



# Education for Orphans in Africa: Predictors Impacting School Attendance

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## Research Questions

How does orphan status affect the school attendance of children in Africa?

- Numerous studies have examined the effects of orphanhood on schooling outcomes with mixed results.
- Some have found that orphans are significantly less likely to be enrolled in school (e.g., Case, Paxson, & Ableidinger, 2004), while others were unable to find a significant relationship (Ainsworth & Filmer, 2006; Yamano, Shimamura, & Sserunkuuma, 2006).
- Other research suggests that poverty, rather than orphan status, is ultimately responsible for lower schooling outcomes (Ainsworth & Filmer, 2006; Bennell, 2005).

Does the child's relationship to the head of household act as a protective factor?

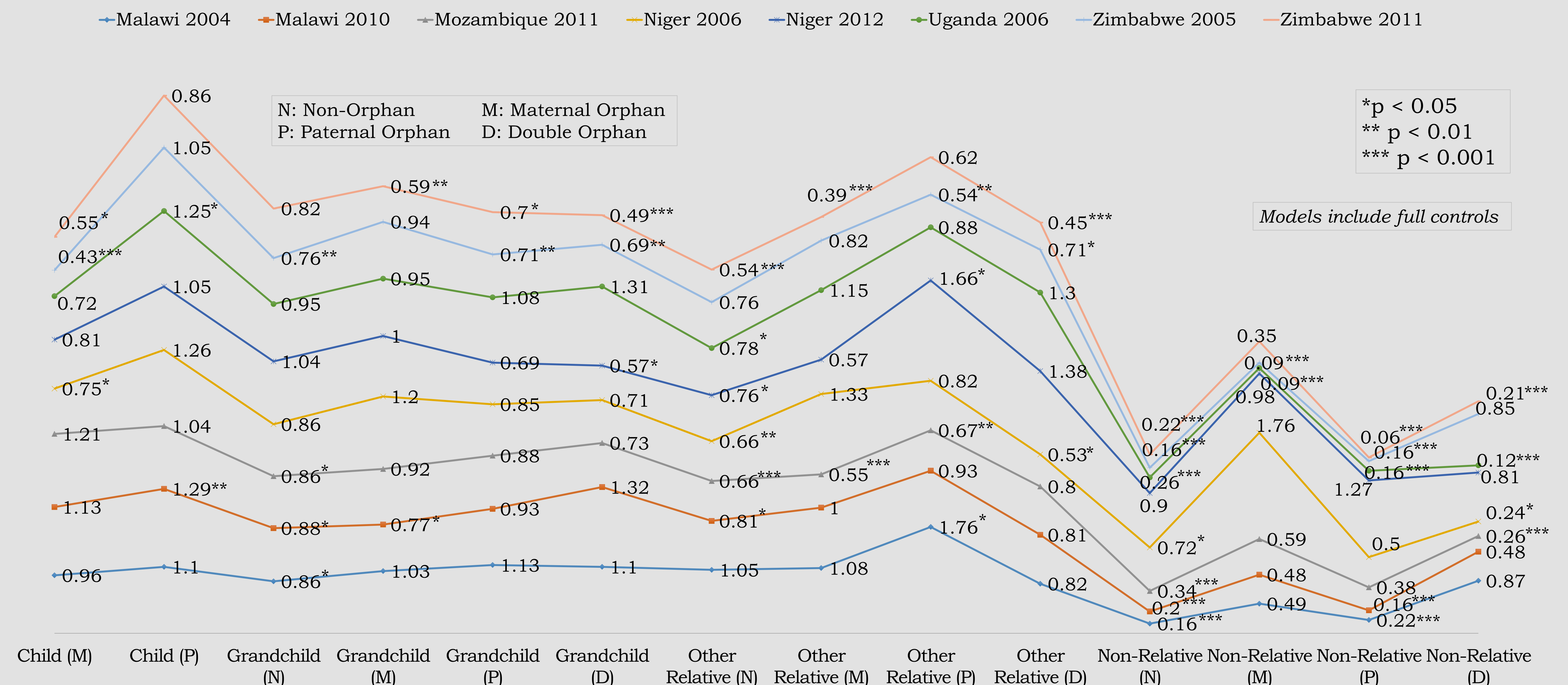
- It has been posited that Africa's system of kinship care could mitigate against adverse effects of orphanhood on schooling.
- A concept known as Hamilton's rule states that as the relational distance between a child and caregiver increase, investments in that child will decrease (Case et al., 2004).
- Results across Africa demonstrate this tendency – children who resided with their grandparents received higher educational investment than those living with more extended family (e.g., Howard et al., 2006).
- However, extreme poverty often hampers the child's ability to access education, in spite of positive kin attitudes toward it (Roby, 2011).

## Method

- USAID Demographic and Health Survey Data
  - 5 African countries (Malawi, Mozambique, Niger, Uganda, Zimbabwe)
  - 8 total data sets
  - Spanning years 2004-2012
  - N = 124,592 children ages 6-14
- School attendance was measured using the question "Did (name) attend school at any time this year?" Answers were coded as "Attended at some time" or "No."
- Control variables included sex, wealth, and place of residence (urban/rural).

## Results

Likelihood of School Attendance by Orphan Status and Relationship to Head of Household Compared to Non-Orphans Living with One/Both Parents (Measured in Odds Ratios)



## Findings

- In most cases, Hamilton's Rule is confirmed across these five African countries. Living with one or both parents is a protective factor regarding schooling outcomes.
- Unexpectedly, paternal orphans residing with other relatives in Malawi, Niger, and Uganda are significantly more likely to attend school than non-orphans living with one or both parents.
  - This could be due to continued maternal involvement and/or sending children to reside with other relatives for the purpose of obtaining an education.
- Children living with non-relatives are consistently, significantly disadvantaged in regards to school attendance. This is true for all orphan groups, including non-orphans.
- Even if a child lives with his or her father, being a maternal orphan is a significant risk factor in terms of school attendance.



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