

Divorce and family instability among Muslim families: Mitigation of the effects on the holistic development of children

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Abstract

Divorce is one of the leading social challenges facing families today. The effects of divorce on holistic development of children is the concern as they are passed to generations. This formed the need the study which was carried out among Muslim families in Moyale sub-county of Marsabit County, Kenya. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design with use of questionnaires, interviews, and documentary analysis to collect data. The target population entailed 1203 people with a sample size of 123. The study found that utilization of mediators, adoption of parenting Islamic education programs, usage of children divorce support groups and proper communication can be mitigation measures on the effects of divorce on children's holistic development during the divorce process.

Keywords: Mitigation, Divorce Effects, Holistic Development, Muslim Families, Child Development, Family Instability

Introduction

Quite a good number of Islamic marriages are ending up in divorce despite the clear teaching of the Islamic law where marriage is viewed as a powerful bond with mutual affection and sacrifice. Muslim men and women are required to get married unless they are physically, mentally, or financially unable to get married. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) enjoined Muslims to marry so that they can keep their chastity intact and safeguard their moral integrity. Marriage also establishes a stable Muslim family where the offspring are provided with a suitable adherent and practicing environment.

Islam allows couples to divorce, but only in severe situations where divorce is the only solution. Hassan (1986) reveals that Islam has accepted it since in some cases the rejection of divorce threatens the peace and security of the family and both parties. Divorce is among the downfalls of children's life that affect holistic development throughout one's life. When they are between thirteen to nineteen years of age is when children are developing rapidly and rely on their parents for stability.

Kreider (2007) reports that according to the U.S. Census of 2004, 1.1 million adolescents experienced effects relating to divorce. Copen (2012) also reports that in the United States, American children experience their parents' divorce before the age of 18 can be a devastating experience for the children as well as the parents involved. It has physical, emotional, and social effects on children in future. Adeyemo (2006) asserts that one in two marriages in the United Kingdom and United State end up in divorce.

U.S. Bureau of the Census 2009 reports that failure of marriage has many ramifications to both the partners, especially woman who bears the brunt of stigmatization in the society, acquiring poor image and burden of bearing the children. Latest data from the 2009 American Community Survey, only 47 per cent reach age 17 in an intact married family.

Historical trend of divorce phenomena, among contemporary Muslim societies, revealed that whatever we shift from the feudal system to liberal and industrial society, the divorce possibility and frequency keep on increasing. The rapid growth of the number of divorces raised concerns among Islamic families Sharifi (2011). The rise in divorce cases raises a major concern for its effect on children. This increases chances of parental divorce affecting their social, emotional, intellectual and emotional well-being (Adofo & Etsey, 2016).

In Turkey which is predominantly Muslim, divorce rates differ substantially according to the region: the Aegean region on the western side of Turkey has the highest divorce rate at 2.05, while central-eastern Anatolia has the lowest rate at 0.49 (Turkstat, 2008). It has been observed that it is women mainly file for divorce in Turkey.

According to Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (2011), Muslim Divorce situation in Bangladesh is not different from the rest of the world, in 2011 Bangladesh the male divorce rate was 0.06% where it is lower than women 0.49%. Iran is not an exception, according to official statistics of Organization of Registration and Record of Iran shows that in 2006 alone, about 94000 cases, 258 cases per day, had been registered.

According to the Iran National Organization for Civil Registration, the divorce rate in Iran increased from 15.9% to 16.3% between 2011 and 2012. Although there are no recent generalized statistics on the rise in divorce rates in Gulf countries over the past three decades, Kuwait's figures indicate that the number of divorces has doubled over the past quarter-century. According to the Kuwait Ministry of justice respondents, 60 per cent of marriages are ending in divorce in 2017. The report does not only reveal increases in divorce but also decreases in the number of marriages.

According to the United Arab Emirate Statistics Centre, 1,922 divorce cases were recorded in 2016 as compared to 1,813 the previous year, while just 5,892 couples got married as compared to 6,037 in the same comparison period. Moreover, Divorce rates are on the rise in the United Arab Emirates, and the government is particularly concerned with the rising divorce rate among its citizens. Figures released by the United Nations show the United Arab Emirates has one of the highest rates of divorce in the Muslim world, between 2002 and 2004 the number of broken marriages in the country leapt 13 per cent pushing the annual figure to 12,974. Statistics from the Tawasel Centre for Training and Family show that one in four marriages among the whole population is breaking down. From the divorces, 42 per cent are a couple in their 20s. Experts are so concerned that a campaign has been launched to offer counselling sessions for young couples. These are designed to give them more realistic expectations of marriage and instill a more responsible attitude.

The Talk Magazine (1990) stated the following: "There were 32,524 South African children who were caught up in the pain of divorce in 1989." With statistics being quoted worldwide that one out of every three marriages ends in divorce and an article in the Daily News September 1990 claiming that, 73% of children in South Africa come from broken homes; and that 150,000 children have been affected by divorce in the last four years. Collins (2003) intimates that in South Africa one out of every two marriages ends in divorce. This means that 50% of young people come from broken homes. According to Statistics South Africa (2005), 32,484 divorces were recorded in 2005.

In Kenya according to a report by Gikonyo (2010) which was released by the Saturday Nation in April 2010, a total of 152 divorce cases were filed at Milimani Commercial Court in the year 1999. The cases increased to 386 by the year 2010. In Nairobi high court the divorce cases which numbered 163 in 2005 increased to 183 in 2010.

In Garissa County of Kenya, despite the majority of the population being practicing Muslims divorce is growing at an alarming rate. According to Aphia 11 assessment of Kenya Sexual Network in Garissa, (2005) attributes 78% of divorce to religion. Forty-four per cent of couples in Garissa are either divorced or separated (Kahutho, 2005).

This could be attributed to the fact that Koran chapter 65 verses 1 and 5 allow men to divorce their wives as long as they abide by what is acceptable in the Koran. After getting three talaks, a woman

can never go back to her husband until she is married by another husband (Koran 2:230). Under such circumstance children are at increased risk of adverse outcomes following a family breakdown and that negative outcomes can persist from childhood into adulthood. The instability of family structure has become an increasingly outstanding part of children's lives in Marsabit County over the past few years. During this period, divorce rates increased.

Marsabit County is inhabited by different communities that want to maintain their own culture despite the majority of them being Muslim. For the past four years, the County has witnessed the drastic movement of people from rural areas to town as a result of being county headquarter. The footprint left by different cultures has increased the rate of divorce by affecting the Islamic culture of a county that is inherently more conservative. According to the Marsabit Khadi, hasty and ill-considered marriages, high expectations of couples from each other, irresponsibility and family differences were the most common social risk factors for divorce. A crucial cultural factor in divorce is differences in the couple beliefs and worldview. Children from divorced Muslim families can have trouble with their own relationships and experience problems with self-esteem.

In Moyale Sub-County, little attention is paid to the problem of divorce. Despite its increase, measures to avert this crisis have not been well addressed. The difference between the past and the present is that the causes of divorce have increased. The social life has taken such a turn that now there are more chances of the disruption of the family cohesion. That is why the efforts of the religious leaders and the public-spirited people have borne no fruit. Therefore, this study investigates the effects of divorce on the holistic development of children among Muslim families in Moyale sub-county, Marsabit County.

Family stability promotes holistic development and creates a building block for children to progress throughout life. Watching stable homes deteriorate into a "broken" one has a devastating effect on both divorced couples and their children. Hetherington (2002) undertook a 30-year longitudinal study of 2,500 children from 1,400 families. He discovered that whilst children often recover from the negative effect of divorce, 25% of children from suffering serious social, emotional or psychological and academic problems as compared to only 10% of children from intact families.

A number of studies have been done on divorce with great focus on the causes of it and the growth rate globally. Available secondary data also shows that most studies done on divorce are general in nature, without a critical focus on a segment of the society such as members of certain religious groups. Consequently, little attention has been placed on the effect of divorce on children and almost no focus on the holistic development of children in Muslim families.

According to Mr. Muhammad Juma presiding Kadhi at Marsabit County Law Court, hasty and ill-considered marriages, high expectations, irresponsibility, and family differences were the social risk factors leading to increased cases of divorce in the county.

Contextually, none of the studies under focus was undertaken in Moyale Sub-county of Marsabit County. Conceptually, none of the studies focused on effect of divorce on the holistic development of children among Muslim families. Thus, the study purposed to investigate the mitigation measures of the effects of divorce on the holistic development of children. The study was carried out among Muslim families in Moyale Sub-county, Marsabit County - Kenya with objectives guided by the role of Islamic religion and professionals.

Literature

Theoretical perspective

The study was guided by the attachment theory that was developed by Bowlby Harlow and Ainsworth 1969. The theory states that attachment is a key aspect of determining personality and behavior throughout an individual's lifetime. Attachment can be defined as the strong bond that develops first between a parent and a child, and later in peer and romantic relationships (Bowlby, 1969). It is often reported that children of divorce have trouble adapting to different stages of their lives because of their experience with broken or detached attachment bonds. The view is put forward that divorce is a process of disruption to an attachment that has far-reaching roots in previous attachment relationships and profound implications for future relationships of the child and the parent.

Robertson and Bowlby (1952) identified three phases of separation response: Protest related to separation anxiety, despair (related to grief and mourning) and detachment (related to defense Mechanisms, especially repression). Bowlby (1960) believed that when a caregiver continues to be unavailable to the infant, or when the succession of primary the attachment figure is too frequent, protest-despair responses will result in detachment and may affect the infant's ability to form interdependent and caring relationships in life.

In the 1960's psychiatrist John Bowl by explored the process by which mothers and infants formed and broke the bond of affections, in particular, he describes how infants became emotionally attached to their primary caregivers and emotionally distressed when separated from them. Attachment theory posits that our primary motivation in life is to be connected with other people because it is the only security we ever have (Johnson &Mariano, 1994). Our sense of self and self-worth develops in the family in the course of being nurtured, having our needs met, and experiencing our parent's pleasures in our social and emotional growth and our unfolding accomplishment. People learn how to nurture themselves, meet their needs and take pleasure in being who they are and parents who have provided a 'secure base" by being responsive and accessible when called upon usually produce children who subsequently feel secure enough to explore both the physical and the social environment (Ainsworth,1978). This exploration continues throughout their adult lives developing new bonds within dating, premarital and marital relationships that are warm and loving without fearing they will lose their individuality and autonomy.

Children usually lose a degree of contact with one of their very few attachment figures when a divorce occurs. It is a confusing and stressful time for children, regardless of whether the divorce was amicable or not. Booth, Clarke-Stewart, McCartney, Owen, & Vandell (2000) refer to various national studies when stating that poor school performance, low self-esteem, behavior problems, distress and adjustment difficulties are associated with divorce. In adolescents from divorced families, they noted more instances of delinquent behavior, early sexual activity and continued academic issues.

In contrast, there have also been comparable studies that detect no unusual behavior or emotional distress occurring from divorce (Armistead, 1998). For example, one study involved extensive questionnaires and concluded that the average scores attained from the children were within normal ranges when compared to children of intact families. There are many factors that may play into how children's attachments are altered after a divorce, gender and age being the two most documented variables.

Attachment theory helps the couple therapist see into and through the complex, multidimensional drama that is a close relationship in crisis. It helps direct the therapist to the defining features of such relationships, set treatment goals that are relevant and meaningful, and map out the best ways to intervene. A map that outlines the nature of the terrain makes the difference between a glorious adventure and getting lost in the woods and reaching a dead end.

Islamic Perspective

The Quran and the Hadith are the fundamental religious texts of Islam serve as the primary source for the Islamic teachings. Both the Quran and the Hadith often instruct Muslims to adopt a morally upright character in life. The researcher examines types of divorce, Islamic teaching on divorce based on the Quran and Hadith. The Arabic word for divorce is Talaq which means "freeing or undoing the knot". In the terminology of the jurists, Talaq signifies the dissolution of marriage (Abed, 2013).

The Kenyan government established the Kadhi' Courts under Article 170 of the Constitution. Their jurisdiction is limited to the determination of questions of Muslim Law relating to personal status, marriage, divorce or inheritance in proceedings in which all the parties profess the Muslim Religion and submit to the jurisdiction of the Kadhi' courts.

The main source of Islamic teaching is from the Qur'an which, is considered as the main source of Islamic law, Muslim Believe Quran as direct word of God revealed through angel Gabriel to Muhammad in Medina and Mecca, the holy scripture stipulates the moral, philosophical, social, political and economic basis on which a society should be built. From an Islamic perspective, divorce is the legal route out of an abusive or unsatisfactory marriage for both men and women. Historically, divorce in Muslim societies has strongly been considered a measure of the last resort, a step is chosen after much negotiation and discussion, taking into account the long-term effects on all family members, especially children.

In the Quran, Allah prescribes `divorce` only if the problems are severe. This is outlined in Quran chapter 4 verse 130 where He says that if the couples disagree and must part, He will provide abundance for all from His all reaching bounty. In Verse 128 of the same chapter, Allah further states that if a wife fears cruelty or desertion on her husband's part, there is no blame on them if they arrange an amicable settlement between themselves; and such settlement is best.

Quran Chapter 30 verse 21 says that among the signs of God is that He created couples for you so that you may find tranquility in them; and that He placed between your affection and mercy. The verse depicts marriage as an institution through which couples can enjoy tranquility, love and mercy. Unfortunately, this noble institution like many others has over the years continued to suffer a setback where the practice is increasingly cut short by divorce. This is also reflected in the words of Prophet Muhammad who said that of all the lawful acts the most detestable to God is divorce.

God discourages divorce and encourages the continuation of marriage. Striving to preserve marriage is a duty for both husband and wife, even in extreme cases of misbehavior as outlined in verses 34 and 128 of chapter 4 of the noble Quran.

To reduces instances of divorce which happen out of anger, in Quran chapter 2 verses 226 and 227, a four-month 'cooling-off' period is issued before considering the decision of separation, this is also reinforced by verse 35 of chapter 4 where we are advised to appoint an arbitrator from each side of the family to try to reconcile the couple. In many other verses, chances of divorce are further reduced by God, in Quran 4 verses 22 and 23 where He states that unlawful marriages are

not to be broken but rather formalized. In Quran 2 verse 232 He states that reconciling after divorce is a purer and more righteous choice and in Quran 2 verse 229, He gives two chances to the divorced couple to get back together.

But in the unlikely instances that the marriage ends in divorce, In Quran 65 verse 7 God orders men to spend on and take care of the women during their *eddah* (waiting period before the divorce is a). In marriages where children are involved, Islamic teaching pertaining to custody of the children after divorce is outlined by God in Quran chapter 2 verses 233. Based on the same verse, some jurists stipulate that custody of the child is awarded to the mother if the child is under a certain age and to the father of the child is older.

There is no Quranic evidence of age being a determinant for custody. Similarly, with regard to the issue of maintenance, in the Quran, the ex-husband's financial obligation to his ex-wife is mandated, but a specific formula for the amount of support is missing. This is open for negotiation between parties and should be in accordance with the husband's financial ability (Quran 2:241). The lack of specific formula has often been exploited by unscrupulous Muslim men.

The Hadith is the second source of Islamic law. It is the prophet Muhammad (PBUH) this is holy prophet words and acts are recorded in Hadith. Muslims consider the Hadith to be important supplements to the Qur'an.

In most of the teaching of the Hadith, marriage is viewed as a powerful bond with mutual affection and sacrifice. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) encourage all Muslim men and women to get married unless they are physically, mentally, or financially unable to get married. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) also enjoined Muslims to marry so that they can keep their chastity intact and safeguard their moral integrity. According to the Hadith Marriage also establishes a strong Muslim family are provided with a suitable adherent and practicing environment for the younger generation.

Divorce is not the right denoted to men and prohibited of women, but it is the last way of ending a bad marriage should either of them feel that things are not working out (Mohd, 2015).

A stern warning is given to those who separate couples who have been coexisting in peace and love. Prophet Muhammad PBUH said that anyone who separates a couple will see the wrath and the curse of Allah in this world and the Hereafter.

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: "Of all the permitted things divorce is the most abominable by God." and "Marry and do not divorce, undoubtedly the throne of the beneficent Lord shakes due to divorce" (Reported by Abu Dawud-Al- Hadith)

(Aroos, 2005). The Hadiths of the Prophet (PBUH) have an inbuilt mechanism to caution marriages against divorce. However, if all available options fail then marriage becomes the only option. To protect either party from abusive marriage the Hadiths have given both husband and wife an equal chance to file a divorce case against their partners. (Akram, 2011).

Empirical Studies

Effects of divorce and family instability on holistic development of children

Social effects

Family instability leads to Parental divorce, where contact with one parent is lost, leads to the children loss of knowledge, skills and resources of that parent. More life stress, living situations such as changing schools, childcare, homes, among other things, lead to children having to make adjustments to changes in relationships with friends and the extended family (Kelly & Emery, 2003)

Children who experienced two or more family instability were more likely to show disruptive behavior at school, to have poorer emotional adjustment, compared to children from stable family (Martinez and Forgatch 2002).

Amato (2012) reveals that children from unstable families become problematic in personal, emotional, and social aspects. Children of divorced or separated parents' exhibit increased behavioral problems. The marital conflict that accompanies parents' divorce places the child's social competence at risk. Even in intact families that have low to medium levels of conflict, children still have fewer behavior problems than those in the high conflict, disrupted families. Children from divorced families are more likely to exhibit such behavioral issues than those from non-divorced families. They thus tend to withdraw from social participation (Mezieobi and Okpara, 2007).

Family instability also affects children's self-esteem; this is because parents often involve their children in the divorce process by use of alienation strategies, such as degrading one another or turning the child against the other parent. This makes the children internalize the insults toward their parent and make them believe that they are not loved and that the divorce is their fault. These children exhibited lower self-esteem, higher rates of depression, insecure attachment in relationships, and decreased self-sufficiency. In line with the alienation strategy, Mezieobi and Okpara (2007) also confirm that there are cases of children disrespecting the parent and in most cases the father.

Divorce also leads to diminished social skills in children. The challenge is manifested in having fewer childhood friends and a tendency to complain about the lack of peer support. Aquilino (2001) reveals that it is also difficult for non-residential parents such as fathers to maintain close ties with children because of reduced frequency and quality of parent-child contact. Children from broken families have a higher tendency of abusing drugs. Abuse of drugs become the avenues for them to vent out their frustration and anxiety.

Instable families always use violence more frequently to resolve conflict and are more likely to be aggressive and physically violent with their friends. The children are more likely to be unhappy, to escalate a conflict, to communicate less, to argue frequently, and to shout or to physically assault their spouse in their marriage. The transferred behavior will increase the likelihood of divorce being transmitted across generations. This is also confirmed by Kirk (2002) who found that these children have dismal views on an effective marriage. Girls from divorced families often end up in prostitution to make ends meet (Mezieobi and Okpara, 2007).

Cognitive effects

Holistic Development is an approach to learning that emphasizes the importance of the physical, emotional and psychological wellbeing of children. Its development deals with thinking and mental process. Several study findings show that family instability increases chances of academic difficulties in children (Pong & Ju, 2000).

Children in primary school were found experienced two or more-family transitions were more likely to show lower grades and achievement scores compared to children who experienced no transitions or one transition (Martinez and Forgatch 2002).

Children coming from divorced parents generally have a lower aspiration for education and also score low during exams. As a result, they tend to be less educated by adulthood. Daniel Potter (2010) found that elementary school children who experience parental divorce perform worse

academically than their peers from intact families. In line with Fagan and Zil (2011) findings, who also confirm that the academic performance gap persists through elementary school. The report is also supported by Wolshik (2002) that children who have experienced family instability perform poorly than their counterparts from families.

Chances of children from divorced families not going to college are higher than that of those from families which are intact (Wallerstein & Lewis, 2004). This as posited by Amato & Cheadle (2005) could be pointing to the fact that success in education is strongly influenced by the makeup of the family structure for young children.

According to Pong and Ju's (2000) poverty as a result of the divorce is the cause of poor academic performance. The poor performance could also be as a result of frequent absence from school. Barry (2003) postulates that children whose parents divorced skipped nearly 60 per cent more class periods than children from intact families. He further reports that girls appeared to be more affected than boys. Children whose parents divorced or separated also tend to get suspended or expelled from school according to findings by Kelley (2009). The same challenge is extended to the college level as Wallerstein & Lewis (2004) reveal that children from divorced families are less likely to complete a four-year degree at the college. Lack of parental monitoring as a cause of poor academic performance.

Owing to lack of resources, even when in school, the children from divorced families tend to participate less in extra-curricular activities according to Kelly and Emery (2003).

Every cloud has a silver lining, McIntyre, Heron, McIntyre, Burton, & Engler (2003) reveal that children of divorced families tend to be more resilient. The study further shows that children who were exposed to parental divorce had less educational attainment compared to those from intact family (Amato and Anthony 2014).

Spiritual effects

Family instability has a significant impact on children spiritually. In families that have a high conflict during divorce period, children tend to have many issues and doubts of God or any higher power (Ellison, 2011).

When a divorce takes place, Children's religious involvement and commitment diminished the practice of religion, in turn, can have negative consequences. Parents strongly influenced the religion of the children. Specifically, the strong apparent effects of mothers' and fathers' religious affiliation, practice, and belief on the religiosity of young adults. Offspring of divorce may be less engaged in religious or spiritual pursuits in young adulthood, as compared with their counterparts from intact families. Gruber and Hungerman (2008) report that parental divorce reduces attendance of religious services. On the other hand, an increase in drinking and drug abuse among children who initially attend religious services. The Effects would likely result in an increase in risky behaviors and lower marital stability.

There are some disagreements in the literature regarding which aspects of children's religious involvement is most clearly influenced by family socialization, others also estimate substantial family influences on organizational facets, such as religious attendance in adulthood. However, not all families are equally successful at transmitting religious ties, practices, and beliefs across generations. On the contrary, these socialization patterns may be complicated by several factors. Investigators have explored gender-specific patterns of parental influence on the religiosity of children, with discrepant findings. Some studies find that mothers are apparently more influential

on the average than fathers in transmitting religion to their offspring. On the other hand, several researchers argue that these patterns vary depending on the specific dimension of religion under consideration; while mothers are more likely to shape the general religious orientations of children, fathers may have greater influence over their religious activities, such as religious membership and attendance

Young people may learn spiritually relevant skills or behaviors by observing other persons whom they admire. Thus, spiritual exemplars are role models; through them, as King and Mueller (2004) point out, religious or spiritual behaviors can be modelled and then eventually learned if the parental conflict is avoided. After the divorce of the parents, the children are deprived of the role of observational learning from spiritual role model (King and Mueller 2004)

Parents play a vital role in influencing children's religious lives after divorce, particularly in a culture in which congregational engagement and other forms of civic involvement are no longer as normative as they once were. An increase in the parent-son agreement was associated with an increase in the children's religious belief. Fathers were found to influence their sons heavily in religious practices. If fathers had a high church attendance and a high rate of other religious practices, the sons were more likely to do the same. Mothers had a smaller effect on their son's religious beliefs and practices (than fathers), but nonetheless, the mother-son agreement did correlate positively with the adolescent's religious beliefs.

Physical Development effects

Physical development can be defined as the progress of a child's control over his own body. This includes control over muscles, physical coordination, and ability to sit or stand or growth in which (height, length, mass) of individual increases. A drop in parents' income during the family conflict and after separation directly affects children access to proper nutrition, involvement in extracurricular activities. Children from unstable families face number of health-related problems ranging from stress (Burton, & Engler, 2003), attention Deficit (Cohen, 2002), hyperactivity disorder (Barker, 2011), depression and anxiety (Burton, 2012) and physical illness such as headache (Juang, (2004) that can affect child's physical growth and development.

Family instability greatly affected the psychological health of children. The problem if left unchecked causes emotional and behavioral problems, negative feelings and less psychological well-being (Linda J & Evelyn L, 2003). Marital hostility is associated with increased aggression and disruptive behaviors on the part of children which, in turn, seem to lead to peer rejection, academic failure, and other antisocial behaviors (Webster, 2003). 12% of children in an intact family were found with poor health issues as compared to 22% of children from broken homes (National Health Interview Survey, 2012). Other reports show that children from divorced marriages experience more illness and medical problems and receive psychological treatment three times as often as those from intact families. A study carried out in France by Man (2010) Shows that children from divorced families have both physical and mental health problems at old age as compared to those from intact families. Other health-related problems according to Mezieobi and Okpara (2007) includes malnutrition and higher incidence of illness and poor medical attention; Children's reaction to stress may vary from relief and complete acceptance to great sadness, anger or anxiety.

Mitigation of divorce effects on holistic development of children

Joint custody by both parents should have access to their children and share the responsibility and shared commitments to their growth. Joint custody reduces the pain of divorce for children. Edinyang (2013) proposes that couples should accommodate one another need even after divorce, that couples should collaborate with each other to minimize the effect of divorce on the children. It is not always about winning he says as he encourages couples to compromise and also have the willingness to comprehend the problems at hand and resolve together. He further recommends good family life education as a way of resolving family conflict. The educational system can help reduce the effects of divorce on children this involves things such as counselling and group therapy.

Hutchisons (1989) recommends proper training for teachers at school so that they are able to identify and assist children from divorced families. Other measures that he recommends include curriculum changes and additional facilities to help the children cope with the effects of divorce.

Divorced couples need to take care of their emotional and ask their parents support when need arise, but parents should remain responsive, warm and caring to the needs of their children after separation. The parents never quarrel, talking negatively about one another or forcing the child to pick sides in the presence of their children. The child should be allowed to have a consistent visitation schedule when appropriate. Divorced parents can ensure that their child thrives following a divorce and is not trapped in a world of anxiety, stress, and subsequently, negative behaviors (Joshua 2016).

To avoid problems arising due to the alienation strategies, Mclanahan (1999) recommended that children should not be exposed to the conflict between couples. But the parents should explain to children why the divorce is occurring.

Islam has put measures which will reduce the effect of divorce on children. To avert the economic hardship, for instance, Allah in Quran chapter 2 verse 233 places the duty of feeding for the children squarely on the father. That the father should spend on the male children till they reach puberty and on girls till they get married. Allah not only spoke of the children but also took care of the pregnant woman. In Quran chapter 65 verses 6 Allah orders men to spend on their divorced wives till they deliver. And once the child is delivered, his or her financial welfare is secured as Allah orders men to take care of the breastfeeding mother financially in the same verse.

Maintenance of children is obligatory upon the father according to the consensus of Muslim scholars whether he keeps his wife or divorces her, and whether the wife is poor or rich. So, she is not obliged to spend on the children if the father is around. Allah in verse 7 of chapter 65 says that the man should spend on his family according to his ability.

To minimize the psychological impact of divorce on children and ensure that they enjoy the mother's warmth and love, the prophet PBUH in Musnad Imam Ahmad 6707 and Abu Dawood 2276 said that the woman has the custodial right of the child so long as she does not remarry. In case she is remarried the custodial right automatically shift to the father even if he remarried.

If anyone separates a mother and her child, Allah will separate him and his loved ones on the Day of Resurrection (al-Tirmidhi 1204). Adherence to the warning of the prophet PBUH will ensure that the child will not be deprived of meeting and networking with either of the parents and along the way avert other resultant social, behavioral or health-related challenges.

In helping a couple to stay together and promote strong family bonds, the Quran gives a few suggestions for those who wish to take heed. Couples must do what is in their power to stop

problems from getting out of hand. To do this there must be sacrifice and a lack of selfishness on behalf of both parties(Quran 4:128).The couple should appoint an arbitrator from each family if they divorce and wish to reconcile, GOD will help them. GOD is Omniscient, Cognizant. (*Quran 4:35*).

Materials and Methods

The study employed a descriptive research design where data was collected through administering questionnaires and interviews to an individual sample. The study was conducted in Moyale Sub-County, Marsabit County – Kenya through two purposefully selected wards including Manyatta Heillu and Obbu wards. With a total population of 1203, the strata included 900 divorced affected persons, 1 Kadhi, 150 imams, 150 other religious leaders, and 2 children's officers. At 10%, the sample size consisted of 120 of the persons affected by divorce and religious leaders plus the 1 Kadhi and 2 children's officers (total 123). The geographical location of Manyatta-Heillu ward from the urban area and Obbu ward from the rural setting formed the basis of their selection to give an inclusive view of the Islamic teachings, divorce and holistic development of children.

The study employed purposive sampling technique to select two male divorcees, two female divorcees, one religious leader and one children's officer from each of the fifteen villages of both Hellu Manyatta and Obbu wards. The study entailed questionnaires for collection of data from the divorcees while face to face interviews were conducted among the Imams, the Kadhi and the children's officers. Documentary analysis involved the court publications, the government public releases and other documentations from the government offices.

The research instruments were piloted in four villages in the neighboring Moyale county to assess the reliability and validity. Construct validity was assessed through comparisons to attachment theoretical model as used in the study where the study variables were operationalized. Reliability of the questionnaire was assessed through test-retest method and the collected data analyzed using Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient. The resulting $r=0.80$ was deemed sufficient to conclude on consistency of the results in repeated measures by the questionnaire. Through physical contact, the questionnaires were administered within two weeks and collected back. Within the same period, interviews were conducted among the Imams, the children's officers and with the Kadhi.

Prior to and during the data collection process, key ethical concerns were observed through seeking for ethical review committee clearance at Mount Kenya University, obtaining introduction letter from the School of Postgraduate, securing a research permit from the National Council of Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI), and finally obtaining authorization letter for data collection from the County Government of Marsabit. All participants were briefed on the purpose of the research and issued with a participation consent form for declaring their willingness and voluntary participation prior to giving the information relating to the study.

The collected data was cleaned and coded according to various themes. The quantitative data was entered into the computer using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and analyzed descriptively with frequencies, means and percentages. The analyzed data was presented using tables and charts. The qualitative data was analyzed thematically and presented in both transcribed and quoted forms.

Results

Effects of family instability on the holistic development of children

The study investigated the social effect of family instability on children. The theme entailed finding out how the social state of children after divorce. The results were presented using Table 1.

Table 1

How are the children doing socially after divorce?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage %
Aggressive	10	12%
insecure	15	18%
involve in drug abuse	18	21%
depressed	5	6%
like isolation	18	21%
low self esteem	6	7%
few friends	12	14%
Total	84	100

From Table1, it was clear that divorce had some effects on the holistic development of children. It was observed that 10 (12%) admitted that after divorce children became aggressive, 15 (18%) feel insecure after parental divorce, 18 (21%) involved in drug abuse, 18(21%) liked isolation, 6(7%) developed low self-esteem and 12 (14%) they separate from there old friends and remain with few. Therefore, it is clear from the finding that parental divorce had devastating impacts on children's social development.

Majority of the participant interviewed also admitted that children from divorced families are faced by many social problems in their daily life. They develop negative self-concept and also develop difficulties in getting along with their family members. Absence of one of the parents after divorce and changing school and home are some of the factors that have made the child's environment more stressful. This situation has made children from divorced parents to develop behavioral problems and depression. The finding concurs with Amato (2012) who revealed that children from divorced families become problematic in personal, emotional, and social aspects. He, in addition, stated that such children exhibit increased behavioral problems.

According to the majority of interviewed couples, children from divorced parents were poor socially on peer relationships, hostility towards others, anxiety and withdrawal. They also feel guilty for their parents' divorce, the majority of children had become increasingly insecure, aggressive, violent, and disobedient in addition to developing strong feelings of unhappiness and damage. Some of the respondents, however, argued that some of the impacts on the children after divorce fade away as the children adjust to the environment.

The study also inquired on whether the divorce children victims really engaged in drug use and abuse. The results were presented using Figure 1.

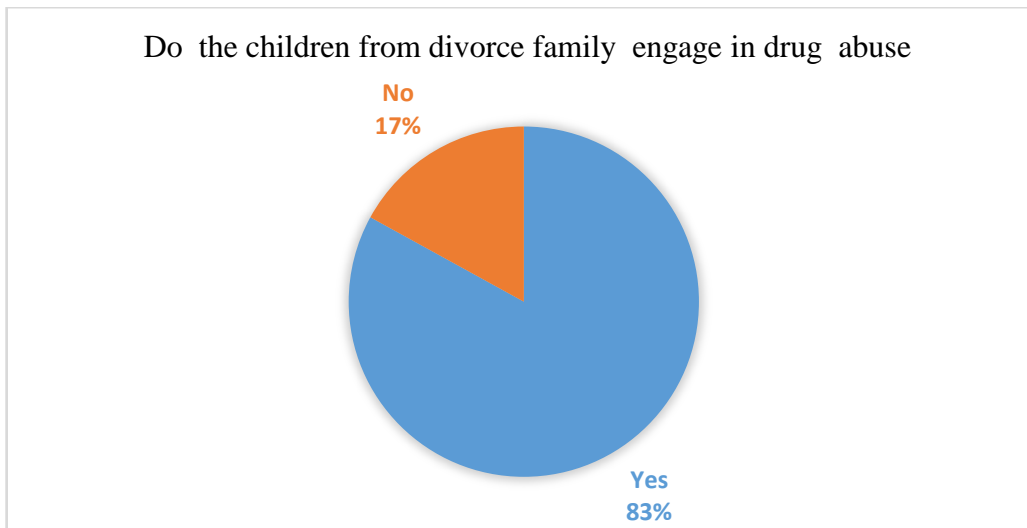


Figure 1. Do the children from divorced family engage in drug abuse

Figure 1 shows that majority of the respondents 70(83%) agreed that children abused more drugs after divorce of their parent compared to the time before divorce, while 14(17%) did not agree that parental divorce had contributed to drug abuse in children. The finding reveals that compared to children from an intact family the majority of children from divorced family abused drugs. This is in line with Aquilino (2001) who found that children from broken families have a higher tendency of abusing drugs. They tend to see drugs as the avenue for venting out their frustration and anxiety. The children's officers attributed drug abuse of children from divorced family to lack of stable parental guidance. They revealed that *khat (miraa)* is the most commonly abused drug. Miraa leads to laziness, health, social and economic problems. One of the reasons was that the drug gives children an easier solution to their problems when they munch substance.

The study further investigated the cognitive effect of family separation on the holistic development of children. The collected data was analyzed and presented using Table 2.

Table 2

Children School attendance after parental divorce

Responses	Frequency	Percentages
absent	50	60
truant	20	24
present	14	17
Total	84	100

Table 2 shows that 50(60%) are absent from school for one reason or other, 20(24%) of the children from divorced families attend school in the morning but disappear from class in the course of the day. 14(17%) respondents said that children school attendance was not in any way affected by parental divorce.

Therefore, the study clearly shows the majority of children from separated or divorced are either absent or leave school before time. The finding agrees with Barry (2003) who also found that children whose parents divorced skipped nearly 60 per cent or more class periods than children

from intact families This had serious effects on their academic performance on the children as depicted in Figure 2.

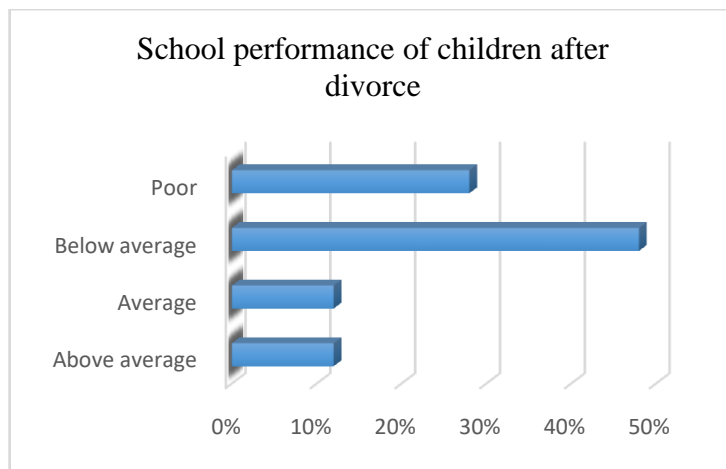


Figure 2. School performance of children after divorce

Figure 2 reveals that 10(12%) of the participants performed above average even after spousal divorce, 10(12%) had average performance, 40(48%) of children performed below average while 24(28%) of children from divorced family did poorly in all academic work after divorce. The study shows that the majority of children performed either below average or poor, so respondents agreed that the children were somehow affected by the parents' separation however it did not affect the performance of a few children. The findings are in line with Fagan and Zil (2011) confirm that for children from divorced families, the academic performance gap persists through elementary school. The finding is further supported by Wolshik (2002) who said that those children who have experienced parental divorce perform poorly than their counterparts from families which are intact. According to one of the religious leaders, Children's education is severely affected by their parents' separation. Due to poverty, many divorced mothers do not afford to give their children a quality education. Moreover, since children cannot spend much time with their parents, they are easily attracted to the bad people in their neighborhood. The interest of going to School diminishes with time.

Effects of family instability on children's spiritual development

The study investigated the situation of the divorce children victims in attending daily prayers. The collected data was analyzed and presented using Table 3.

Table 3

Do children from divorced family attend five daily prayers regularly

Responses	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	24	29
No	60	71
Total	84	100

Table 3 shows that 24(29%) of the respondents agree that children attend five daily prayers even after divorce, while 60(71%) of the respondents said that children from divorced family do not attend the five daily prayers. However, some of the respondents admitted that the children's spiritual life remained steadfast and was not in a way affected by the parents' divorce. Hungerman (2008) report that parental divorce reduces attendance of religious services. His findings agree with this study. In addition, children from divorced families tend to miss important religious celebrations and gatherings as opposed to children from an intact family.

The explored the attitude of children from divorced family towards madrasa. Using the data collected from the questionnaires, the results were presented using Figure 3.

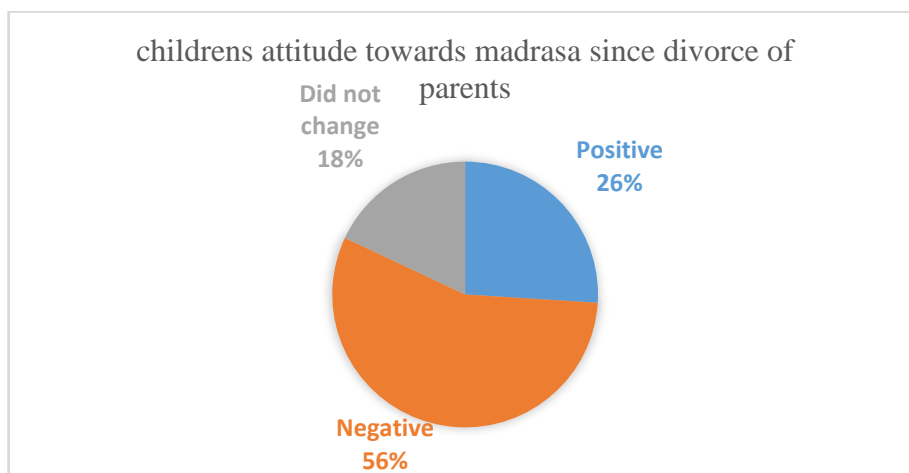


Figure 3. Children's attitude towards Madrasa after divorce of parents

Figure 3 shows that 22(26%) of the respondent said that the children's attitude toward madrasa changed positively, 47(56%) of the children developed negative attitude while 15(18%) of the respondent did not see any changes of attitude toward madrasa.

Majority of the couples interviewed agreed that the attending religious gathering, and five daily prayers become boring after parental divorce, they occasionally attend madrasa during the weekend. They avoid reciting religious books such as Quran and *Hadith*. They avoid listening to spiritual matter because it does not make meaning for them.

The study further investigated the effective of family instability on the physical development of children among the Muslim families. The collected data was analyzed and presented using Figure 4.

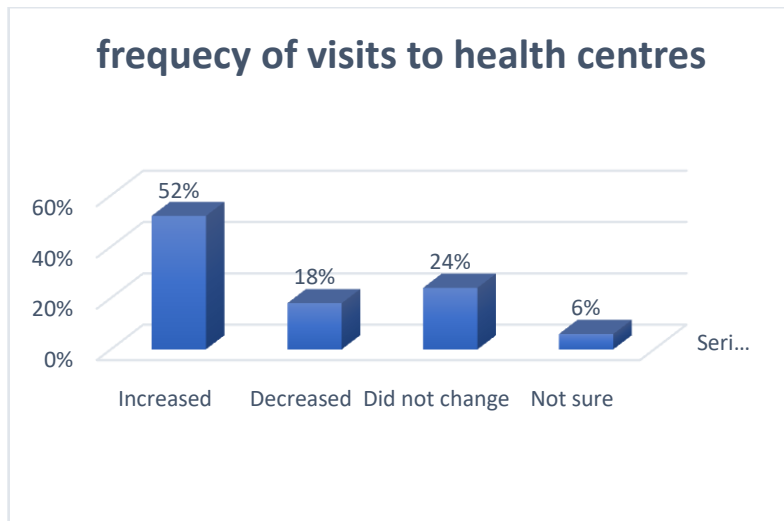


Figure 4. Physical impact of divorce on children

Figure 4 shows that 44(52%) of the respondents admitted that attendance of health facilities by children had increased after divorce, 15(18%) of the respondents said it decreased, 20(24%) of the respondents agreed that attendance of the hospital did not change, while 5(6%) of the respondents refused to comment on the issue. The finding clearly shows the majority of the respondents that attendance of Health Centre increased due to increase of sickness after divorce. This affects children’s physical growth. Mezieobi and Okpara (2007) agree with the finding that children from divorced family suffer from malnutrition and higher incidence of illness and poor medical attention. related to the above findings, the study inquired on the level and situation about mental and psychological status of children from a divorced family, and the results were presented using Table 5.

Table 5

Mental and Psychological Status of Children from a Divorced Family

Responses	Frequency	Percentages
Affected	50	60
not affected	24	29
not sure	10	12
Total	84	100

Table 5 shows that parental divorce had a great impact on children's mental and psychological wellbeing. 50 (60%) of the respondents agreed that after divorce, the relationship between the children and the parents changed by the marital disruption. The trust between the children and the parent gradually diminish after parental separation. The finding also reveals a high mental problem, depression, withdrawal from group activities in class, sadness, hostile behavior and withdraw from their former friends. 24(29%) of the respondents did not agree that parental divorced had some impact on children, 10(12%) did no comment on the matter.

Methods of mitigating the effects of divorce on the holistic development of children among Muslim families

Most of the divorced couples interviewed reported that health care of children from a divorced family as a major challenge. Most of them suffer from malnutrition because of economic loss suffered by the custodian mother. In addition, change from the old school to a new school as well as shifting to new home interferes with chances of getting properly balanced food.

The respondents were asked to give suggestions on what should be done. Majority of the respondents agreed that raising public awareness against early marriage and promoting preventive measures should be adopted to reduce the high rate of divorce among Muslim families.

Islamic Religious institution that can help Muslim family should be established in order to educate them before divorce in order to reduce or prevent divorce. The institution should be managed by those who are well versed with Islamic knowledge. These were stated by the religious leaders who argued if all Muslim boys and girls are encouraged to attend Islamic learning institution then their future chances of divorce are minimal. Mosque imams, religious leaders and couples should work harder to serve as good role models to their followers. They should provide a conducive environment for those affected by divorce so that they can vent out their issue and come to an agreement.

Divorced couples should be enabled to understand the importance of community support and mediators during the conflict between husband and wife, in order to alleviate the suffering of the children from divorced parents before it is too late. The religious leaders, imams and family members should provide impartial support for negotiation between the husband and the wife. The neutral mediator should create a forum for the couple to re-establish the ties between them. This will enable the husband and the wife to meet and resolve their conflict. The created opportunity will enable the couples to reflect and consider the impact of divorce on their children and also make a good decision.

The local Imams observed that divorce can be prevented by adhering to the teaching of Islamic dress code. Islam enjoins women to observe Hijab, cover their beauty from strange men (who is not related to them by blood) except for their husband. The scriptures further warn them not to attract any other men apart from their own husband. The wife should only display her beauty at home when she is with her husband, children, parents or the womenfolk. On the other hand, Islam directs men to lower their gaze, avoid teasing and joking with strange women (whom you can marry). He said that if above teaching is followed to the letter then the current trend of divorce will decrease.

According to the imams, Muslim women should be instructed to wear their best clothes when at home, beautify themselves according to the wishes of the husbands and strive to display their beauty to the husband with eager enthusiasm. On the other hand, men are also instructed to observe personal cleanliness and display his handsome and sincere character for their wives. This will enhance love and passion between husband and wife.

Furthermore, couples are discouraged from infidelity in order to increase love, trust and strong bond. The religion advises both the husband and the wife to not only think of their own pleasure but find a way to give more pleasure and satisfaction to their spouse when making love and performing sexual acts.

The non-governmental organization should make some strategies to support children during the process of parental divorce although other couples argued in some case divorce reduce the negative

impact on especially when the children had been witnessing frequent fighting between their mother and father.

Children from divorced families should be counselled on the process of divorce so that they can understand that they are not the only children from divorced families. Social service personnel and officials of the Kadhi courts should be trained to reduce feelings of stigma by guiding and counselling families being affected by divorce. They should guide them on the importance of maintaining family ties even after the divorce has taken place.

Discussions

The study found out that raising public awareness against early marriage and promoting preventive measures can reduce the high rate of divorce among the Muslim community. The participants also agreed that acquiring proper Islamic knowledge, selflessness, compromising attitude above all of the fear of Allah is some of the factors that can prevent divorce. They also found out that in order to save marriage from break up one has to develop the ability to handle their family pressure.

The participants revealed the need to establish an Islamic Religious institution that can help the Muslim family to seek Islamic knowledge about marriage and divorce in order to reduce or prevent divorce. The institutions should be managed by those who are well versed with Islamic knowledge. All Muslim boys and girls are encouraged to attend the Islamic learning institution at an early age. The study further revealed that impartial mediators should be used to alleviate the suffering of children from divorced parents before it's too late. The neutral mediator creates a forum for couples to re-establish their ties, this enables husband and wife to meet and resolve their conflict.

Conclusion

The study concludes that utilization of mediators, adoption of parenting Islamic education programs, usage of children divorce support groups and proper communication can reduce the effects of divorce on children's holistic development during the divorce process.

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