

Factors Influencing Academic Performance of Primary School's Orphans in Tanzania

Anthony Nyangarika and Zacharia Joseph Ngasa

Department of Adult and Continuing Education Studies, Institute of Adult Education,
P.O. Box 20679, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the factor influencing orphan's academic performance in primary schools. In Tanzania the number of orphaned students resulted from different causes such as the death of parents from different accidents, diseases and those with divorced parents is drastic increases. Orphaned students are among the most vulnerable members of society, often lacking basic needs and services related to better education. This study investigated the factors influencing the academic performance of orphans in Arusha City. The study used descriptive research design and it was conducted in Arusha City to primary school orphans from different wards. Data were collected from 100 respondents including DEO, WEC, head teachers, class teachers, other teachers, orphans, guardians, and community through interviews. Findings show that orphanage students were performing poorly and this was contributed by many factors including social-economic factors, home learning environment, sexual violence, inferiority complex, school's absenteeism, lack of a system of helping orphaned students in schools. It was recommended that Schools should find a means to identify orphaned students and their needs and provide necessary support including psychological and also encourage them to learn and provide necessary academic support when appropriate. The orphaned students should participate fully in the learning process, and the MoEVT and other Educational stakeholders should plan and establish regular seminars to teachers on how to help students.

Keywords: Orphaned Students; Educational Stakeholders; Epidemic Disease; Guardians; Community

1. Introduction

The number of children living without both or single parents is increasing since the epidemic disease began (Edward I et al., 2001:3). By the end of 2003 there were approximately 37.8 million people in the world living with HIV/AIDS of which about 35.78 million were adults and 2.1 million were children, (UNAIDS, 2004). In Kwazulu-Natal in South Africa, HIV prevalence among those who attended clinic is almost 37%, about three times higher than the Province of Western Cape that has the lowest prevalence (Dyke, 2005). 12% of all children under the age of 18 in South Africa would have lost one or both parents to AIDS Schneider. et al (2002). There was a need in this study to access factors which could assist orphaned learners to survive. Phillippe .et al (2003). stated that there was evidence that children who lost their parents undergo the traumatic experience in their study they indicated the role played by memory boxes in building resilience of orphans who lost their parents through the HIV/AIDS pandemic in South Africa.

The memory box include photographs a family tree. Stories and other familiar's things that enable the child to remember the parents. Memory boxes are trusted to be effective in building the resilience of such orphans. In these way orphans do not feel a complete emptiness arising from the loss of parents. Phillippe.et al (1 2003). Indicated that there was a need to identify factors which can assist in developing resilience in orphans since death is more prevalence due to HIV/AIDS. The study aimed at identifying more factors other than memory boxes which could assist in building the resilience of orphan's learners. Palmary (2002) researched that, South Africa in 1999. 42% of children under 7 years of Age lived in single parents' female headed household. In their study they emphasized that young people in South Africa do not grow up in families where they learn respect. Warm and good interpersonal relations but there are still young people who overcome severely traumatic childhood experience and became productive and well adjunctive members of society. With this research a programme was designed to assist in preventing criminality among young people.

Coombe 2000 drew attention to the harsh reality of the HIV/AIDS reduces the number of parents who were twenty to forty years old and increases the numbers of orphans. The increase of orphaned learners leads to trauma. Kalemba 1999.In Malawi related that community willingness to absorb and care for orphaned children was high. The communities are found unacceptable to place orphans in orphanages. Since number of children

who had been raised in institutions is psychologically difficult implied that children became uncontrollable and developed serious behavioral problems.

A need exists in South Africa to examine whether orphanages and foster homes do assist orphan's learners to cope with life challenges or not. Several researchers Ainsworth-D, et al 1999, Braxton 1999, Mdada 1999, Mthembu, 1996. Studied the association between the family background and academic achievement of learners. In Tanzania, by Wikipedia.org/wiki/HIV/AIDS (2011) Data, AIDS has resulted in an estimated 1.3million orphaned Children. The focus of the above mentioned studies was on the causes of academic failure while the study is going to investigating on factors influencing academic performance of orphans in Arusha City in Tanzania. Not much research has been conducted on the factors influencing academic performance of learners who experience trauma problems and environmental barrier in Arusha City in Tanzania.

The view of academic performance as a context where orphans experience a number of problems that influencing their academic performance has lead the researcher to investigate the factors that influencing academic performance of orphans in Arusha City in Tanzania. The factors that would be found might use to formulate strategies that can promote the academic performance of orphans in primary schools. Brizay, (2008) stated that, the policies are there, but we do not see any implementation. Until now no response to the problems of orphans in Tanzania is hampered by conflicts in role and responsibilities between different Ministries and departments.

2. Material and Methods

The supportive relationship that bonds a child to the parent and facilitates the fulfillment of the child's needs is explained by Attachment theory, which was developed by John Bowl and Mary Ainsworth (Bretherton, 1992; Holmes, 2003; Bettmann, 2006). Parents are normally expected to provide for their children's material and non-material needs, including emotional and social needs. According to the attachment theory, from infancy through the first early years of life, maintenance of proximity and availability of attachment figures is crucial to child development. The theory proposes that during this early period in children's lives, they develop an internal working model on life expectations and also on how their relationships with significant attachment figures should proceed. (Bowlby,1969/1982). Bettmann, (2006) added, the premise of attachment theory is that children are born with a predisposition to attach to the parent or caregiver and their behavior is geared towards maintaining proximity with the parents. In other words, when the parent or caregiver is around the child feels safe and secure.

The bond established between a child and a parent or caregiver is mutual in that the child seeks protection from the parent or caregiver, who provides safety and security for the child (Goldberg, 2000). This entails that, there is great torture to a child when parents died. A researcher selected attachment theory because the theory explores the relationship between a child and a parent or parent figure that facilitates the fulfillment of needs. The nature of the relationship described in the theory may provide insight into understanding the needs of orphaned students and the relationship between the students and the educators that emerged in the study.

The narrations of some of the experiences of the orphans suggest that they do not have a secure base to turn to when they need material, emotional and social support. One of the orphaned learners expressed: *I felt good because my mother was still alive and every day she bought me something (Thato.1.4)* (Ogina,2007)."Positive emotions such as love, excitement, enthusiasm and joy enhance the ability to process information and create permanent mental programs" (Sylwester, 1996). Learning cannot take place unless the learner feels "safe"(Sylwester, 1996), Nyangarika et al. (2020b) "Stress and constant fear, at any age, can circumvent the brain's normal circuits" (Viadero, 1996). Brain-based learning theory in (Sousa, 1998) entails that ability to make meaning must be based on previous interests and emotion interact with reason to support or inhibit learning. How students feel in the classroom "determines the amount of attention they devote to... [the lesson]"(Sousa, 1998). It is very important for learners to feel relaxed and safe in the learning environment. It must be taken into consideration that emotion disruption has negative impact to orphaned students in learning process. In this theory, it must be taken into consideration that emotional disturbance can occur to any student depending to school setting.

Luther and Zigler (1991) found that although environmental disadvantage and stress can lead to behavioral and physical problems among children's, there are children who overcome these difficulties to success and social adaptation rather than academic failure. Nlasten Bert and Germany (1990) indicated that the more resilient young people are the less likely they are to get in to serious trouble in a range of risk behaviors including drug

use Osher Tendziora, Vendenberg and Dennis (1999). Indicated that it is not individual characteristics only which are important in building resilience in children but addressing the social factors that enable those conditions to occur in their study they emphasized and examined various social components of resilience and how the environment can be created to support resilience. They moved away from the traditional model of resilience which stressed that it is only the individual who contributes to his/her success to considering to individual in contributing to the individual's success.

The study is going to follow to same pattern where it will identify possible factors in resilience of orphaned learners. With the community shift from the risk-orientated to competence-orientated programme resilience research provides a meaning full framework for developing programmes and support system for children and youth (Visitors 2003:3) Several organizations (Meyers Hope project invading Orphans. The issue of orphan's resilience through memory boxes garden creation food parcels and the teaching of life skills. More factors which promote resilience should be identified since the number of orphans is

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The study father will mention the resiliency that exist for the successful child. In the same study it will mention the members of one's family community and for school care is deeply about that person have cared Krovotz 1999 started that all student can overcome adversity if important protective factors are present in their lives. To maintains faith in the future and can overcome almost any adversity (Krovert 1999). However Medical Research Council of South Africa (2001) demonstrated that a large numbers of children's who are orphans get more traumatically by hearing their grandparent's aunt and elders sibling describe how difficult it is for them (caregivers) to cope with the burden of caring for them (orphans). It is important for this study to identify the effect if any that the type of custodian had on the resilience of orphaned.

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This study aims at collecting data from children (orphans) Teachers and communities who are experiencing death and who seem to be surviving whom might assist in developing strategies for promoting resilience of orphaned learners. A Newcastle article reverent that two children were placed in an orphanage where they

began to live a semi normal life (Mlotsh/va 2001) in this article a semi normal life will become a guardian separated from family member's relatives sobbing and the community in which the child grew up when the parents were still alive. The article father stated that children were then removed from an orphanage to be doing well and placed with the foster parents who abused the physical and emotionally. It was through poor academic performance that the social worker could be informed of the situation and went to visit the children at home. They discovered that the foster parent was abusing the children. Thus there is therefore a need to research whether there is relationship between the custodian type and orphaned learner's resilience. Braxton 1999 in the study on academic achievement found that culture and family influenced student performance where parents assisted the children to learn.

The medical Research Council of South Africa stated that Durban, South Africa will face the challenge by 2015 of having to look after 1.85 million children orphaned by the HIV/Aids Pandemic While (Braxton, 1999; Nyangarika, et al. (2020a). In their studies emphasized the importance of parental guidance and family involvement in academic achievement of learners. Documented the problems of children who are orphans Example lucky of behavioral problems and little has been written about the successful outcomes in these children's. Kalembe (1999) stated that Malawians are developing an orphan's policy programmer since the AIPS crisis in Malawi has had crippling impact on the country children. As early as 19 the government of Malawi established a National orphans care task force Which has been responsible orphans in class four nationals Exams do well at their Exams while others do not.

3. Methods

This study used descriptive research design in investigating the factors influencing academic performance of orphans in Arusha City. The study used primary and secondary data. Primary data used face to face individual interviews in collecting primary data. The interviews were conducted to 100 different respondents including DPEO, WEC, all Head of primary schools, class teachers, other teachers, orphaned students, guardians, and the community. The population of the study involved all teachers including all heads of primary schools in Arusha city, DPEO, WEC, orphaned guardians, orphans, and community at large. The collect data for the orphans studying at six primary schools in the city from six different wards. The city was having seventeen ward including Baraa, Daraja mbili, Engutoto, Kaloleni, Kimandolu, Lemara, Levulosi, Kati, Ngarenaro, Oloirien, Sekei, Sokoni, Sombetini, Terrat, Themi, and Unga Limited (Tanzania Beaural of Statistics, 2002). The sample of this study comprised of 48 primary school pupils of STD IV, STD V, and plus 1 DPEO, 6 WEC, 6 heads of schools, 12 class teachers, 6 other teachers, 12 orphaned guardians, and 9 members of the community at large which made a total of 100 respondents. A random sampling technique was used during the process of selecting schools for the study.

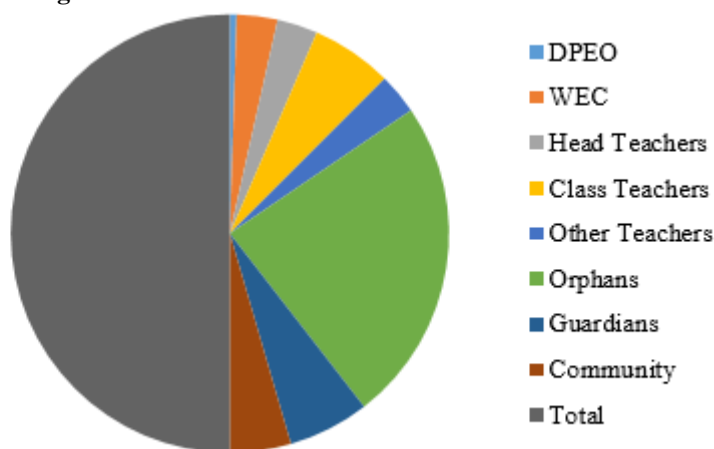
4. Results

The study determines the factors which influence the academic performance of primary school's orphans in Arusha city. Primary data were collected from the respondents in meeting this research objective. Findings generally revealed that social economic status, home learning environment, access to schools (absenteeism), sexual violence for girls, inferiority complex among orphans, and lack of systems of helping orphaned students in schools seemed to be the factors which influenced the academic performance of orphaned students in primary schools in Arusha city (Table 4.1; Table 4.2; Table 4.3; and Table 4.4). The family factors seemed to be the major causes of orphan's poor academic performance. This finding is in line with those of (Idanda. 1997: Salmon & Strobe! 1997: Nyangarika et al. (2020c). The reason for this could be that schools mainly provide academic support with no regard to emotional and physical support which contribute to academic achievement.

Social economic factor was one of the major factors which influenced the academic performance of primary school orphaned students in Arusha city as revealed in the Figure 4.1. There was a response of 100 (100%) on this factor of which 1 (1%) of DPEO supported, 6 (6%) of WEC supported, 6 (6%) of head teachers, 12 (12%) of class teachers, 6 (6%) of other teacher, 48 (48%) of the orphaned students, 12 (12%) of the guardians, and 9 (9%) of the rest of community supported this (Figure 4.1). Findings further revealed that majority of Tanzanians do not keep savings for their children so when they die they leave economic hardship to the children of which hinder them even to get needed education for their future. Also due to the fact that most of Tanzanians are having big families so when their relatives die also need to extend their families by taking the kinds of their relatives to live with them while their level of income is low. This brought hardship in life of which they failed to finance well orphans academically and other social needs including food. Due to low social economic status of many of the guardians, this create low disposable income to finance orphans especially in buying exercise

books, school uniforms, pens, pencils, shoes, paying for tuition, and other school fees. These affected students directly and indirectly which in turn led to poor performance in classes

Figure 4.1: Social Economic Factors



Source: Field Data (2020)

Learning environment also play a great role in the performance of students. From the study, it was reported that home learning environment hindered orphaned students to perform well academically. This was supported by majority of the respondents 85 (85%) and from each group, 1 (1%) DPEO was in agreement with this, 6 (6%) of WEC, 6 (6%) of head teachers, 10 (10%) of class teachers, 4 (4%) of other teacher, 42 (42%) of the orphaned students, 7 (7%) of the guardians, and 9 (9%) of the rest of community (Figure 4.1).

The study findings show that that home learning environment of many orphans was not conducive for them to concentrate on studies which left them with little or no time to study at home and do class assignment. They were mostly occupied with a lot of works after schools including fetching some water, cooking, selling small items in the streets, going into the streets to beg money. Also the study findings show that that most of them were coming from the families which were not good financially therefore even in the night there were no light (electricity power or fuel power for the lamps) to light house so that they can study and also there were no adults support in the learning process at home. So all these in one way or another contributed much to their poor academic performance.

Table 4.1: Home Learning Environment as Factor

Category of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
DPEO	1	1%
WEC	6	6%
Head Teachers	6	6%
Class Teachers	10	10%
Other Teachers	4	4%
Orphans	42	42%
Guardians	7	7%
Community	9	9%
Total	85	85%

Source: Field Data (2020)

Inferiority complex seemed to be the factor which contributed to the poor academic performance of orphaned students in primary schools in Arusha city. Findings from the study revealed that majority of the respondents 73 (73%) were in agreement with this (Table 4.1). From each group 1 (1%) DPEO supported, 5 (5%) of WEC supported, 5 (5%) of head teachers, 12 (12%) of class teachers, 5 (5%) of other teachers, 32 (32%) of orphans, 8 (8%) of guardians, and 4 (4%) of the other community members (Table 4.2).

The study findings show that many orphaned students were feeling inferior before their fellow students due to the situation they were having and also this was contributed much by lack of acceptance from their fellow students through bad jokes and creation of barrier to participate in various school activities such as group discussion, sports and games. This created emotional stress making them difficulty to concentrate and learn in the classroom due to trauma. Therefore, there is a relationship between the challenges facing orphaned students and academic performance in primary schools.

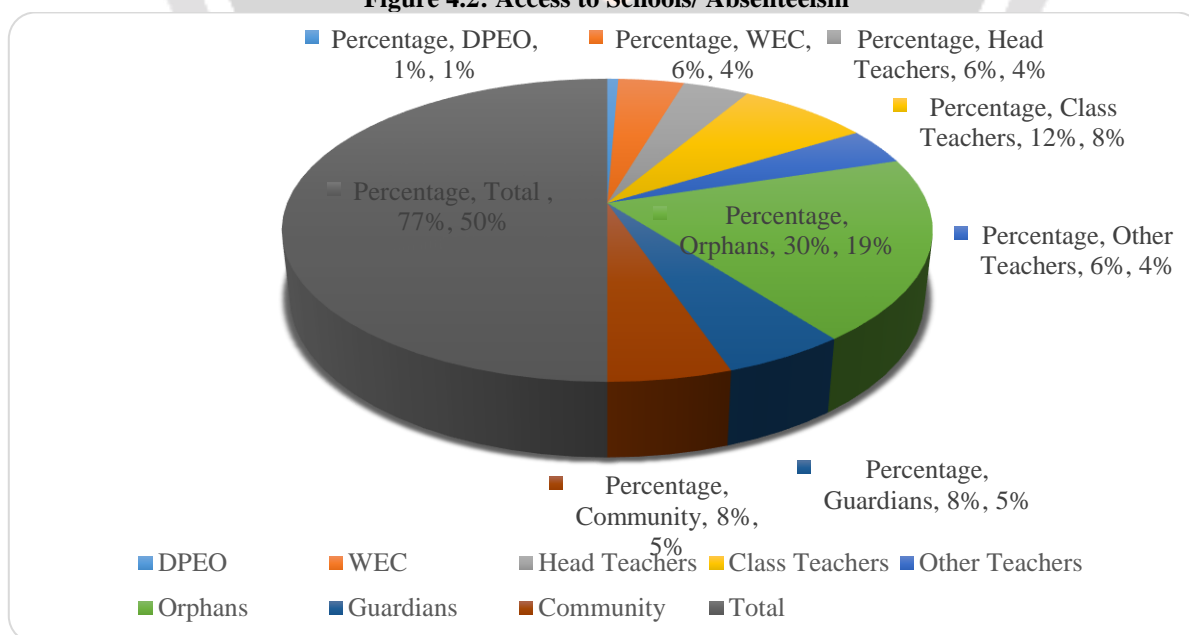
Table 4.2: Inferiority Complex as a Factor

Category of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
DPEO	1	1%
WEC	5	5%
Head Teachers	5	5%
Class Teachers	12	12%
Other Teachers	5	5%
Orphans	32	32%
Guardians	8	8%
Community	4	4%
Total	73	73%

Source: Field Data (2020)

Access to school and student’s absenteeism contributed much to the academic performance of orphaned students in primary schools in Arusha city. Findings from the study revealed that 77 (77%) of the respondents supported this whereby there were 1 (1%) DPEO, 6 (6%) WEC, 6 (6%) head teachers, 6 (6%) other teachers, 8 (8%) guardians, 8 (8%) community members, and 30 (30%) orphans (Figure 4.2). The researcher asked class teachers and they respondent that most of students were missing classes many times and this made them to miss class lesson of which at the end of semester made them difficult to pass well examinations because they were having nothing in their heads provided that even at home they were not studying. For the students, they admitted that they were missing classes many times and it was not their willingness but due to home responsibilities including cooking, washing clothes, home appliances, selling vegetables and other small items in the streets as were sent by their guardians. Also they said that sometimes it was difficult to attend classes all day because they were living far away from schools and they were required to board cars (Town Hiace) of which they were required to pay money which they were not having. From the guardian’s perspectives, they said that they were allowing their kids to go to schools and do other activities at home.

Figure 4.2: Access to Schools/ Absenteeism



Source: Field Data (2020)

From the study it was revealed that lack of system of helping orphaned students in schools also contributed to the poor academic performance of orphans as was supported by 59 (59%) of the respondents (Table 4.2). From

each group of the respondents 1 (1%) DPEO supported, others were 6 (6%) of WEC, 6 (6%) of head teachers, 10 (10%) of class teachers, 5 (5%) of other teachers, 26 (26%) of orphans, 4 (4%) of guardians, and 1 (1%) of other community member (Table 4.2). DPEO, WEC, and teachers they said that, in schools and government (MoEVT) in general there is no policy of identifying orphaned students and treating them in a special way compared to other students. But currently class teachers took this responsibility of identifying them as evidenced in the Figure 4.2. The identified number of orphaned students need to be recorded in special book so that they can easily reached for the support by school's administration, government, and other supporting units. Also teachers needed not to harass orphaned students in the classes and giving out examples in teaching which touch their lives which could increase their inferiority complex.

Table 4.3: Lack of System of Helping Orphaned Students in Schools

Category of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
DPEO	1	1%
WEC	6	6%
Head Teachers	6	6%
Class Teachers	10	10%
Other Teachers	5	5%
Orphans	26	26%
Guardians	4	4%
Community	1	1%
Total	59	59%

Source: Field Data (2020)

Sexual violence also reported in this study to be one of the factors which contributed to the poor performance of orphaned students in primary schools in Arusha city. Findings revealed that this was supported by 58 (58%) respondents of which included 1 (1%) DPEO, 5 (5%) WEC, 4 (4%) head teachers, 8 (8%) class teachers, 4 (4%) other teachers, 28 (28%) orphaned students, 2 (2%) guardians, and 6 (6%) other community members (table 4.4). The study findings show that there were some cases on rapping of orphaned girls by the street people and others with the people living with. This created psychological torture which impacted them in performing well in classes but these were few cases which were revealed. Also this happened even to the few boys as were revealed by class teachers as the researcher was interviewing them.

Table 4.4: Sexual Violence for Girls

Category of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
DPEO	1	1%
WEC	5	5%
Head Teachers	4	4%
Class Teachers	8	8%
Other Teachers	4	4%
Orphans	28	28%
Guardians	2	2%
Community	6	6%
Total	58	58%

Source: Field Data (2020)

The second objective of this study was to determine the factors which influence the academic performance of primary school's orphans in Arusha city. Findings generally revealed that social economic status 100 (100%), home learning environment 85 (85%), access to schools (absenteeism) 73 (73%), sexual violence for girls 53 (53%), inferiority complex among orphans 73 (73%), and lack of systems of helping orphaned students in schools 59 (59%) seemed to be the factors which influenced the academic performance of orphaned students in primary schools in Arusha city (Table 4.1; Table 4.2; Table 4.3; and Table 4.4).

5. Conclusion

Tanzania like the rest of the world, seems to be in dire need for strategies to assist orphaned learners survive for building the future of the nation. From the study it was revealed that orphaned students were performing poorly due to the environment they were living and the major factors was the social economic factors which included poverty among the orphaned guardians. This called the need for all stakeholders including NGO's, the government, and other stakeholders to provide full support to the needy orphaned students for them to study well for their future and future of the nation. This study recommends that the availability of food for orphaned

learners to eat at home contributed to the academic achievement of learners. It would therefore be of benefit that school's nutrition programmes be fully implemented, coordinated and monitored in all schools. The findings revealed that their a were factors which contributed to orphaned student academic performance. e.g. food available for breakfast and supper. Assistance with homework. availability of time to do homework. reading books other than school books. A program incorporating these factors need to be developed to assist guardians of orphan learners in providing academic. physical and emotional support to learners. The community members and other stakeholders including the government should work in hand to hand in helping the orphaned students at all levels so as to help them acquiring education for their future.

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