

Marriage in Crisis: Causes and Consequences of Divorce among Young Couples in Mtoni Ward, Zanzibar

Bakari Khatib Faki,^{1*} Isbandi Rukminto Adi¹

¹Department of Social Welfare Sciences, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Indonesia, Depok – Indonesia

Abstract

Divorce among young couples in urban Zanzibar has emerged as a critical social welfare concern shaped by Islamic marital norms, rapid urbanization, and shifting gender dynamics in Mtoni Ward, West District “A.” The 2022 Population and Housing Census reports a 6.2% divorce rate in the Urban West Region, with women disproportionately affected, yet existing literature remains theoretically limited. This study employs a qualitative desk review of secondary data, integrating peer-reviewed literature and census evidence, guided by Social Exchange Theory, Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, and Community Development Theory. Findings indicate that unemployment, economic insecurity, emotional neglect, poor communication, and weakening community mediation structures jointly accelerate marital dissolution. The study demonstrates that divorce is a structurally embedded social welfare issue rather than an individual failure. It calls for gender-responsive interventions, including premarital education, economic empowerment, and sustainable post-divorce support systems.

Perceraian di kalangan pasangan muda di perkotaan Zanzibar telah muncul sebagai masalah kesejahteraan sosial yang kritis, yang dipengaruhi oleh norma perkawinan Islam, urbanisasi yang cepat, dan pergeseran dinamika gender di Kelurahan Mtoni, Distrik Barat “A.” Sensus Penduduk dan Perumahan 2022 melaporkan tingkat perceraian sebesar 6,2% di Wilayah Barat Perkotaan, dengan perempuan yang terkena dampak secara tidak proporsional, namun literatur yang ada masih terbatas secara teoritis. Studi ini menggunakan tinjauan pustaka kualitatif terhadap data sekunder, mengintegrasikan literatur yang ditinjau sejawat dan bukti sensus, yang dipandu oleh Teori Pertukaran Sosial, Hierarki Kebutuhan Maslow, dan Teori Pengembangan Komunitas. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa pengangguran, ketidakamanan ekonomi, pengabaian emosional, komunikasi yang buruk, dan melemahnya struktur mediasi komunitas secara bersama-sama mempercepat pembubaran perkawinan. Studi ini menunjukkan bahwa perceraian adalah masalah kesejahteraan sosial yang tertanam secara struktural, bukan kegagalan individu. Studi ini menyerukan intervensi yang responsif gender, termasuk pendidikan pranikah, pemberdayaan ekonomi, dan sistem dukungan pasca-perceraian yang berkelanjutan.

Keywords: divorce among young couples; family welfare; gender dynamics; urbanization; Zanzibar

***Corresponding Author:** Bakari Khatib Faki (fakibakar8@gmail.com), Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Indonesia, Jl. Prof. DR. Selo Soemardjan, Pondok Cina, Depok, Jawa Barat 16424, Indonesia.

Introduction

The issue of marriage dissolution has been growing in the mass consciousness and social discourse of Muslim-majority societies, where the permanence of marriage is firmly rooted in religious teachings, cultural ideals, and community norms (Bukido, Azzochrah, et al. 2025). Scholars such as Mosha (2026) argue that divorce has ceased to be an in-house issue in urban Zanzibar and has become an observable social phenomenon that has sparked intense discussion among religious leaders, community elders, policymakers, and welfare practitioners. The increasing rate of marital failure of young couples complicates the traditional beliefs about the stability of Islamic family institutions and poses serious questions about the ability of the current social welfare system to react properly (Junuh and Hussin 2024). According to Faki and Ali (2026), the family, once considered the basic unit of social cohesion, is increasingly under structural pressure, particularly amid the rapid pace of urbanization and mounting economic pressures. Knowing the social factors driving marital separation among young couples in Zanzibar is thus not an academic exercise but an emergency issue for social welfare policy and community development practice.

Young couples' divorce has become the subject of increasing academic interest all around the world, especially in the context of determining the socioeconomic, psychological, and cultural factors. As highlighted by scholars such as Lebert et al. (2025), financial insecurity, unemployment, and housing precarity are consistently the leading causes of marital instability, placing constant stress on the household and undermining marital satisfaction and cooperation. Marriage is particularly prone to conflict and disillusionment, driven by economic factors and unrealistic expectations

among young couples who typically enter matrimony with limited financial resources. Studies in a wide variety of cultural contexts have substantiated the notion that couples become much more inclined to seek divorce once the economic benefits of marriage are overshadowed by financial liabilities and relationship expenses (Faki and Ahmed 2025). These economic pressures are heightened in the Zanzibar case, as unemployment among youth is chronic and the informal sector is the main source of livelihood in the city.

In addition to the economic factor, psychological and relational forces are also critical in determining the outcome of marital life in young couples. The research is unanimous and always points to poor communication, emotional neglect, unmet affective needs, and unresolved conflict as the proximate factors of marital dissatisfaction that cause divorce (Ponzetti and Cate 2021). A valuable explanatory prism in this context is the Hierarchy of Needs by Moon et al. (2022), which shows that couples cannot achieve higher-level needs, such as intimacy, mutual respect, and self-actualization, which make healthy marriages, in situations where they cannot meet basic needs, that is, physiological and safety needs. This cumulative deprivation is especially vulnerable to young couples who enter marriage unprepared for the emotional and practical pressures of marriage (Zumaro et al. 2025). Therefore, dynamics are further complicated in Zanzibar, where young women are gaining rights to education, economic participation, and autonomy over their own lives, while young men face pressure to live up to the role of provider, as dictated by culture.

Cultural and religious factors also play a critical role in shaping the course of marital dissolution in Zanzibar. According to Ishak

(2025), Islam emphasizes the reconciliation of marriage, family mediation, and the preservation of marriage as a holy institution. Still, rising divorce rates suggest that modern young couples are negotiating normative frameworks differently. Urbanization has increasingly undermined the extended family systems that in the past mediated marital conflict and provided informal post-divorce services, forcing couples to resort to formal legal procedures, such as kadhi court proceedings, as the main way of resolving marital breakdown (da Costa and Pereira Mosmann 2021). Similar studies in Muslim-majority context also note that divorce is turning into something that young women do not perceive as a moral failure but an understandable response to years of torture, injustices, and neglect (Susantin et al. 2025). Therefore, these changing interpretations indicate the intricate interplay between old religious values and the stresses of the modern urban world, resulting in marriage decision-making styles that have yet to be theorized in the literature on Zanzibar.

Although there is increasingly more knowledge on the topic of divorce in sub-Saharan Africa and among Muslim-majority populations, there remains a major gap in the theoretical and empirical literature on the topic in Zanzibar. The literature on Zanzibar is biased towards a limited approach to analyzing legal processes, demographic data, or individual causal agents, without considering these aspects within a comprehensive social welfare context. What's more, little is known about the relationship between Islamic law, gender inequality, informal economy, and the vulnerability of welfare in the generation and perpetuation of marital instability. This study fills a gap by providing a localized, multidimensional analysis of divorce among

young couples in Mtoni Ward, West District, "A", grounded in these supporting theoretical approaches: Social Exchange Theory, Hierarchy of Needs, and Community Development Theory. The main thesis presented is that young couples in urban Zanzibar do not fail to get divorced; it is a socially constructed social welfare issue, the product of the convergence of economic precarity, unmet psychological needs, weakening community support systems, and changing gender relations. This theoretically grounded methodology, implemented in a specific underrepresented urban ward, is the study's unique academic contribution.

This study employs a qualitative desk review methodology, which is appropriate for examining complex social phenomena by systematically synthesizing existing scholarly knowledge. The desk review involved the collection, evaluation, and thematic analysis of peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, institutional reports, and policy documents relevant to divorce, social welfare, urbanization, and family dynamics in Zanzibar and comparable socio-religious contexts. Sources were selected based on their relevance to the study's theoretical frameworks and their capacity to illuminate the specific social, psychological, economic, cultural, as well as institutional themes of marital dissolution among young couples.

This study employs a qualitative research design based on secondary data analysis using a systematic desk review approach. Data were drawn from peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, institutional reports, and official statistics related to divorce, social welfare, and family dynamics in Zanzibar and similar sociocultural contexts. Sources were selected based on relevance to research objectives, theoretical significance, and contextual

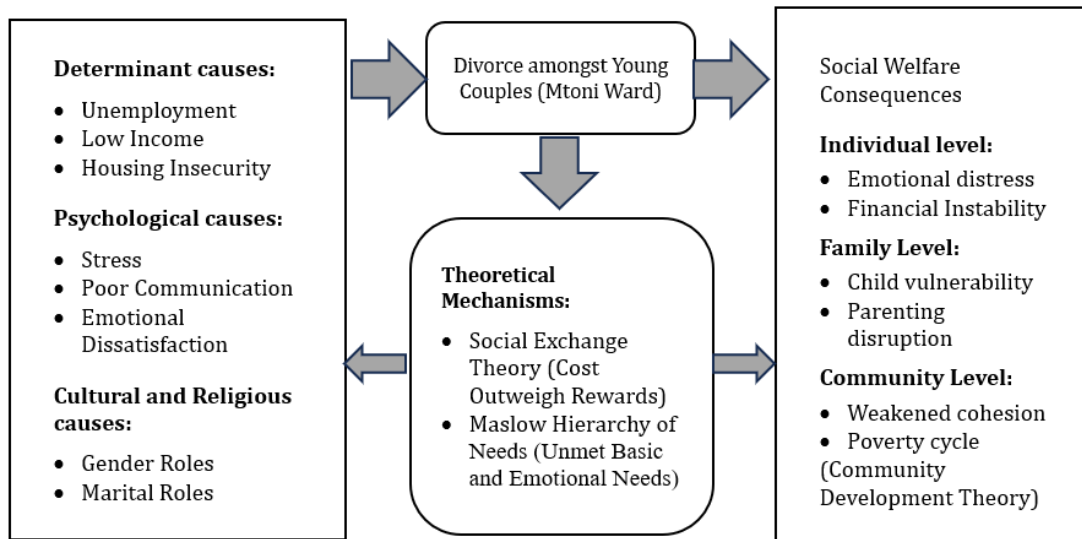
applicability. The analysis applied thematic techniques, including coding and categorization of recurring patterns across the literature. To enhance rigor, findings were triangulated with data from the 2022 Population and Housing Census, linking theoretical insights with empirical trends. The study examines three dimensions: socioeconomic and psychological causes; cultural and religious influences; and consequences at the individual, family, and community levels.

Three research questions guide this study. First, how do social, economic, and psychological causes lead to divorce among young couples in Zanzibar? Second, what are the causes of cultural and religious norms portrayed and analyzed in existing literature in shaping divorce among young couples in this urban Zanzibari context? Third, what are the consequences of divorce

described and interpreted in secondary sources at individual, family, and community levels in Zanzibar? The findings and analysis are presented according to the three research questions, providing a qualitative interpretation based on secondary data of how divorce among young couples in Zanzibar is shaped, experienced, and understood within its socioeconomic, cultural, and institutional context.

This study is premised on several foundational assumptions that inform its theoretical orientation and analytical approach. It is assumed, first, that divorce among young couples in urban Zanzibar is not an isolated personal event but a socially embedded process shaped by structural forces including economic inequality, inadequate welfare infrastructure, and shifting cultural norms.

Figure 1
Conceptual Framework



Source: Author Synthesis based on Reviewed Documents

Second, it is assumed that the three theoretical frameworks employed Social Exchange Theory, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, and Community Development Theory, are sufficiently complementary to provide a comprehensive analytical basis for understanding marital dissolution across its economic, psychological, and community dimensions. Third, it is assumed that the 2022 Population and Housing Census provides a reliable and representative empirical foundation for contextualizing the demographic patterns of marital dissolution in Urban West Zanzibar. Fourth, it is assumed that the peer-reviewed literature synthesized in this study, while drawn from diverse geographic and cultural contexts, is sufficiently applicable to the Zanzibar setting given shared structural conditions of urbanization, economic precarity, and gendered inequality. Finally, it is assumed that strengthening the theoretical grounding of divorce research in this context will meaningfully contribute to the development of more effective, contextually responsive, and gender-sensitive social welfare policies and community-based interventions in Zanzibar.

Figure 1 gives the conceptual framework of the study. The framework depicts the causes and consequences of divorce among young couples in Zanzibar West District "A" area, Mtoni Ward, through the processes described by the Social

Exchange Theory and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Divorce is also conceptualized as a process that causes individual, family, and community-level consequences, which align with Community Development Theory.

Causes of Divorce amongst Young Couple in Mtoni Ward

Analysis of secondary data indicates that divorce among young couples in Zanzibar, especially in the Urban West district "A" and the Mtoni Ward, is a rising, multidimensional social welfare problem influenced by demographic, socioeconomic, psychological, cultural, and institutional factors. The 2022 Population and Housing Census (2022) indicates that higher rates of marital dissolution occur in urban communities than in rural communities, with the West District "A" having comparatively higher rates of divorced persons. The highest concentration of divorce is among young and early middle-aged adults, which means that early-stage marriages are the most unstable (Uggla and Saarela 2025). Women make up a higher proportion of people who are divorced as a result of gendered consequences of marital dissolution, which are recorded in both the African and global records of divorces. The causes of divorce among young couples in Mtoni Ward can be seen on Table 1.

Table 1
Key Causes of Divorce among Young Couples in Mtoni Ward

Category	Specific Causes/Reasons	Empirical Evidence
Economic	Unemployment, low income, financial stress	Census (19.5% unemployment)
Psychological	Emotional neglect, poor communication, abuse	Omar (2022) findings
Social	Family interference, social media influence	Literature review synthesis
Structural	Urbanization, weakened community mediation	Census & secondary data

Source: Author's Synthesis based on Reviewed Documents

Table 1 shows that the factors contributing to divorce among young couples in Mtoni Ward are interrelated, suggesting that no single factor causes divorce. The main factors influencing marital stability among young couples appear to be economic hardship, particularly unemployment, low income, and financial insecurity. Indeed, the high unemployment rate in the 2022 Population and Housing Census has placed a significant burden on couples expected to take on traditional family roles. Often, when someone lacks necessities, one or both members of the couple can become frustrated and unhappy in their marriage. Financial insecurity also hinders trust and collaboration among partners and increases the risk of divorce.

The table also underscores the significance of psychological and social factors in accelerating marital breakdown. Emotional neglect, lack of communication, mistrust, and emotional abuse lessen emotional connection and lead to long-term conflict within a relationship. Meanwhile, social factors such as family interference and the growing influence of social media can lead to misunderstandings, negative expectations, and unhappy relationships. The dynamics of rapidly changing cities and the diminishing role of traditional community mediation mechanisms have reduced the importance of elders and extended family in mediating marital conflict. Thus, young couples are more prone to marital problems with little social support, thereby raising the risk of divorce in the urban society of Zanzibar.

Social, Psychological, and Economic Perspective

This section addresses the first research question by examining the social, economic, and psychological causes of divorce among young couples in Zanzibar. The results show that

divorce among young couples in Mtoni Ward is not a singular, accidental event but a multidimensional phenomenon that is structural and depends on the interplay of economic and psychological instability and changing social forces. The factual evidence presented using census data and past research (Omar 2022), indicates that young couples, especially those aged 25 to 39, are the most susceptible to divorce, which is on the rise, with a range of 1.1 to 7.2 percent, implying that marital instability in the form of cumulative socioeconomic pressures has been on the increase.

The most prevalent drivers are economic problems, such as unemployment and financial insecurity. The 2022 Census lists an unemployment rate of 19.5%, with higher rates among youth and women. According to Zanzibari sociocultural norms, men are supposed to be the main providers; when they fail to do so, this creates a conflict situation, loss of respect, and dissatisfaction. It aligns with Homans's Social Exchange Theory (1958), which holds that people maintain relationships as long as they see the rewards outweigh the costs. Here, financial pressure increases relational costs, leading to rational decisions toward dissolution.

Psychological Factor

The research points to the lack of communication, emotional neglect, mistrust, and unrealistic expectations as key factors. It has been empirically established that intolerance, emotional abuse and psychological stress are major factors that lead to divorce among Zanzibar couples. It aligns with Maslow's Human Motivation Theory (1943), which postulates that when basic needs, such as financial security, are not met, it becomes difficult to satisfy higher needs like love, belonging, and emotional stability.

Urbanization weakens traditional family structures, reducing informal social mediation. Also, exposure to social media and changing lifestyles contribute to mistrust and dissatisfaction. Considering a Community Development Theory by Ife (2016), point of view, indicates that these trends are symptomatic of larger structural disparities and eroded community support systems.

Table 2 presents the changes in cultural and religious values and their impact on marriage and divorce in young couples in Zanzibar. Islamic teachings and Islamic community values have traditionally been strong proponents of reconciliation, patience, and the maintenance of marriage as a holy sacrament. Extended family systems and community elders were very important in brokering conflicts and abating divorce. A traditional perspective of divorce was very negative, viewed as a failure within the social structure, and negatively impacting family reputation and social cohesion.

But today's social developments have caused a shift in these traditional patterns. Rapid urbanization, modernization, and enhanced access to education and employment opportunities have facilitated individual autonomy, particularly for women. As gender roles become more fluid, many women have become less tolerant of emotional abandonment,

inequity, or abusive relationships. Further, with the dissolution of extended family, there has been a decline in traditional modes of conflict resolution, and couples are increasingly turning to formal institutions like Kadhi courts. As a result, divorce is becoming a more common occurrence as young couples focus on emotional satisfaction, personal dignity and psychological health over the conventional societal norms. The results thus reveal that cultural and religious norms are not fixed entities, but are continually negotiated in the context of contemporary urban life in Zanzibar.

Religious and Cultural Norm's Perspective.

This section addresses the second research question by analyzing the ways in which cultural and religious norms shape divorce among young couples in Zanzibar. The results show that the cultural and religious norms in Zanzibar serve as both stabilizing and transforming factors in modern marital relationships, and tradition and modernity interact dynamically. In the past, marriage in Zanzibar has been highly entrenched in the Islamic values that underline the importance of patience (*sabr*), reconciliation, and maintenance of familial cohesiveness (Bukido, L, et al. 2025).

Table 2
Influence of Cultural and Religious Norms on Divorce

Themes	Traditional Role	Contemporary Transformation
Religion (Islamic law)	Encourages reconciliation, discourages divorce	Allows divorce as last resort
Family system	Strong mediation by elders	Weakening due to urbanization
Gender roles	Male provider, female dependent	Increased female autonomy
Social norms	Divorce stigmatized	Divorce increasingly normalized

Source: Author's Synthesis based on Reviewed Documents

These normative systems, supported by powerful extended family systems, served as protective mechanisms that discouraged divorce and encouraged informal conflict resolution by elders and community leaders (Abdullah 2025). Therefore, as indicated in the current analysis, these conventional structures are undergoing significant change in the context of high urbanization and socioeconomic transition.

The dissolution of the extended family and the growing popularity of the nuclear family have undermined traditional mediation processes and communal control in marital conflicts (Zondi and Zibane 2025). Consequently, young couples are becoming increasingly collective in their decision-making and are turning to formal legal institutions to resolve marital conflicts, including Kadhi courts (Zemirli 2026). This shift does not imply the denial of cultural and religious conventions, but rather their reinterpretation in the realities of modern urban life.

George C. Homans (1958), in the Social Exchange Theory, states that cultural and religious sentiments in traditional societies raised the social and moral costs of divorce. The community, the religious beliefs, and family pressures, as well as the fear of social stigma, dissuaded couples from divorcing easily. Marriage was not viewed as a completely free choice because divorces carried several consequences, including a loss of respect, a loss of one's social identity, a loss of family support, and criticism within the community. These social pressures prodded individuals to maintain marriage even in the face of problems in their family relationships. Divorce was not just a matter of personal choice but a socially controlled event with a big reputation impact. However, contemporary processes of modernization, in terms of higher education, economic diversification, and access to global

systems of values, have led to the minimization of those constraints (Ko et al. 2026). Young couples are increasingly analyzing marriage in terms of a cost-benefit analysis, with the focus on personal well-being, emotional fulfillment, and what is considered fairness in the relationship. Therefore, if the perceived cost of staying in the marriage outweighs the perceived benefits, divorce becomes rational and acceptable in society.

Gender change is a vital aspect of this change. The results show that the autonomy and bargaining power of women in marriage have improved due to greater access to education and economic opportunities. Women are becoming much less ready to put up with inequality, emotional neglect, or abuse, which indicates the change of traditional dependence to agency and self-determination (Faki and Ali 2026). According to Khosravi et al. (2024), the change undermines the traditional gender roles and also helps increase divorce rates, especially in areas where traditional attitudes of male domination are still ingrained with newer attitudes of gender equality.

According to Maslow's Human Motivation Theory (1943), the shift in human needs has shifted marriage's expectations from survival and economic stability to higher-order psychological needs, such as emotional satisfaction, personal fulfillment, respect, intimacy, and self-development. It has shaped modern marital stability, making people more sensitive to their unmet needs. Although in traditional marriages economic interdependence and social responsibility usually served as factors that could keep marriages going, modern marriages are increasingly measured by their capacity to meet the needs for emotional intimacy, respect, self-esteem, and personal development (Nagy 2025).

When these second-level needs are not fulfilled, people tend to leave substandard relationships, even when discouraged by culture or religion.

According to Ife (2016), social capital and community unity are important for stable family and marital relationships. A lack of trust, cooperation, collective responsibility, and social support among community members can increase couples' risk of conflict, isolation, and mis-understanding. Insufficient community networks diminish emotional and social support systems that typically aid families to amicably manage problems, promoting marital disintegration and consequently the rate of divorce in society. The traditional community institutions previously served as social safety nets, helping mediate conflict, reinforce norms, and help couples overcome marital difficulties (Stofile and Mpya 2022).

Their declining numbers have led to a lack of collective responsibility and informal support, making it harder for individuals to handle marital conflicts alone (You et al. 2025). This personalization of the marital decision-making in turn increases the chances of divorce. In this case, the results help emphasize that the cultural and religious norms in Zanzibar are not fixed determinants of marital behavior, as they are negotiated within changing socioeconomic conditions. The result of this negotiation is divorce among young couples, influenced by the interplay between modernization, gender transformation, and changing value systems (Abutima and Kyei-Gyamfi 2025).

Consequences of Divorce among Young Couple Perspective

This section addresses the third research question by examining the consequences of divorce at individual, family, and community levels in Zanzibar. The results indicate that

divorce in young couples in Zanzibar has had multidimensional and interdependent impacts at personal, family, and community levels, thus supporting its categorization as a significant social welfare concern instead of a strictly personal one. The effects are not merely short-term but also compound and intergenerational, influencing social stability and development patterns. On an individual level, divorce is connected with deep emotional, economic and social impacts. People often get psychologically distressed, feeling anxious, losing self-esteem, and feeling isolated (Elisetty and Datti 2025).

The impact is felt more among women because there are ingrained gender inequalities in the socioeconomic system. Primary caregivers often shoulder most of the caregiving burden but also have limited access to stable sources of income, making them more economically vulnerable (McLaughlin, Fong, and Schneider 2026). According to census data, there is a significant number of women-headed households with many having limited financial status. Using Maslow's Theory of Human Motivation, divorce interferes with the realization of basic needs like safety, security, and belonging, and this will affect psychological well-being and the ability of people to live to fulfill higher needs like dignity and self-actualization (Moral et al. 2021).

Homans (1958) stated that divorce happens when they believe that the emotions, social or economic costs of marriage outweighs the benefits. If the benefits that are expected (love, support, satisfaction) are reduced, couples may decide that separation is a logical choice. Nevertheless, the results demonstrate a paradox: although divorce can alleviate short-term dissatisfaction in relationships, it also introduces new sources of vulnerability, such as financial instability, reduced social support, and long-term uncertainty (Badri et al. 2025). It highlights

the intricacy of marital dissolution as a coping mechanism, as well as a foundation of additional socioeconomic threat. The consequences are highly evident at the family level among children. Divorce destroys the structural and emotional backbone of the family system; there is usually less parental support, less consistent supervision and less access to resources (Everett 2021). Evidence by Laletas and Khasin (2021) suggests that children in divorced families face higher chances of becoming emotionally unstable, poor in academics and having behavioral difficulties. These not only influence short-term well-being but also have long-term consequences for human capital development and social mobility. The lack of a supportive and stable family setting interferes with socialization and increases the likelihood of vulnerability in late life (Chavda and Nisarga 2023).

These consequences at the individual and family levels, when aggregated at the community level, contribute to broader trends of social disintegration and economic stress. Due to the emergence of single-parent families, divorce rates are on the increase, and a further burden on already strained social welfare systems (Jam et al. 2021). From a Community Development Theory perspective, the family is an essential component of a community's social cohesion and resilience. Consequently, family breakdowns undermine overall well-being, diminish social capital, and help sustain cycles of poverty and inequality. Moreover, the results indicate a significant disparity in institutional responses to divorce (Qamar and Faizan 2021). Therefore, current mechanisms are mostly reactive and focus on dissolution through the law rather than on proactive or supportive interventions. The poor access to counseling services, premarital education, and economic empowerment services worsens the effects of divorce that have long-lasting effects, especially on the vulnerable

population like women and children (Dhanya and Karthikeyan 2026). Comprehensively, the results indicate that there is a cyclical, vicious, interdependent relationship between divorce and socioeconomic vulnerability. Poverty and inequality are perpetuated by economic hardship which in turn leads to marital breakdown and, as a result, divorce. According to Dogeje (2026), the cycle highlights the pressing need to apply integrated, theory-informed gender-responsive social welfare measures to enhance families' resilience and foster long-term, sustainable development in Zanzibar.

Conclusion

The study indicates that divorce among young couples in Mtoni Ward, Zanzibar, is a multidimensional social welfare problem shaped by the interaction of economic, psychological, social, cultural, and institutional factors. The findings reveal that unemployment, financial insecurity, emotional neglect, poor communication, and unresolved conflicts are the major drivers of marital instability among young couples. At the same time, rapid urbanization, weakening extended family systems, and changing gender roles have transformed traditional marital relationships and reduced community-based conflict mediation. The study further establishes that divorce produces serious consequences at individual, family, and community levels, including emotional distress, financial instability, child vulnerability, weakened social cohesion, and the continuation of poverty cycles. Guided by Social Exchange Theory, Maslow's Human Motivation Theory, and Community Development Theory, the study demonstrates that divorce in Zanzibar should be understood not merely as a personal failure but as a broader structural social welfare concern that requires integrated, gender-responsive interventions.

This study is one of the most significant because it is offered based on a multidisciplinary, theoretically grounded approach, integrating Social Exchange Theory, Maslow's Human Motivation Theory, and Community Development Theory to gain a comprehensive understanding of marital dissolution among young couples. The study successfully brings together the sociological, psychological, economic, and community development lenses, and divorce is explored beyond the level of the individual and into the broader structural context. Furthermore, the application of the qualitative desk review methodology enabled the incorporation of outputs from a variety of empirical sources, such as census statistics, peer-reviewed literature, and contextual studies specific to Zanzibar. The study's emphasis on an under-researched urban context, Mtoni Ward, further enriches this study by offering insights from within the site, which significantly add to academic discourse, social welfare policies, and community-based intervention strategies in Zanzibar and other sociocultural contexts.

Despite these important contributions, the study has several limitations that create opportunities for further research. The reliance on secondary data limited the ability to capture real-life experiences, emotions, and personal narratives of divorced young couples, which could provide deeper insight into the relational and psychological dimensions of marital dissolution. Moreover, the study is applicable only to Mtoni Ward and to rural areas of other parts of Zanzibar, with various socioeconomic and cultural contexts. Further research would thus be wise to include primary qualitative techniques, such as interviews, focus group discussions, and field observations, to provide greater depth to the empirical evidence obtained. Comparative studies of differences

between urban and rural communities, and longitudinal studies of the effects of divorce on children, women, and community welfare, would also help build understanding and develop more effective interventions for social and family welfare in Zanzibar.[]

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