Marital Conflicts and the Psychosocial Status of Children and Adolescents: A case study of Kinondoni District, Tanzania

CHITEGETSE A. MINANAGO, GAD KILONZO, ROSE MWAIPPO
1. Open University of Tanzania
2. Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences
3. University of Dar es Salaam

Consistent with Blumer’s Symbolic Interactionism (1969), this study explored a child and adolescent’s experiences of marital conflicts and their outcomes on their psychosocial wellbeing. It specifically focused on examining the links on how marital conflicts negatively influence the psychosocial wellbeing of children and adolescents. The study involved children of ages 7-12 (middle childhood) and adolescents of ages 13-19 (early adolescence) respectively. The data were...
collected by administering children and adolescent’s self-report measures using non-participant observation and in-depth interview methods. With the use of an exploratory design, ideas, insights and experiences of children and adolescents towards marital conflicts were captured and analyzed using content analysis technique, and presented in narratives along the study’s objectives. Findings indicated that marital conflicts predicted a child’s and adolescent’s psychosocial distress in terms of their distorted relationship with parents and peers, lowered self-esteem, signs to psychological disorders such as anxiety and depression, and development of externalizing and internalizing behaviors respectively. The study recommends a longitudinal study on the subject matter and more practical studies for the services needed for these affected children and their distressed parents.