children obtained outside wedlock

Suspicious of an affair

Suspicious of an affair

Violence

Conflicts, a gate way to separation

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Conflicts

Violence

Womanizing behaviour

Jealousy

A big fight

Conflicts and violence

Conflicts reason to depart

Conflict and violence

Arguments, conflicts and fights brings separation

Conflict and fights

Alcoholism

Alcoholism

Extra marital affair

Irresponsibility

Insecurity of husbands to wives economic power

External influences

Marriage due to influences from parents

A very short time of knowing each other

No thorough pre-marital counselling

Holding ties with parents not let parents go

Failure to manage differences

Over drinking

Irresponsibility of one parent

Disclosure of a separation process to children

Children limited insight into cause of separation

Children unaware of separation

Parents hiding the cause

Unaware of separation

Separation as a surprise

Early information helps

Potential role of children in advising

Children quest for the causer

A need to choose who to live with

Not informed

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Not informed, concluded based on circumstances

A quest to know the reality

A quest to know the now and after

Need for communication

Benefits of early disclosure

Non-disclosure result into hurt

Helps children to predict and cope

Need for children involvement

Children quest to know the family's whereabouts

Need to be informed

Need to be informed

Parents hiding the truth

Not informed, not prepared

Children become the last to know

A need to be informed and to be heard

Children's desire to be involved

Children are uninformed

Uniformed and unprepared

Separation as a surprise to children

Enquiring from children before making decisions

A need to be informed throughout the process

A need to be involved in giving out views

Desire to know the cause

A quest to know their destiny

Effect of marital dissolution

Poverty after separation, lack of basic needs

Effect of parents

Burden on relatives, grand mother

Effect on parents

Father disconnection affects visits

Aggression by father

Physical and verbal abuse on children

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APPENDIX H

EXCERPTS FROM FIELD JOURNAL

I did not use informal assessment activities as planned earlier before because all child participants were above 12 years old, instead I used children narratives to supplement information obtained from children's interviews. During narratives, children were giving their life stories, though it was long and in need of some guidance but it gave a clear picture of each and everything that happened in their lives. These narratives gave a flow of how events were chronologically flowing and how life course theory and multi-transition theory had relevance in their lives. To some children it was easy to follow the pattern of their life events through narration than through interviews.	Usefulness of narrative style
I experienced some challenge in obtaining children's behaviour related documents as it was not a normal culture in school and in centres to keep behavioural trend records. It was also a challenge to access academic documents for children who were living with custodial parents because majority of them were not able to continue with school.	Absence of academic documents to majority children
The decision to involve parents, teacher and caregivers in my study was productive and with effective results. The experiences that these people had towards children of broken homes (whether living with them at home or in the centres) gave a clear picture of how their lives were interwoven with issues resulted from parents' marital dissolution.	The interrelated nature of the effect of marital dissolution
Debriefing: Each group had a debriefing session in which I discussed with them what emerged during our first meetings and repeating informing them the way the data will be treated in regard to issues of anonymity and confidentiality. Each participant was happy and satisfied (29 January, 2013).	Participants satisfied with the research process
I did my interviews with three boys in centre 2. I am planning to come back for the remaining interviews in the next two or three days (20 November, 2012).	Boys outnumbering girls in the centres
I managed to conduct a focus group discussion with HOCET caregivers. The session was almost 3 hours and it was very productive (10 January, 2013).	

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I got late arriving at centre 2. I had a long narration from child 6, So we planned to do the interview session in the next day. I left the centre early because children were going for computer classes in the city centre (22 November, 2012).	
I went to do an interview with child 11 in his custodial home. The mother did not want to participate but allowed her son to participate in the study. However I managed to interview the elder son (15 years old) because the younger son was very young to remember things that happened during parents' separation (14 December, 2012).	Young children were less affected because of their immaturity
Majority of children ended up remaining with their mothers whether by the decision from family meetings, father's inability to take care of the children or by mothers forcing to remain with children. However majority of these children did not continue living with their mothers but were taken to live with maternal grandparents or maternal relatives due to the life's hardship of the custodial parent (Field journal, 12 December, 2012).	Overdependence on relatives
I had a focus group discussion with teachers and caregivers of centre 2 in one of selected class. I was in the centre since morning but we couldn't commence the session as some caregivers had other responsibilities, later we managed to seat together after lunch. I was also able to have my lunch with children, observing their daily living in the centre, I observed some bullying behaviour, shouting, banging doors that displays how street life have affected them (15 January, 2013)	Manifestation of negative effect of marital dissolution on children

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APPENDIX I

CHILDREN'S NARRATIVE ACCOUNTS

NARRATION 1

CHILD 6: 13 Years

Date: 22 November 2012

My study aims to explore how children like you have been positively or negatively affected by the separation of your parents. Throughout the narration of your story and the way in which you respond to my questions I will be able to measure the extent and effect of your parents' separation. Feel free to give details of your life and your experiences because your responses are going to help other children.

Can you please tell me your story?

I originally come from the Kagera Region but I moved to Dar es Salaam in 2003. I was born and raised by my parents in Kagera. My parents experienced some conflict with their neighbours that forced my father to flee to Dar es Salaam. We were taken to live with our grandmother. Life was not good there because I was punished almost every day as they thought that I was wetting the bed while it was my sister doing it, not me. During that time I also became sick with a skin disease.

Dependency on relatives

Later my mother got married to a soldier and we stayed with that man for eight months. One day my mother stole 400,000Tshs from that man and by adding some other money she got when she sold her piece of land, we escaped. We had a long walk to the train station where we took a train to Dar es Salaam with our mother. When we arrived in Dar es Salaam we heard that my father was living in "Bunju A". We went to Bunju to try to find my father but it was hard to locate him because he was using a different name. We later found him – he was keeping and taking care of cattle. We all helped with this job: my mother did the milking and my father did the grazing. At this time they enrolled me in kindergarten (pre-school).

Remarriage

Losing contact with a non-resident parent

After some time my father left that job and we went to stay in our little

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house which he constructed with his own hands. He later decided to sell the house and we rented another one. At this time my Mother had a "*genge*" – a table where she sold garden products and fruit. My mother was spending most of her time involved in her business and sometimes she used to come home late from market. My father started to suspect that she was having an affair, but my mother denied this. Then they had arguments that lasted a long time and my father decided to chase our mother away from home; she was told never to set foot in our home again. I remember it was in 2005. Infidelity as a cause of separation

I remained with my father. We were forced to move out of the house when our lease expired. My father was also changing jobs a lot – from cattle grazing to selling meat and working on sand trucks. Financial strain of the custodial parent

Time was passing and when I was in Grade 4, we saw our father starting a relationship with a beautiful girl who he used to bring home, telling us that we must respect her and consider her as our aunt. When my father separated from my mother and when he started to have a relationship with this woman he was very frustrated, very violent, and he beat us all the time. Infidelity

There was this incident when my sister was playing imitating my mother cooking in the kitchen. When my father saw her, he took a hot charcoal and burnt her hands. She later recovered well but was left with permanent scars. Child abuse

One day I went to school and unfortunately I lost my exercise book. When I came back home I was severely beaten until the neighbours came to rescue me. I made another mistake on another day and my father started beating me telling me to call the neighbours who always came to rescue me. I was severely beaten but I could do nothing and nobody came to rescue me this time. Child abuse Child abuse

If we asked for money from Father, he used to insult us and tell us to go and resurrect our mother who was dead and ask her for money. My father used to tell us that our mother was dead when it was not true; he

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sometimes told us that mom never loved us – he just wanted us to forget about her, hate her, and not to talk about her. *(Crying).* He told us that if we saw our mother we must cry loud and shout out as if we have seen a thief; the only thing he wanted is for us to take his side just because of their conflict. My father used to take our food and give it to his woman; she was also given money as well as other things that belonged to us. Whenever we ask for anything we were insulted but this woman was given everything she wanted. When she came to our home, especially when my father was sick, we saw them kissing. When this woman was sick, our father would not go to work but spend time at her house.

Family neglect due to extramarital affairs

There was a time when my father ordered me to wash his bloody underwear – a night when they had come back from an outing. I couldn't ask about the blood because I was scared of being beaten. Actually we were all happier when Father was away than when he was at home. If my father was not angry he would whip someone only 40 times, but if he was angry he would whip them up to 120 or 130 times. He used to chain our legs and our hands before he beat us.

Child abuse

It reached a point where if we cooked at home, my father would come and take the food and give it to his woman. It was painful because sometimes we were left with no food. He even woke us up at 1 a.m. in the morning to cook when they came from their outing. Our father had three women who he changed from time to time according to where he was going. Sometimes he used to tell us that he was going to his workplace but he was seen in bars and guest houses. When I discovered this I started to steal his money in the house instead of asking him for it. I also started selling empty bottles, mangoes, fish, scrapers and coconuts to earn some money. I was still a student at that time and all these activities affected my concentration at school. My father didn't know that I was engaged in these businesses. I told my siblings that they should never tell our father because the money I got helped them as well and if he knew everything would stop.

Family neglect due to extramarital affairs

Extra marital affairs

Children engaging in petty business

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After a long time of taking our father's money and returning from selling my stuff, my siblings started to see me as their hero. I would suffer and sacrifice for them and I was able to help them with some money. Sometimes my father used to ask where we got the money to buy snacks for breakfast and we used to lie. That was my life. Slowly I also started to beg. I would pretend that I needed some money for stationary and when someone helped I used the money for other things, like buying toys for my sisters. All this time the teachers at school knew that I was sick. Many people didn't know that I was a beggar. I didn't want anybody to know.

Truancy

One day I stole 900Tshs from my father's container. He took me to the local administrative officer saying that I had stolen 28,000Tshs; he also started beating and insulting me. He took me back home and chained my hands and my legs which caused my whole body to swell. I managed to escape after unchaining myself and ran away to Bunju "B" and then to Boko. After six months my father found me in Tegeta. He caught me, chained me, and took me to the police station. They warned me not to run away again but I kept thinking of escaping again because I knew if we got home I might be killed.

Child abuse

Child abuse as a result of an emotional unstable custodial parent

To me it wasn't hard to run away because I had already tested the street life. I didn't stay home for a long. My sister once told me that my father had said that one day he would kill me so I decided to run away again to streets. I stayed for some time, living on the streets, when a certain person convinced me to go and live with him at his place. Unfortunately, I didn't stay with him for many days before I decided to return to street life. Some people from this Children's Centre came to bring me here; I stayed at the Centre for few weeks but escaped to the streets again to beg. Finally, they took me to Manzese Centre after I had stayed on the streets for few days and thereafter I was transferred to the place where I am today.

Life in the street as a result of parents' separation

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