



Social and Psychological Challenges Facing Orphaned Children Living in the Orphanage Centres in Tanzania

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ABSTRACT: The study aimed to assess social and psychological challenges facing orphaned children living in the orphanages in Tanzania. The motivational theory of Abraham Maslow guided this study with the use of the qualitative approach. In-depth interviews were employed to collect data from the research participants. The study was carried out in four orphanage centres within three wards in Dar es Salaam Region. A purposive sampling technique was employed to get 29 participants for this study. Specifically, the study intends to answer the following unexplored questions: i) What are the social challenges facing orphaned children living in the orphanages? ii) What are the psychological challenges facing orphaned children living in the orphanages? The findings revealed that in the orphanages orphaned children experienced various social challenges including shortage of basic needs, shortage of educational materials, and lack of sport gears as well as poor health services. They also faced psychological challenges like physical punishment, bullying behaviours from fellows, segregation, isolation and poor attachment from their caregivers. Such challenges are indicators for defining ineffectiveness of caregivers in providing psychosocial services to orphaned children. The study concluded that in the present context, orphanages are not a good residence for orphans' psychosocial wellbeing due to shortage of funds and presence of untrained personnel. The study recommended that, the government should formulate interventional policies and enact laws which would look after the welfare of orphaned children rather than depending on the institutional Care.

KEYWORDS: Children, Orphans, Orphanages, Psychological challenges, Social challenges, Tanzania

INTRODUCTION

A youngster who has lost his mother, father, or both parents due to any reason is known as an orphan [1]. Orphaned children are more likely to experience anxiety, rejection, anger, idealization, and guilt than other children. The death of one's parents has an impact on the children's living system [2]. Orphan children are individuals whose safety, well-being, and development are jeopardized by a lack of psychological care, according to this study. When compared to their peers, orphans are more prone to experience social and psychological disorders. Depression, rage, anxiety, and despair are some of the psychological issues [3]. These issues arise as a result of their inability to deal with their experience of loss [4]. Therefore, the psychosocial challenges facing orphaned children might be attributed to inability of their caregivers in handling their problems because psychological challenges such stress, anger, anxiety, sadness, discrimination, bullying, stigma, physical punishment, anxiety, poor attachment and isolation need caregivers who are well nurtured [5].

The research and Analysis Working Group [9] maintained that, orphaned and vulnerable children are at great risk of dropping out of school because of lack of money to pay school expenses. Furthermore, UNICEF [7] emphasized that, in order to be serious with orphans' needs the education system must address the cost of schooling, protection and service provision within the school setting, and relevance of curricula to the needs of vulnerable. Further, school fee abolition has a direct impact on the enrolment of vulnerable children. Where education is nominally free, out-of-pocket expenses for learning materials, uniforms and transportation costs can prevent children from attending school.

Institutional care plays an important role in solving orphans' problems but some shortcomings like inadequacy of psychosocial services, emotional and poor cognitive development of children are observed [8]. Likewise, in these centres children also experience depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, fear, anger, sadness, loneliness, isolation, stigma, psychiatric disorders, and poor social skills



[9, 10]. Mchau [2] maintained that, most of stresses faced by orphaned children are associated with the lack of basic needs such as food, clothes, health care, economic hardship, taking parental role, fear of failing examinations, sadness, stigma and rejection.

In Tanzania, the rate of orphaned children started to increase since the 1980s coupled with HIV/AIDS and malaria [11]. Due to the increase of orphans, extended families have been overwhelmed with the burden of caring for the orphans [12]. Consequently, majority of orphans have taken in orphanages for their survival, which is the focus of this study. An orphan refers to any person living in the orphanage under age of 18 years whose one or both biological parents have died. Meanwhile, there are about 500 registered and non-registered orphanages caring for more than 11,565 children in the country [13]. An orphanage is an institution owned by an individual, non-governmental institutions or faith based organization that is undertaking care for more than thirty orphaned children.

The absence of national policy which safeguards the needs and welfare of the orphaned children in Tanzania motivated the international agencies like UNICEF, USAIDS, PEPFAR; NGOs and faith based organizations to take over the caring roles of orphans by establishing orphanages [9]. Likewise, factors such as urbanization, individualism, migration and high cost of living have weakened the capacity of extended families to continue providing support to the huge number of orphans especially those families living in cities [14, 7].

In providing services, most of the organizations concentrate much on material support such as providing food, shelter, clothes and educational materials [7] with little focus on psychosocial support due to the limited of financial resources and human personnel. Consequently, the orphaned children have been continually suffering from various social and psychological challenges while living in these orphanages. Most of these challenges have been reported in studies and reports by international agencies like UNICEF [15]; UNICEF [7]; PEPFAR, [16] with narrow coverage by empirical studies. Though these agencies presented challenges facing orphaned children in the orphanages, however, two major questions remain unexplored. (i) What are the social challenges facing orphaned children living in the orphanages? (ii) What are the psychological challenges facing orphaned children in the orphanages? In this regard, this study aimed to cover this gap in knowledge for the orphan's psychosocial wellbeing. Therefore, psychological challenges cover aspects such as attachment, affection, motivation, love, while social challenges cover aspects such as respect, interaction, caregiving, spiritual support, educational and health support.

Generally, the findings of the study provide a clear understanding of the status of social and psychological challenges facing orphaned children living in the orphanages in Tanzania. In this regards, The findings can assist in the process of reviewing and changing policies on orphanage and practices of the Tanzanian government, non-governmental institutions, health workers, social workers, teachers, counsellors, stakeholders and caregivers working with orphaned children. Meanwhile, the study is the tool for enhancing caregivers' capacity of providing psychosocial services to orphaned children in a professional way.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study was guided by motivational theory of Maslow [17]. The theory expresses the people's goodness and the need for freedom in order to be open, free and independent. According to him a child care involves freedom to grow and become what one can be in one's future life.

Maslow [17] described human needs that could be met by an individual from the grassroots (physiological needs) to the top (Self-actualization) in one's life experience. The physiological needs include food, water, good health, shelter and clothing. Safety is the second stage of the hierarchy of need where an individual feels safe in a position. Kinship and a sense of being loved is the third stage of the hierarchy in which people struggle to seek a sense of love and belongingness. The next stage is self-esteem, where, at this stage the human need based on satisfaction with ones' roles and skills and the one at the top is self-actualization. This is a stage of being open, creative, loving, spontaneous, autonomous, being happy and democratic.

Therefore, the current study believes that, availability of social support including health services, interaction between caregivers and orphans, availability of basic needs, educational materials and sports gears as well as psychological support such as motivation, affectionate, attachment love and peer belongingness have influence on orphans' wellbeing. However, limited provision of such services might have negative effects to orphans' socially and psychologically.



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Approach and Design

The study used qualitative approach to collect data in Dar es Salaam Region in assessing the current status of social and psychological challenges facing orphaned children living in the institutionalized centres. Kombo and Troump [18] argue that, qualitative approach takes place in natural setting and interpretation of facts based on meaning that people bring to them.

The study employed multiple case study designs to assess social and psychological challenges facing orphaned children living in the orphanages. Researchers visited four institutionalized centres which enabled him to obtain the first hand information on the current status social and psychological challenges facing orphaned children living in the respective centres.

The Study Area

The study was conducted Dar es Salaam Region Tanzania within four orphanages namely Green Pastures (Bunju B), Umra (Magomeni), Chakuwama and Ijango (Sinza). Chakuwama Orphanage is a home to more than fifty orphans and underprivileged children in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Another center is Green Pastures Orphanage which is a project of Tanzania Child Rescue Network purposed to rescue the needy children in Tanzania from their legal child rights caused to numerous factors. i.e. the right of education, proper medication, shelter and balanced food diets. In addition, Umra is a four home community located in DSM-Tanzania, which supports orphans and underprivileged kids from different parts of the country. Finally, Ijango Orphanage Center is situated at Sinza, Dar es Salaam dedicated to host orphans mostly from Dar es Salaam and other part of the country. These homes engage the children in curricular studies and extracurricular activities to keep them occupied and motivated. Through the engagement, they could minimize the risk of children falling into drugs and substance abuse, loitering aimlessly, sexual practices, idleness among others.

The choice of Dar es Salaam Region was influenced by the magnitude of orphaned children. Makuu [13] found that in the region, the number of orphans living in the orphanages is higher than other places in the country, whereby about 45 orphanages undertaking care more than 2000 orphans.

The statistics provided by the Municipal Social Welfare Officer of Kinondoni municipality revealed that currently the Municipality has a total of 9,339 orphans and vulnerable children, among them, 1500 residing in 30 orphanages. Further, the findings revealed that in the four study orphanages there were about 158 orphaned children among these 82 were males and 76 were females. Likewise, there were four (4) directors and 36 caregivers who were responsible in taking care for orphaned children.

Sample, Data Collection and Data Analysis

The sample for this study involved of 29 participants. Data saturation was the significant points for the selection of this sample. Majority of the orphaned children (13) were of the age ranging from 15 to 17 years, others had age range from 12 to 14 while the age of remaining (three) orphans ranged from nine to eleven years. Eleven (11) were males while nine were females. Therefore, all orphaned children who were interviewed were children by Tanzanian definition of the 2009 law which states that a child is a person whose age is less than 18 years. Omari [19] maintained that, sample selection is supposed to focus on the nature of subject, economic status of the researcher and the time available. Creswell [20] suggested that, the range of 20 and 30 participants are adequate enough for qualitative study.

In this study, purposive sampling technique was used to obtain four orphanages, 20 orphaned children, four caregivers, four directors and one official from the social welfare department. Orphaned children were purposively selected because they were main victims of social and psychological challenges in the orphanages. Likewise, caregivers were purposively selected by the researcher for the reason that most of their working hours were in line with orphaned children and they were also aware of the social and psychological challenges faced by orphaned children in the orphanage centres. Moreover, four Directors of the institutions were purposefully selected because they were owners of the institutions and in charge of all activities in the orphanages. In this regard, they were also aware of the social and psychological challenges orphaned children faced in the institutions. Further, the official welfare officer was purposively selected from the Municipal Department of Social Welfare because he was responsible for orphans and vulnerable children in a particular setting. The officer was also used to get more information about existing programs, policies and plans for helping orphans in the orphanages.

The researchers used 29 in-depth interviews to get information on the social and psychological challenges facing orphaned children in the centre. The researcher preferred the technique due to the nature of the study which required direct conversations, freedom of



expression and open room for clarifying the questions. Ryan *et al.* [21] argued that when the interview takes place in normal conversations, the participants feel free to participate in a relaxed manner. Interviews also enabled the researcher to make clarification on the questions which were not well understood by the participants.

The data collected were analysed by using thematic data analysis method. Researchers analysed information obtained from each centre following objectives and then the findings from the four cases were combined to get a general meaning, and the combined units were changed into themes and patterns which were presented in form of vibrates. Creswell [22] argued that, cross case analysis represents a thematic analysis across case.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Social Challenges Facing Orphaned Children in the orphanages

During the interviews, orphaned children were asked to state social challenges that they faced in the institutions. Similarly, caregivers and directors were asked to highlight social challenges facing orphaned children in the institutionalized centres. The findings revealed that in the institutionalized centres orphaned children were facing various social challenges including shortage of educational materials, poor health services, shortage of basic needs like food and clothes as well as shortage of sports gears. These challenges are explained further in the following sub-sections.

Shortage of educational materials

The findings from most of orphaned children, caregivers, all directors of the centres revealed that, orphaned children experienced shortage of educational materials such as fare to and from schools, books, and money for tuition while some of them responded that in the institutions children were able to access educational materials such textbooks, pencils, pens, school bags and school uniforms.

An orphaned boy aged 16 years in the institution number three said:

“The provision of educational materials, such as pens and exercise books, is undoubtedly important for children's education. However, the challenge arises when the number of children in need exceeds the available resources. Simply distributing a limited number of exercise books among all the children may not suffice due to the sheer quantity of students. To illustrate this point, let's consider the scenario where young children are assigned six exercise books each, while older children are allocated twelve exercise books each. Despite these allocations, it becomes apparent that meeting the demand for exercise books for every child is an insurmountable task. The limited supply fails to accommodate the needs of all the children, leading to an inevitable disparity.

In one possible outcome, the older children may have a better chance of obtaining the necessary number of exercise books, while the younger ones are left without sufficient materials. This disparity arises due to the older children's ability to assert their priority and secure the resources they require. Consequently, the younger children may face a disadvantage, hindering their educational progress and potentially impeding their overall development.

Conversely, another plausible scenario involves the younger children receiving the necessary exercise books, while the older ones are left with inadequate supplies. In this case, the younger children benefit from the priority given to their educational needs, while the older ones may have to make do with fewer resources or resort to alternative means to meet their requirements.

This discrepancy in resource distribution highlights the challenges faced when trying to meet the educational material needs of a large number of children. Simply relying on pens and exercise books as the sole means of support may not suffice in such circumstances. Additional efforts are needed to address the resource gap, such as seeking external assistance, implementing effective resource management strategies, or exploring alternative educational tools that can cater to a larger group of children.”

The findings indicate that shortage of funds in the institutionalized centres was a hindrance to orphaned children in getting educational materials. Ganga and Chinyoka [23] provided that orphans are likely not to go to school due to lack of educational materials such as stationaries and school uniforms.



Fare to and from school was also a problem to some orphaned children attending in schools. An orphaned boy aged 15 years in orphanage 1 was quoted saying:

“The fare to and from school poses a significant challenge for us at the orphanage. With a large number of children residing here, each requiring transportation to attend school, it becomes increasingly difficult to ensure everyone's access to education. Unfortunately, walking to school is not a feasible option for us due to the considerable distance between the orphanage and the schools.

As orphans, we face the compounded difficulty of lacking the financial resources to cover transportation expenses on our own. The cost of daily transportation can quickly become burdensome, especially when multiplied by the number of children requiring transportation services. Limited financial means often restrict our options, making it a constant struggle to find a sustainable solution for all of us.

The absence of reliable and affordable transportation inhibits our ability to attend school consistently. Missing out on education not only hampers our intellectual and personal development but also limits our prospects for a brighter future. Education is crucial for our empowerment, and it is disheartening when financial constraints hinder our access to this fundamental right.”

The findings indicated that huge number of orphaned children in the orphanage affected the efficiency of caregivers in the provision of educational needs to orphaned children

Generally, the findings indicate that caregivers have hard time when it comes to educational expenses of orphaned children. Shortage of funds in the Centre affected the provision of educational needs to orphaned pupils. The study findings support those of the Research and Analysis Working Group [6] which argued that, orphaned and vulnerable children are at great risk of dropping out of school because of lack of money to pay school expenses. Likewise, Kuo and Operario [24] argued that, regardless of the efforts of the government to alleviate school fees in primary school education, most caregivers could not even afford to pay for educational materials such as uniforms, books and other school contributions. Further, UNICEF [7] maintained that, where education is nominally free, out of pocket expenses for learning materials, uniforms and transportation costs can prevent children from attending school. Nevertheless, the findings were contradicted with Katabaro [25] observed in Bukoba Urban, who perceived orphanages as best residence for orphaned pupils to get educational support due to availability of funds compared to orphaned children cared by foster parents. The existence of such dissimilarity might be due to differences in geographic location and change in time from when the study was conducted which do not link with the current study.

Poor health services

Majority of orphaned children revealed that, in the centres they experienced poor health services like shortage of medicines, and delay in getting medical treatments when they became sick. Minority revealed that they got health services like ant pain and some were taken in dispensaries for medication when got sick. An orphaned child aged 15 years in centre number one was quoted saying:

“The situation concerning the healthcare of sick children, including orphans, is deeply concerning. Unfortunately, it has been observed that sick children are often brought to hospitals late, and in some cases, tragic outcomes such as the loss of lives have occurred even within the confines of the orphanage. This distressing reality raises serious concerns about the well-being and adequate medical attention provided to sick children, including those who are suffering from various ailments and conditions.

Regrettably, the personal experience shared highlights the challenges faced by individuals within the orphanage system. In this case, the individual expressing their distress is suffering from chest pain, a potentially serious symptom that warrants immediate medical attention. However, it is disheartening to learn that their condition has been made known to caregivers, yet the necessary and timely healthcare intervention has not been consistently provided. Instead, the individual has been offered pain killers as a temporary solution, while spending the majority of their time confined to their room, presumably resting or sleeping.”

The findings indicate that some orphaned children were not adequately getting health services in the centres due to shortage of funds. The study findings supported those of Kuo and Operario [24] who found out that, the common problem to orphans was lack of money to pay for medical treatments as well as consultation fees for providers. Further, they revealed that orphaned children were not taken to hospital when they got sick due to insufficient of funds.



Likewise, findings most of caregivers and all directors revealed that, children experienced poor health services and getting sick most of the time. The centres had no health facilities for orphaned children to get treatments while some revealed that children got health services like being taken to hospital when get sick. The director in centre number one said:

“...Nowadays, at our center, we are caring for a group of children who are facing the additional challenge of being HIV positive. These children require specialized and intensive medical care that differs from the treatments provided to other children. Their unique medical needs demand dedicated attention and a comprehensive approach to ensure their well-being.

Unfortunately, the orphanage where these children reside does not have its own dispensary or medical facility. Consequently, we find ourselves faced with the responsibility of covering the costs associated with their medical treatments. This place a significant financial burden on us, as the required medical interventions and medications can be quite expensive.”

The findings indicate that owners of centres were overwhelmed with tasks of looking after orphaned children due to high costs involved in medication. Kuo and Operario [24] also found caregivers complaining about the cost of health services being involved. According to a national cost sharing program in Tanzania, patients must pay a small fee, for medical visits and usually 50% of drug costs [26]. Though this seems a small fee, but is difficult for many caregivers to meet, as a result they resort to other treatments. The findings revealed that, caregivers in the orphanages had poor skills in providing health services since most of them were not medically trained. Likewise, none of the centres had an employed doctor or nurse who could look after the health conditions of the orphaned children especially those who were affected by HIV/AIDS. Mwaipopo [27] observed that it is problematic often for unskilled individuals to detect emotional problems among children because they are subjective and internal. Therefore, it is less visible to care providers such as guardians and foster parents to notice. Hence the problems may continue unaddressed. Likewise, orphans to get medical treatment, in the centres depended on unreliable donors. This fact limited the provision of quality health services in the institutionalized centres. However, the findings contradicted with those in a study of Makape [28] in Lesotho orphanages who found that orphaned children were getting adequate health services including counselling services to enable them talk freely about their problems. Such circumstance facilitated their psychosocial wellbeing. Such contradiction might be due to economic differences between two countries. As such, economic stability of Lesotho might be a facilitating factor in providing adequate health services to orphaned children.

Shortage of basic needs

Findings from few orphaned children, caregivers and directors revealed that orphaned children experienced shortage of basic needs such as food and clothes and shoes. Many of them revealed that children were well fed and clothed in the centre. An orphaned girl aged 16 years in centre number three was quoted saying:

“The current situation presents a challenging reality where not only is there a scarcity of food, but the availability of proper footwear is also a pressing issue. This unfortunate circumstance is exemplified by the deteriorated condition of my own shoes, which have become worn-out and torn, leaving my toes exposed whenever I wear them. As a result, I often find myself in the difficult position of attending school without any shoes, resorting to walking barefooted.

The shortage of food creates a significant strain on individuals and communities, limiting access to essential nourishment. The absence of an adequate food supply can have severe consequences, affecting physical health, overall well-being, and impeding proper growth and development, particularly in younger individuals like myself.

Furthermore, the lack of appropriate footwear exacerbates the challenges faced in daily life. Worn-out and damaged shoes not only fail to provide the necessary protection for my feet but also hinder my mobility and comfort. This can lead to discomfort, potential injuries, and impediments in engaging fully in various activities, including attending school.

The impact of these hardships is particularly evident when I find myself attending school without any shoes. Walking barefooted exposes me to potential hazards, such as sharp objects, rough terrain, extreme temperatures,



and unhygienic conditions. These circumstances not only compromise my physical safety but also pose psychological and social challenges, as I may feel self-conscious or excluded due to my lack of proper footwear.”

The findings also indicated that, orphaned children in the orphanages were not satisfied with the amount of food and quality of clothes and shoes provided by caregivers due to economic hardship in the centres. These findings were similar to those in a study conducted by Ngamesha [29] in Arusha that, orphans living in institutions lack basic needs including security, comfort in caring environment and the right to enjoy their youth. Maslow [17] provided that, a want that is satisfied is no longer a want, an organism is dominated and its behavior organized only by unsatisfied needs. If hunger is satisfied, it becomes unimportant in the current dynamics of the individual. He further, argued that a man who is extremely and dangerously hungry, no other interests exist but food. Therefore, the orphans' complaints about food and shoes reflected their major wants in the institutions which reflected insufficiency in the institutionalized centres.

Shortage of sports gears

Findings from few orphaned children revealed that they lacked sports gears such as balls and bicycles in the centre while many of them revealed that they engaged in plays by using sports gears made by local materials. An orphaned boy aged nine in orphanage number two said:

“In the present day, the activity of playing football has come to a halt due to the unfortunate circumstance of our footballs reaching their expiration date. As a result, we find ourselves unable to engage in the exhilarating game that we have come to cherish. However, our hopes are not entirely dashed, for we eagerly anticipate the arrival of visitors who bring with them the potential for joy and excitement to be restored. This anticipation stems from the delightful tradition that these visitors have established over time - the tradition of presenting us with gifts, such as brand new footballs and even bicycles.

The arrival of these guests not only fills our hearts with anticipation but also ignites a renewed sense of enthusiasm within our community. We eagerly await their presence, for their visits serve as a beacon of hope, signaling the imminent revival of our beloved football matches. With their thoughtful offerings, they not only demonstrate their generosity but also provide us with the means to resume our much-loved sport.

Beyond the physical objects they bring, the arrival of visitors carries a sense of camaraderie and togetherness. It is a time when our community gathers, united by the shared joy of football. The laughter, cheers, and friendly competition that fill the air during these moments create an atmosphere of vibrant energy and unbridled enthusiasm.

In this way, the act of receiving gifts from our visitors goes beyond the tangible objects themselves. It represents the renewal of our spirit and the restoration of our cherished pastime. We eagerly await their arrival, counting down the days until we can once again kick the ball, feel the rush of the game, and revel in the joy that football brings to our lives.

Until that moment arrives, we patiently bide our time, imagining the possibilities that lie ahead. We eagerly anticipate the day when the sound of laughter and the exhilarating cheers of a football match will fill the air once more, thanks to the generosity and thoughtfulness of those who visit us.”

The findings indicate that shortage of funds limited orphaned children in accessing playing materials. In the institutionalized centres, children did not engage in playing because of lack of sports gears. Children like plays where these are necessary for children's social, physical and cognitive development [30]. Further, PEPFAR [16] maintained that plays and games can lower anxiety, depression and anger to children.

Psychological Challenges Facing Orphaned Children in the orphanages

The second objective of the study aimed at examining psychological challenges facing orphaned children in the institutionalized centres. During the interview, orphaned children were asked to state psychological challenges that they faced in the centres. Similarly, caregivers and directors were asked to highlight psychological challenges facing orphaned children in the centres. The findings revealed that in the institutionalized centres orphaned children were facing various psychological challenges including physical punishment, poor attachment and affection, isolation and segregation and bullying behaviours, as explained hereunder.



Physical punishment

Interview findings from some orphaned children revealed that in the orphanages they experienced physical punishment and they were overworked by caregivers. Likewise, some of directors provided that caregivers infringed physical punishment to children unreasonably. An orphaned boy aged 16 years in orphanage 4 said:

“As adults, we often find ourselves facing a multitude of responsibilities and obligations. Within our roles as grown-ups, we frequently experience the demands of daily life, which may include being subject to discipline and engaging in various domestic tasks. Unfortunately, amidst these obligations, it can sometimes feel as though our voices and concerns go unheard.”

In the realm of discipline, caregivers may resort to measures such as caning as a means of maintaining order and instilling discipline. These disciplinary actions, although intended to teach and correct behaviors, can sometimes leave us feeling physically and emotionally drained. The repetitive nature of domestic chores further compounds this fatigue, as we tirelessly perform tasks to maintain our homes and care for our loved ones.

The weariness we experience from the constant demands placed upon us can be exacerbated by the lack of understanding and support we encounter when expressing our exhaustion. The simple act of acknowledging our fatigue and voicing our need for rest often falls on deaf ears. Whether it is due to societal expectations, a perceived duty to fulfill our responsibilities without complaint, or a lack of empathetic listeners, our pleas for respite can feel unheard and invalidated.

Consequently, this creates a significant challenge, as we are left to navigate the exhaustion and overwhelm on our own. The absence of a compassionate ear or a supportive network can lead to feelings of isolation, frustration, and even burnout. It is crucial for us as individuals and as a society to recognize the importance of listening, empathy, and understanding, especially when it comes to acknowledging and addressing the fatigue and needs of those who shoulder significant responsibilities.”

The findings indicate that physical punishment is not good to children who are grown up, as it may increase hostility between children and their caregivers. Maslow [17] argued that, physical punishment draws out panic and fear in the child that, we must assume more is involved than bodily pain alone. Likewise, Freiberg [30] maintained that, physical punishment leads to hostility towards the punishing parent and low sense of guilt for the misbehaviour. Juma [9] proposed that, parenting education is needed to caregivers on the appropriate different methods of disciplining the child. Such methods include giving children manual task, writing essay, and denial permission for outing, watching television, playing football, and visiting friends.

Poor attachment and affection

Findings from some orphaned children and directors revealed that, orphaned children experienced poor affection and attachment from caregivers. Others revealed that they were well treated and cared by their caregivers. The director in orphanage 1 was quoted saying:

“Taking care of non-biological children is a multifaceted and intricate matter, particularly concerning the demonstration of love and attachment. It is essential for caregivers to recognize that promoting positive behavioral changes requires patience and is far from an effortless task, contrary to what some may assume. Unfortunately, the reactions of many caregivers towards these children often fall short of being supportive and nurturing.”

One of the primary challenges in caring for non-biological children lies in establishing a deep emotional connection and building a sense of trust. Unlike biological parents, who typically have a natural bond with their children, caregivers of non-biological children often find themselves starting from scratch in terms of developing attachment. This process demands a significant amount of time, effort, and understanding.

Moreover, behavioral change in any individual, regardless of their background or circumstances, is a complex and gradual process. Non-biological children may have experienced trauma, loss, or difficult life circumstances, which can manifest in challenging behaviors. Caregivers must recognize that these behaviors are often rooted in the child's past experiences and require a compassionate and empathetic response.



However, caregivers sometimes fail to grasp the intricacies of this journey. They may underestimate the emotional impact of the child's past experiences, leading to unrealistic expectations for immediate behavioral improvements. This lack of understanding can result in frustration, impatience, and negative reactions towards the children."

The findings indicated that caregivers did not show affectionate attachment to children were not attached to children. Such fact signified lack of parenting education to caregivers. The findings were similar to those by Juma [9] in Zanzibar, who found that care services provided in orphanages have proved failure in sustaining psychosocial needs to orphaned children due to lack of attention, affection, security and social networks in a particular setting. In addition, Balige [31] maintained that sometimes people who are in need, vulnerable and abused, are afraid of revealing to those who are trying to help them, they need people who will listen to them, they need to feel that they are not being judged. They need people who will guide them so that they can explore and discover their self-esteem, self-respect, and pride and have a strong sense of empowerment. Further, PEPFAR [16] proposed that, the interventions and programs for caregivers should strength their capacity to talk and to listen to the children. Also the activities that will be assigned to children should help them to give expression to their feelings and perception of loss and help to the protection of attachment and personal history.

Bullying behaviours

Findings from orphaned children (three) caregiver (one) and director (one) revealed that orphans experienced bullying behaviours from fellows. An orphaned boy aged 16 years in orphanage four said:

"In the context of the orphanage, the dynamics among the children can sometimes be challenging, and instances may arise where affection and care towards one another are not consistently displayed. Unfortunately, there are occasions when the children exhibit disdain and mistreatment towards their fellow residents. These instances of animosity and harassment can create an emotionally charged environment within the orphanage walls.

One particular group that is particularly prone to exhibiting disruptive behavior is the young children. Due to their limited understanding and emotional development, they may engage in troublesome actions that can be quite trying for the adults who oversee their care. Their curiosity and exploration of boundaries often lead them to provoke the grown-ups, pushing the limits of what is acceptable behavior.

Regrettably, when these incidents are reported to the caregivers or staff members responsible for the children's well-being, it can be disheartening to find that little to no action is taken. This lack of intervention may stem from various factors such as limited resources, overwhelmed staff, or the challenging nature of addressing and rectifying the complex interpersonal dynamics within the orphanage.

The absence of prompt and effective measures to address these issues can contribute to a perpetuation of the negative behavior, leading to a strained and tumultuous social atmosphere for the children residing in the orphanage. It is crucial to recognize the impact this can have on the emotional well-being and overall development of the children, as their experiences in the orphanage play a significant role in shaping their future lives."

Moreover, the existence of bullying behaviors among orphaned children indicated that, orphans were not contented with the physiological and safety needs provided by their caregivers, since their level of satisfaction could trigger elements of love and affection in their livelihood. Maslow [17] argued that, if both physiological and safety needs are fairly gratified, this will generate love and affection among individuals. However, the findings reflected inability of caregivers in providing physiological needs.

Isolation and segregation

Findings from some orphaned children and directors revealed that, in the institutionalized centres orphaned children isolated and segregated themselves and other revealed that they lived well with fellows in the centres. An orphaned boy aged 15 years in orphanage one was quoted saying:

"In contrast to these children, who seem to lack the spirit of cooperation, there are others who consistently display a willingness to collaborate and work together. These children embody the values of inclusivity and teamwork, actively seeking opportunities to support and uplift their peers. They understand the importance of unity and recognize that by joining forces, they can achieve more collectively than they would as individuals.



These cooperative children demonstrate a remarkable ability to bridge divides and break down barriers. Rather than segregating themselves, they actively foster an inclusive environment where everyone feels valued and included. They embrace diversity and understand that each individual brings unique strengths and perspectives to the table.

When approached for assistance, these children respond with empathy and kindness. They genuinely care about the well-being of others and are willing to lend a helping hand without hesitation. Their response is characterized by understanding and a sincere desire to make a positive difference in someone else's life.

Rather than belittling or undermining those who seek their help, cooperative children offer guidance, support, and encouragement. They understand that true strength lies in uplifting others, and their actions reflect this belief. Their willingness to extend a helping hand creates a nurturing environment where everyone feels comfortable seeking assistance when needed.

These cooperative children are not only valuable assets in their immediate communities, but they also serve as role models for others to emulate. Through their actions, they inspire their peers to develop a similar spirit of cooperation, fostering a culture of support and collaboration that extends beyond individual interactions.”

The findings imply that orphaned children were not receiving proper guidance and counselling services from caregivers. Lack of guidance and counselling services to children makes it difficult in understanding the needs of fellows. Balige [31] argued that psychotherapeutic process should help an individual to increase their competences, to engage in cooperation, and to help them to look life in hopeful mind. Further, he argues that when the child is well nurtured and receives proper guidance from caregivers, there is a high possibility of forming correct perception about the self, others and the world in all. Therefore, poor cooperation among the orphaned children implied that caregivers were not effective in providing guidance and counselling services.

Suggestions for the Orphans' Future Wellbeing

Orphaned children, caregivers and directors were asked to give their suggestions for the orphans' future wellbeing. The findings from most of orphaned children revealed that, in order to maintain their psychosocial wellbeing, they should be provided with basic needs such as food, shoes and clothes, sheltering, water and educational materials, to listen their problems and people should make more research in the orphanages so as to identify their problems. A few of them responded that, the government should provide free medication for orphaned children and establish dispensaries in the orphanages. One respondent in orphanage three suggested:

“The government should prioritize actively listening to the problems faced by its citizens as this can lead to a resolution of these issues. When the government genuinely listens and acknowledges the concerns of the people, it demonstrates a commitment to addressing their needs and improving their lives. By engaging in effective communication and actively seeking feedback from the public, the government can gain valuable insights into the challenges and grievances faced by individuals and communities.

When citizens' voices are heard, it fosters a sense of trust and confidence in the government. It provides reassurance that their problems are being taken seriously and that appropriate actions will be taken to address them. This listening process can help identify systemic issues, gaps in services, or areas requiring policy changes. Consequently, the government can formulate targeted solutions that directly respond to the concerns raised by the public, thereby alleviating these problems effectively.

However, if the government fails to listen or remains indifferent to the cries of its citizens, the consequences can be detrimental. A lack of responsiveness can lead to frustration, disillusionment, and a sense of helplessness among the populace. When the government dismisses or ignores the problems raised over radio and television, it undermines the public's confidence in the democratic process and erodes the trust between the government and its constituents. The perception that nothing is being done can further exacerbate the issues at hand, as individuals may feel unheard and neglected, which can eventually lead to societal unrest and dissatisfaction.”

Findings indicate that children need their problems to be listened to by the governments. As such the orphans' complaints to government indicate that their problems are not listened. According to Tanzanian 2009 Law of the Child, the Local Authorities have the duty in giving assistance to vulnerable children whenever possible in order to enable them grow up with dignity among other children and to develop their potential and self-reliance. Although the law is clear on the responsibilities of Local Authority in



handling orphans' problems but implementations remain mostly theoretical. Macleod [32] argued that, the challenge to political figures is to convert children's voices into meaningful and practical recognition and actions through a political action of listening. Therefore, solving orphans' problems needs practical solutions.

Orphans also suggested that, the government should admit students into schools which are nearby the orphanages. They also advised stakeholders who provide services to the orphanages should first make consultation in the orphanages so as to understand the potential needs of the orphaned children, instead of coming with things that are already available, and the orphanages should have permanent donors.

Further, directors of the orphanages suggested that, orphaned children should be provided free National Health Insurance Cards (NHIC). Such support is necessary for children's health services in orphanages. The director aged 50 in orphanage 2 was quoted saying:

"The government has a crucial responsibility to prioritize the well-being and healthcare needs of vulnerable populations, particularly orphaned children residing in orphanages. To fulfill this duty, it is imperative for the government to make concerted efforts in providing National Health Insurance Cards specifically tailored for these children. Such cards would serve as an essential means to ensure that when these children fall ill or require medical attention, they can access the necessary treatment without facing financial obstacles.

Orphaned children already face significant emotional and psychological challenges due to the loss of their parents or guardians. Adding the burden of limited access to healthcare would only exacerbate their plight. Without proper healthcare coverage, these children may be deprived of the right treatment they need to recover from illnesses or maintain good health. Medical expenses can be financially overwhelming for orphanages, which often operate on limited resources and rely on public assistance. Consequently, providing National Health Insurance Cards to orphaned children would alleviate the financial burden on orphanages, enabling them to offer timely and appropriate medical care when needed.

By extending National Health Insurance Cards to orphaned children, the government would be taking a proactive step in safeguarding their health and well-being. These cards would grant them access to a wide range of healthcare services, including doctor's visits, hospital stays, medications, and specialized treatments. By ensuring that healthcare services are affordable and accessible, the government would be demonstrating its commitment to protect the most vulnerable members of society and provide them with the same opportunities for quality healthcare as their peers.

Furthermore, the provision of National Health Insurance Cards for orphaned children would contribute to their overall development and future prospects. Adequate healthcare is crucial for their physical and cognitive development, enabling them to grow into healthy and productive members of society. By investing in the healthcare needs of orphaned children, the government would be investing in the future well-being of the nation as a whole."

Generally, the suggestions provided by participants indicate that owners of the orphanages were overwhelmed in caring for orphaned children due to shortage of funds. Consequently, they were inviting the government to provide support to orphaned children living in orphanages.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study conducted shed light on the various social and psychological challenges faced by orphaned children, emphasizing the detrimental impact of limited funds and a shortage of personnel. Among the social challenges highlighted were the scarcity of educational materials and sports gears, inadequate access to essential health services, and a shortage of basic needs. These circumstances created significant hurdles for the orphaned children, impeding their overall well-being and development. In addition to the social challenges, the study also highlighted the psychological difficulties experienced by these children. Instances of bullying behaviors, isolation, and segregation were prevalent, further exacerbating their already vulnerable situation. The study also found that physical punishment and poor attachment were common issues faced by orphaned children, posing serious emotional and psychological consequences.



The overwhelming nature of these challenges placed a heavy burden on the owners of the orphanage centers, who were already stretched thin in their efforts to care for the children. Recognizing the need for external support, the owners of these centers made a plea to the government to step in and provide assistance to these children living in orphanages. They emphasized the urgency of the situation and the necessity for the government's involvement in improving the conditions and outcomes for these vulnerable children. As a result of the study's findings, it recommended that the Tanzanian government take proactive measures to establish comprehensive policies and laws that prioritize and safeguard the welfare of orphaned children. The study argued for a shift in reliance solely on orphanages to address the needs of these children. Instead, it proposed the implementation of intervention policies that would ensure orphaned children receive essential services not as mere assistance but as their inherent rights. This approach would seek to create a more sustainable and supportive framework to cater to the unique needs and challenges faced by orphaned children in Tanzania.

By adopting such interventional policies, the government would play a pivotal role in ensuring the well-being, development, and future prospects of orphaned children. Through the establishment of robust protective measures, comprehensive support systems, and appropriate resource allocation, the government could help alleviate the burden faced by orphanage owners while promoting a more inclusive and nurturing environment for these vulnerable children.

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