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### RESEARCH ARTICLE

## FAMILY STRUCTURE AND CHILD VICTIMIZATION AS PREDICTORS OF CHILDREN'S ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS OF ILUBABORA ZONE. IMPLICATION FOR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT.

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### Abstract

This study was conducted to investigate the relative importance of family structure and child victimization in predicting children's academic achievement in primary school in Ilubabor Zone. The respondents for this study were 620 students' and 20 teachers. A survey was conducted by using a child victimization questionnaire for gathering information about child victimization to examine its effect on academic performance of children, the academic performance was gauged by the result of their Mathematics and English subject achievement result and FGD items developed by researchers. Bivariate correlation, mean score and standard deviation was used to investigate the correlation between family structure, child victimization and academic achievement and to examine difference in academic achievement as a result of family structure respectively. On the other hand, multiple regression and independent t-test were employed to analyze the relative contribution of family structure and child victimization on children academic achievement. Besides, the data from FGD was analyzed qualitatively and presented accordingly. The results of the study revealed the correlation between family structures and children academic achievement. The academic achievement of children's from Stepparent (M = 15.744) and single parent household (M = 17.53) were significantly different from nuclear family (M = 18.71). The analysis result by multiple regression indicated that there is statistically significant relationship between nuclear family structure and children academic achievement score ( $t = 10.440$ ,  $p < .001$ ) as a result of victimization and there is statistically significant relationship between single biological family structure and students academic achievement score ( $t = 8.575$ ,  $p < .001$ ) as a result of child victimization and the result also indicated that there is no statistically significant relation between step family structure and students academic achievement score ( $t = -6.52$ ,  $p > .05$ ) as a result of victimization. Finally, it was found out that girls perform better than the male in English subject but as a result of family structure impact they perform less than male. Eventually, conclusions, recommendations and areas of further research were forwarded based on the major findings to enhance academic achievement of children from step family and single biological family.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

ANOVA: **Analysis of Variance**

FGD: **Focus Group Discussion**

MoE: **Ministry of Education**

MoH: **Ministry of Health**

SPSS: **Statistical Packages for Social Sciences**

**CHAPTER ONE:-**

This chapter is about the orientation of the research. The background to the research is explained first. Following this, the statement of the research problems is described. Then the basic research questions that are thought to be answered by the research are provided in order. Finally, the general objective, specific objectives, the significance of the research, the delimitation and limitation of the research and clarification of terms are presented.

**1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

In this era of globalization and technological revolution, education is considered as a first step for every human activity. It plays a vital role in the development of human capital and is linked with an individual's well-being and opportunities for better living (Battle & Lewis, 2002). It ensures the acquisition of knowledge and skills that enable individuals to increase their productivity and improve their quality of life. This increase in productivity also leads towards new sources of earning which enhances the economic growth of a country (Saxton, 2000).

Throughout most of the world, children begin formal education at age six or seven. Although children are naturally having potential to grow up, environmental conditions in which they grow up determine their healthy development. One factor which contributes to children well-being is family structure. The issue of the expansion of academic failure among the primary school children is a threat that has encouraged both the government and stakeholders in the face. There is a consensus of opinion about the fallen standard or quality of education as a big problem that is hindering the posterity of the nation in terms of man power resources. Most students in primary school experience academic problem that manifests itself in the form of academic poor performance (AdesehinwaOlayinka, 2013).

The quality of students' performance or academic achievement remains at top priority for educators. It is meant for making a difference locally, regionally, nationally and globally. Educators, trainers, and researchers have long been interested in exploring variables contributing effectively for quality of performance of learners. These variables are inside and outside school that affect students' quality of academic achievement. These factors may be termed as student factors, family factors, school factors and peer factors(Crosnoe, Johnson & Elder, 2004).

Families fulfill an important function in every society: children growing up in a family, which is responsible for teaching them norms and values that are essential in life. Family forms the context in which a child develops by adopting social behavior and its first attitudes. Generally, it provides the child with opportunities to develop into a

stable and independent person, for example through enabling the child to attend school. The future success of children thus greatly depends on the household they grow up in. Nevertheless, a child is not in the position to choose its own family and has to accept it if its family is not capable of offering the best opportunities. Traditionally, the word 'family' referred to a married couple with one or more children. Within this family, father usually had to work to earn his bread, while mother stayed at home to run the household and to take care of the children. This representation of a family, also referred to as the traditional male breadwinner model (McDonald 1997; Lewis 2001), prevailed during the 1950s.

During 1950s it was very common for young people to marry early and to have many children quickly (Martin and Kats 2003). Moreover, people hardly ever divorced cohabitated or had children outside marriage. As a result, single parenthood was quite rare and in most cases it followed after the death of one of both parents. Although nowadays many households still fit the description of the male-breadwinner female-homemaker family, family structures have changed enormously during the later decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the introduction of some new family forms (Martin and Kats 2003). To a large extent, this change comes down to the fact that the universal two-parent families have made way for more single-parent families and stepparent families.

Family structure is one of the most researched and debated factor among educational professionals, psychologists and sociologists that contribute towards the academic performance of students. The most prevalent argument is that family structure of learners affects the quality of their academic performance. Family structure changes have been studied extensively in the previous literature particularly in western countries. Those studies mainly found a negative relationship between non-nuclear family structures and child outcomes. Many studies have documented the challenges faced by single parents and the disadvantages of their children relative to children raised in two-parent households (Balcom 1998, Mandara& Murray 2006).

Reviewed studies show that children from single-parent homes score lower on tests of cognitive functioning and standardized tests, receive lower results, and complete fewer years of school when compared to children from two-parent homes (Balcom 1998, Mandara& Murray 2006). Even when controlling for economic and racial differences of the family, children from two-parent households outperform children from one-parent households across a variety of measures (Downey, 1994; Kim, 2004).

On the other hand, children living with two parents generally outperform children with single parents or stepparents. Children with two parents show higher academic achievement (Cherlin, Furstenberg, Chase-Lansdale et al., 1991), higher teacher evaluations (Bosman&Louwes, 1988), lower dropout rates (Kiernan, 1992), and higher college enrolment rates (Beller& Chung, 1992) than do other children. Explanations for these effects include two-parent families (a) investing more in educational resources; and (b) showing more family involvement (Downey, 1994).

There is also literature evidence from Amato and Keith (1991) which showed that problems related to family structure affect children well-being which leads to academic problems. Children from non-nuclear families or single parents and stepparents thus have worse outcomes than children from nuclear families (living with their biological parents) both before and after a family structure change (Piketty, 2003, Bjorklund&Sundstrom, 2006; and Bjorklund et al., 2007). However, the result obtained by Oluwatosin and Joseph (2011) study shows that, there is no correlation or relationship between the type of home through which a student come from and his/her academic performance in the school.

With regard to child victimization, Heather,et.al, (2007) stated that there are multiple causes of greater risk among children in separated families (in single parents and stepparents), one important source of risk may be their greater exposure to victimization. Child victimization encompasses a relatively broad category of events, including criminal offenses against minors such as robbery and aggravated assault, violations of child welfare statutes such as physical abuse and neglect, and other aggressive and sexual behaviors against children such as bullying and sexual harassment. Victimization especially in stepfamilies may be related with a number of problems more common in stepfamilies, including parent– child inconsistency and other forms of family dysfunction. Parent-child conflict is likely to contribute to family perpetrated child victimization and may even lead to greater victimization outside the household by reducing positive communication and involvement with children.

Adesehinwa and Aremu (2010) put forward that factors resident in child, family, society, government and the school may be composite causative effects for the poor academic achievement of children; they, however concluded that

there is a need for each of these variables to be considered extensively, hence the focus of this study was to critically consider family structure and child victimization and its effects on academic achievements of primary school children's. Knowing academic problems of school age children helps all the concerned bodies to provide the required care on their education. The present study intended to assess children academic problem and achievement in terms of their family structure.

## 1.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The situational analysis makes clear that the present care of children in Ethiopia is poor and there is the need of improvement on early stimulation and education. Childhood care and education has become one of the priorities for the education sector of our country as it will be one of the potential inputs to the overall improvement of the quality of education, reduction of dropouts and reputation for latter stages of formal schooling (MoE, MoH and MWA, 2010). This Early life care is important for later life competency of the individual which could be affected by family structure.

As the family, are typically the first educators a child comes in to contact with, it is important to understand the influence this relationship can have on child's educational outcomes. Parents often unknowingly lay foundation for which the rest of child's education is built up on through words and actions. In later years, parents can serve as the support system guiding the child throughout his/her school years when various issue arise. The influence a parent can have over a child's future can have repercussions well into the child's adult life, such as college or job choices. The family, being a powerful influence on the child and its importance as a primary agent of socialization could in no doubt enhance or hinder the academic achievement of the child depending on the social climate in the family. Variance in psycho-social emotional fortification in the family background could be an indicator to high or low academic performance of students.

A series of variables are to be considered when to identify the affecting factors towards quality of academic success (Waters & Marzano, 2006). Identifying the most contributing variables in quality of academic performance is a very complex and challenging job. The students in public schools belong to a variety of backgrounds depending upon their demography. This diversity is much vast and complex as ever before in Ethiopian culture. Keeping in view all these discussions, researchers conducted this study to examine the effect of family structure and child victimization on the children's quality of academic achievement at the primary school level in Ilubabor zone.

As far as literatures have been assessed and the researchers knowledge is concerned, research on this aspect or in relation to family structure and child victimization as predictors of children's academic achievement has not been exhaustively looked into in Ethiopia particularly in Ilubabor zone where the single, nuclear and stepparents family system is actively practiced bearing in mind the intervening effect of high and low socio-economic status. Therefore it is important to understand which family structures have the greatest effect on children academic achievement. Consequently, this study answered the following basic research questions.

1. Which family structure highly affects children academic achievement?
2. What is the relationship among family structure, child victimization, language achievement and mathematics achievement?
3. Is there gender difference in language and mathematics achievement due to family structure and child victimization?

## Objectives of the Study:-

### 1.3.1. General Objective of the Study

- ❖ The general objectives of this study was to assess the relative importance of family structure and child victimization in predicting children's academic achievement.

### 1.3.2. Specific Objectives of the Study

More specifically, this study was intended to:

- ❖ To identify which family structure highly affects children academic achievement.
- ❖ To investigate the combined and relative importance of family structure and child victimization in predicting children's achievement.
- ❖ To examine whether there is gender difference in achievement due to family structure and child victimization.

#### 1.4. Significance of the Study

This part of the research explains the reasons why the study is conducted and the values of the research findings. Due to this reason, it is expected to identify the people or institutions that may benefit from the research results (Best & Kahn, 2003). Accordingly, this research is thought to be significant in the following arenas.

The result of this research would help teachers and school managers to care for children from different family structure, family problems and victimization in order to help them develop their potential. And also, it could help Mettu University professionals to serve the community on child rearing, development and effect of family environment on child well-being. Once this relationship is understood, parents, schools, and policy makers can design and implement programs, techniques, and actions that will aid children in achieving the greatest possible outcome that is vital not only to their futures but to society's as well.

#### 1.5. DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Geographically, this study was delimited to primary schools in Ilubabor zone. On the other hand it was delimited to study of three types of family structures such as two biological family/nuclear family/, single parents, and step parents. Victimization covers four general areas of concern: Conventional Crime, Child Maltreatment, Peer and Sibling Victimization, and Witnessing and Indirect Victimization. Finally academic achievement was concerned with language and mathematics ability.

#### 1.6. Research Limitations

Research limitations refer to the conditions that pose restrictions on the conclusion and application of a research endeavor (Best & Kahn, 2003). It is believed that this study provided with useful findings for different parties in the education sector. However, there are some limitations in the study that have to be addressed as it is natural for any research to have certain shortcomings. Therefore, the research has the following limitations.

- In order to see student's academic achievement variation in English language & Mathematics, teachers made examination was used. Such type of examination is a one shoot evaluation, triangulating the information collected in this way with document analysis or previous score would give better image.
- Since some school based factors which are thought to be the causes for achievement differences among students, the researchers do not fully claim that the study has no limitation as long as it is based on current school situations (factors) rather than on longitudinal study.
- Due to financial and time constraint the study is limited to students and few teachers involved in FGD. For this reason parents of the students were not included in the study. Therefore, further study may be advanced by interested researchers in line with these limitations.

#### 1.7. Operational Definition of Terms

Terms can be defined conceptually and operationally for the applicability to the intended purpose and to make them clear and precise. The researchers have tried to provide operational definitions of the following terms. This is done purposely to make the application of concepts clear in relation to the context of the present study.

- ❖ **Family:** a social group consisting of parents and their children.
- ❖ **Family Structure:** The type of family in which the child grow up which include two biological family/nuclear family/, Single family and Step family in this research.
- ❖ **Child Victimization:** Child abuse which may affect child physical and psychological well-being such as Conventional Crime, Child Maltreatment, Peer and Sibling Victimization, and Witnessing and Indirect Victimization.
- ❖ **Academic Achievement:** Children ability or score of language and mathematics examination.

#### Chapter Two:-

##### 2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The introduction chapter has stated the research questions and set them in context. The succeeding chapter (chapter two), the literature review, begins with the theoretical frame work assumed to inform the impact of family structure on students academic achievement. Then the literature reviews about family structure and its effect on child wellbeing, family structure and victimization and effect of child victimization on academic achievement and child behaviour are presented.

## 2.1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Psychology, sociology, and economics suggest contributory mechanisms that might explain correlations between family structure and children's academic achievements. Each discipline postulates that children reared in certain family structures will, on average, receive more psychological support or more social, cultural, and economic resources than children reared in others. The distinction between psychological, sociological, and economic theories is seldom useful because most theories draw on insights from all three disciplines. Although Biblarz and Raftery (1999) assert that almost all existing theory about the consequences of family structure for children centers around the relationship between family type and resources, the notion of resources in these disciplinary perspectives is very broad.

The pathways through which resources are hypothesized to affect children are often described in the language of sociology and developmental psychology. Socialization theories often point to parenting styles, which may differ systematically with family structure. For example, single parent families may be associated with inconsistent parenting or reduced supervision and control, and these characteristics of parenting styles may adversely affect child development (Thomson, Hanson and McLanahan 1994). Learning theories often emphasize the importance of a male role model. McLanahan and Sandefur, (1994) argue that father absence leads to a lack of knowledge about how to operate in society.

Loss of parental control theories emphasize trauma -- perhaps the loss of a parent due to death or divorce, perhaps the number of transitions from one residence to another or from one family structure to another (Wu and Martinson, 1993). Economic theories typically emphasize human capital, focusing on the access of children to money and time; but the gap between economic theories, on the one hand, and sociological and psychological theories, on the other, is substantially narrowed if the crucial variable is parental time spent nurturing children rather than expenditure on books or child care.

Selection and evolutionary psychology cut across the substantive theories drawn from sociology, psychology and economics because they are silent about the nature of the resources or the pathways through which differences in adult motivations or characteristics affect children. Selection theories postulate that some unobserved characteristics cause both changes in family structure and differences in educational outcomes for children. For example, parental conflict rather than divorce itself may adversely affect child development. Research has shown that children whose parents eventually divorce may manifest behavioral problems before parental separation (Cherlin et al. 1991). Alternatively, some individuals may be more child-oriented than others and this may result in their attachment to certain family structures and in certain outcomes for children. Because selection does not directly identify the pathways through which parental behavior or characteristics affect children, it is a complement to rather than a substitute for the theories from sociology, psychology, and economics.

Evolutionary psychology purports to explain the motivation of the parents and stepparents, postulating that mothers are more willing to provide resources than fathers, and biological parents more willing to provide resources than stepparents. Mothers and biological parents have greater investments in children and thus are more vested in their outcomes. Because it does not specify the pathways through which parental motivations affect outcomes for children, evolutionary psychology, like selection, is a complement to theories which propose resource-based mechanisms.

## 2.2. FAMILY STRUCTURE AND ITS EFFECT ON CHILD WELLBEING

Social policy and research continue to be reasonably concerned about how different family structures affect children's development and well-being. Educational services related to quality and performance are often not tangible and are difficult to measure because they result in the form of transformation of knowledge, life skills and behavior modifications of learners (Tsinidou, Gerogiannis, & Fitsilis, 2010). The environment and the personal characteristics of learners play an important role in their academic success or performance. The members of the families, school personnel and communities provide help and support to students for the quality of their academic performance. This social assistance that emanate from family and society has a crucial role for the accomplishment of performance goals of students at school (Goddard, 2003). Besides the social structure, parents' involvement in their child's education increases the rate of academic success of their child (Furstenberg & Hughes, 1995).

The family serves as the primary agent of socialization, encouraging academic achievement through children-family interaction. Previous research has pointed to a direct link between academic achievement and the structure of the

family with regard to parental marital status, family size, socio-economic status, and the educational environment of the home. Large bodies of research indicate the effect of family structure on children healthy development in terms of psychological functioning and academic achievement. For instance the finding by Piketty (2003), Bjorklund and Sundstrom (2006) and Bjorklund et al. (2007) indicated that children from non-nuclear families will thus have worse outcomes than children from nuclear families both before and after a family structure change. The result obtained from Oluwatosin, et.al (2011) shows that, there is no correlation or relationship between the type of home through which a student come from and his/her academic performance in the school which disagrees with other studies, which states that , single parenting do not help children to develop as self-actualized individuals.

On the other hand, other finding shows that those children ages 6–11 in non-nuclear families' exhibit lower school engagement, on average, than children in two-biological parent married families (Brown, 2004). The same study revealed that Children living in married stepfamilies, single-mother families, or without parents also report higher levels of behavioral and emotional problems (Brown, 2004).

### **2. 3. FAMILY STRUCTURE AND VICTIMIZATION**

The accomplishment or academic achievement of students is negatively correlated with the low socio economic level of parents which is one factor in family structure which affects children's academic achievement because it hinders the individual in gaining access to sources and resources of learning (Duke, 2000; Eamon, 2005; Lopez, 1995). Low socio economic level strongly affects the achievement of students, dragging them down to a lower level (Sander, 2001). It is also observed that the economically disadvantaged parents are less able to afford the cost of education of their children at higher levels and consequently they do not work at their fullest potential (Rouse & Barrow, 2006).

While certainly there are multiple causes of greater risk among children in divorced families, one important source of risk may be their greater exposure to victimization. "Child victimization" encompasses a relatively broad category of events, including criminal offenses against minors (such as robbery and aggravated assault), violations of child welfare statutes (such as physical abuse and neglect), and other aggressive and sexual behaviors against children (such as bullying and sexual harassment) (Heather,et.al, 2007). Turner, Finkelhor, and Ormrod (2006) found that, relative to children living with two biological or adoptive parents, children living in single parent and stepfamilies had greater lifetime exposure to several forms of victimization, including sexual assault, child maltreatment, and witnessing family violence.

Although past research suggests that youth in both single parent and stepfamilies may be at elevated risk for victimization, the extent of risk, the types of victimizations they experience, and the mechanisms that lead to victimization in these families may differ. Paralleling research on child well-being (Thompson, Hanson, & McLanahan, 1994), the most influential factors for single parent families may revolve around lack of economic resources and time constraints, while stepfamilies may have more problems in the quality of family relationships.

Indeed, single parent families are most likely to live in poverty and experience the many stressors that arise from financial difficulties (Amato, 1999; Arendell, 1986; McLanahan, 1983). Economic deprivation, in turn, can contribute to inconsistent and harsh parenting (McLoyd, 1990). Low-income status and unemployment can also have direct effects on victimization by reducing basic resources necessary to support and care for children (Berger, 2004). However, while conditions in single parent families may have implications for family perpetrated victimization, their importance for extra familial victimization may be even greater. The acute economic difficulties, poor neighborhood environments in which single parent families often reside, and poor parental supervision, may make children in this family type especially vulnerable to victimization outside of the household.

Single parent families may have particular problems with the monitoring of children. In general, parental monitoring involves tracking the child's whereabouts (Bulcroft, Carmody, & Bulcroft, 1998), ensuring adequate supervision, and awareness their child's friends and activities (Brown, Mounts, Lamborn, & Steinberg, 1993; Fisher, Leve, O'Leary, & Leve, 2003). There is considerable evidence that inadequate parental monitoring is associated with numerous forms of antisocial and delinquent behavior (Chilcoal & Anthony, 1999; Patterson & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1994). Although less research has focused on the impact of parental monitoring on victimization experiences, there is some evidence that children who are poorly supervised are more likely to be victims of crime (Esbensen, Huizinga, & Menard, 1999).

Research has shown that single parents make fewer demands on their children and monitor their activities less adequately than do married parents (Astone&McLanahan, 1991; Cookston, 1999). Lone parents have considerably more demands on their time and energy and are often less able to monitor children and maintain involvement in school and extra school activities (Ram & Hou, 2003). To the extent that single parents provide less monitoring, this may represent one important mechanism by which children in these family forms are at increased risk for victimization.

Another possible source of risk in single parent families is residential mobility. Divorce is associated with multiple transitions for children that extend beyond changes in household structure and can contribute to poor outcomes (Kurdek, Fine, & Sinclair, 1995). An important index of multiple changes is residential mobility, since moving households is often accompanied by changing schools, leaving friendship networks, having new peer contacts, and exposure to different neighborhood conditions. Residential mobility is typically higher for single parent families than for two-parent families (Astone&McLanahan, 1991; McLanahan&Sandefur, 1994) and is likely linked low or unstable economic resources. There is reason to suspect that residential mobility might also increase exposure to victimization (Sampson, 1985).

Single parent families may also expose children to more dangerous neighborhood conditions. Local violence, in schools and neighborhoods, is likely to directly increase victimization exposure among children. Children in high community violence contexts are both more likely to witness violence and to experience personal victimization outside of the household (Margolin&Gordis, 2000). Because single parents more often live in poverty and more often forced to reside in dangerous neighborhoods (McLanahan&Sandefur, 1994; South & Crowder, 1998), neighborhood conditions may represent one mechanism by which children in these family structures are at increased risk for victimization.

Elevated risk of child victimization in stepfamilies may be the direct consequence of the presence of a stepparent perpetrator in the household. There are several studies that indicate stepfathers are more often perpetrators of sexual abuse than are biological fathers (Finkelhor& Baron, 1986; Russell, 1984). There is also considerable evidence of elevated risk for child physical abuse in stepfamilies (Daly & Wilson, 1987; Turner et al., 2006), although many of these studies did not directly examine the relationship between abuser and victim (Giles-Sims, 1997). Giles-Sims (1997) outlined a number of factors that may contribute to the overrepresentation of stepparents among child abuse perpetrators, including lower SES, higher interpersonal conflict, less commitment to the caretaking role, and selection factors associated with social dysfunction. To the extent that parents with problems such as history of unemployment or drug and alcohol likely to also see more biological parents as perpetrators in these families.

Stepsiblings may also be significant perpetrators of victimization. Child abuse researchers often fail to consider violence between siblings, yet victimization by siblings is relatively widespread (Hardy, 2001; Wiehe, 1990) and has shown lasting consequences (Kessler & Magee, 1994). While we know of no research that has specifically compared sibling victimization across family structure, (Dunn, Deater-Decker, Pickering, O'Connor, and Golding, 1998) found that children's adjustment in complex stepfamilies (households that include stepsiblings) was significantly poorer than those living in simple stepfamilies. While a number of reasons for this association are certainly likely, one factor may include greater victimization among siblings in stepfamilies.

Victimization in stepfamilies may be linked with a number of problems more common in stepfamilies, including parent-child conflict and other forms of family dysfunction. Research shows that stepfamilies are particularly likely to be characterized by conflict in relationships between parents and children (Hetherington et al., 1998) and relationship negativity (Dunn et al., 1998). While some of this reflects heightened conflict between children and stepparents (Fine & Schwebel, 1992; Hetherington, 1989; Thompson et al., 1994), research has also shown poorer relationship quality between children and biological mothers when the father and child are not biologically related (Dunn, Davies, O'Connor, & Sturges, 2000). Parent-child conflict is likely to contribute to or co-occur with family perpetrated child victimization and may even lead to greater victimization outside the household by reducing positive communication and involvement with children.

Child victimization often occurs against a backdrop of parental dysfunction and chronic family adversity, such as unemployment, parental alcohol or drug problems, parental imprisonment, marital discord, or episodes of homelessness. Such family problems, while often coexisting with victimization, are likely to increase the risk of subsequent victimization and, therefore, can themselves represent risk factors for victimization exposure. Indeed, a



substantial increase in the risk for child maltreatment has been associated with parental alcohol abuse (Sebre et al., 2004), parental substance abuse (Forrester, 2000), and wage earner unemployment (Gillham et al., 1998). Children with incarcerated parents have also been overrepresented in child maltreatment cases (Phillips, Barth, Burns, & Wagner, 2004).

There is some evidence that family problems, such as those described above, are more often present in stepfamilies than in families with two biological parents (Amato & Keith, 1991; Dunn et al., 1998; Hetherington et al., 1998). Many scholars have pointed to difficulties that arise from the formation of stepfamilies. It has been suggested, for example, that stepfamilies represent incomplete institutions with unclear norms for parenting and conflict resolution and stress associated with greater isolation from relatives and their community (Booth & Edwards, 1992; Bray & Berger, 1993; Cherlin & Furstenberg, 1994). These stressful circumstances, in turn, can reduce the psychological and social functioning of parents (Hetherington & Jodi, 1994). Therefore, family problems or dysfunction may mediate the association between family structure and victimization.

Social selection may also operate in the association between family structure and victimization. Dunn et al. (2000) found that negative parent– child interactions within stepfamilies could be linked to parental problems and risks earlier in both parents' lives. Parents in stepfamilies are more likely to have left home early, experienced a teenage pregnancy, and have entered their first marriage at a young age (Dunn et al., 2000). Accelerated adult transitions, such as early marriage, have been associated with preexisting indications of substance abuse (Chassin, Presson, Sherman, & Edwards, 1992) and other risky and unconventional behavior (Martino, Collins, & Ellickson, 2004). Since marriage at young ages is strongly associated with divorce (Teti & Lamb, 1989) and young single parents are more likely to remarry (Le Bourdais & Desrosiers, 1995), partners in remarriages may more often have problematic life course histories.

Indeed, studies have shown that parents in stepfamilies are also more likely to have a history of employment difficulties, multiple relationships, and family conflict, even prior to the formation of the stepfamily (Amato, 1993; Booth & Edwards, 1992; Dunn, 2002; O'Connor, Thorpe, Dunn, & Golding, 1999; Pryor & Rodgers, 2001). Thus, adults with existing dysfunction may be more likely to both select into stepfamilies and possess characteristics that increase their children's risk of victimization.

Given the large body of literature pointing to the significance of child victimization for the development of psychiatric disorders, physical health problems, and poor social and economic outcomes (Molnar, Buka, & Kessler, 2001; Terr, 1991), specifying the social contexts that contribute to child victimization remains an important objective. Recent research suggests that exposure to multiple forms of victimizations may have particularly powerful consequences (Finkelhor, Ormrod, & Turner, 2007; Menard & Huizinga, 2001) and that lifetime victimization explains much of the difference in children's symptom levels across family structure (Turner et al., 2006). To the extent that children in single parent and stepfamilies are at increased risk for victimization, efforts to identify factors that explain or contribute to their elevated risk are clearly warranted.

#### **2.4. Effect of Child victimization on academic achievement and child behavior**

There is a finding which reveals that victimized children are at high risk for low school performance and to experience high conflict with their mothers (Kostas, et.al, 2013). The form of victimization such as peer group rejection appears to be one of the strongest predictors of academic readiness and achievement (Buhs & Ladd, 2001). Buhs and Ladd (2001) proposed a model in which it was hypothesized that the effects of peer rejection on children's achievement is mediated through two processes: (a) the negative behavioral treatment that rejected children receive from peers and (b) resulting changes that such treatment causes in children's classroom participation. Peer group rejection is predictive of a range of chronic, negative peer behaviors that may alter both the social environment of the classroom and children's adaptive responses within that context across the elementary school years. In particular, the inference that peer exclusion reduces children's classroom participation, and ultimately delays their achievement, merits additional study (Buhs, et.al, 2006).

Residing in a single parent or stepfamily is a risk factor for psychopathology and adjustment problems in children and adolescents (Hetherington, Bridges, & Isabella, 1998). Children from divorced and remarried families are more likely than children from nuclear intact families to have academic problems, to have externalizing and internalizing disorders, and to have lower self esteem and social competency (Amato & Keith, 1991; Cherlin & Furstenberg, 1994; Hetherington et al., 1998).

**CHAPTER THREE****3. METHODOLOGY**

In chapter two, literatures related to the variables of the study were discussed or reviewed. In this chapter, the methods and procedures employed to carry out this study are described. First, the type of research design employed is indicated, and then the research site and population of the study are stated followed by sample and sampling techniques and the instruments used to collect data. After that, the validity and reliability of data gathering tools and data collecting procedures are mentioned consecutively. Finally, ethical considerations and the data analyses techniques were discussed.

Based on the research problem, the researchers have developed assumptions that inform this study (1) the sample of the study are representative of the population taken, (2) instruments are administered properly under standard conditions, (3) the respondents in the study responded to questions openly and genuinely, (4) Child victimization and academic achievement varies across family structure.

**3.1. RESEARCH DESIGN**

The primary purpose of this study was to examine the effects of family structure and child victimization on academic achievement of primary school students in Ilubabor zone. In order to carry out this study, survey approach was employed. It describes the degree to which the selected independent variables (family structure and child victimization) have to be related to children's academic achievement.

**3.2. RESEARCH SITE AND POPULATION**

This study was conducted in Ilubabor Zone. The population from which samples were selected was primary schools students in the aforementioned Zone.

**3.3. SAMPLE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUES**

Ilubabor Zone comprises of 22 Weredas and 2 administrative towns. Since there might be variations in the issue to be addressed among zonal areas, the multistage cluster sampling and purposive sampling procedures were followed. First, the zonal woredas were clustered into four categories based on their geographical locations and then equal proportions of woredas were selected. Accordingly, eight woredas and two administrative towns were selected for the study. The next step was to select schools to represent each woreda and town. Accordingly, out of 115 (total 1-8 primary schools) in the sampled woredas and towns, 46 (1-8) primary schools were randomly selected from Mettu and Bedelle administrative town, Darimu, Dorani, Bure, Gore, Dambi, Cora, Nono Sale and Cewaka Woreda. For FGD 20 teachers were selected from the sampled schools by purposive sampling Method. Those FGD respondents were taken from Mettu town and Bedelle town by assuming most experienced teachers can be easily accessed.

**3.4. Data Collection Instruments**

Since the collected data were both quantitative and qualitative, instruments like standardized Child Victimization questionnaire, some open ended items for FGD and language and mathematics achievement test were employed. The purpose of gathering qualitative data is for triangulation of the quantitative data and to capture detailed information, which might not be obtained through quantitative data.

**3.1.1. Child Victimization Questionnaire.**

Measures of victimization (ill- treatment) exposure are based on items from the Juvenile Victimization Questionnaire (JVQ), a recently constructed inventory of childhood victimization (Finkelhor, Hamby, Ormrod, & Turner, 2005). The JVQ was designed to be a more comprehensive instrument than has typically been used in past research, providing a description of all the major forms of offenses against youth. The JVQ obtains reports on 34 forms of offenses against children/youth that cover five general areas of concern: Conventional Crime, Child Maltreatment, Peer and Sibling Victimization, Sexual Assault, and Witnessing and Indirect Victimization. The overall  $\alpha$  for the JVQ for respondents answering all 34 items is 0.80, which is very good (Finkelhor, Hamby, Ormrod, & Turner, 2005).

**3.1.2. Focused group discussion**

This instrument was selected because it helps us to get additional insight. It helps us to gather a data from home room teachers of those children with identified family structure and victimized children regarding their academic progress.

### 3.1.3. Academic Achievement test

The classroom academic achievement of these students on both English language and mathematics were analyzed. This academic achievement test was prepared by subject teachers and then face validity of the test was checked by another person from professions. Finally, these tests were administered to students of grade 7 and 8. This instrument is selected since it will help us to get the academic performance of these students without our interference in the teaching learning process.

## 3.5. DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

### 3.5.1. Pilot Study (instrument tryout)

The validity and reliability of the research tool was checked by reviewers and pilot study before collecting data for the study. After developing the questionnaire, to establish its content and face validity it was first submitted to instructors of psychology working in Mettu University, Department of Early Childhood Care and Education to judge the clarity of wording and the appropriateness of each items and its relevance to the construct being measured. The items were thoroughly inspected for relevance and clarity; the content validity of the instruments, omissions, vague items and terminology were improved and made to measure what they were supposed to measure by incorporating their corrections, suggestions, and comments.

Following designing the instrument for data collection, pilot testing was done on 50 subjects similar to those to be included in the main study in Hurumu primary school (Hurumu Wereda) which is one of the primary schools in Ilubabor Zone. The questionnaires were filled out properly and collected. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients were calculated. The calculated reliability was 0.89. Based on the pilot testing results, the wording and overall organizations of the items were revised. In doing this, the validity and reliability of the items were checked along with the necessary revisions.

### 3.5.2. Data Collection

After samples of schools were selected from the population, student's family structures were identified. Next, measures of victimization questionnaire were administered for students. Then, by using FGD with home room teachers were conducted. Finally, by using achievement test of English language and mathematics, subject's academic achievements were measured.

## 3.6. Ethical Considerations

Throughout conducting this study, the researchers emphasized ethical considerations. The cooperation of the Ilubabor Zone education office, the Weredas, the school administrators and participating teachers and students were vital in this research.

In this regard, a research permit was obtained from Mettu University after approval by the Research and Technology Transfer Directorate. Then the Education office of Ilubabor Zone, the selected town and Wereda education officers were communicated to get letter of research approval to gather data from selected sites before the beginning of data collecting process for the study. Passing through these steps the research approval letters from district education offices were obtained and presented to school directors before facing respondents to gather data.

Finally, the research participants were asked to give their informed consent prior looking for their responses. They were informed that information obtained from them would be presented anonymously and used for the purpose of the specified study by ensuring the participants to use the collected data solely for the academic purpose or research purpose.

## 3.7. METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS.

Before analyzing the collected data effective data entry tasks were done and the analysis tasks were performed with the help of SPSS version 20. Accordingly, the data were processed using descriptive and inferential statistics on the basis of their appropriateness for answering the basic research questions. Bivariate correlation, mean score and standard deviation was used to investigate the correlation between family structure, child victimization and academic achievement and to examine difference in academic achievement as a result of family structure respectively. On the other hand, multiple regression and independent t-test were employed to analyze the relative contribution of family structure and child victimization on children academic achievement. Finally, the data from FGD was analyzed qualitatively and presented accordingly. The alpha value for test of significance was set at 0.05 levels.

**CHAPTER FOUR:-****4. RESULTS**

This chapter deals with analysis of the study. The purpose of this study was to investigate the relative importance of family structure and child victimization in predicting children's academic achievement. Thus, this study examined (1) Differences in academic achievement as a function of family structure and child victimization, (2) the relationship among family structure, child victimization, language achievement and mathematics achievement and (3) gender difference in language and mathematics achievement due to family structure and child victimization. The results of the study were summarized under the following sections: In the first section, the quantitative data analyses and findings are presented. In the final section of the chapter, the data obtained from analyses of FGD questions and findings are stated. Accordingly, in the following pages, the data is systematically presented and analysis given under each. The three research questions that were investigated in this study were:

1. Which family structure highly affects children academic achievement?
2. What is the relationship among family structure, child victimization, language achievement and mathematics achievement?
3. Is there gender difference in language and mathematics achievement due to family structure and child victimization?

**4.1. MAJOR QUANTITATIVE RESULTS.****4.1. The relationship between predictor variables and dependant variable**

To determine the relationship between independent variable and dependant variable bivariate correlation were computed.

**Table 1:-Bivariate Correlation among Independent Variable and Dependant Variable**

No	variables	1	2	3	4	5
1	Academic achievement	-	-.153**	.734**	.697**	-.652**
2	Child victimization		-	-.096**	.102**	.715**
3	Nuclear family			-	.67**	.521**
4	Single biological family				-	.617**
5	Step family					-

\*\*p<0.01, \*p<0.05.

The result of the above table indicate that nuclear family structure and single biological family structure positively correlated with students academic achievement score were as step family structure and child victimization score is negatively correlated with students' academic achievement. Students academic achievement is significantly correlated with nuclear family structure and single biological family structure positively were as significantly and negatively correlated with child victimization and step family structure. The result clearly indicated that achievement of children belonging to nuclear family are much better than those in single parent and step family and the academic achievement of children's from step family is the worst.

The result displayed in table 1 above also shows the correlation between child victimization and academic achievement and the result indicated that as child victimization increases academic achievement decreases and vice versa. Therefore, the result indicates the existence of relationship between child victimization and academic achievement.

**Table 2:-Differences in Academic Achievement as Function of Family Structure**

Family structure	NO	MEAN	SD
Nuclear family structure	350	18.71	3.42
Single biological family structure	170	17.53	2.82
Step family structure	100	15.744	2.60

The above table shows that mean of students' academic achievement score differ across family structure. The mean score of children from nuclear family structure (M = 18.71) is greater than the mean score of children from single family structure (M = 17.53) and also greater than the mean score of children from step family structure (M = 15.744). Therefore, the result indicate that as compared to students from single biological family structure and

stepfamily structure students from nuclear biological family structure have highest mean score of language and mathematics achievement. That means students from nuclear biological family structure are highest achiever than single family structure and step family structure. It is also clear from the result that the mean score of students from step family structure is the least or worst than the mean score of children from single and nuclear biological family structure.

Furthermore, the result in table 2 above clearly indicated the impact of family structure on students' academic achievement. The family structures determine the psychological, social, cultural support and economic resources that hinders or determines children's academic achievement. Hence, the study result on impact of family structures on students' academic achievement is displayed in table above.

**Table 3:-**Relative contribution of family structure and Child victimization on students' academic achievement

Variables	B	St.error	BETA	t	R	F
Nuclear family	.325	.031	.489	10.440	.613	125.449
Single family	.223	.026	.450	8.575		
Step family	.220	.025	.034	6.52		
Child victimization	-.106	.056	-.077	-1.895		

Multiple regressions were used to examine the contribution of independent variables in predicting students' academic achievement. The result of multiple regression analysis indicate that nuclear family structure, single biological family structure, step family structure and child victimization collectively account for significant proportion of variance in students' academic achievement score by 61.3%. This proportion of variance was statistically significant ( $F=125.44$ ,  $P<.001$ ).

In order to see the relative contribution of each independent variable, it is important to evaluate which has significant contribution with student academic achievement score. As indicated in the above table there is statistically significant relation between nuclear family structure and students academic achievement score ( $t=10.440$ ,  $p<.001$ ) and single biological family structure and students academic achievement score ( $t=8.575$ ,  $p<.001$ ) but there is no statistically significant relation between step family structure and students academic achievement score ( $t=6.52$ ,  $p>.05$ ) and child victimization and students academic achievement score ( $t=-1.895$ ,  $p>.059$ ).

**Table 4:-**Stepwise multiple regression analysis of each independent variables on students' academic achievement.

Steps	R	Df1	Df2	F
Nuclear family structure	.486	1	353	227.126
Single biological family structure	.613	1	168	184.337

#### **Predictors: Nuclear and single biological family structure:-**

As indicated in the above table nuclear family structure alone explained about 48.4% of the variance in students academic achievement score and the second independent variable single biological family structure, which was entered in the second step increases the coefficient to 61.3%, that is single biological family structure alone accounted for 12.9% of the variance in students academic achievement.

In stepwise multiple regression analysis child victimization and step family structure were not entered in the process. This is because the Pearson correlation coefficient indicates that child victimization and step family structure has the least correlation coefficient with students academic achievement score when compared with nuclear family structure and single biological family structure.

**Table 5:-**Gender differences in students' academic achievement

Subject	Family structure	Sex	N	M	SD	t
English	Nuclear family	M	200	18.57	2.55	2.59
		F	150	19.11	3.01	
	Step family	M	40	14.34	3.02	4.48
		F	60	15.22	3.53	
	Single family	M	110	18.17	3.41	3.76
		F				

		F	60	16.19	2.91	
<b>Mathematics</b>	Nuclear family	M	200	23.60	2.78	2.75
		F	150	22.13	3.43	
	Step family	M	40	15.76	4.75	6.96
		F	60	14.54	4.32	
	Single family	M	110	21.31	4.15	6.57
		F	60	20.75	3.99	

As shown in the above table the results indicate that, there was statistically significant gender difference in mean of language achievement score ( $t=3.76, df=168, p<.05$ ) and mean of mathematics achievement score ( $t=6.57, df=168, p<.05$ ) between male and female students from single biological families and there was also statistically significant gender difference in mean of language achievement score ( $t= 4.48, df=98, p<.05$ ) and mean of mathematics achievement score ( $t= 6.96, df=98, p<.05$ ) between male and female students from step families but there was no statistically significant gender difference in mean of language achievement score ( $t= 2.59, df= 348, p>.05$ ) and mean of mathematics achievement score ( $t= 2.75, df=348, p>.05$ ) between male and female students from nuclear families.

#### 4.2. MAJOR RESULTS OBTAINED FROM FGD QUESTIONS

In order to get detail insight about the topic being studied, in particular the relationship between family structure and children's academic achievement the researchers developed FGD items and conducted FGD with selected home room teachers from the aforementioned zone. Hence, being guided by the FGD items the researchers conducted FGD and presented the findings in the following section. The FGD items used for this investigation were:

1. How do you see your student's family structure? Do you have students who are different from other in this regard? If there are what types of family structure is it?
2. How do you evaluate the academic achievement of those students with different family structure you mentioned above?
3. How do you relate the academic achievement of these students and their family structure in which they are growing? Do you think that there is gender difference in achievement as a result of family structure?
4. Is there any additional point that can you say with regard to children's academic achievement and their family structure?

In line with the first item, respondents of the study responded that their students have divers' needs and differences like socio economic back ground, learning styles, learning capabilities and family structures that need to be fully addressed in classroom teaching if the intention is to help all learners achieve the intended educational goals. Specifically, related to the issue of family structure they mentioned that their students have varied family structure background. They grouped their students into: (a) two biological parent families consisted of those living with two biological or adoptive parents; (b) single parent families comprised of those living with one biological parent only; and (c) stepfamilies consisted of those living with one biological parent and a stepparent or non biological parent.

In relation to the academic achievement of their students and family structure, most respondents responded that though it is difficult to say academic achievement differences among students are because of merely family structure, there exist considerable achievement differences among their students having different family structures. Moreover, they said the academic performances of the students they are teaching who have different family structure background are quite different as far as they observed and examined. They also added that especially the academic performance of children's from single parents, stepparents and those who are attending their education without both of their biological parents being cared for living by others or living with other relatives are worse and need due consideration as far as they have right to education and they are member of this society.

According to respondents of this study, the most influential factors for single parent families may revolve around lack of economic resources or risks from economic-related factors, such as residence in violent neighborhoods and high residential mobility and time constraints, such as poor parental monitoring. The respondents indeed touched that, single parent families are most likely to live in poverty and experience many stressors that arise from financial difficulties which have greater impacts on child over all welfare and academic achievement in particular.

In addition to this, they also stated that economic deprivation, in turn, can contribute to inconsistent and harsh parenting which greatly can have contributory role on children's from single family for under scoring in school

academic achievement. Accordingly, low-income status and unemployment can also have direct effects on children's academic achievement as far as single family case is concerned by reducing basic resources necessary to support and care for children. This phenomenon as they said causes poor parental supervision, which may make children in this family type especially vulnerable to under achievement in schools.

With regard to the reasons related to underachievement of children from stepparents, the respondents outlined a number of factors that may contribute like lower socio-economic status, parent– child conflict or higher interpersonal conflict, poorer relationship quality between children and biological parents, less commitment to the caretaking role, and parental dysfunction and chronic family hardship, such as unemployment, parental alcohol or drug problems. They also stated that children, themselves, can also contribute to these problems in stepfamilies, showing disapproval or hostility toward their parent's marriage or engaging in delinquent or antisocial behaviors that may elicit parental retaliation or revenge. In the context of such adversity, biological parents in stepfamilies may find themselves acting in particularly authoritarian or aggressive ways, since they are responsible for keeping the peace between their children and new family members. Thus, parent's attempts to cope with stressful family problems while managing resistant children may increase the risk of child victimization in stepfamilies. Especially the impact of parent- child conflict that exists in step families are overemphasized by the respondents as it reduces positive communication and involvement with children and in school activities.

Besides, the respondents recognized the challenges faced by children from single parents, stepparents and without both biological parents living with relatives in comparison to children rose in two-parent/nuclear families' homes with regard to their school or academic performance. They clearly stated that children from single-parent homes and stepparent homes score lower on tests or receive lower results than children from two-parent homes. They also added that the results of children who are in stepparents are worst compared to even with children's from single parents.

In addition, the FGD respondents discussed that children's from single parents, stepparents and without both biological parents complete fewer years of school when compared to children's from two-parents/nuclear parents homes leading to wastage and high dropout rate in schools. Generally, they said as far as differences of the family structure is considered, children from two-parent homes outperform children from one-parent homes, stepparents homes and without both parents across a variety of measures in schools.

Finally, they said that since problems related to family structure affect children well-being which leads to academic problems which is manifested in children's academic performance in the school, special consideration and attention should be given from all concerned bodies in order to assist children's from single parents, stepparents and without both parents meet the intended educational goals.

In relation to this support, since what limit children overall welfare is not only family, schools where children's spend most of their time has also greater roles for physical, social, emotional and cognitive developments of children's. Therefore, schools or teachers and others concerned should play their un replaceable roles. This is to mean that the school is the second home of the child, therefore the social climate for learning in the school should be made conducive so that the students can do better in their academics.

## **CHAPTER FIVE:-**

### **5. DISCUSSIONS**

Family structure and Child victimization has effect on children healthy development in terms of psychological functioning and academic achievement (Picketty, 2003; Bjorklund and Sundsrrom, 2006 & Bjorklund et.al. 2007). Although there is a great deal of research on issues related to the relationship between family structure, child victimization and children academic achievement, the empirical research attempts that have been made in Ethiopian context in relation to family structure and child victimization as predictors of children's academic achievement in primary schools are rare. In this connection, it is when this issue gets consideration that the quality of education is achieved because family serves as primary agent of socialization, encouraging academic achievement through children family interaction. This study attempted to fill this gap by investigating the relation between family structure, child victimization and children's academic achievement in primary schools in Ilubabor Zone, Oromia region.

At the beginning of this work, three basic questions were raised to be investigated thoroughly. Hence, this discussion is organized around the three research questions of this study:

1. Which family structure highly affects children academic achievement?
2. What is the relationship among family structure, child victimization, and language and mathematics achievement?
3. Is there gender difference in language and mathematics achievement due to family structure and child victimization?

#### **Research Question I: Which family structure highly affects children academic achievement?**

The statistical procedure (bivariate correlation), which was employed to examine the family structure that affects children academic achievement showed the relationship between family structure and children's academic achievement. Bivariate correlation computed indicated that children belonging to step families ( $r = -0.652$ ) are highly vulnerable and hence their academic achievement are lower than children from nuclear family ( $r = 0.734$ ) and single biological family ( $r = 0.697$ ).

Besides, as the analysis by descriptive statistics indicated, the mean score of children from nuclear family structure ( $M = 18.71$ ) is greater than the mean score of children from single family structure ( $M = 17.53$ ) and also greater than the mean score of children from step family structure ( $M = 15.744$ ). The result revealed that as compared to students from single biological family structure and stepfamily structure students from nuclear biological family structure have highest mean score. That means students from nuclear biological family structure are highest achiever than single family structure and step family structure. It is also clear from the result that the mean score of students from step family structure is the least or worst than the mean score of children from single and nuclear biological family structure.

On the other hand, the result from FGD analysis indicated that, with regard to the academic achievement of children and family structure, there exists a considerable achievement difference among students having different family structures. Moreover, the result showed that the academic performance of children's from single parents and stepparents are worse or lower than the academic achievement of children from nuclear family structure and especially those from step families require need due consideration. From the respondents response to FGD items it was therefore concluded that, the academic achievement of children from single biological family structure and step family structure are lower than nuclear family structure. It was also identified that the academic achievement of children from step families are least indicating such family structure highly influence children academic achievement than other types. Therefore, current study clearly indicated that academic achievement of children belonging to nuclear family are better than those in single parent and step family.

A consideration of student's family background is very important in teaching and learning. This is because this study has shown that the nature of social interaction within the family can influence the child's academic achievement. A negative influence on a child's emotions and psychology will consequently affect his or her academic achievement. The result of this study is in agreement with the study by (Piketty, 2003; Brojklund&Sundrstorm, 2006 and Brojklund et.al. 2007) who found that children from non nuclear families (step families) have worst outcomes than those from nuclear families. The present study revealed the academic achievement of children's from step families are lower than the academic achievement of children's from nuclear families which is in disagreement with the above mentioned researchers result.

This finding also fits with the finding by (Brown, 2004) which showed that children in non nuclear families exhibit lower school engagement and achievement on average than children in two biological parent families. On the other hand, the present study opposes the finding by Oluwatosin et.al.(2011) that shows no correlation or relationship between the type of home or family through which a student come from and his/her academic achievement.

Along similar lines, the present study received supports from (Forrester, 2000; Phillips, Barth, Burns & Wagner, 2004 and Buhs et.al, 2006) who indicated by their study that the chance of child victimization in single biological families and step parents are greater than children from nuclear family because of many prevalent problems and hence they concluded in similar way to the present study that the academic achievement of children from nuclear family structure is better than those from single family and step family.



The results of the present study might be related to the difference in treatment by parents, socioeconomic status or financial difficulties, fewer demands on their children and the way of monitoring children, lack of adequate supervision and support and due to perpetrators in house hold. That is, single and step families may not invest their time and energy in helping children development in all aspects because of the above mentioned and other factors.

### **Research Question II: What is the relationship among family structure, child victimization and language achievement and mathematics achievement?**

In order to examine the contribution of independent variables (family structure and child victimization) in predicting students' academic achievement or to investigate the relationship among family structure, child victimization and language and mathematics achievement, multiple regressions were used. The result of multiple regression analysis indicate that nuclear family structure, single biological family structure, step family structure and child victimization collectively account for significant proportion of variance in students' academic achievement by 61.3%. This proportion of variance was statistically significant ( $F=125.44$ ,  $P<.001$ ).

On the other hand, the relative contribution of each independent variable was evaluated to see which has significant contribution on student academic achievement score. More specifically, the result indicated that there is statistically significant relation between nuclear family structure and students academic achievement score ( $t=10.440$ ,  $p<.001$ ) and single biological family structure and students academic achievement score ( $t=8.575$ ,  $p<.001$ ) but there is no statistically significant relation between step family structure and students academic achievement score ( $t=6.52$ ,  $p>.05$ ) and child victimization and students academic achievement score ( $t=-1.895$ ,  $p>.059$ ).

Moreover, during FGD respondents were asked to discuss whether there is relationship among family structure, child victimization and children academic achievement and most of them responded that there are different forms of child victimization across family structures and their combined effect affects children academic achievement. The respondents clearly stated that the chance of victimization is greater for children from step families and from single families than children from nuclear family. They specifically responded that the combined effect of family structure and child victimization on academic achievement is greater in children from step families and single families making them low achievers than children from nuclear families.

The findings that children from step families and single families differ in academic achievement statistically from children of nuclear families as a function of family structure and child victimization are consistent with previous researches in the area (Duke, 2000; Sander, 2001 & Eamon, 2005). They indicated that family structure and child victimization highly contributes for children academic achievement thereby showing their combined effect is greater in children from step families and single biological families than children from nuclear families.

Results of the current study showed that there is combined effect of family structure and child victimization in children academic achievement. This study indicated that their combined effect is high in children from step families and single biological families and hence, matches with the conclusion of (Berger, 2004; Fisher, Leve, O'Leary, & Leve, 2003 and Turner et.al, 2006).

### **Research Question III: Is there gender difference in language and mathematics achievement due to family structure and child victimization?**

It was found out that, there was statistically significant gender difference in mean of language achievement score ( $t=3.76$ ,  $df=168$ ,  $p<.05$ ) and mean of mathematics achievement score ( $t=6.57$ ,  $df=168$ ,  $p<.05$ ) between male and female students from single biological families and there was also statistically significant gender difference in mean of language achievement score ( $t=4.48$ ,  $df=98$ ,  $p<.05$ ) and mean of mathematics achievement score ( $t=6.96$ ,  $df=98$ ,  $p<.05$ ) between male and female students from step families but there was no statistically significant gender difference in mean of language achievement score ( $t=2.59$ ,  $df=348$ ,  $p>.05$ ) and mean of mathematics achievement score ( $t=2.75$ ,  $df=348$ ,  $p>.05$ ) between male and female students from nuclear families. The finding of this study revealed that there was gender difference in academic achievement on English and mathematics achievement across family structures.

**CHAPTER SIX:-****6. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS****A. 6.1. Summary**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relative importance of family structure and child victimization in predicting children's academic achievement within the framework of literatures. The present study was guided by the following three basic questions:

1. Which family structure highly affects children academic achievement?
2. What is the relationship among family structure, child victimization, and language and mathematics achievement?
3. Is there gender difference in language and mathematics achievement due to family structure and child victimization?

In achieving the objectives of this study, among the primary schools in Ilubabor Zone, 46 of them were selected and included in the study. FGD respondents were 20 teachers sampled from Mettu and Bedelle town. The instrument used to gather data for this study was Child victimization questionnaire, some open ended questions constructed by researchers for FGD based on literatures and Mathematics and English academic achievement tests.

In order to examine which family structure highly affects children academic achievement were bivariate correlation and descriptive statistics like mean and standard deviation was used, the relationship among family structure, child victimization, and language and mathematics achievement were examined by multiple regression, gender difference in language and mathematics achievement due to family structure and child victimization were analyzed by independent t-test and finally response to FGD items were analyzed qualitatively and presented in words and sentences.

The result of this study showed that there is relationship between family structure and children's academic achievement. Children belonging to step families are highly vulnerable and hence their academic achievement are lower than children from nuclear family and single biological family. The result revealed that as compared to children from single biological family structure and stepfamily structure students from nuclear biological family structure have highest mean score. That means children from nuclear biological family structure are highest achiever than single family structure and step family structure. It is also clear from the result that the mean score of students from step family structure is the least or worst than the mean score of children from single and nuclear biological family structure.

Moreover, the result of the study showed that there is no statistically significant relationship between nuclear family structure and children academic achievement score as a result of victimization and there is statistically significant relationship between single biological family structure and students academic achievement score as a result of child victimization and the result also indicated that there is statistically significant relation between step family structure and students academic achievement score as a result of child victimization. The least academic achievement was the achievement of children from step family structure.

Lastly, the finding of this study indicated that there was statistically significant gender difference in mean of language achievement score and mean of mathematics achievement score between male and female students from single biological families and there was also statistically significant gender difference in mean of language achievement score and mean of mathematics achievement score between male and female students from step families but there was no statistically significant gender difference in mean of language achievement score and mean of mathematics achievement score between male and female students from nuclear families. The result in this regard showed that there are gender difference in language and mathematics achievement due to family structure and child victimization.

**6.2. Conclusions**

In the light of above data analysis and discussion it is concluded that family systems have a significant relationship with the academic achievements of children. This study indicated that the role of parents is more influential because a significant achievement difference was observed between children from nuclear family, single family and step-family. Hence, students get encouragement and confidence through the involvement of the parents. The involvement and attention of the parents are the significant factors that affect the academic performance of the students.

Finally, the family is a crucial institution that provides the individual with the tools he/she needs to face life and reality, if a family is well structured, individuals will be able to reflect this well-being into academic achievement. If one of the parents is missing there have to be adjustments that might have a negative impact on the child's stability and well-being, and may be reflected on his/her behavior and consequently on his/her educational achievement. It would be advisable to check those children who belong to this category in order to design social programs that can help the single and step parent situation. Children who live in a bi-parental (nuclear family) model usually have more supervision from their parents and this is reflected on their educational achievement. From the result of this study, one dimension that should be considered in achieving the provision of quality education is the impact of family structure and child victimization on children's academic achievement.

#### B. 6.3. Recommendations

Based on the finding of the study, the following points were suggested.

- Policymakers have to design effective programs that promote school-family partnerships, strengthen parenting practices, and increase parent involvement in school to support educational success or achievement and attainment for at-risk students. That is designing appropriate and comprehensive early childhood intervention programs as it is highly associated with children's educational achievement.
- Teachers should give pupils from single parent homes and step parent homes attention to enable them cope and that they should equally be counseled to make them adjust to the academic environment. They have to provide these students more timely and effective interventions and support services.
- Governments, private organizations and individuals concerned with the business of education should endeavor to address the obstacles hindering effective academic performance of students from single parents' homes, stepparents' homes and those living with relatives as a result of missing their biological parents. This can be done by developing achievement motivation in students through achievement motivation training and by mainstreaming the educational system so as to support learners with difficulties or factors hindering their best academic performance. There is the need for the recognition of individual differences in students and the need to deal with them accordingly.
- School counselors should be employed in institutions of learning and adequate supervision be put in place to provide the necessary assistance and psychological support for students from single parent family, stepparent family and those living with relatives so as to overcome their emotional and academic problems.
- There is also the need to keep enlightening the parents of the importance of the home structure on the life of children. This is necessary so that parents can understand the implications and consequences of such family structure and thus mobilize all resources to curtail the problems arising from the situation.

#### 6.4. Areas for further investigation

The research was limited to study of family structures and child victimizations on children's academic achievement.

- ❖ Beyond this interested researcher/s can also consider student's factor and school related factors like effects of school's resources and support from teachers and principals besides the conceptual delimitation of the current study.
- ❖ This study was limited to only primary schools. The researchers believe that comparative study with secondary school would provide better image than the present study limited on primary school phase. Therefore, comparative study can be done in the future by interested researcher/s.

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