



Addis Ababa University

College of Education and Language Studies

School of Psychology

**Marital Conceptions of Students from Divorced and Intact Families: The Case of
Undergraduate Students in Addis Ababa University**

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May, 2026

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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**A Thesis Submitted to the School of Psychology of the College of Education and
Language Studies, Addis Ababa University, in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Art in Counseling Psychology**

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Declaration

I, Feven Enkesha Ersa, declare that this thesis entitled "*Marital Conceptions (Attitudes, Intentions and Expectations) of Addis Ababa University Students from Divorced and Intact Families*" submitted to the School of Psychology, College of Education and Language Studies, Addis Ababa University, is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university. All sources used have been duly acknowledged. I understand that non-adherence to the principle of academic honesty and integrity, and misrepresentation/fabrication of any idea or source will constitute sufficient grounds for disciplinary action by the College and can also revoke penal action from the source which has not been properly cited or acknowledged.

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Abbreviation and Acronym

AAU: Addis Ababa University

EDHS: Ethiopian Demographic and Health Survey

FBE: Faculty of Business and Economics

IPV: Intimate partner violence

NFFS: National Family and Fertility Survey

OECD: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development.

SD: Standard Deviation

SES: Socio Economic Status

SPSS: Statistical package for the social sciences

TPB: Theory of Planned Behavior

UNICEF: United Nations Children Fund

Abstract

Divorce has become increasingly common and prevalent in Ethiopia. Several studies have revealed the general impacts of divorce on both parents and children. This study focused on examining impacts on children focusing on children's marital conceptions (attitudes, intentions and expectations) and if these impacts would vary across family background, sex and age at parental divorce. A sequential explanatory mixed-method research design was used to collect data from a sample of 135 undergraduate students of Addis Ababa University (60 from divorced and 75 from intact families) through a validated five-point rating-type questionnaire and interviews (10 from divorced families). Findings indicated that university students reported mean scores above the scale midpoint for marital attitudes ($M = 3.71$, $SD = 0.66$), marital intentions ($M = 3.74$, $SD = 0.76$), and marital expectations ($M = 4.45$, $SD = 0.44$). Differences in marital attitudes, intentions, and expectations were examined across family background, sex, and age at parental divorce. Students from divorced families obtained significantly higher marital expectation scores than students from intact families ($t(133) = -2.42$, $p = .017$). Similarly, female students reported significantly higher marital expectations than male students ($t(133) = -3.97$, $p < .001$). Students who experienced parental divorce during early childhood reported significantly higher marital intentions than those who experienced divorce at a later age ($t(57) = 2.79$, $p = .007$). No statistically significant differences were found in marital attitudes across family background, sex, or age at parental divorce. Correlation analysis revealed significant positive relationships among marital attitudes, marital intentions, and marital expectations, including associations between marital attitudes and intentions ($r = .72$, $p < .01$), marital expectations and attitudes ($r = .20$, $p < .05$), and marital expectations and intentions ($r = .24$, $p < .01$). Qualitative findings indicated that participants reported difficulties in emotional regulation, distrust, loneliness, and psychological stress following parental divorce, while also describing increased resilience, independence, and caution in their future relationships. The findings have implications for counseling and psychoeducational programs aimed at promoting healthy relationships and realistic marital expectations among young adults.

Keywords: marital conceptions, marital attitudes, marital intentions, marital expectations, parental divorce, university students, Ethiopia

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Marriage is one of the most crucial social institutions and a key determinant of personal wellbeing, child development, family continuity and social stability. It provides a socially recognized structure for partnership, parenting, emotional support, and generational continuity (Cherlin, 2004). It is believed that marriage is one of the most suitable and least intrusive social institutions for ensuring children's emotional security, socialization and psychological well-being (Anderson, 2013). Marriage is tightly linked to cultural and religious beliefs and social norms about adulthood and family life in many societies, including Ethiopia (Tilson & Larsen, 2000).

However, divorce has become increasingly common worldwide, as many marriages don't last or are not permanently successful. Divorce is the legal, emotional and social separation of a marriage relationship, and over the past few decades it has become a widespread occurrence worldwide (Amato, 2000). A number of factors have been identified that contribute to marital dissolution, such as poor communication, unresolved marital conflict, infidelity, domestic violence, financial hardship, substance abuse, incompatibility, and changing social norms around marriage and gender roles (Cherlin, 2010). In addition, secularism and urbanization, and women's growing economic independence and orientation towards individual fulfilment, have helped to raise divorce rates in societies (Cherlin, 2004). As a result, the traditional perception of marriage as a lifelong and permanent institution has increasingly been challenged.

Globally, divorce rates have increased substantially over the past several decades. Research in Western societies indicates that divorce rates range from almost one-third to one-half of marriages (Amato, 2010). The OECD report reveals that there's a high disparity in many societies when it comes to crude divorce rates, with rates in 2022 ranging from around 0.6 divorces per thousand populations to 3.6. Ethiopia has also experienced a growing trend of divorce, particularly in urban areas. Tilson and Larsen (2000) found that approximately 45% of first marriages in Ethiopia end in divorce within 30 years. A community-based study reported a

prevalence as high as 26% (Asfaw & Alene, 2023), and national data indicate a 25% divorce rate among ever-married women (Dagneu et al., 2020).

Divorce has enduring impacts on both parents and children. For divorcing adults, it can cause emotional disturbance, economic uncertainty, parenting difficulties, and reduced social support. In many traditional societies, women face additional social stigma and economic vulnerability following marital separation (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002). For children and young adults, parental divorce can disrupt emotional security during critical developmental periods. Research has consistently shown that offspring of divorced parents experience more psychological, emotional, social, and academic adjustment problems than those from intact families (Amato, 1996). Children often suffer from parental conflict, emotional stress, changes in living arrangements, financial instability, and reduced parental involvement, which can adversely affect psycho-social development.

Beyond adjustment difficulties, parental divorce influences how young adults perceive and think about marriage. These perceptions, often termed marital conceptions, encompass beliefs, values, attitudes, expectations, and intentions regarding marriage and marital relationships. Marital conceptions are crucial in shaping relationship behaviors, commitment, and family formation for young adults (Willoughby et al., 2019). Parental divorce is one family experience that shapes these marital conceptions in young adulthood. Young adults from divorced families may maintain positive attitudes toward marriage but tend to be more cautious and unsure about its permanence and success (Burgoyne & Hames, 2002). Research in various international settings suggests that offspring of divorced parents hold more negative attitudes toward marriage, less trust in relationship stability, and less confidence in long-term marital success compared to those from non-divorced families (Amato & DeBoer, 2001; Willoughby et al., 2019).

Single parenthood because of divorce is becoming more prevalent in Ethiopia and may impact young adults' future marriage and relationship concepts. However, most literature on this topic comes from Western countries. Family relations, marital meanings, and expectations are influenced by cultural context. Ethiopian society is highly family-oriented, religious, collectivist, and has high expectations for marriage and family stability. These sociocultural factors may

affect how young adults perceive parental divorce and its impact on their marital conceptions. Qualitative evidence indicates that while exposure to parental divorce can result in increased prudence about marriage, many young adults still maintain positive attitudes toward marriage due to cultural and religious factors (Burgoyne & Hames, 2002). Recent integrative reviews indicate that marital attitudes are mediated by inter-parental conflict, parenting quality, attachment security, and coping resources, warranting context-specific and culturally sensitive research (Cao et al., 2022). Thus, it is important to analyze marital conceptions of students from divorced and intact families among Ethiopian university students to gain insight into the long-term psychosocial implications of parental divorce in the Ethiopian context.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

While the impact of parental divorce on psychological and emotional challenges among young adults has been widely discussed, less focus has been placed on long-term effects on perceptions of future marriage, especially in non-Western cultural settings. Previous overseas research indicates that adverse family circumstances, such as parental divorce and family instability, can influence marital attitudes, intentions, and future relationship and family expectations (Amato & DeBoer, 2001; Willoughby et al., 2019). However, results across studies are not consistent. Some studies have found that offspring of divorce view marriage less positively, while others suggest that many young adults maintain positive attitudes despite family disruption.

The developmental period of emerging adulthood is particularly relevant for examining the formation of marital conceptions because people develop relatively stable marital attitudes, intentions, and expectations during this time (Arnett, 2000). Young people, especially university students, are engaged in identity exploration, emotional growth, and long-term future planning, including decisions regarding marriage and relationships. Parental divorce experiences may thus be important in shaping these emerging marital orientations.

Research in Western societies has generally revealed that youth from divorced families have more cautious attitudes toward marriage and greater concerns about its stability than those from intact families (Amato & DeBoer, 2001; Willoughby et al., 2019). Others suggest that the impact of long-term family conflict and instability on young adults may be more significant than

the impact of divorce itself. These experiences can influence how young adults think about relationships, emotional security, and future family formation.

Although divorce is widespread in Ethiopia, Ethiopian studies have focused more on marital separation, fertility, marital satisfaction, or sociodemographic factors of divorce rather than the psychosocial experiences of young adults from divorced families. The available empirical evidence on the effect of parental divorce on marital attitudes, intentions, and expectations among university students in Ethiopia is limited. Furthermore, little comparative research has been conducted on differences between young adults from divorced single-parent families and those from intact families using standardized psychological instruments.

This represents a significant empirical gap in the Ethiopian context. Given the cultural, religious, and family collectivist traditions within Ethiopian society, findings from Western contexts may not fully capture the experiences of Ethiopian young adults. Parental divorce has complex effects on young adults' conceptions of marriage, and without adequate knowledge of those effects, counselors, psychologists, educators, and policy makers may struggle to create culturally relevant interventions that foster healthy conceptions of marriage among youth. Thus, this study aims to explore the marital attitudes, intentions, and expectations of university students from divorced and intact families in order to provide contextually relevant evidence about the long-term psychosocial outcomes of marital divorce in Ethiopia.

1.3 Research Objectives

1.3.1 General Objective

To examine marital conceptions among AAU students from divorced and intact families.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives:

- To assess marital attitudes, intentions, and expectations among university students from divorced single-parent and intact families.
- To examine whether there are significant differences in marital attitudes, intentions, and expectations based on Family background (divorced and intact families), Sex and Age at parental divorce.

- To determine whether the duration of time since parental divorce is significantly related to young adults' marital attitudes, intentions, and expectations.
- To investigate the interrelationships among marital attitudes, intentions and expectations among Ethiopian young adults.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The study has both theoretical and practical significance. In theory, it adds to the limited literature on marital conceptions of young adults and intergenerational consequences of divorce in non-Western and African settings. The study can be used to assess the cultural generalizability of established theories such as Intergenerational Transmission Theory, Social Learning Theory, Attachment Theory, and the Theory of Planned Behavior by providing research evidence from Ethiopia. By examining whether the patterns observed in Western contexts hold true in a collectivist, religiously oriented society, the study contributes to the refinement and cultural adaptation of these theoretical frameworks. Furthermore, the findings provide empirical grounding for understanding how parental divorce shapes marital attitudes, intentions, and expectations among Ethiopian young adults, thereby expanding the geographical and cultural scope of the divorce literature and offering a foundation for cross-cultural comparisons.

In practice, the findings will be useful to counselors, psychologists and educators, dealing with university students. The role of family background on marital beliefs may be useful in identifying maladaptive attitudes early and using them as prevention and treatment interventions in couple and marriage counseling. Also, the findings can inform the counseling services, in the creation of psychoeducational programs that foster accurate and balanced expectations of marriage. On a bigger scale, the research can enlighten policymakers and family-based organizations on the effects of parental divorce in the long run, and the need to assist children and young adults to face the change of the family environment.

1.5 Scope of the study

This study focused on examining marital attitudes, marital intentions, and marital expectations among university students raised in divorced single-parent families and those from intact families in Addis Ababa University. The study specifically targeted undergraduate regular

students and employed both quantitative and qualitative approaches to obtain a comprehensive understanding of students' perceptions toward marriage. Geographically, the study was limited to Addis Ababa University, and conceptually it focused only on the influence of family structure on students' marital perceptions and expectations. Students from divorced single-parent families and students from intact families were included in the study, but students from other family arrangements (such as students from widowed single-parent families or students from separated but not divorced families) were excluded. In addition, the study focused on the current experiences and perceptions of participants during the study period and did not attempt to assess changes over time or establish causal relationships.

1.6 Conceptual definition of key terms

1. Marital Conceptions: Marital conceptions are the overall beliefs, values, attitudes, intentions, and expectations that university students have about marriage and their future marriage. They are formed by family experiences, parental relationships, socialization and culture and shape one's perceptions of the significance, desire and meaning of marriage as a future commitment (Amato, 2000; Larson & Holman, 1994; Willoughby et al., 2015).

2. Marital Attitudes: Marital attitudes are defined as the overall evaluative beliefs and perceptions that university students possess about marriage as a social institution, its importance, its desirability, and its perceived value in life (Willoughby et al, 2015, Larson and Holman, 1994).

3. Marital Intentions: It is the level of willingness, readiness and future plans of the university students to get married. It manifests the motivational part, whether people want to marry in the future or not (Ajzen, 1991; Carroll et al., 2007).

4. Marital Expectations: It is a belief and assumption that university students have regarding the qualities, behaviors, and standards expected in a marital relationship. This encompasses: communication, trust, emotional support, respect and commitment (Jones & Nelson, 1996; Sharp & Ganong, 2011).

5. Parental Divorce: Parental divorce is defined as the legal or permanent separation of a student's biological parents which leads to the student being reared in a single-parent family or in separated parental households (Amato, 2000; Hetherington & Kelly, 2002).

6. Intact Family: An intact family is defined as a family that consists of two biological parents who are currently living together in a continuous marital relationship and not separated or divorced (Amato, 2001; Demo & Acock, 1996).

2. Literature Review

This chapter examines the theoretical and empirical literature on marital conceptions of young adults, including marital attitudes, intentions and expectations among the university students of divorced single-parent and intact families. This chapter introduces the concepts of marital divorce, why it happens, and how common it is, before exploring how parental divorce affects children psychologically and in terms of their relationships. This also looks at the notion of marital conceptions and how the divorce of parents affects young adults' perceptions of marriage. The relevant theoretical frameworks and empirical studies are reviewed to explain the relationships between parental divorce, marital attitudes, marital intentions and marital expectations. The chapter further explores intermediary factors like sex, age at parental divorce, and custodial parent before exploring Ethiopian and African contexts. Finally, the chapter highlights the major research gaps and the conceptual framework from which the present study was derived.

2.1 Nature of Marital Divorce

Divorce is the legal, emotional and social separation of the marriage bond between husband and wife. This is the end of marital duties and responsibilities that were acknowledged by legal, cultural, or religious entities (Amato, 2000; Hetherington & Kelly, 2002). Divorce is not just a legal procedure; it's a significant transition in the family that impacts not only the spouses but also the children and other social connections. Family scholars use divorce as one of the most stressful family disruptions due to its impact on family structure, emotions, parenting and economics (Amato, 2000). The long-term repercussions of divorce on individuals and families have come to be seen as a social and psychological problem in many societies.

There are several factors identified by the researchers that are responsible for marital divorce. Commonly cited reasons for marital dissolution include poor communication, marital conflict, infidelity, domestic violence, substance abuse, financial problems, incompatibility, and lack of emotional intimacy (Cherlin, 2010). Along with this, modernization, urbanization, changing roles for men and women, and women's growing economic independence have had a significant impact on traditional perceptions of marriage. Marriages in many cities are becoming more individualistic with each person going by his or her own standards, which can decrease

tolerance for the unhappy marriage and lead to divorce rates rising (Cherlin, 2004). Other factors that have been linked to marital instability include psychological stress, unrealistic marital expectations, and poor conflict management abilities.

There's been a significant rise in divorces worldwide in recent decades, although countries and cultures have different rates of divorce. In Western societies, it is estimated that almost half to one-third of marriages fail due to divorce (Amato, 2010). This rise in divorce has captured the academic interest due to its implications on social well-being and child development and family stability. Ethiopia also has seen an increase in the number of divorces, particularly in urban areas. Based on the National Family and Fertility Survey of Ethiopia, Tilson and Larsen (2000) found that about 45% of first marriages end in divorce after 30 years, with many of these divorces taking place during the first five years of marriage. In an Ethiopian population-based study, Asfaw & Alene (2023) reported a prevalence of marital dissolution of 26%. The results of this study show that divorce is becoming a significant social fact in Ethiopian society, even though there is still a high cultural and religious premise regarding marriage.

2.2 Impacts of Divorce on Divorcees and Children

The impact of divorce is multifaceted for divorcees and their children – social, emotional, psychological, and economic. People who have been divorced often report experiencing feelings of sadness, isolation, stress, depression, decreased life satisfaction and financial problems after their divorce. Divorces, especially among women, can also elicit social stigma, less social support, and higher parenting demands in many traditional societies. Divorce can fracture social networks, financial security and emotional stability, which can leave many divorced women with long-term adjustment issues (Kelly & Emery, 2003).

Children are among the groups most significantly affected by parental divorce because divorce disrupts family structure and emotional security during important developmental periods. Research repeatedly has shown that children of divorce have more adjustment problems than children of non-divorce (Amato, 1996). Children often have emotional and behavioral challenges when their parents' divorce, as divorce can involve parental conflict, family instability, moving, and economic hardship. When parents separate, children can feel confused, fearful, angry, sad, insecure and feel like their parents have abandoned them.

Divorce can also adversely impact children's academic and social skills. Minimized parental involvement, financial difficulties, emotional problems, and family disruption are associated with lower academic performance, less focus or attention, lower expectations for education and lower school adjustment (Fagan et al., 2014; Sun, 2002). Divorced children may also have challenges with peers and social integration as a result of emotional distress and family instability.

Parental divorce can have long lasting psychological impacts on adolescents and adults. Longitudinal studies have shown that children of divorced parents are at higher risk of developing internalizing disorders like depression, anxiety, feelings of loneliness, emotional insecurity and low self-esteem as well as externalizing disorders such as aggression, delinquency, and substance abuse (Chase-Lansdale et al., 1995; Størksen et al., 2005). The emotional toll of divorce can have a negative impact on the psychological development of children and make them more susceptible to future mental health issues.

Parental divorce can influence how young adults think about marriage and intimate relationships beyond just issues of adjustment in childhood. Wallerstein et al. (2000) stated that numerous children of divorce suffer from issues of trust, fear of abandonment, and uncertainty about the stability of the relationship. These experiences can have a bearing on identity formation and interpersonal relationships in emerging adulthood. Data from the meta-review also show that the children of divorce are more likely to exhibit insecure attachment styles, to be more fearful of marital instability, and to have lower levels of marital stability beliefs than children reared within intact families (Amato & DeBoer, 2001). The long-term psychological and relational ramifications of family breakup place divorce among parents among an important set of factors to consider when examining young adults' conceptions of marriage.

2.3 Marital Conceptions (Attitude, Intention and Expectation)

Marital conceptions are the general collection of beliefs, values, perceptions, attitudes, intentions and expectations that people have about marriage and marital relationships. They are a reflection of the cognitive and emotional views of marriage as a social institution and life goal. Marital conceptions form as a result of socialization in the family, culture, life experiences, religious beliefs, and observing the family and community relationships (Larson & Holman,

1994; Amato, 2000; Willoughby et al., 2015). These ideas affect perceptions of marriage, future relationships, and decisions about marital commitment.

Marital conceptions consist of beliefs about marital roles, intimacy, parenting, commitment, conflict and divorce; however, three main dimensions of the concept are the focus of this study: marital attitudes, marital intentions and marital expectations. These constructs are similar but different in concept. Marital attitudes are evaluative beliefs about marriage, marital intentions are an individual's readiness or intentions to marry in the future, and marital expectations are assumptions and beliefs about marital relationships in the future (Ajzen, 1991; Carroll et al., 2007; Willoughby et al., 2019). These dimensions can be combined to explain the perceptions of young adults about marriage and future family life.

Marital attitudes further, refers to the positive or negative attitude of persons towards marriage as a social institution and social relationship. They include beliefs regarding the desirability, importance, permanence, and value of marriage (Park & Rosen, 2013). Positive marital attitudes include positive beliefs about companionship, support, commitment, trust, and family stability. Negative attitudes towards marriage can include doubts about the benefits of marriage, fears of conflict, or skepticism about the permanence of marriage.

Marital intentions: conscious plans, willingness or readiness to get married in the future. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) suggests that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (PBC) are immediate determinants of behavior and are measured by intentions (Ajzen, 1991). People who have positive attitudes towards marriage and favorable social environments are likely to have stronger intentions to marry.

Marital expectations are a combination of beliefs and assumptions about future marriages. These expectations may involve perceptions of emotional intimacy, communication, trust, conflict resolution, gender roles, financial responsibility, marital satisfaction and divorce potential (Landis-Kleine et al., 1995). There is a reason why marital expectations are important, as they affect one's choice of partner, relationship behaviors, and marital adjustment. Irrational and pessimistic attitudes may be responsible for the dissatisfaction and instability in future relationships.

2.4 Empirical Evidence of the Influence of Parental Divorce on Young Adults' Marital Conceptions

Parental divorce has a profound effect on children's marital conceptions in socialization experiences and because of the exposure to marital instability. Young adults in divorced families are generally affected by parental conflict, disturbed attachment, less family unity, and an altered family role. Such experiences could impact on their adult views of marriage, commitment, trust and relationship stability (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002; Cui & Fincham, 2010).

Studies indicate that divorce in the family often produces more guarded and less rosy attitudes toward marriage among young adults than for those from non-divorced families. Burgoyne and Hames (2002) termed this pattern of attitude in children of divorce "cautious realism" that is, children do not necessarily disapprove of marriage, but they are more critical and concerned about marriage's stability. While many people value marriage, they might have less confidence in the permanency of marriage and greater tolerance for divorce as an alternative. Within the above study (in which only 20 young adults participated in the qualitative study), the divorced group had a more "realistic" perspective of marriage and a more realistic view of not getting married. Interestingly, both groups in their study (irrespective of family background) anticipated marriage at some point in their life and negatively evaluated divorce, however those from divorced families were less likely to use a "romantic" discourse when considering marriage.

Empirical research also has demonstrated that parents' divorce impacts expectations of future marriage success and stability among young adults. Youth of divorced families tend to have less confidence in their capacity to sustain a stable marriage than do youth from families of intact marriages and are more likely to expect that marriages will be difficult. In a study, Whitton et al. (2008) discovered that emerging adults who experienced parental divorce were more likely to feel more insecure about their relationships and less competent in them. Such experiences can lead to doubt about stability and commitment in marriage in adulthood.

Qualitative research, which has helped shed light into the complexity of these attitudes, have uncovered emotional conflict among young adult families from divorced parents. Collardeau and Ehrenberg (2016) conducted a study on the experiences of many people from divorced families, who struggle with a conflict between intimacy and fear of rejection. These

experiences could lead to ambivalent emotional bonds and vulnerabilities in romantic relationships. In the same manner, Sharp and Ganong (2011) found that divorce and family disruption have an impact on the individual's perception of social norms and expectations about marriage and enduring relationships.

The evidence from the longitudinal studies supports well the development of these attitudes over time. Using national longitudinal data on two generations, Amato and DeBoer (2001) found that the impact of parental divorce was to double the odds of offspring divorce. Of course, it was discovered that the problem of the children of divorced parents is not that they lack relationship skills, but that they have relatively low endorsement of the norm of “lifetime of marriage.” The intergenerational transmission of divorce has been found in 15 countries, and is thus observed in different cultural and institutional settings (Dronkers & Härkönen, 2013).

Parental divorce can also affect marital intentions: their timing and nature. In a study of young adults from divorced homes, Tilson and Larsen (2000) found that the young adults' intention to marry is high, but they are more likely to delay marriage compared to those who come from intact families. These concerns about divorce, the likelihood of marriage, and the issue of commitment can all play a role in the delay of marital transition. The results indicate that the impact of parental divorce persists in young adult's marital attitudes, expectations and intentions.

2.5 Theoretical Frameworks

Several theoretical perspectives explain how parental divorce influences young adults' marital conceptions. The present study is based mainly on the theories of Intergenerational Transmission Theory, Family Systems Theory, Social Learning Theory, Attachment Theory, and the Theory of Planned Behavior.

The Intergenerational transmission theory suggests that divorce and marriage attitudes are passed down across generations by observational learning and socialization processes (Bumpass et al., 1991). The theory of intergenerational continuity of marital attitudes has been a key point of research in the study of family psychology. Bumpass, Martin and sweet (1991) were some of the earliest researchers who empirically established that children whose parents divorced had a higher risk of disruption along the marital line. This work was subsequently furthered by other

studies which investigated attitudinal processes that have led to this transmission. There are two main processes that take place, a decline in relationship competence and a decrease in marital permanence commitment (Amato & DeBoer, 2001). Their results indicated that the children of divorce do not lack relationship skills but may have poorer beliefs of marital permanence, which has resulted in the lower barriers of leaving relationships. This attitudinal route has been corroborated by subsequent studies which found that young adults whose parents were divorced had less marital optimism and commitment (Willoughby et al., 2019).

Family Systems Theory suggests that the family is an emotional system that can be viewed as the interconnectedness of the emotional systems within families, changes within one of these emotional systems impacts the entire family system and the relational patterns and development of the individual family members (Bowen, 1978). This theory helps to understand the impact of family rupture on children's marital attitudes, expectations and intentions in the context of parental divorce, as the disruption of family equilibrium changes children's expectations of marital stability and/or the idealization of the intact households in an effort to compensate.

In Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977) children learn marital scripts from watching and repeating their parents' relationship patterns. They frequently carry over into their own grown-up relationships as well (Amato & Booth, 2001; Cunningham & Thornton, 2006). To complement this view, Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969) accounts for the impact of the early caregiving experiences on internal working models of relationships. Inconsistent or disrupted attachment can result in anxious or avoidant types of relationships that can make them more susceptible to conflict and dissatisfaction in intimate relationships (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016; Feeney, 2000).

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB; Ajzen, 1991) is a more complete model of intents and actions related to relationships. According to the TPB, behavioral intention is the foremost determinant of behavior, and behavioral intention is influenced by three factors, namely attitude towards the behavior, subjective norm (perceived social pressure), and perceived behavioral control (the ease or difficulty of performing the behavior). These pathways have been well supported by empirical research in the area of marital or relational decision making (Fincham & Bradbury, 1993; Kurdek, 2006).

These theoretical pathways have been found and confirmed in extensive literature, such as the recent meta-analyses. For example, the mean effect size range of the relationships between TPB components and behavioral intentions in various cultural contexts ranging from $r=.35$ to $r=.55$ was reported by McEachan et al. (2011) in their large-scale meta-analysis. Similarly, Fishbein and Ajzen (2011) showed that these patterns hold true across different populations and across a range of different relationship contexts, supporting the generalizability of these models. Other cross-cultural findings corroborate the ability of both Social Learning Theory (Whitton et al., 2013) and Attachment Theory (Schmitt et al., 2004) to explain marital and relational behaviors in different cultures.

2.6 Relationship between Marital Attitude, Intention and Expectation

During the emerging adulthood years, marital attitudes become more consistent as people establish their relationship goals and identities and generally become more stable (Arnett 2000). Empirical research has shown that certain significant relationships exist between marital attitudes, marital intentions and marital expectations. Positive attitudes towards marriage tend to be correlated with higher intentions to marry, and more positive expectations of future marital relationships (Jacquet & Surra, 2001). Moreover, studies have indicated that people with positive attitudes towards marriage are more likely to want to commit to a long-lasting relationship and expect a stable marriage.

In addition, there are some signs that intentions to marry are moderately linked to marital behavior. A moderate positive correlation between marital intentions and marital behavior was found by Rhoades et al. (2011) ($r = .42$). So, people who plan to marry are moderately likely to marry. But family context seems to matter with respect to the timing of these intentions. Although when socioeconomic status is factored in, children of divorced parents plan to marry as much as children of intact families, they also delay their marriage (Tilson and Larsen, 2000). Concerns about divorce, lack of confidence in the success of the marriage, and questions about commitment can play a role in this delayed marital transition.

Furthermore, marital expectations are important determinants of relationship behaviour and unionisation. Expectations are schemas that influence partner selection and partner maintenance behaviours (Landis-Kleine et al., 1995). Arocho (2019) found that the relationship

between divorce expectations and the onset of marriage was negative for both men and women from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics with 2,052 respondents, while controlling for expectations of marriage and sociodemographic factors. Those who felt that their chances of getting divorced were higher were more likely to be single or cohabiting than to be married during emerging adulthood. The results indicated that many people cherish marriage but there can be some worries about the stability of marriage that can put off commitment to marriage.

The importance of family socioeconomic status and family structure for the formation of marital expectations has also been studied empirically. Palumbo et al. (2024) found evidence of social stratification in the expectations of marriage in the British Household Panel Survey and Understanding Society. Expectations around marriage and doubts about the appropriate age of marriage were significantly lower for those from disadvantaged backgrounds than for those from more privileged families. The study also identified that the proportion of these differences was accounted for by the fact that some children grow up in single-parent families during adolescence. The results build on previous studies by Tilson and Larsen (2000) in that they show that socioeconomic disadvantage and family structure are not only associated with the timing of marriage, but also with the likelihood of marriage.

There is growing cohabitation within the context of emerging adulthood as a part of relationship development and union formation. Many people now date without a clear objective of marriage, in line with wider shifts in dating and relationship behaviours, noted Stanley, Rhoades and Fincham (2011). Likewise, in a four-year longitudinal study of 120 cohabiting couples, Rhoades, Stanley, and Markman (2011) reported considerable differences between relationship partners in commitment to the relationship, indicating that many cohabiting relationships are marked by unequal commitment. Abuses of this type may affect the eventual fate of the relationship, whether it will become an established marriage or end in a break-up.

The concept of “progression bias” offers some additional clues on how intentions to relate become actualized into actions. According to Joel and MacDonald (2021), there are decisions people make in their relationships that are in the direction of the relationship, even if they are aware of potential issues in the relationship. In their research on speed-dating, they found that often people took advantage of dating opportunities even when these were not in line

with their preferences. The tendency may account for why people who come from divorced households, who show cautious attitudes toward marriage nonetheless go on to seek out a romantic partner and ultimately marry, perhaps a bit later than other people from families where both parents are married.

These results provide evidence that the conception of marriage is the product of complex interrelated relational and family experiences. In general, the literature indicates that marital attitudes, intentions and expectations are very tightly related in emerging adulthood. Positive marital attitudes are more likely to increase marriage intentions and raise positive expectations of future relationships while negative attitudes, such as fear of divorce, instability in their families and negative marital models, are likely to undermine their confidence in marriage success and hinder marriage transitions. The results suggest that family experiences, such as parental divorce, might shape young adults' marital conceptions by interacting with one another in a complex manner in the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral domains.

2.7 Intermediate Factors Influencing Marital Conceptions

The relationship between parental divorce and marital conceptions may be influenced by several intermediary variables including sex, age at parental divorce, duration since parental divorce and custodial parent. Research findings suggest important gender differences in responses to parental divorce. Emotional security, trust, and relationship stability are frequently more important concerns among young adult females compared to their male counterparts who may exhibit relatively less emotional sensitivity to parental marital disruption. Gender socialization patterns may therefore influence how divorce affects marital attitudes and expectations (Amato, 2001; Hetherington & Kelly, 2002).

The age at which parental divorce occurs may also shape psychological adjustment and future relationship perceptions. A divorce during childhood could have more severe emotional and developmental effects, as it is likely to interfere with the development of attachment and emotional security at a critical period. Adolescents who have lost both parents could also suffer from identity confusion and problems in interpersonal trust-building (Wallerstein et al., 2000; Lansford, 2009).

Research suggests that the duration of time since parental divorce may influence children's and young adults' marital conceptions, including their attitudes, expectations, and intentions toward marriage. Research shows that the impacts of divorce are not always direct, and can continue or even evolve over time, depending on how well the child adjusts to the divorce, how family relationships change, and what happens in the post-divorce environment. Children exposed to long-term marital conflict, marital instability, or a diminished support from their parents following divorce may develop a more dismal view of marriage and commitment (Amato, 2000). However, when parenting is positive and relationships are stable, some people may slowly adjust to the family transition over time, so the negative effects of divorce on later relationship beliefs can be diminished (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002). There is also evidence that the long-term impacts of parental divorce have an effect on the expectations of children and young people to have a successful marriage and trust in intimate relationships in adulthood (Cui & Fincham, 2010). Therefore, the duration since parental divorce occurred may play an important role in shaping marital conceptions by affecting the extent to which individuals experience adjustment, resilience, or continuing emotional difficulties following the divorce.

Parent custody also affects children's socialization experiences, emotional adjustment and the development of their relationships after divorce, with the sex of the parent also playing a role. Children brought up by a mother or father alone might have varying parenting styles, emotional climates, disciplinary practices, and role models which affect how they view marriage and intimate relationships in the future. Family structure is not as significant as the quality of the post-divorce parent-child relationship in predicting later psychological and relational outcomes, according to research (Kelly, 2007).

Children raised primarily by mothers after divorce frequently receive greater emotional support and communication regarding feelings and relationships because mothers are often more involved in emotional caregiving and daily parenting responsibilities. These children can become more expressive with their emotions as well as being more sensitive to the relationship aspect, but they can also feel anxious about abandonment or marital instability if they observe the stress or difficulties of the family, or negative attitudes to marriage after divorce (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002). In some instances, children growing up in a mother-led family may take on adult

roles early, which can affect their expectations of marital role and family responsibilities in the future.

On the other hand, children who are primarily raised by their fathers following their parents' divorce might have somewhat distinct emotional and relational socialization experiences. There are some reports suggesting that fathers may place a greater emphasis on independence, self-control and problem-solving skills, rather than on emotional expression, and this may shape children's attitudes to intimacy and conflict in their future relationships (Amato & Gilbreth, 1999). Some father-headed families may have a lack of emotional communication, which could lead to emotional distance or challenges in expressing vulnerability in future intimate relationships. But positive father involvement, warmth and consistent parenting are linked to improved psychological adjustment and relationship expectations among children of divorce (Kelly, 2007). In general, the parenting style, emotional availability, and parental-child interaction of the custodial parent are important factors influencing marital attitudes, expectations, and intentions during emerging adulthood.

2.8 Marriage in Ethiopian and African Context and Research Gaps

In Ethiopia, the institution of marriage is still strong and is largely supported by deeply rooted traditions, cultural norms and religious beliefs (Tafere et al., 2020). However, marital separation is a new phenomenon in urban areas of Ethiopia, with community-based studies reporting up to 26.0% (Asfaw & Alene, 2023). There are some patterns and reasons that can be explained to account for this trend. For example, national-level studies reveal that employed women are more likely to be divorced than women who are not employed, and women who endure intimate partner violence (IPV) are at greater risk of marital separation than other women (Dagnew et al., 2020). Additionally, women who marry for motives such as financial security or through arranged marriages are more likely to experience divorce than those who marry for companionship or to have children (Asfaw & Alene, 2023). However, there are also some variations from region to region, such as the higher rate of marital separation in Tigray, Amhara, Addis Ababa, and Dire Dawa than in other areas (Teshome & Abdisa, 2024). Evidence from the Young Lives longitudinal study further shows that young couples are at increased risk of divorce and separation if they marry at a young age, have conflictual relationships with their spouses, if

the husband drinks heavily, or faces financial problems (Pankhurst & Crivello, 2020). While young women may feel vulnerable following divorce (e.g., social stigma), many feel happier following divorce when they are financially well-off (Tafere et al., 2020). Thus, while marriage remains culturally valued in Ethiopia, economic factors, interpersonal dynamics, marriage motives and regional differences are reshaping marital outcomes.

There are few empirical research studies that examine the psychosocial implications of divorce on Ethiopian youth. Qualitative evidence indicates, however, that young people in Ethiopia are increasingly involved in decision-making on marriage, while norms and customs still limit their options, particularly the options of young women (Chuta et al., 2020). The attitudes of urban educated youths towards marriage have changed over the last few years, as reflected in the scholarship, which shows that they tend to delay marriage and negotiate within marriage.

Comparative studies across Africa reveal trends similar to those reported in international literature regarding changing marital patterns among young adults. In South Africa, family instability has been associated with changing perceptions and valuation of marriage among youth (Posel et al., 2011). Studies conducted in different African contexts further suggest that many young people continue to value marriage while simultaneously expressing caution regarding marital stability and long-term commitment (Tafere et al., 2020; Pankhurst & Crivello, 2020). Research in Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland also indicates increasing normalization of premarital childbearing, partly influenced by female education and changing gender roles, although marriage continues to remain socially valued (Gage-Brandon, 2018). In addition, cohabitation and informal relationship progression have increasingly become part of the transition toward marriage among emerging adults (Stanley et al., 2011; Joel & MacDonald, 2021). Studies across African countries further indicate that early marriage remains prevalent despite legal age restrictions, while many young people report feeling insufficiently prepared for marital responsibilities and experiencing educational and economic challenges following marriage or divorce (Mann & Crivello, 2020). Taken together, findings from African and Ethiopian studies suggest that although marriage continues to hold important cultural and social value, its timing, patterns, and perceived stability are gradually changing.

There is adequate evidence from other countries that shows an association between family background and marriage attitudes, intention and expectation, but the Ethiopian evidence is primarily descriptive and less explanatory (Wondimu and Andualem,2024).To fill the specific gap this research study tries to cover, some recent studies in Ethiopia that have contributed knowledge on constructs related to marriage were taken into consideration.

In the case of Addis Ababa, Wondimu and Andualem (2024) adopted a qualitative method with 15 participants and examined the determinants of marital satisfaction and reported the factors that influence marital satisfaction such as perception of marriage, readiness for marriage, caring behavior, integrity, patience and religiousness. Both were descriptive studies but not quantitative measurements of attitudes or intentions by measuring them by a standard instrument. In a similar way, a recent thesis from Addis Ababa University (2025) looked at the premarital expectations, religiosity, and marital satisfaction of 300 people in Arada Sub-City. This study did use validated instruments like the Marital Attitude Scale and Dyadic Adjustment Scale and found that the variables in this study pre-marital expectations and religiosity explained 58.5% of the variance in marital satisfaction. The attitudes and intentions of the young adults in divorced vs intact families were not specifically studied in this research, however.

Several studies are available in Ethiopia with indirect relevance to the constructs. The studies on marriage patterns and transition to fertility revealed the high level of early marriage and marital instability in Ethiopia and the increasing improvement of marriage stability over the years (Kedir, Dejene, & Degefa, 2025). The focus of this population study is not however on psychological processes, such as attitudes, intentions and expectations, in the process of marriage decision making. Along the same lines, a longitudinal study at Jimma showed that teens with higher career desires were significantly less likely to have their first sexual experience or to marry early and that parents' wish for a later marriage age for daughters had a significant delaying impact (Mensch et al., 2022). This study has indirect implications regarding intentions to marry because it looks at time of marriage, but it did not use scales that were validated to measure attitudes toward marriage and youth who were not compared across different family backgrounds.

2.9 Conceptual Framework

The theoretical frameworks used in this study are Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977), Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969) and Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Together, these views reflect the impact of family on young adults' attitudes toward marriage.

Social Learning Theory suggests that kids learn marital skills by watching and copying what they see in their families, and thereby learning scripts that affect their family relationships. According to Attachment Theory, early experiences in caregiving contribute to the development of internal working models of relationships; disrupted attachments because of parental separation may result in anxious and avoidant patterns of relationships, such as fear of abandonment and guarded relationships with others. Theory of Planned Behavior also suggests that behavior (e.g. marriage) is determined by the intention to engage in the behavior, which is influenced by attitude toward behavior, subjective norm (perceived social pressure) and perceived behavioral control (perceived ease or difficulty of behavior).

A significant contextual factor in this study is parental divorce (divorced vs intact family) which leads to exposure of individuals to marital instability and particular marital models. Marital attitudes (e.g., cautious realism) and marital expectations (e.g., expectations of divorce) are passed down from family to family, as are marital intentions, via the three theories.

Attitudes are young adults' positive or negative judgements about marriage. Expectations are schemas of cognition, knowledge and beliefs that are associated with marriage, including the possibility of divorce. Intentions are conscious plans of marrying or not. The theory of planned behavior suggests that attitudes and subjective norms (family and friends' perceptions of marriage) and perceived behavioral control (self-efficacy about having a successful marriage) combine to create intentions.

The relationships between the three constructs are assumed to be as follows: When people have positive attitudes toward marriage, they will also be more positive about their intentions to marry, and when people have positive attitudes about marriage, they will also be more positive about their intentions to marry (Rhoades et al., 2011; Jacquet & Surra, 2001). Marital attitudes are also likely to influence expectations since one's attitude toward marriage

influences one's expectations of marriage (Landis-Kleine et al., 1995). In addition, marital expectations are hypothesized to be linked to marital intentions, such as young adults who have a negative expectation of marriage being able to postpone or not intend to marry (Arocho, 2019). Therefore, there is both direct and indirect influence between attitudes and expectations as well as intentions.

The framework also recognizes the role of intermediary variables such as sex, age at parental divorce and duration since parental divorce in influencing the relationship between parental divorce and marital conceptions. Lastly, the cultural, religious, social and economic aspects of Ethiopian society, such as cultural traditions, religious values, family pressures and socioeconomic status, shape the impact of the above theoretical pathways in the local context. For instance, although the divorce rate has increased in urban Ethiopia, the marriage system is still robust with the influence of culture and religion (Tafere et al. 2020). The attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control are influenced by these contextual factors which can vary from Western contexts.

Thus, the conceptual approach of this study presents the hypothesized relationships between parental divorce, marital conceptions, personal factors and Ethiopian sociocultural context. The framework is shown below.

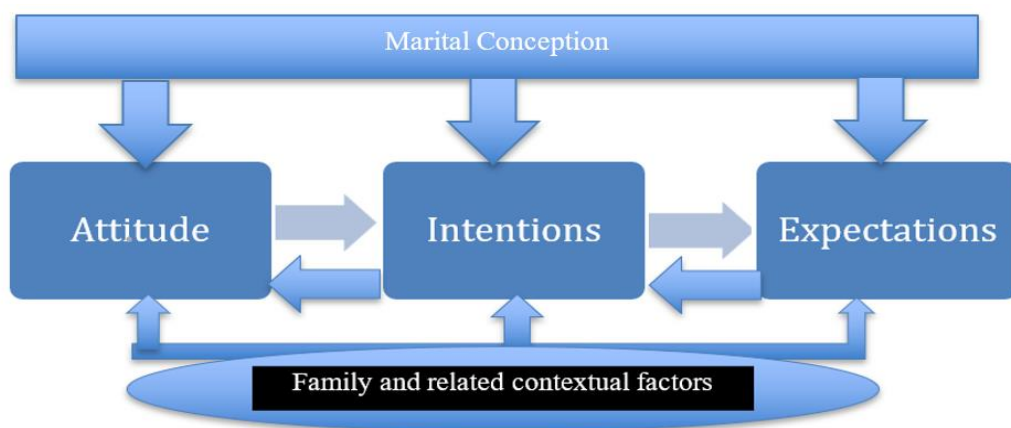


Figure 1: The Conceptual Model

3. Methods

3.1 Research Design

The study employed a comparative sequential explanatory mixed-methods research design. In the first phase, quantitative data were collected to examine differences in marital attitudes, intentions, and expectations among university students raised in divorced single-parent families and those raised in intact families. Subsequently, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 participants from the divorced family group to gain deeper understanding of their experiences and to elaborate on the quantitative findings. This phase is used to explain and elaborate quantitative results, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study (Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006).

The design is cross-sectional in nature, as data were collected from students from divorced single-parent families and intact families at a single point in time to compare their marital attitudes, intentions, and expectations (Levin, 2006). The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings enabled a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem by combining statistical trends with participants' personal experiences.

3.2 Target Population and Sampling

The target population of this study included unmarried undergraduate students aged 18–25 years enrolled at Addis Ababa University. Participants were selected from two campuses of the university: 6 Kilo Campus and the Faculty of Business and Economics (FBE) Campus. Students from different departments and educational levels were included to ensure diversity and adequate representation. From the 6 Kilo Campus, participants were recruited from the departments of Psychology, Law, Political Science, Social Work and Sociology. From FBE Campus, students were recruited from Economics, Accounting and Finance, Management and Public Administration and Development Management departments. Both third-year and fourth-year students were included from all available sections.

3.3 Sample Size

The sample size was calculated based on standard statistical power values for quantitative comparative studies. Under the assumption of a 95% confidence level, statistical power of 0.80,

and a medium effect size, a sample of approximately 128 participants (64 per group) was deemed necessary for meaningful statistical comparisons between students from divorced and intact families. The target sample was increased to approximately 150 participants to account for potential non-response.

The final sample consisted of 135 participants (60 from divorced families, 75 from intact families), representing approximately 90% of the planned sample. This sample size was considered acceptable as it provided sufficient representation for comparative statistical analysis and maintained adequate statistical power for detecting group differences. The slight reduction in sample size was primarily due to the limited number of eligible students from divorced families identified during the screening process within the data collection period.

Participant Distribution by Department:

The final sample distribution by department was as follows:

Table 3.1 Participant distribution by department

Department	Divorced (n)	Intact (n)	Total
Accounting & Finance	8	10	18
Management	10	12	22
Economics	6	8	14
PADM	2	2	4
Psychology	12	15	27
Law	10	12	22
Political Science & IR	6	8	14
Sociology	4	5	9
Social Work	2	3	5
Total	60	75	135

3.4 Sampling and Data collection procedure

A multi-stage sampling procedure was employed:

Stage 1 – Convenience sampling: Two campuses were selected (6 Kilo – for accessibility to the researcher; FBE – to achieve the required sample size for both family background groups).

Stage 2 – Purposive department selection: Departments with larger student populations were selected to maximize the probability of identifying students from both divorced and intact family backgrounds.

Stage 3 – Screening: All students in selected departments and sections were screened using a brief demographic questionnaire. Screening was conducted mainly physically in classrooms and digitally using Google Forms distributed through Telegram by class representatives.

Stage 4 – Stratified purposive sampling: From screened students, all identified students from divorced families taken as eligible and contacted to participate. For the intact group, participants were matched to divorced participants on age, department, and gender as closely as possible. Complete one-to-one matching was not achieved for every participant due to practical constraints.

Prior to the actual questionnaire administration, a preliminary demographic screening process was conducted to identify eligible participants based on family background. The screening process involved both physical classroom screening using a screening questionnaire and online screening using Google Forms distributed through Telegram by class representatives. Students who completed the screening and agreed to participate provided contact information (phone numbers).

For the main quantitative data collection, eligible participants were contacted through phone calls and text messages to confirm their willingness to participate. The actual questionnaire was administered digitally through Google Form links shared via Telegram. For participants from divorced families, repeated follow-up calls and text messages were made until the questionnaire was completed. For participants from intact families, if an initial contact did not respond, another eligible participant from the screening pool with similar demographic characteristics was contacted as a replacement. This procedure yielded a 100% completion rate among the final contacted sample.

In the qualitative phase, semi-structured interviews were conducted sequentially after the completion of the quantitative survey with 10 students from divorced family backgrounds selected from the 60 participants who had completed the questionnaire. The qualitative component was included to explore the lived experiences of students who had experienced parental divorce and to gain a deeper understanding of how these experiences shaped their marital attitudes, intentions, and expectations. In addition, the interviews aimed to provide contextual and personal explanations for the quantitative findings by capturing participants' feelings, perceptions, relationship experiences, family interactions, and the meanings they attached to marriage and divorce, thereby revealing aspects that might not be fully reflected through standardized questionnaires alone. Interviews were conducted in quiet and comfortable settings based on participants' availability and willingness to encourage open and honest discussions. With the participants' consent, field notes and audio recordings were taken to facilitate accurate transcription and subsequent thematic analysis

3.5 Instruments of Data Collection

3.5.1. Description and Construction of Tools

The study employed two instruments: a self-administered questionnaire for the quantitative phase and a semi-structured interview guide for the qualitative phase. Both instruments were developed by the researcher through a review of relevant literature and empirical studies related to marital attitudes, marital intentions, marital expectations, and family background. Rather than adopting a single standardized instrument, relevant concepts and items were adapted from previous studies and modified to fit the objectives of the present study and the Ethiopian cultural context. Some items were reworded and simplified to enhance clarity and contextual relevance for university students.

To ensure cultural appropriateness and ease of understanding, the questionnaire and interview guide were initially constructed in Amharic. An English version was subsequently prepared for documentation purposes. To ensure linguistic equivalence, the English version was translated back into Amharic by a bilingual language expert, and discrepancies between the original and back-translated versions were reviewed and resolved. This translation and back-

translation procedure helped enhance the clarity and consistency of the instruments. Both the Amharic and English versions of the questionnaire and semi-structured interview guide are attached in the Annexes.

The questionnaire employed a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree and contained a total of 30 items. Each of the three scales consisted of 10 items measuring marital attitudes, marital intentions, and marital expectations, respectively. It consisted of three sections. The first section contained an introduction and general instructions that guided participants on how to complete the questionnaire. The second section collected demographic information, including age, sex, year of study, family background (whether the participant was raised in an intact family or by divorced parents), and age at parental divorce for participants from divorced families. The third section consisted of three subsections measuring the major study variables. The first subsection measured marital attitudes through 10 items assessing participants' beliefs and feelings about marriage as a social institution, including its perceived benefits, challenges, and importance in adult life. The second subsection measured marital intentions using 10 items that assessed participants' willingness and readiness to marry, long-term commitment, and future plans regarding marriage. The third subsection measured marital expectations through 10 items assessing expectations concerning mutual respect, shared responsibility, emotional support, communication, trust, and lifelong commitment. A few negatively worded items were reverse coded during data analysis to maintain consistency in scoring. Overall, the questionnaire was designed to be clear, concise, and culturally sensitive, allowing systematic assessment of marital attitudes, intentions, and expectations among university students.

For the qualitative phase, a semi-structured interview guide was developed to obtain in-depth information regarding participants' experiences and perceptions related to marriage and parental divorce. The guide consisted of open-ended questions organized around major themes, including perceptions and attitudes toward marriage, emotional and psychological experiences following parental divorce, lessons learned from family experiences, future marital intentions and expectations, and factors considered important for successful marital relationships. Follow-up and probing questions were used whenever necessary to obtain rich and detailed responses.

Both the questionnaire and interview guide were administered in Amharic to facilitate participants' comprehension and encourage open communication.

3.5.2 Validation of Tools

Pre Pilot Study

Before conducting the pilot study, the questionnaire was reviewed by the researcher's peers and by a PhD student in the Department of Psychology at Addis Ababa University to assess the relevance, clarity, appropriateness, and comprehensibility of the items. Their feedback helped enhance the content validity of the instrument. Based on the suggestions received, necessary revisions and refinements were made to the questionnaire prior to the pilot study.

Pilot Study

Prior to the main data collection, a pilot study was conducted from March 10 to 25, 2026, at Addis Ababa University's 6 Kilo Campus among third-year Law and fourth-year Psychology students to assess the clarity, relevance, organization, and appropriateness of the questionnaire developed to measure marital attitudes, intentions, and expectations of university students. It also aimed to examine the instrument's reliability and establish preliminary evidence of validity, as well as to identify potential challenges related to sampling and data collection procedures. A total of 49 students participated in the pilot study, comprising 28 females and 21 males. Regarding family background, 34 participants were from intact families, 8 from divorced families, 6 from widowed families, and 1 from another family structure. To avoid contamination and ensure independence of the final sample, participants in the pilot study were selected from class sections different from those included in the main study and were therefore excluded from the final sample.

Psychometric Properties of the Instrument: Face and content validity of the instrument was tested in the pilot study. The overall instructions and questions in the questionnaire were found to be understandable and culturally appropriate by most of the participants. One participant noted, however, that there were problems with the wording of Attitude Item Number 2, and that it needed to be corrected. In addition participants recommended simplifying the

presentation of the demographic part by structuring the categories of responses into a well-formatted table or boxed presentation, thereby easing the completion of the responses.

Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used for measuring the internal consistency reliability of the three scales. Results showed acceptable to excellent reliability for all of the study variables.

Table 3.2 Reliability test result for pilot test and final form

Scale	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	
		Pilot-test	Final-form
Marital Intention	10	.897	.923
Marital Expectation	10	.789	.791
Marital Attitude	10	.844	.858
Marital Conception	30	.923	.916

This table also shows the reliability analysis of the study scales using Cronbach's alpha coefficients. The results indicated good internal consistency for all scales in both the pilot and main study, with slight improvements observed in the main study. The marital attitude scale improved from $\alpha = .844$ in the pilot study to $\alpha = .858$ in the main study. Similarly, the marital intention scale increased from $\alpha = .897$ to $\alpha = .923$, showing the highest reliability among the scales. The marital expectation scale also showed a slight improvement from $\alpha = .789$ in the pilot study to $\alpha = .791$ in the main study. The overall marital conception scale demonstrated excellent reliability in both the pilot and main study, with Cronbach's alpha values of $\alpha = .923$ and $\alpha = .916$, respectively. Although a slight decrease was observed in the final form, the reliability coefficient remained well above the acceptable threshold, indicating strong internal consistency among the scale items.

Administration and Format: It was easy to administer and participants understood the questionnaire. Average completion time was 10-15 minutes and was found to be appropriate for university students. And also, it was found that the response format Likert scale was practical and user friendly.

Sampling Issues, Challenges and Adjustments: The primary challenges encountered during the pilot study were getting the required numbers of students from divorced single-parent family backgrounds. Although the researcher attempted to increase the sample size, the number of eligible participants remained limited. To address this challenge during the main study, a preliminary demographic screening process was implemented across all selected departments in both campuses. The screening process targeted all available students within the selected departments and sections to identify students based on family background. Students identified through screening were later contacted through phone calls and text messages for participation in the actual study. These adjustments improved participant identification and increased representation from both divorced and intact family groups.

Recommendations and Modifications: Based on findings from the pilot study, several improvements were made before the actual data collection.

Retained Components

- Overall structure of the questionnaire
- Three-scale organization (attitude, intention, expectation)
- Likert-scale response format
- General participant instructions

Modified Components

- Revision of unclear wording in Attitude Item Number 2
- Minor revision of Intention Item 7 and Expectation Item 9 to improve scale reliability
- Improvement of demographic section formatting
- Strengthening of participant screening and recruitment procedures

3.6 Data Analysis

After data collection, responses gathered through Google Forms were exported to Microsoft Excel for coding, editing and data cleaning. Then, data was analyzed in Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. Demographic characteristics and major study variables were presented as descriptive statistics: frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations. Prior to inferential analysis, assumptions of normality were examined using the Shapiro–Wilk test. Although the Shapiro–Wilk test indicated statistically significant deviations from normality ($p < .05$), parametric tests were retained for analysis since, the histograms and normal Q-Q plots suggested approximately normal distributions and the skewness values did not indicate serious departures from normality. And independent samples t-tests and Pearson product–moment correlations are reasonably robust to moderate deviations from normality in large samples and moderately balanced group distributions. Furthermore, the study variables were derived in terms of composite Likert scale scores, which are generally regarded as continuous variables in social science studies. Therefore, parametric analyses were considered appropriate for the present study.

For the qualitative component, interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The interview responses were first transcribed and carefully reviewed several times to gain familiarity with the data. Meaningful statements and recurring ideas relevant to the objectives of the study were identified and assigned initial codes. These codes were then classified into groups, according to common meanings and patterns. These categories were further organized into broader themes and subthemes that reflected the common experiences, perceptions, and viewpoints expressed by the participants. The identified themes were interpreted and described narratively to provide deeper understanding and support for the quantitative findings of the study.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

The ethical considerations such as voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and right to withdraw from the study were meticulously considered during the process of the research. Prior to data collection, all participants were

informed about the purpose, objectives, and significance of the study. The participants were also told that their participation was voluntary and that they could refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without penalties.

Participants were not asked to give any identifying personal details, and their answers were handled confidentially. All participants' data was kept securely and used only for academic and research purposes. In addition, the findings of the study were reported in a generalized manner to prevent the identification of individual participants. The study received ethical clearance from the School of Psychology, Addis Ababa University.

4. Results

This chapter presents findings from 135 undergraduate students at Addis Ababa University (60 from divorced families [44.4%], 75 from intact families [55.6%]). Analyses address four research questions using SPSS v26. Although the Shapiro–Wilk test indicated deviations from normality ($p < .05$), parametric tests were employed because the sample size was sufficiently large and the study variables were computed using composite Likert-scale scores. Therefore, independent samples t -tests and Pearson correlation analyses were considered appropriate for the study.

4.1 Participant Demographics

The socio-demographic characteristics of the participants, including family background, gender, and age during parental divorce, are presented in table 4.1.

Table 4.1. Demographic Characteristics of participants (N = 135)

Variable Characteristic	Category	n	%
Family Background	Intact (Live with both parents)	75	55.6
	Divorced parents	60	44.4
Gender	Male	56	41.5
	Female	79	58.5
Age during parental divorce	(0-6) years	30	51%
	(7-14) years	22	37.4%
	(15-21) years	7	11.6%

Demographic information of participants is presented in Table 4.1. Of the total respondents, 75 (55.6%) were from intact families (those who lived with both parents) and 60 (44.4%) were from divorced-parent families. In terms of gender distribution, the female

respondents outnumbered the male, with 56 (41.5%) being male and 79 (58.5%) female. This suggests that female students were more represented in the study than male students.

Among participants from divorced families, the age at which parental divorce occurred was also assessed. Out of the 60 participants, one respondent reported being unable to remember the age at which the divorce occurred; therefore, the analysis was conducted using responses from 59 participants. The findings revealed that the minimum reported age during parental divorce was 0 years (were not born while divorce occurred) and the maximum age was 21 years. The mean age at parental divorce was 7.01 years. The majority, 30 (51%) experienced parental divorce during early childhood (0–6 years). Additionally, 22 (37.4%) experienced divorce during middle childhood to early adolescence (7–14 years), while only 7 (11.6%) experienced parental divorce during late adolescence or early adulthood (15–21 years). This suggests that parental divorce was more commonly experienced during the early developmental stages of participants' lives.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics of Variables on Marital Conceptions

All marital conception scales in this study consisted of 10 items and were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree.

Table 4.2 Descriptive statistics result of marital conception variables

Variables	Number of Items	Mean	SD
Marital Attitude	10	3.71	0.66
Marital Intention	10	3.74	0.76
Marital Expectation	10	4.45	0.44

Note. Scores ranged from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree.

The findings revealed that participants generally held positive marital conceptions. The mean score for marital attitude was 3.71 (SD = 0.66), indicating that students had favorable attitudes toward marriage. Similarly, participants reported positive marital intentions, with a mean score of 3.74 (SD = 0.76), suggesting that they generally intended to marry in the future. Marital expectation yielded the highest mean score (M = 4.45, SD = 0.44), indicating highly

positive expectations regarding marital relationships. Overall, the results suggest that the participants viewed marriage positively, expressed intentions to marry, and held strong expectations concerning marital roles and relationships.

4.3 Marital Attitude, Intention and Expectation by Selected Socio-demographics

An independent sample *t*-test was conducted to examine differences in marital attitudes, marital intentions, and marital expectations based on family background, sex and age at parental divorce. The table below presents the result.

Table 4.3 Independent Samples *t*-test of Marital Conceptions by Family Background (N = 135)

Variable	Intact Family	Divorced Family	df	t	p
	Mean(SD)	Mean(SD)			
Marital Attitude	3.71 (0.63)	3.71 (0.71)	133	0.000	1.000
Marital Intention	3.78 (0.74)	3.70 (0.80)	133	0.557	.578
Marital Expectation	4.37 (0.43)	4.55 (0.43)	133	-2.424	.017*
Overall Marital Conception	3.95 (0.47)	3.99 (0.54)	133	-0.410	.682

Note. *p* < .05(*)

Table 4.3 presents the results of the independent-samples *t*-test comparing marital conception variables between students from intact and divorced families. The results indicated no statistically significant differences between the two groups in marital attitude, $t(133) = 0.000$, $p = 1.000$, marital intention, $t(133) = 0.557$, $p = .578$, or overall marital conception, $t(133) = -0.410$, $p = .682$. However, a statistically significant difference was found in marital expectation, $t(133) = -2.424$, $p = .017$, with students from divorced families ($M = 4.55$, $SD = 0.43$) reporting higher marital expectations than students from intact families ($M = 4.37$, $SD = 0.43$).

Table 4.4 Independent Samples t-test of Marital Conceptions by Sex (N = 135)

Variable	Male	Female	df	T	p
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)			
Marital Attitude	3.79 (0.62)	3.65 (0.69)	133	1.197	.233
Marital Intention	3.78 (0.71)	3.72 (0.80)	133	0.390	.697
Marital Expectation	4.28 (0.49)	4.57 (0.35)	133	-3.969	.000**
Overall Marital Conception	3.95 (0.50)	3.98 (0.50)	133	-0.372	.711

Note. $p < .001(**)$

Table 4.4 shows the results of the independent-samples t-test examining differences in marital conception variables by sex. The findings revealed no statistically significant differences between male and female students in marital attitude, $t(133) = 1.197$, $p = .233$, marital intention, $t(133) = 0.390$, $p = .697$, or overall marital conception, $t(133) = -0.372$, $p = .711$. However, a statistically significant difference was observed in marital expectation, $t(133) = -3.969$, $p < .001$. Female students ($M = 4.57$, $SD = 0.35$) reported significantly higher marital expectations than male students ($M = 4.28$, $SD = 0.49$).

Table 4.5 Independent Samples t-test of Marital Conceptions by Age at Parental Divorce

Variable	Early Divorce	Late Divorce	df	t	P
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)			
Marital Attitude	3.86 (0.66)	3.53 (0.72)	57	1.838	.071
Marital Intention	3.96 (0.69)	3.41 (0.83)	57	2.793	.007**
Marital Expectation	4.52 (0.46)	4.56 (0.40)	57	-0.374	.710
Overall Marital Conception	4.11 (0.53)	3.83 (0.52)	57	2.074	.043*

Note. $p < .05(*)$. $p < .01(**)$

Table 4.5 presents the results of the independent-samples t-test comparing marital conception variables according to age at parental divorce among participants from divorced families. No statistically significant differences were found in marital attitude, $t(57) = 1.838$, $p = .071$, or marital expectation, $t(57) = -0.374$, $p = .710$. However, significant differences were observed in marital intention, $t(57) = 2.793$, $p = .007$, and overall marital conception, $t(57) = 2.074$, $p = .043$. Participants who experienced parental divorce at an earlier age reported higher marital intention ($M = 3.96$, $SD = 0.69$) and higher overall marital conception ($M = 4.11$, $SD = 0.53$) than those who experienced parental divorce at a later age ($M = 3.41$, $SD = 0.83$ and $M = 3.83$, $SD = 0.52$, respectively).

4.4 Interrelationships among marital conception variables

Pearson product-moment correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships among the main study variables: marital attitudes, marital intentions, marital expectations the analysis was performed to address the research questions concerning the interrelationship among the constructs .The table below presents the relationship.

Table 4.6 Pearson correlation result among study variables

Variables	1.Attitude	2.Intention
1. Attitude	—	—
2. Intention	.716**	—
3.Expectation	.198*	.240**

Note. $P < .05(*)$, $p < .01(**)$

The correlation analysis showed that marital attitude was strongly positively correlated ($r = .716$, $p < .01$) with marital intention which means that the more positive the marital attitude the more positive the marital intention. Marital expectation also showed weak but statistically significant positive relationships with marital attitude ($r = .198$, $p < .05$) and marital intention ($r = .240$, $p < .01$). These findings suggest that the three marital constructs are positively interrelated among the participants.

4.5 Qualitative Finding

The qualitative data was collected through in-depth interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis to explore the attitudes of university students from divorced families toward marriage and the influence of parental divorce on their perceptions, emotional experiences, and future marital intentions. The analysis revealed four major themes: perceptions and attitudes toward marriage, psychological and emotional impacts of parental divorce, development of resilience and premature responsibility and future marital intentions and lessons learned.

Theme 1: Perceptions and Attitudes toward Marriage

Participants expressed diverse views regarding marriage. Although a few respondents held negative perceptions due to their family experiences, the majority viewed marriage as an important and meaningful institution that requires commitment, communication, tolerance, and maturity.

Marriage as Sacred, Valuable, and Necessary

Most participants described marriage as a valuable, sacred, and socially important institution. Several respondents associated marriage with religion and spirituality, emphasizing that marriage itself is not the problem, but rather how individuals manage it.

Participant 4 explained: *“First and foremost, marriage is a gift from the Creator. The responsibility expected in marriage is not just one person's responsibility... Both parties, cooperating and committing, should live in love.”*

Similarly, participant 3 described marriage as a necessary part of human life: *“Marriage is fundamental for a human being. It is important... Marriage is not a bad thing; it is a very good thing. It is a gift from the Creator.”*

Another participant also viewed marriage positively and connected it with emotional fulfillment and hope: *“It's a core part of life. It's something that sweetens life. Without it, life is boring.”* (Respondent 7) In the same way, Respondent 8 stated: *“I believe it is an institution with a great purpose, created by God.”*

Many respondents explained that marriage provides companionship, emotional support, empathy, and social belonging. Participants frequently emphasized that marriage becomes meaningful when couples cooperate, support each other, and work through challenges together.

Participant 1 explained this by saying: *“If there is tolerance, I think marriage is better than anything else.”* Similarly, Respondent 4 noted: *“One lightens the other's load. When one tires, the other encourages.”*

These findings indicate that despite experiencing parental divorce, many participants still maintained positive beliefs regarding the importance and value of marriage.

Marriage Requires Tolerance, Communication and Trust

Participants repeatedly emphasized tolerance, communication, trust, transparency, empathy, and mutual respect as essential foundations for successful marriage. Many respondents associated the breakdown of their parents' marriages with poor communication, unresolved conflict, and inability to manage disagreements effectively.

Participant 1 reflected on his parents' relationship and stated: *“When one messed up, the other would ignore it and let it pass; they wouldn't discuss and solve it together.”* The participant further emphasized: *“If there is no tolerance, I don't think the marriage will continue.”* Similarly, Participant 5 stressed the importance of open communication: *“Communication. If there is open communication, it's good. If they don't tell you their thoughts, you don't really know.”* Participant 2 also emphasized trust and transparency: *“There must be trust, transparency. I don't think there should be secrets between husband and wife.”* Likewise, Respondent 9 explained: *“Trust is foundational... one must be able to compromise.”*

Several participants also highlighted respect as an important aspect of marital relationships. Participant 3 explained: *“Marriage must be respected. Respect is mandatory above all.”* In addition, participants frequently linked communication and tolerance with protecting children from emotional harm caused by conflict and divorce. Participant 7 stated: *“Talking or communication is a very pleasant thing... If the two sat and discussed their problems...”*

These responses showed that participants viewed communication, trust, tolerance, and respect as essential protective factors against marital instability.

Marriage Requires Readiness and Maturity

Most respondents believed that marriage should not be entered impulsively and emphasized the importance of financial stability, emotional maturity, psychological readiness, and compatibility before marriage.

Participant 2 stated: *“It requires very, very much preparation; it's your whole life afterwards... It's not something you just jump into.”* Similarly, Participant 3 explained: *“Marriage requires a lot of management.”* The participant further added: *“Mental growth is needed. Young people or those not fully mature... they might not be able to manage marriage.”* Participant 5 also emphasized the importance of careful partner selection and compatibility: *“Take your time, see the good and bad sides, and then study the compatibility.”* Likewise, Participant 8 stated: *“A child raising a child is difficult.”*

Many participants also highlighted financial readiness as necessary for marital stability. Participant 10 explained: *“They must be financially independent. I think they must be physically and psychologically mature.”* Similarly, Respondent 6 noted: *“A person should be certain to the best of their ability before moving to having children.”*

These findings demonstrate that participants perceived marriage as a serious and demanding life commitment requiring preparation and maturity.

Theme 2: Psychological and Emotional Impact of Parental Divorce

Parental divorce had significant emotional and psychological effects on many participants. Feelings of fear, emotional insecurity, loneliness, stress, and distrust were commonly expressed throughout the interviews.

Fear, Distrust and Emotional Guardedness

Several participants explained that witnessing parental conflict and separation negatively affected their trust in relationships and made them emotionally cautious.

Participant 4 explained: *"It has made me very suspicious... It influenced my trust in people."* The participant further stated: *"Relationships used to seem like a lie."* Similarly, Participant 2 shared: *"I have become gloomy. There is fear inside me."* Another participant explained his fear of repeating his father's behavior: *"I absolutely will not get a divorce... I think I might repeat my father's situation."* (Participant 1) Participant 5 also expressed a deeply negative perception of marriage: *"I don't believe it is something founded on love at all generally."*

These responses indicate that parental divorce contributed to fear of intimacy, distrust toward relationships and emotional guardedness among participants.

Loneliness and Loss of Family Attachment

Many participants described emotional loneliness, lack of parental closeness and absence of family warmth. Participant 2 emotionally expressed: *"I didn't know what is called family love."* The participant further added: *"You feel very lonely sometimes, a kind of isolation feeling."* Similarly, Participant 1 reflected: *"I wonder what effect it would have if my father called me."* Respondent 8 described the emotional pain associated with father absence: *"Losing a father's love... A father gives confidence if present."* Likewise, Participant 7 explained how family events highlighted parental absence: *"When everyone gathers, it hurts when one comes and the other stays away."* Several respondents also discussed emotional distance within their families. Participant 5 explained: *"I can't communicate openly with my parents. I was trying to pretend to be okay for them."*

These findings suggest that parental divorce negatively affected emotional attachment, closeness, and feelings of family belonging among participants.

Psychological Burden and Stress

Participants frequently described psychological pressure, emotional burden, overthinking, and stress resulting from family instability and divorce.

Participant 4 explained: *"I didn't live my childhood."* The participant further stated: *"When my mother is sick, I become the husband, the father."* Similarly, Participant 6 noted: *"We*

know our problems beyond our age.” Participant 10 also described emotional pressure and responsibility: *“I am the only man in the house, so I felt pressure.”* Another participant explained: *“You get hurt psychologically coming from a single parent.”* Several participants also mentioned trauma, fear and emotional exhaustion. Participant 3 explained: *“There are many things that stress me... I worry about anything.”*

These findings show that parental divorce created long-term emotional and psychological strain for many participants.

Theme 3: Development of Resilience and Premature Responsibility

Despite the emotional difficulties associated with parental divorce, many participants reported becoming resilient, independent and self-reliant.

Early Maturity and Adult Responsibilities

Many respondents explained that parental divorce forced them to assume responsibilities beyond their developmental age.

Participant 10 explained: *“I have been working since 5th grade.”* Similarly, participant 4 stated: *“I become the husband, the father.”* Respondent 3 also explained: *“I had an obligation to know.”* Likewise, Participant 6 reflected: *“Growing beyond your age itself is a problem.”*

Several participants described taking financial responsibilities, caring for siblings, or managing emotional burdens within the family at an early age.

Independence and Self-Reliance

Although painful, many participants also believed that their experiences helped them become strong, disciplined, and independent.

Participant 2 explained: *“It has made me very strong.”* Similarly, Participant 1 stated: *“It gave me the freedom to do things on my own.”* participant 10 also explained: *“I learned working on my own.”* Another participant stated: *“It made me skilled in life, wise.”* (Participant 4)

Participants frequently described learning to depend on themselves emotionally, financially, and socially.

Theme 4: Future Marital Intentions and Lessons Learned

Participants' experiences with parental divorce strongly influenced their future expectations, marital intentions, and relationship behaviors.

Desire to Avoid Repeating Parents' Mistakes

Many respondents expressed determination to avoid repeating the marital failures they observed in their families.

Participant 3 stated: *"I will try my best not to repeat that event."* Similarly, participant 7 explained: *"I want to do the opposite."* participants also shared: *"When I marry, I don't want it to be something that can be cut off."*

Participants frequently emphasized protecting future children from emotional pain and creating healthier family environments.

Cautious and Selective Approach toward Marriage

Many participants reported becoming more serious, observant and selective regarding relationships and marriage.

Participant 4 explained: *"It has made me do everything cautiously."* The participant further stated: *"I want to know every step I take."* Similarly, Participant 5 emphasized: *"Take your time."*

Several participants explained that they carefully observe communication style, emotional behavior and responsibility before trusting others.

Rejection or uncertainty of Marriage

A few participants developed pessimistic attitudes toward marriage and expressed unwillingness to marry.

Participant 5 stated: *"I have decided not to marry at all."* participant 9 explained: *"I am not sure whether I will get married or not."*

These participants associated marriage with emotional suffering, conflict, disappointment, and uncertainty.

Summary of Findings

In general, the qualitative findings revealed that parental divorce significantly shaped participants' conceptions toward marriage, emotional experiences and future marital expectations. Although some participants developed fear, distrust and negative attitudes toward marriage, many still viewed marriage as meaningful and valuable. Participants commonly emphasized communication, tolerance, trust, maturity and financial stability as important foundations for successful marriage. Additionally, parental divorce contributed both to emotional difficulties and to the development of resilience, independence and greater caution regarding future relationships.

5. Discussions

The purpose of this study was to examine marital attitudes, intentions and expectations among university students from divorced-parent families and intact families at Addis Ababa University. The study also explored whether family background and sex influence marital orientations and investigated the relationships among marital attitudes, intentions and expectations. Quantitative findings were further supported by qualitative interview data, which provided deeper understanding regarding participants' lived experiences, emotional reactions and perceptions toward marriage following parental divorce.

5.1 Marital Attitudes, Intentions and Expectations among University Students

The results of the present study indicate positive attitudes of the participants towards marriage, intentions to marry, and positive expectations from future marriages in general. These results suggest that marriage remains significant in participants' social, emotional and cultural lives in the face of greater family instability and shifting family arrangements. The positive orientations of the participants toward marriage indicate that marriage continues to be seen as a meaningful institution that brings satisfaction and positive emotions like companionship, emotional support, family formation, and social belonging.

The findings from the interviews help to shed more light on the meaning participants gave to marriage. The majority of the respondents felt that marriage was sacred, valuable and necessary, and highlighted communication, trust, tolerance, emotional maturity and financial preparedness as key factors in successful marriage. The answers indicate that participants' perceptions of marriage were not solely idealistic. Instead, they represented relatively realistic, mature perceptions of marital life which acknowledged both the joys and duties of marriage.

These findings consistent with those of the studies carried out in collectivist and family oriented societies that show marriage still has significant social and cultural values for young adults even in the face of changing family structure (Amoateng & Kalule-Sabiti, 2013). In Ethiopia, marriage is taken to be not just a personal relationship, but also a social, cultural and spiritual institution. In the present study, the overall favorable marital conceptions reported could thus be attributed to the influence of cultural and religious values that continue to promote the value and stability of marriage.

The results also consistent with the Theory of Planned behaviour suggesting that attitudes toward a behavior positively influence the behavior's intentions (Ajzen, 1991). This is supported by the strong positive relationship found between marital attitudes and marital intentions and the proposition that positive attitudes towards marriage are linked to increased marital intentions for the future.

The results are important in that they indicate that greater exposure to divorce and family disruption does not necessarily result in negative attitudes toward marriage. Rather, it seemed that participants held positive attitudes towards marriage, with at the same time awareness of the significance of communication, trust, and emotional maturity. This implies that young adults might still hold the value of marriage but have more realistic and thought-out expectations of marital relationships. These results help to understand the types of marital conceptions in non-Western societies and the need to look at cross-cultural influences in the study of attitudes towards marriage.

5.2 Influence of Family Background, Sex and Duration since Parental Divorce on Marital Conceptions

The major findings of this study were that students from divorced-parent families and those from intact families did not differ significantly in their marital attitudes or intentions. Participants from both family backgrounds generally viewed marriage positively and expressed intentions to marry in the future. This finding suggests that experiencing parental divorce does not necessarily diminish the value attached to marriage or reduce the desire to establish future marital relationships. Rather than leading to rejection of marriage, parental divorce may influence the way young adults think about relationships without altering their overall orientation toward marriage.

This result differs from many studies conducted in Western countries, which have reported that children of divorced parents tend to demonstrate lower marital commitment, less favorable attitudes toward marriage, and greater fear of relationship instability (Amato & DeBoer, 2001; Amato, 2010). One possible explanation for this discrepancy may lie in the sociocultural context in which marriage is embedded. In Ethiopia, marriage is often viewed as a highly valued social, cultural, and religious institution. Such values may buffer the negative

effects of parental divorce and contribute to maintaining positive marital orientations despite experiences of family disruption. Therefore, the present findings suggest that the consequences of parental divorce may not be uniform but may vary according to cultural contexts and meaning systems surrounding marriage.

Although no differences were observed in marital attitudes and intentions, students from divorced families reported significantly higher marital expectations than students from intact families. Interview findings help explain this result, as participants from divorced families repeatedly emphasized the importance of trust, communication, emotional support, transparency, and relationship stability. Rather than indicating unrealistic expectations, these findings may reflect heightened sensitivity to relationship quality and emotional security. Individuals who experienced family conflict and parental separation may place greater importance on qualities that they perceived to be lacking in their parents' relationships.

Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969) provides a useful framework for understanding this finding. Early family experiences may influence internal working models of relationships and shape expectations concerning intimacy, trust, and emotional security in adulthood. Consequently, higher marital expectations among participants from divorced families may represent an effort to establish relationships characterized by stability and emotional support, thereby avoiding experiences similar to those witnessed during childhood. These findings suggest that parental divorce may not weaken commitment to marriage itself but may influence the standards and expectations individuals bring into future relationships.

Regarding sex differences, no statistically significant differences were found between male and female participants in marital attitudes and intentions. This finding suggests that both sexes generally shared similar beliefs concerning the importance of marriage and demonstrated comparable intentions regarding future marital relationships. However, female participants reported significantly higher marital expectations than males. This difference may reflect gender socialization processes, whereby women are often encouraged to place greater emphasis on emotional intimacy, communication, trust, and relationship quality. As a result, women may develop stronger expectations concerning emotional support and relational stability in marriage.

The finding further suggests that expectations about marriage may be shaped not only by family experiences but also by socially constructed gender roles.

With regard to age at parental divorce, participants who experienced parental divorce during early childhood reported stronger marital intentions than those who experienced divorce during later developmental periods. However, no significant differences were found in marital attitudes and expectations. Developmental theories and previous studies suggest that children who experience parental divorce during adolescence are more likely to have vivid memories of parental conflict and greater awareness of family disruption, which may influence later perceptions of intimate relationships (Amato, 2000; Lansford, 2009). In contrast, individuals who experienced divorce during early childhood may have had more time to adapt and incorporate the experience into their developmental adjustment. The interview findings appear to support this interpretation, as participants who experienced divorce during adolescence described stronger memories of conflict, emotional distress, and insecurity, whereas those who experienced divorce at younger ages often reported better adjustment over time.

Overall, these findings suggest that parental divorce may not necessarily determine whether young adults value marriage or intend to marry. Rather, its influence appears to be reflected more in the emotional meanings and expectations attached to future relationships. The findings highlight the importance of considering cultural and developmental contexts when examining the long-term consequences of parental divorce and contribute to a more nuanced understanding of marital conceptions among young adults.

5.3 Emotional and Psychological experiences of Parental Divorce and Marital Conceptions

Although parental divorce was not associated with less favorable attitudes toward marriage or weaker intentions to marry, the qualitative findings revealed that it had important emotional and psychological consequences that appeared to influence participants' perceptions of relationships and future marital life. Experiences of loneliness, emotional insecurity, distrust, fear of relationship failure, and psychological stress were commonly reported by participants who had experienced parental divorce. These findings suggest that parental divorce may affect

the emotional meaning attached to intimate relationships even when it does not diminish the value individuals place on marriage itself.

Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969) provides a useful framework for understanding these findings. According to the theory, early family experiences contribute to the development of internal working models that influence expectations regarding trust, intimacy, and emotional security in later relationships. The fear, emotional guardedness, and distrust described by many participants may therefore reflect the lasting effects of witnessing parental conflict and family instability. Consistent with previous research (Amato, 1996), parental divorce appeared to increase concerns regarding relationship stability and emotional security. These emotional experiences may partly explain why participants from divorced families placed considerable emphasis on communication, trust, and emotional support in future marital relationships.

At the same time, the findings demonstrated that parental divorce was not solely associated with negative outcomes. Many participants described becoming more independent, responsible, and emotionally mature as a result of their experiences. Some respondents reported assuming responsibilities at an early age, learning to rely on themselves, and developing greater resilience in coping with adversity. These findings suggest that parental divorce may function not only as a source of emotional distress but also as a context in which adaptive coping and personal growth can emerge.

The coexistence of emotional difficulties and resilience highlights the complexity of young adults' responses to parental divorce. While some participants experienced loneliness, mistrust, and fear of intimacy, others reported increased self-reliance, maturity, and personal strength. These contrasting experiences indicate that the consequences of parental divorce are not uniform. Rather, individuals may respond differently depending on their family circumstances, coping mechanisms, and the support available to them. Thus, parental divorce should not be viewed exclusively as a risk factor but as an experience that may produce both vulnerability and growth.

Furthermore, participants frequently expressed a desire to avoid repeating the marital difficulties they had observed in their parents' relationships. Many emphasized the importance of

communication, trust, emotional maturity, and careful partner selection. Rather than rejecting marriage altogether, participants appeared to adopt a more cautious and reflective approach toward intimate relationships. This pattern supports the concept of cautious realism proposed by Burgoyne et al. (2002), which suggests that children of divorced parents may continue to value marriage while becoming more selective and thoughtful regarding relationship formation and maintenance.

In general, the findings suggest that parental divorce may have a lasting influence on the emotional dimensions of marital conceptions rather than on the desire to marry itself. Experiences of parental divorce appeared to increase sensitivity to issues of trust, communication, and relationship stability while simultaneously fostering resilience and personal growth among some individuals. These findings contribute to existing knowledge by demonstrating that the impact of parental divorce involves both risk and adaptation, highlighting the importance of adopting a balanced perspective when examining its long-term consequences among young adults.

5.4 Relationships among Marital Attitudes, Intentions and Expectations

The study showed that marital attitudes were significantly and positively correlated with marital intentions ($r = .72, p < .05$). This result suggests that people who were more positive about marriage were more likely to say that they intended to marry more strongly in the future. The findings support the Theory of Planned Behavior proposed by Icek Ajzen (1991) that attitude is one of the significant factors in influencing behavioral intentions. Qualitative results also confirmed this interpretation, as participants who had an overall favorable attitude toward marriage often talked about future plans for marriage, lifelong commitment, and desire to create strong family relationships. Thus, positive attitudes toward marriage appeared to be closely associated with stronger marital intentions.

In contrast, the relationships between marital expectations and the other study variables were comparatively weaker. Both marital attitudes and marital intentions showed weak positive relationships with marital expectations. This discovery indicates that marital expectations might be a more intricate psychological facet of marriage that is not merely shaped by marriage beliefs,

but also by emotional experiences, family relations, and worries about marriage stability. In addition the qualitative findings further supported this interpretation. While some participants had positive attitudes toward marriage, others reported emotional guardedness, concerns about trust and high expectations for communication, emotional support, and partner behavior. It appears that the positive attitude to marriage remains among young adults, but at the same time they become even more demanding, with their expectations being directed at preventing emotional harm and relationship instability.

In general, the present study showed that Addis Ababa university students have a positive orientation towards marriage irrespective of their family background. However, parental divorce seemed to have a related impact on the emotional significance of marriage by raising the level of caution, emotional sensitivity, and anticipation of trust, communication, and stability in the marital relationship. The quantitative and qualitative results together indicate that the divorce of parents does not necessarily lead to a diminished interest in marriage among young adults, but rather might cause them to be more reflective, cautious, and expectation-oriented regarding future marriage.

6. Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Summary of the Study

This study compared the marital attitudes, intentions and expectations of the students of Addis Ababa University from divorced single parent families and those of students belonging to intact families. A sequential explanatory mixed method design was used with 135 undergraduate students, 60 from divorced families and 75 from intact families. The data collection was done using two methods, namely quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative data were collected using a structured self-administered questionnaire measuring marital attitude, intention and expectation, while the qualitative data gathered through semi-structured interviews from 10 students of divorced family background. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, independent t-test, correlation analysis and thematic analysis.

The quantitative findings indicated that Addis Ababa university students generally held positive marital attitudes, intentions, and expectations, with marital expectations showing the highest overall mean score. No statistically significant differences were found between students from divorced and intact families regarding marital attitudes and marital intentions. However, a statistically significant difference was observed in marital expectations, with students from divorced families reporting higher marital expectations than students from intact families. Similarly, no statistically significant sex differences were found in marital attitudes and marital intentions, although female students reported significantly higher marital expectations than male students. Concerning age at parental divorce, a significant difference was found in marital intentions, with participants who experienced parental divorce at an earlier age reporting higher marital intentions than those who experienced divorce later in childhood or adolescence. The correlation analysis further revealed a strong positive relationship between marital attitudes and marital intentions, supporting the Theory of Planned Behavior. Weak positive relationships were also observed between marital expectations and both marital attitudes and intentions.

The qualitative findings provided deeper insight into participants' lived experiences and perceptions regarding marriage and parental divorce. Participants generally viewed marriage as sacred, valuable, and necessary, and emphasized communication, trust, emotional maturity, readiness, tolerance, and mutual understanding as essential foundations for successful marriage.

At the same time, many participants from divorced families described experiences of fear, distrust, loneliness, emotional burden, and psychological stress associated with parental divorce. Despite these challenges, many participants also reported developing resilience, independence, maturity, and a stronger sense of responsibility. Furthermore, many participants expressed a strong desire to avoid repeating their parents' mistakes by becoming more cautious, selective, and thoughtful in future intimate relationships, although very few rejected marriage altogether.

6.2 Conclusions

The results of the study led to the following conclusions. Marital attitudes, intentions, and expectations among Addis Ababa university students were generally positive regardless of whether participants came from divorced or intact families. Parental divorce did not significantly diminish positive attitudes toward marriage or intentions to marry, but it did seem to shape the emotions connected with marriage in ways that involved raising expectations for trust, communication, emotional support, and relationship stability. Students from divorced families were not rejecting marriage but were approaching future relations with marriage more carefully, in a thoughtful way.

The results also indicate that family disruption and cultural/religious values could play a protective role in maintaining positive marital orientations in Ethiopia. The results above indicate a high positive correlation between marital attitudes and intentions ($r = .72$), which further corroborates the use of the theory of planned behavior in explaining marital intentions of university students in Ethiopia.

Moreover, the effects of parental divorce seem to be both negative and positive psychologically. Some felt distressed, distrustful, lonely, emotionally fragile and fearful of the uncertainty of the relationship, while others have become more resilient, independent, emotionally mature, and realistic about marriage and relationships. The results also revealed that the age at which parents' divorce may affect youth's attitudes toward marriage, such that those who were exposed to parental divorce while younger were more likely to indicate greater intentions to marry in the future than those who were exposed later in life. Gender differences were also noted with regard to marital expectations, where females' marital expectations were found to be significantly higher than male students' marital expectations. This indicates that

females might be more concerned with the importance of communication, emotional support and relationship quality in future marriages.

In general, the study fills the gap in limited literature in Ethiopia and more broadly in Africa on marital attitudes, intentions and expectations among the youth from various family backgrounds. The results suggest that parental divorce does not automatically make young adults less likely to appreciate marriage; it may make them more careful, emotionally conscious, realistic, and expectation-oriented in their future marriage. Cultural and religious values seem to buffer against the adverse impacts of family instability and reinforce resilience and coping flexibility. The implications of these results for counselling practice, family intervention programs and for future investigation in the context of the Ethiopian and African context is significant.

6.3 Limitation of the study

1. Cross-sectional design in which data was collected at one time, causal inferences cannot be established.
1. Limited generalizability due to the use of convenience sampling, since only Addis Ababa Universities two campuses was sampled, thus results cannot be generalized to all Ethiopian university students or young adults in other regions.
2. Participants may have responded in a socially desirable manner because of cultural norms related to marriage and family so, this may lead to response bias.
3. The study did not look in detail at other important factors that might influence the study results, such as level of parental conflict, parenting quality, socioeconomic status and relationship with the custodial parents.
4. Small qualitative sample (Only 10) students from divorced families were interviewed; no comparison was made with students from intact families for the interview.
5. One of the expectations scale items had lower relative reliability and therefore requires additional validation.

6.4 Recommendations

As successful marriage was always mentioned to include communication, trust, emotional maturity and conflict management, as well as other competencies, it is recommended that university counseling centers and mental health workers offer psychoeducation programs dealing with healthy relationships, communication skills, the regulation of emotions and realistic expectations of marriage. These interventions could assist youth grow in the relationship skill areas that they themselves determined to be important for marital stability.

The qualitative results indicated that loneliness, distrust, emotional insecurity and psychological stress were experienced by some of the participants after the divorce of parents. Thus, it is recommended that universities enhance their counseling and psychological support services in dealing with the emotional challenges of divorce and helping divorced students adjust psychologically.

Parents and family practitioners should try to reduce children's exposure to destructive parental conflict during and after divorce as participants often pointed to the negative effects of conflict and the need for family harmony. There is a risk that family conflict can affect children and adolescents emotionally and this may be better conveyed to parents through public awareness and family education programs.

It was also found that the students from divorced homes had positive attitude and intentions about marriage, and they expressed that they expected higher levels of trust and communication and emotional support in a relationship. For this reason, it is essential that premarital counseling programs focus on realistic expectations, relationship skills, conflict resolution and emotional maturity to build healthy and stable marital relationships with young adults.

As participants have shown signs of emotional challenges and adaptive strengths after parental divorce, counsellors and mental health practitioners need to be sensitive to expressions of vulnerability as well as expressions of strength and resilience that have been shown by young people.

Future research should focus on longitudinal studies to investigate the changes in marital attitudes, intentions and expectations over developmental periods. Due to the limitations of the

present research that did not consider parent conflict, parent-child relationship quality, attachment styles and socioeconomic status, future research should explore such factors to determine if they have a impact on marital conceptions. Furthermore, between- and within-college comparisons are suggested to enhance the broader applicability of the results. Further psychometric evaluation of marital expectation measures within Ethiopian cultural contexts is also recommended.

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Annex-1

አዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ

ሳይኮሎጂ ት/ቤት

መጠይቅ

ውድ ተሳታፊ፣

ይህ መጠይቅ በኢትዮጵያ ዩኒቨርሲቲ ተማሪዎች ዘንድ ስለ ጋብቻ ያለ አመለካከት፣ ፍላጎት እና ጥበቃ ምን እንደሚመስል ለመመርመር የተዘጋጀ ነው።

በዚህ መሰረት መጠይቁ ለሳይንሳዊ ጥናት ብቻ የሚጠቅም ሲሆን የሚሰጠው መረጃ ሙሉ በሙሉ ሚስጥራዊነቱ የተጠበቀ ይሆናል፤ መጠይቁን ለመሙላት ፈቃደኛ ካልሆኑ በማንኛውም ጊዜ ማቋረጥ ይቻላል።

መመሪያ

ይህ መጠይቅ ሁለት ዋና ክፍሎችን ያካትታል፡-የመሠረታዊ መረጃ ክፍልና ዋና ጥያቄዎች።

በመጀመሪያው የመሠረታዊ መረጃ ክፍል ስር ለተጠየቁት ጥያቄዎች መረጃ በመጻፍ፣አማራጭ መልስ ላላቸው ደግሞ ከአማራጮቹ ተገቢ መልስ ነው በምትሉት መልስ ፊትለፊት ይህን ምልክት (X) አስቅምጡ።

በሁለተኛው ዋና የጥያቄ ክፍል ስር ደግሞ በተዘረዘሩት ጉዳዮች ዙሪያ ያላችሁን የስምምነት ደረጃ ከሚከተሉት አምስት አማራጮቹ አንዱን ብቻ በመምረጥ ለየጥያቄዎቹ የስምምነታችሁን ደረጃ እንድትገልጹ እናሳስባለን። አማራጮቹም፡-

1 = በጣም አልስማማም

2 = አልስማማም

3 = መካከለኛ

4 = እስማማለሁ

5 = በጣም እስማማለሁ

ማሳሰቢያዎች

ትክክል ወይም ስህተት መልስ የለም፤ የራሳችሁን እውነተኛ አመለካከት እንዲገልጹ በትህትና እንጠይቃለን።

መጠይቁን መመልስ መጀመርዎ በዚህ ጥናት ላይ በፈቃድ መሳተፍዎን እንደሚያመለክት ይቆጠራል።

ክፍል አንድ: የመሠረታዊ መረጃ ክፍል

ጥያቄዎች	አማራጮች	መልስ
1.ዕድሜ	አመቱ በቁጥር ይሞላ	_____
2.ፆታ	ወንድ ወይስ ሴት	_____
3.በዩንቨርሲቲው የሚከታተሉት ፕሮግራም	የመጀመሪያ ዲግሪ ወይስ ሁለተኛ ዲግሪ	_____
4.የቤተሰብ ዳራ:	ያደግሁት በሙሉ ቤተሰብ ውስጥ ነው (ከሁለቱም ወላጆች ጋር) ወይስ ያደግሁት ከተፋቱ ወላጆች ጋር ነው	_____
5.በተፋቱ ወላጆች እጅ ካደጉ ወላጆች በተፋቱበት ጊዜ ዕድሜዎ ስንት ነበር?	አመቱ በቁጥር ይሞላ	_____

ክፍል ሁለት: ዋና የጥያቄ ክፍል

2.1 ስለ ጋብቻ ያለ አመለካከት (10 ጥያቄዎች)

ከታች የተዘረዘሩት ጥያቄዎች ስለ ጋብቻ ያለዎትን አመለካከት ይመለከታሉ። እያንዳንዱን ጥያቄ በጥንቃቄ አንብቦው፤

የእርስዎን አመለካከት የሚገልጽዎት መልስ በተዘጋጀው ሳፕን ውስጥ ይህን ምልክት (X) በማስቀመጥ ይመልሱ።

(1 = በጣም አልስማማም፤ 2 = አልስማማም፤ 3 = መካከለኛ፤ 4 = እስማማለሁ፤ 5 = በጣም እስማማለሁ)

ተ . ቁ	ስለ ጋብቻ ያለ አመለካከት ጥያቄዎች	1=በጣም አልስማማም	2=አልስማማም	3=መካከለኛ	4=እስማማለሁ	5= በጣም እስማማለሁ
1	ጋብቻ በማህበረሰብ ውስጥ ጠቃሚ ተቋም ነው።					
2	ጋብቻ የአንድ ሰው አርኪ የጎልማሳ ሕይወት አካል ነው።					
3	ጋብቻ ስሜታዊ መረጋጋትን ሊሰጥ ይችላል።					
4	ጋብቻ የሚጠይቀው ጥረት እና መስዋዕትነት በሚያስገኘው ደስታ ይካሳል።					

5	ደስተኛ ሕይወት ለመኖር ጋብቻ አስፈላጊ አይደለም።*					
6	ጋብቻ ከሚያስገኘው ጥቅም ይልቅ ብዙ ጊዜ ችግሩ ያመዝናል።*					
7	በዘመናዊ ማህበረሰብ ጋብቻ ከዚህ ቀደም ከነበረው ያነሰ አስፈላጊ ነው።*					
8	ለሰዎች ማግባት አስፈላጊ አይደለም።*					
9	በአሁኑ ዘመን የተሳካ ጋብቻ ማድረግ ይቻላል።					
10	ጋብቻ በግል እድገት ላይ አዎንታዊ ተጽዕኖ ሊኖረው ይችላል።					

2.2 የጋብቻ ፍላጎት እና ዝግጁነት (10 ጥያቄዎች)

ተ.ቁ	የጋብቻ ፍላጎት እና ዝግጁነት ጥያቄዎች	1=በጣም አልስማማም	2=አልስማማም	3=መካከለኛ	4=እስማማለሁ	5=በጣም እስማማለሁ
1	ወደፊት ለማግባት እቅድ አለኝ።					
2	ጋብቻ የረጅም ጊዜ የሕይወቴ እቅድ አካል ነው።					
3	ዕድሜ ልክ የሚቆይ የጋብቻ ግንኙነት እንዲኖረኝ እመኛለሁ።					
4	ጋብቻ ፈተናዎች(ችግሮች) ቢኖሩትም ለማግባት እቅድ አለኝ።					
5	ለጋብቻ ራሴን በማዘጋጀት ላይ ነኝ።					
6	ጋብቻ የጎልማሳ ማንነቴ አካል እንደሚሆን አምናለሁ።					

7	ማግባት እፈልጋለሁ ወይም አልፈልግም በሚለው ጉዳይ እርግጠኛ ነኝ።*					
8	ትምህርቴን ከጨረስሁ በኋላ በተገቢ ጊዜ ማግባት አስባለሁ።					
9	ጋብቻ በሕይወቴ እቅድ ውስጥ አይገባም።*					
10	የተረጋጋ የጋብቻ ግንኙነት ለመመሥረት ተነሳሽነት አለኝ።					

2.3 ስለ ጋብቻ(ትዳር) ያለ ጥበቃ (10 ጥያቄዎች)

ተ.ቁ	ስለ ጋብቻ(ትዳር) ያለ ጥበቃ ጥያቄዎች	1=በጣም አልሰማማም	2=አልሰማማም	3=መካከለኛ	4=እስማማለሁ	5=በጣም እስማማለሁ
1	ጋብቻ በትዳር ጓደኞች መካከል የጋራ መከባበርን ማካተት አለበት።					
2	በትዳር ውስጥ ሁለቱም አጋሮች ኃላፊነት አለባቸው።					
3	የትዳር አጋር በችግር ጊዜ ስሜታዊ ድጋፍ መስጠት አለበት።					
4	ግጭት በትዳር ውስጥ የሚያጋጥም እና መቆጣጠር የሚቻል ነገር ነው።					
5	ጋብቻ ቀጣይነት ያለው ጥረት እና መግባባትን ይጠይቃል።					
6	በትዳር ውስጥ መተማመን እንድሚኖር እጠብቃለሁ።					
7	በትዳር ውስጥ አጋሮች በዋና ውሳኔዎች ላይ በጋራ መወሰን አለባቸው።					

8	በትዳር ውስጥ ኢጋሮች አንዱ የሌላውን የግል እድገት መደገፍ አለባቸው።					
9	በትዳር ውስጥ ኢጋሮች ሁልጊዜ መስማማት አለባቸው።					
10	ትዳር በፍቅር ላይ የተመሰረተ መሆኑን አለበት።					

English Questionnaire

Section A: Background Information

Age: _____

Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female

Year of study: _____

Educational level: ☐ Undergraduate ☐ Graduate

Family background:

☐ Raised in an intact family (both biological parents together)

☐ Raised by a divorced single parent

If raised by a divorced parent:

Age at parental divorce: _____

Section B: Marital Attitudes (10 items)

(How students think and feel about marriage)

1. Marriage is an important institution in society.
2. Marriage is a key part of a person's adult life.
3. Marriage can provide emotional stability.
4. The effort and sacrifice that marriage demands are compensated by the happiness it brings.
5. Marriage is not necessary to live a happy life.*
6. The problems of marriage often outweigh its benefits.*

7. In modern society marriage is less important than it used to be.*
8. Getting married is not necessary for people.*
9. In the present day it is possible to have a successful marriage.
10. Marriage can have a positive influence on personal growth.

Section C: Marital Intentions (10 items)

(Plans and willingness to marry)

1. I plan to get married in the future.
2. Marriage is part of my long-term life plan.
3. I wish to have a lifelong marital relationship.
4. Despite the challenges or problems that marriage may have, I plan to get married.
5. I am preparing myself for marriage.
6. I believe marriage will be part of my adult identity.
7. Whether one wants to get married or not is not always clear.*
8. I intend to get married at the appropriate time after finishing my education.
9. Marriage is not part of my life plan.*
10. I have the motivation to establish a stable marital relationship.

Section D: Marital Expectations (10 items)

(Beliefs about what marriage should be like)

1. Marriage should include mutual respect between spouses.
2. In marriage both partners have responsibilities.
3. A spouse should provide emotional support during times of difficulty.
4. Conflict is something that can arise in marriage and can be managed.
5. Marriage requires continuous effort and communication.

6. I expect trust to exist in marriage.
7. In marriage partners should make major decisions together.
8. In marriage partners should support each other's personal growth.
9. In marriage disagreement means the marriage is weak.*
10. Marriage should be based on love.

Annex-2

የቃለ-መጠይቅ መመሪያ

1. ጋብቻን እንዴት ትመለከታለህ/ሽ?

- በጋብቻ ውስጥ የሚጠበቁ ሀላፊነቶችና ሚናዎች ምንድን ናቸው?
- የጋብቻ ጥሩ ጎኖች ምንድን ናቸው?
- የጋብቻ አስቸጋሪ/ክፉ ጎኖች ምንድን ናቸው?
- በጋብቻ ውስጥ መደረግ ያለበት እና መደረግ የሌለበት ምንድን ነው?
- ሰዎች ከመጋባታቸው በፊት ምን ያህል ዝግጁነት እና እቅድ መኖር አለባቸው?

2. ከተፋቱ ወላጆች መመጣትህ/ሽ በጋብቻ ላይ ያለህን/ሽን አመለካከት እንዴት አስተፅኦ አሳድሯል?

- የወላጆችህ ፍቺ በአስተሳሰብህ/ሽ ላይ ምን ተፅእኖ አሳድሯል?
- ከዚህ ተሞክሮ ምን ተማርክ/ሽ?
- ምን ነገሮች አስቸጋሪ ነበሩ? ምን ነገሮች ረድተውሃል/ሻል?
- ይህ ተሞክሮ በወደፊት ጋብቻህ ላይ ያለህን/ሽን እቅድ እና ግምት እንዴት አስተፅኦ አሳድሯል?

3. ራስህን/ሽን ከሌሎች (ከሁለቱም ወላጆቻቸው ጋር የሚኖሩ ተማሪዎች) ጋር ሲነጻጸር ምን ልዩነት አለ?

- በአመለካከትህ/ሽ ወይም በተሞክሮህ/ሽ ምን ልዩነት አለ?
- እነሱ እና አንተ/አንቺ ጋብቻን በመመልከት ያለው ልዩነት ምንድን ነው?
- ይህ ልዩነት ከየት የመጣ እንደሚመስልህ/ሽ ታስባለህ/ሽ?

INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. How do you view marriage?

- What are the expected responsibilities and roles in marriage?
- What are the good sides of marriage?
- What are the difficult/bad sides of marriage?
- What should and should not be done in a marriage?
- How much readiness and planning should people have before they get married?

2. How has coming from divorced parents influenced your attitude towards marriage?
 - What impact has your parents' divorce had on your thinking?
 - What have you learned from this experience?
 - What things were difficult? What things helped you?
 - How has this experience influenced your future plans and considerations regarding marriage?
3. What differences exist between you and others (students who live with both of their parents)?
 - What difference is there in your attitude or experience?
 - What is the difference in how you and they view marriage?
 - Where do you think this difference comes from?