

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTAL CONFLICT AND SOCIAL  
ADJUSTMENT OF ADOLESCENT STUDENTS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN  
MURANG'A COUNTY, KENYA**

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## DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University or for any other award.

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this thesis to my wife Joyce, whose love, prayers and support inspired me. I also dedicate it to our wonderful children; Cynthia, Grace, Victor and Jeremy for their continued support. To my mother Jane Wanjiku Muriithi who instilled in me the value of diligence and resilience.

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## OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

**Adolescence:** Refers to the period following the onset of puberty during which a young person transits from transits into an adult. This refers to the age between 15 years to 19 years.

**Constructive Conflict:** Refers to solution oriented disagreement between spouses, which commonly ends up with amicable solutions, and are characterized to understanding and consensus over thorny issues within the family.

**Delinquency:** Refers to behavioural challenges by an adolescent characterized by acts that can amount to a crime in law.

**Destructive Conflict:** Refers to escalated parental disagreements and arguments resulting from unresolved issues within the family and are commonly characterized by hostility, verbal and physical aggression between the spouses.

**Externalizing Behaviour:** Refers to disruptive and aggressive behaviours by adolescents that are directed toward the external environment (other people) and may include physical aggression, disobeying rules, cheating, stealing, and destruction of property.

**Intensity:** Refers to the magnitude of verbal and physical aggression characterizing parental conflicts ranging from quietly resolved conflicts to physical violence between the parents.

**Internalizing Behaviour:** Refers to negative behaviours by adolescents that are focused inward as a form of responding and reacting to the effects of persistent conflicts between their parents. This behaviour may result into fearfulness, social withdrawal, and somatic complaints.

**Offensive Interpersonal Behaviour:** Refers to annoying conducts by an adolescent towards peers which signal challenges in social adjustment.

**Parental Conflict:** Refers to disagreements between parents, which form part of solution seeking mechanism over issues that the parents may be having divergent opinions.

**Pro-social Behaviours:** Refers to socially endearing conducts by an adolescent towards peers which signal successive social adjustment.

**Social Adjustment:** Refers to the process and efforts by adolescents in developing relationship outside the immediate family set-up, which determines how he/she fits within the society as an independent person.

## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

<b>CFA</b>	-	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
<b>CPIC</b>	-	Children's Perception of Inter-parental Conflict Scale
<b>CPS</b>	-	Conflicts and Problem Solving Strategies
<b>KDHS</b>	-	Kenya Demographic and Health Survey
<b>PCPR</b>	-	Primary Caregivers Practices Report
<b>SPSS</b>	-	Statistical Package for Social Sciences

## ABSTRACT

Parental conflict is a prevalent problem that threatens the social adjustment of adolescence children both in developed and developing nations. Despite evidence of parental conflicts in Kenyan families, there is scarce literature on the relationship of parental conflict and social adjustment of adolescence. This study sought to establish the frequency of parental conflict in families of students in secondary schools in Murang'a County; To find out the types of parental conflicts in families of students in secondary schools in Murang'a County; To assess the level of social adjustment of students in secondary schools in Murang'a County; To examine the relationship between parental conflict and social adjustment of adolescent children in secondary schools in Murang'a County; and To find out if there is any gender differences in social adjustments of students in secondary schools in Murang'a County. The study was guided by attachment and interpersonal theories. This study employed a descriptive survey design with a quantitative approach. The study target population was 108,774 secondary school students in Murang'a County. A Stratified random sampling was applied to draw a sample size of 400 students. Standardized instruments were used to collect data from the students. The Social Adjustment Scale developed by Reda-Norton was used to measure social adjustment among the students while frequency of parental conflict and type of parental conflict was assessed using the Children's Perception of Inter-parental Conflict Scale (CPIC). Data collected was coded and processed using the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. Quantitative data collected was analyzed to generate descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentages and mean. Correlations between parental conflicts and social adjustment of adolescence were established using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficients. The study showed that 55.8% reported low frequency of parental conflicts while 24.8% reported high frequency. On type of parental conflicts, the students reported perceiving both constructive and destructive parental conflicts with majority perceiving constructive conflicts. On social adjustment the students were predominantly pro-social with 62.3% rating themselves high on pro-social, 74.3% rated themselves low in offensive interpersonal behaviours and 74.8% rated themselves low in delinquency behaviours. The study revealed that there was a positive and significant relationship between type of parental conflicts perceived and social adjustment of the students. The Pearson (r) correlation coefficient between parental conflicts and both offensive and delinquent behaviours were positive and significant at  $(r(257) = 0.241, P < 0.05)$  and  $(r(260) = 0.171, P < 0.05)$  respectively. However, the relationship between parental conflicts and pro-social was negative but not significant. The study also revealed gender difference in social adjustment of the students. A t-test result of the students social adjustment mean scores showed that there was gender differences in delinquent behaviors at and  $(t = -3.384, df = 319, P < 0.05)$  respectively. Thus more males than females were more likely to show delinquent behaviours in response to experienced parental conflicts. However, no difference was found in respect to pro-social behaviours and offensive interpersonal behaviours. The findings of the student were in support of both attachment and interpersonal theories. The study recommended that schools strengthen counseling department to help students with social adjustment challenges. The study also recommended premarital education and counseling, couples counseling and community awareness creation on the harm of destructive parental conflicts to their entire family.

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background to the Study**

The purpose of the study was to establish the relationship between parental conflict and social adjustment of adolescents. Adolescent is a period at which individuals develop self-identities and is one of the most challenging periods in an individual's development (Jayachandran, 2017). Studies have shown that Adolescence is a time of new challenges and new opportunities. Some adolescents do not negotiate these challenges positively and develop personal and social problems, which lead towards their maladjustment. Parental conflict varies depending on the frequency and type (Ernest-Ehibudu, Ijeoma, Obikoya, & Oluwatoyin, 2017). Social adjustment have different levels such as delinquency behaviours, offensive interpersonal behaviour or pro-social behaviour (Lee, 2018) and varies depending on the gender of the adolescents (Jayachandran, 2017).

Stability of marriage is determined by the level of unity among family members (Wu, Wong, Yu, Fok, Yeung, Lam and Liu (2016). However, more times than not conflicts are unavoidable in a marriage. Conflict within the family is a common contemporary phenomenon and greatly impact on the children in homes as seen among adolescents in United States of America (Kumar & Mattanah, 2017). Conflicts in a marriage may result into undesired psychological issues. Ubaidi (2017) asserts that children from a marriage characterized with persistent conflicts in Ghana, are predisposed to challenges in their future relationships. Such predispositions are influenced by the types of the conflicts a child is exposed to at home. The nature of conflict that is

harmful to children largely depends on how the parents conduct themselves during such conflicts.

According to Kusekwa (2016), in a study in Dar es Salaam and Coast Region of Tanzania, parental conflict can be defined as anger that is overtly expressed, hostility and disagreement between husband and wife. Nan, Hongjian, & Esther (2017) notes that a distressed couple is normally characterized by interactions that marked by mutual negativity, physical aggression and escalating anger. The causes of parental conflict are many and may differ depending on the circumstances of the couples involved. National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (2017) gives several causes of parental conflicts such as incompatibility, role confusion, behavioural contingencies, dissatisfaction and communication are among the most common causes of parental conflicts.

Parental conflicts take various forms depending on how conflicts between married individuals are expressed and managed. Jayachandran (2017) in a study in India classifies parental conflicts as either destructive or constructive. According to Jayachandran (2017), destructive parental conflict includes inter-parental aggression or violence, withdrawal during conflict, non-verbal conflict, inter-parental and parent-child verbal hostility, aggression by members directed towards objects, threats and conflicts about child related themes. On the other hand, Jayachandran (2017) defines constructive conflict as the one that exists when parents agree on how conflict can be resolved and how the conflict is not a serious threat and eventually can be worked

out.

Kariuki and Aloka (2015) states that parents who are happily married are sensitive, affectionate, warm, and responsive towards their adolescent children. More importantly, parents play a critical role in the social adjustment of their children since they have influence in socializing their teenage children through inculcation of values and nurturing self-identity development (Alam, 2017). Mathil (2016) observes that when children witness parental conflicts their social adjustments is affected and are likely to become distraught, since conflicts disrupt children's human development as explained further by Interpersonal Theory. In addition, parental conflicts are likely to disrupt such parental support resulting to difficulties in adolescent social adjustment as explained by attachment theory (Jayachandran, 2017). In this regard, Alkali (2016) defines social adjustment as the process and efforts by adolescents in developing relationship outside the immediate family set-up, which determines how he/she fits within the society as an independent person.

Wu, Wong, Yu, Fok, Yeung, Lam and Liu (2016) observes that destructive parental conflicts can have both direct and indirect effects on the relationships between parents and children and adjustment of the child. Alam (2017) notes that children respond and adjust to parental conflict by either internalizing or externalizing the effects. Children internalize the effects of conflict through their emotional reactions; they could either show lots of mixed emotions or no emotions at all (showing withdrawal symptoms). According to Bhagat (2016), children's emotional reaction to parental conflicts is understood as the reflections of the child's social adjustment problems regarding their

family sub-system. If children interpret the conflict as threatening to the security and stability of themselves and their family, they would have feeling of powerlessness and feelings of hopelessness. Makwana and Kaji (2014) assert that children in Ahmedabad Gujarat District in India normally show genuine concern towards their parent's well-being, and as such, any physical distress can activate a child's empathy and feelings of sorrow for the parents. When children internalize the effects, they often seem to withdraw and adjust poorly to peer (social) relations.

Conversely, in constructive parental conflicts, couples in Raipur city in India dealt with conflicts positively for instance by displaying better communication, intimacy, physical affection, supporting each other and problem solving (Singh, Tripathi & Mahato, 2014). Constructive parental conflict is useful in preserving security of the children, as it boosts their confidence that any differences between the parents will be resolved in a way that maintains family harmony and affection (Dar & Tali, 2014). In families that exhibit constructive parental conflict, it is less likely for children to get involved directly in conflicts and any other delinquent behaviors. In addition, Paramanik, Saha and Mondal (2014) notes that constructive parental conflicts lowers the possibility of children developing aggressive tendencies and can assist children in developing their own conflict resolution, coping and problem solving abilities.

Apart from the type of parental conflict (destructive or constructive), the frequency of the parental conflict also impacts on the adolescence social adjustment (Dar & Tali, 2014). According to Wu, Wong, Yu, Fok, Yeung, Lam and Liu (2016), evidence shows that parental conflict is more harmful to children if it occurs more regularly.

Kumar and Mattanah (2017) states that families experiencing more frequent inter-parental conflicts have children who are characterized by greater levels of distress, anger and feelings of insecurity. Further, Özmete and Bayolu (2013) notes that children's perception of the frequency of inter-parental conflict greatly contributes in predicting both cognitive functioning and conduct problems.

Bhagat (2016) notes that the relationship between parental conflicts on the child's adjustment differs according to child's characteristics such as age, developmental stage of the child and gender among other characteristics. According to National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (2017), adolescents are more vulnerable than pre-school children since pre-school children are too young to fully comprehend the extent and probable outcomes of the conflict happening around them. This was the basis for selecting form three to be respondents of the study whose age is between 15-19 years. Bhagat (2016) defines adolescents as the developmental period of transition between childhood and adulthood, which begins at approximately 10 to 13 years of age and ends between ages of 18 and 22 years. According to Mathil (2016), boys brought up in families experiencing parental conflicts showed higher levels of conduct problems while girls in the same family settings exhibited lower levels of conduct problems such as verbal aggression and physical aggression. In this regard, Jayachandran (2017) observes that inter-parental conflicts affect boys directly through their coping behaviour, whereas for girls the outcomes are indirect via threat appraisals and self-blame.

On global perspective, Özmete and Bayolu (2013) in Ankara in Turkey notes that

parental conflicts are based on household chores such as cleaning up homestead, meals and taking care of things. Other sources of parental conflict were noted to be related to money expenditure and family rules such as the right time to arrive home. Özmete and Bayolu (2013) further noted that parental conflicts varied in intensity and frequency between one family structure to another. In India, Jayachandran (2017) noted that secondary school students had high social adjustment problems.

In the United States of America, Kumar and Mattanah (2017) noted that parental conflict was significantly related to feeling of depression and loneliness. Kumar and Mattanah (2017) further noted that students from families whose parents were involved in inter-parental conflicts were more likely to face social adjustment challenges in their schools. In China, Nan, Hongjian, & Esther (2017) noted that coping tactics such as conciliation, avoidance, and assertion behaviors increased with increase in frequency and intensity of parental conflicts. The authors also observed that avoidance was negatively related to the frequency of parental conflicts. Social adjustment challenges were observed with an increase in parental conflicts in families in China. Alam (2017) noted that there were significant differences in the level of social adjustment based on student gender in India.

In African Context, Teseletso (2015) in Botswana noted that adolescents scored higher on emotional symptoms, conduct problems and peer problems. In the context of Ghana, Ubaidi (2017) noted that due to parental conflicts, students rated their families as functional or dysfunctional. Kusekwa (2016) in Dar es Salaam and Coast Region of Tanzania observed that parental conflicts were seen to cause fear,

depression, stress, loneliness, anger and nightmares. Ernest-Ehibudu, Obikoya and Oluwatoyin (2017) in Nigeria noted that there are significant correlation between family conflicts and student social adjustment. Still on Nigerian context, Alkali (2016) observed that there were no significant differences in the level of social adjustment between the student genders.

In Kenya, Orwa, Aloka and Gudo (2016) in Rarieda sub-county noted that secondary school adolescents were faced with social adjustment problems whereby majority of them kept imagining that other students were talking about them. Orwa, Aloka and Gudo (2016) further noted that teen-mothers were not willing to freely mingle with other students regarding social events. It was also noted that secondary school students in Rarieda sub-county kept quiet and took a long time to make friends with fellow students. Gatua (2014) in Nakuru and Uasin Gishu Counties in Kenya noted that secondary school students were faced with high social adjustment challenges.

Bochere (2017) noted that among secondary school students in Kiambu County, there was significant relationship between parental conflicts and a student being a perpetrator of bullying in school. Kariuki and Aloka (2015) in Nairobi County noted that parental conflicts affected the student social adjustment of students where it was associated to delinquent behaviours. Adhiambo, Odwar and Ayere (2017) observed that there were no significant differences between social adjustments of boys and that of girls in secondary school students in Kisumu East-County. Njenga (2016) in Kiambu County noted that some parental conflicts lasted for one year, others lasted

for between two to five years while other conflicts between couples lasted for over five years. Most of these conflicts were observed to lead to injuries

The Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (2014) revealed that 37% of women from former Central Province counties such as Nyeri, Kirinyaga, Murang'a and Kiambu county who had ever been married had suffered physical violence by a husband, 17% had suffered sexual violence, and 30% had suffered emotional violence. There is not study that has been carried out in Murang'a County to depict the association between the reported parental conflicts and social adjustment of secondary school students. Without empirical evidence such inference can only remain speculative. The current study was based on this evidence on the widespread of destructive parental conflicts in Kenya and the lack of empirical evidence on the effect of such conflict on social adjustment of children in Murang'a County.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Cases of parental conflicts in Kenya are widespread as evidenced by persistent cases of domestic violence as reported by Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (2014). Some parental conflicts (6.7%) in Kenya lasted for one year, 17.8% lasted for between two to five years while 75.5% of the conflicts between couples lasted for over five years (Njenga, 2016). Dangers of parental conflicts to students have been seen as fear in imagining that other students were talking about them, unwilling to freely mingle with other students regarding social events, keeping quiet and taking a long time to make friends with fellow students as well as perpetration of bullying in

school (Bochere, 2017). If these issues are not addressed in time, it may give rise to social adjustment challenges among the students which may lead to security risks. Other negative consequences of parental conflicts among the adolescents include stress, sexual aggression and adolescent threatening behaviours, social aggression, psychosocial adjustment and negative self-expressiveness (Kumar & Mattanah, 2017).

As parental conflicts are reported to be on increase, it is important to find out how parental conflicts influence adolescence social adjustment. The previous studies conducted in Kenya on parental conflict focused on prevalence and causes. This opened a research gap for a study to be conducted in Murang'a involving students in secondary schools who are prone to social adjustment problems. This study sought to fill this gap by investigating the relationship between parental conflict and social adjustment of students in secondary school in Murang'a County.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to establish the relationship between parental conflict and social adjustment of adolescent students in secondary school Murang'a County, Kenya.

### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

The study was guided by the following research objectives:

1. To establish the frequency of parental conflict in families of students in secondary schools in Murang'a County.
2. To find out the types of parental conflicts in families of students in secondary

schools in Murang'a County.

3. To assess the level of social adjustment of students in secondary schools in Murang'a County.
4. To examine the relationship between parental conflict and social adjustment of students in secondary schools in Murang'a County
5. To find out if there is any gender differences in social adjustments of students in secondary schools in Murang'a County.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

The study explored for answers to the following research questions:

1. What is the frequency of parental conflict in families of students in secondary schools in Murang'a County?
2. Which types of parental conflicts are experienced in families of students in secondary schools in Murang'a County?
3. What is the level of social adjustment of students in secondary school in Murang'a County?

### **1.6 Research Hypotheses**

The study tested the following research hypotheses;

1. There is no statistically significant relationship between parental conflict and social adjustment of students in secondary schools in Murang'a County?
2. There are no statistically significant gender differences in social adjustments of students in secondary school in Murang'a County?

### **1.7 Justification and Significance of the Study**

The basis on which the study was justified stems from the increased incidences parental conflict in Kenya (Orwa, Aloka & Gudo (2016); Gatua (2014)). A study on parental conflicts and social adjustment among student in secondary schools may enable parents and educational stakeholders to understand the implications of parental behaviours of students' social adjustment. Specifically, through the established frequency of parental conflicts, the study may help the education stakeholders to understand the status of parental conflicts in families in Murang'a County. Further, through the established types of parental conflicts, parents may be able to protect their children from adverse effects of parental conflicts by embracing constructive parental conflicts. Evidence shown by this study on the relationship between parental conflicts and social adjustment of secondary school students, may help education stakeholders to devise ways of reducing the impact of parental conflicts on students for better psychological well-being. The evidence of gender differences in social adjustment of secondary school students established in this study may help school administration in revising guidance and counseling strategies to benefit both boys and girls.

### **1.8 Scope and Limitations of the Study**

The study was confined within Murang'a County which defined the geographical scope of the study. The main focus was the relationship between parental conflicts and social adjustment of secondary school students which was the content scope of the study. While there are many people affected by parental conflicts, this study focused on the adolescent's aged 15-19 years attending secondary schools and this formed the population scope of the study.

Though most of the questions about parental conflict and its consequences were framed in a supportive and non-judgmental manner and some of the questions prompted negative emotions. In respect to this, some students were shy to report prevailing conflicts between their parents. However, the researcher was quick to assure the students that their feedback would be confidential and would not be shared with other people. The researcher also insisted that to the respondents not to include any identifying details. By doing this, the researcher was able to proceed with the study without any hiccup.

### **1.9 Assumptions of the Study**

This study was based on the following assumptions:

- i. The study assumed that students knew the frequency at which they witness parental conflict in their families.
- ii. The study also assumed that students were able to identify different forms of parental conflicts in their families.
- iii. The study assumed that there were levels of social adjustment of students in secondary schools in Murang'a County.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter covers a review of literature related to the study. The chapter presents the theoretical framework, which covers various theoretical perspectives on adolescent development and social development during adolescence. Empirical review was conducted by critically reviewing past studies relevant to the research problem. A summary of the literature was also presented along with the gap. A conceptual framework showing the relationship between the independent and dependent variables under consideration were presented.

#### **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

The study was guided by two theories: attachment theory by Bowlby (1969) and interpersonal theory by Sullivan (1953). The two theories are discussed in this section.

##### **2.2.1 Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969)**

Attachment theory was developed by Bowlby in the year 1969. The theory explains how the human is motivated to develop relationships with others and to maintain a desired level of accessibility to attachment figures or significant others. According to Nan, Hongjian, & Esther (2017), the bond between the child and the significant others is important for general well-being of the child. Ubaidi (2017) asserts that bond between the child and the significant others functions as a guide for all future relationships across the lifespan. Based on this assertion, it can be inferred that the parent-child relationship has an implication on adolescent social adjustment. Since

the significant others (in this case the parents) act as template for future relationship, the children may imitate their parents while socializing with peer (Kumar & Mattanah, 2017).

According to the proponent of the theory, Bowlby (1988), the theory explains how long-term relationships between humans are formed and maintained, with the basic principle being that, starting right from infancy; children have a need to form a relationship with a primary caregiver for normal social and emotional development. Attachment theory argues that, parental relationship with a child has a strong influence on child development. At the early infancy stage, children have the capacity for mental representation of their attachment figures and construction of ideas and expectations about relationships with both parents and significant others (Ernest-Ehibudu, Obikoya, and Oluwatoyin, 2017). The theory further states that the attachment behavioural system controls the attachment behaviours of children under emotional distress. Attachment theory argues that attachment figure who offers comfort, reassurance and contact facilitates development of the child's well-being, emotional regulation and fostering the expectation that close relationships provide safety and security (Bochere, 2017). Therefore, close relationship with parents is an important factor in adolescent development, since this relationship functions as a template that is carried forward over time to influence the development of new relationships (Kumar & Mattanah, 2017).

According to Godbout, Dutton, Lussier and Sabourin, (2009), in the late 1980s researchers such as Hazan and Shaver (1987) extended attachment theory to adult romantic relationships after they observed that parents and adult romantic partners

shared similar attachment features (for example feeling safe when the other is nearby and responsive, engaging in bodily contact). This saw the development by Bartholomew (1993), of a quadripartite model of adult attachment. This model by Bartholomew (1993) was based on two main dimensions: 1) anxiety toward separation and abandonment and 2) avoidance of close relationships.

The first dimension – anxiety towards separation and abandonment (also called the model of self) corresponds to the level of fear of rejection in a relationship or abandonment. This dimension is characterized by a lack of sense of self-worth. A person operating on this dimension strategically hyper-activates an attachment system that generally focuses on signs of threats in the relationship, and on the search for love and security. The second dimension – avoidance of close relationships (also called model of other) is characterized by a degree of emotional suppression, self-reliance, and discomfort with closeness and interdependence a person experiences. People operating in this dimension are characterized by expectations that the partner will be unavailable and non-supportive. The person operating in this dimension responds by strategically deactivating the attachment system in an effort to reduce negative emotional states and feelings of vulnerability to rejection (Godbout et al., 2009).

In the context of the current study, the theory guided the study in regard to the relationship between parental conflict and social adjustment of adolescents in secondary schools in Murang'a County. Ubaidi (2017) assert that in the presence of parental conflict, parents may not have time or psychological well-being to offer adequate contact, reassurance and comfort thus affecting the child's development.

Such a child develops negative attitude towards relationships with other people which in turn affects their social adjustment as adolescents (Njenga, 2016). In this regard, a child witnessing destructive parental conflict is constantly worried of the possibility of losing one of the parents through separation thus developing anxiety towards separation (National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development, 2017) Likewise, frequent destructive conflicts may invoke mistrust towards relationship to a child who may subsequently develop mechanism to avoid close relationship for fear that such relationships are bound to fail (Mathil, 2016). Both fear of separation and avoidance of close relationship influence the child's interaction with peers thus affecting their social adjustment during adolescence (Packiaselvi & Malathi, 2017).

### **2.2.2 Interpersonal Theory**

The Interpersonal theory was developed by Sullivan in the year 1953 in an attempt to explain human development. The theory explains human development by presenting the process children go through while seeking to satisfy their needs in a social-cultural world. Through this the children form relationships with other people, and learn language within social interactions shaped by the material and cultural conditions of the time and place. According to Sullivan (1953), the deepest and most fundamental learning that an infant experiences occurs as the child is involved in activities with parents or other primary caregivers. It is in such activity situations that basic perceptions of the self, as well as self in relation to others are formed. It is while engaging in activity situations such as feeding that the child learns how to coordinate with others and take part in shared activities, thereby satisfying mutual needs.

Sullivan explained six developmental stages called 'epochs' or heuristic stages in

development. These are: 1) infancy (birth to 18 months) characterized by gratification of needs, 2) childhood (18 months to 6 years) characterized by delayed gratification, 3) juvenile era (6-9 years) characterized by formation of peer group, 4) preadolescence (9-12 years) when relationships within same gender develop, 5) early adolescence (12 to 14 years) where identity occurs, and 6) late adolescence (14 to 21 years) where lasting, intimate relationships are formed. During the adolescence stage social development is closely related to an individual's psychological development, particularly identity formation and the need for intimacy (Jayachandran, 2017). Sullivan (1953) viewed interpersonal relations as central to one's individual identity.

Sullivan (1953) posited three stages of adolescent development, which are distinguished by different needs and expressions of interpersonal intimacy: preadolescence, early adolescence, and late adolescence. Preadolescence is characterized by the need for intimacy expressed through strong relationships, usually with persons of the same sex. The stage of early adolescence is ushered in by the physiological changes of puberty with the concomitant appearance of the lust dynamism (Sullivan, 1953). The early adolescence stage is characterized by new integrating dynamism that results in the shift to intimate relations with persons of the opposite sex for most adolescents, patterned, to some degree, after preadolescent same-sex relationships. A person enters late adolescence when he or she discovers what he or she likes in the way of genital behaviours and how to fit it into the rest of life (Sullivan, 1953).

This theory guided the study on how parental conflict influence how adolescents perceive their parents as being supportive or unsupportive, thus dictating their pattern

of adjustment and competence. As related by the interpersonal theory, each stage of adolescence comes with a set of changes which requires appropriate response to enable an individual handle the demands that come with the changes. According to Teseletso (2015), a child witnessing destructive parental conflicts is therefore bound to shun strong relationship with persons of the same sex as required at the preadolescence stage or form relationship with the opposite sex in later stage of adolescent. Orwa, Aloka and Gudo (2016) assert that destructive parental conflicts are often characterized by disruptive episodes, unstable and unpredictable life. In such circumstances parents as the primary caregivers hardly engage consistently in activities that facilitate the learning of a child (Gatua, 2014).

In addition, the disruptive nature of destructive conflicts denies both the child and the parent adequate time and psychological well-being to bond and engage in activities geared towards satisfying mutual needs (Bochere (2017). In regard to this, Ubaidi (2017) asserts that with parental conflict, parents may not be able to offer guidance, and where guidance is available adolescent confidence on the parent's guidance may be affected. According to Ernest-Ehibudu, Obikoya and Oluwatoyin (2017), parent's guidance is crucial in shaping the perception that adolescents develop about their relationship with others at this stage. This eventually translates to social incompetence where the child is ill equipped to engage in relationships leading to difficulties in social adjustment (Özmete & Bayolu, 2013).

### **2.3 Review of Related Studies**

This part of the chapter covers a review of past literature related to the study. Literature was reviewed with regard to the research objectives that is; frequency of

parental conflicts, types of parental conflict, levels of social adjustment among secondary school students, relationship between parental conflict and adolescence social adjustment, and gender differences in social adjustment of adolescence experiencing parental conflicts.

### **2.3.1 Frequency of Parental Conflicts**

A study by Prueksaritanond, Tubtimtes, Pumkopol and Prueksaritanond (2015) studied the prevalence and consequences of spouse conflict in primary care. The purpose of this study was to identify the prevalence, the potential risk factors and the consequences of spousal conflict among patients consulting physicians in a primary care setting. A descriptive study design was employed by the study. Stratified random sampling of 460 participants from a university primary care setting was conducted by using the spousal conflict questionnaires with Likert's scale. Findings revealed that 83.9% of the sample had conflicts with their spouses during the previous 12 months. The conflict events occurred seldom and occasionally at 30.2%, while often (once or twice a month) and always (every week) at 59.1%. Young adult women and a high school level of education of men were less likely to have conflict with their spouses. The population studied and the data analysis procedures differed from the current study, which gathered data from secondary school students and analysed data using frequencies, percentages, means, median, modes as well as t-test and correlation coefficients.

Orpin, Papadopoulos and Puthussery (2017) studied the prevalence of domestic violence among pregnant women in Nigeria through a systematic review of all published studies between April 2004 and June 2016. Identified articles were

screened in two stages against the inclusion criteria with titles and abstract screened first followed by full-text screening. Selected articles were assessed using the “guidelines for evaluating prevalence studies,” and findings were synthesized narratively. Results from 19 studies that met the inclusion criteria, two articles were excluded due to low methodological quality and 17 articles were included in the review. The prevalence of domestic violence during pregnancy in Nigeria ranged between 2.3% and 44.6% with lifetime prevalence rates ranging between 33.1% and 63.2%. The review suggested a high prevalence of domestic violence in pregnancy among women in Nigeria and higher lifetime prevalence. This study relied on secondary data while the current study gathered primary data from respondents. The study also gathered data from women only specifically pregnant women, not men, and other women who were not pregnant at the time of the study. The studied conflicts were all destructive and not constructive forms of parental conflicts an area addressed by the current study.

Kusekwa (2016) carried out a study to examine the effect of inter-parental conflicts on adolescents in secondary schools in Dar es Salaam and Coast Region of Tanzania. The study used survey research design. The sample size for the study was 175 respondents who comprised of secondary school students. Data for the study was collected using closed-ended questionnaires. Measuring conflicts from their homes, 21.1% of the respondents indicated that the conflicts were intense and frequent while 74.4% of the respondents indicated that the conflicts were witnessed a few times. It was also noted that 4.4% of the respondents did not experience parental conflicts at their homes. The parental conflicts were seen to cause fear, depression, stress, loneliness, anger and nightmares. The reviewed study presents a methodological

research gap in that it utilized a small sample of 175 respondents, which was deemed insufficient to such a geographical scope of the study. The current study filled this gap by using a larger sample size of 400 respondents for broad generalization.

In the Kenyan context, Njenga (2016) carried out a study to examine factors leading to conflicts between parents in Kikuyu Sub County in Kiambu County. The study used descriptive research design to meet its objectives. The sample size for the study was 30 families selected through stratified random sampling. The study respondents were required to fill a structured questionnaire. The study established that 51.1% of the couples always engaged in conflicts with their spouse, 26.7% of couples also cited that quite often they engaged in conflicts with their spouse while 13.3% of the cited that they rarely engaged in conflicts with their spouse. Only 8.9% of couples cited that they never engaged in conflicts with their spouses. The study further sought to establish the duration of the conflict and whereby the study established that 6.7% of the conflicts lasted for one year, 17.8% lasted for between two to five years while 75.5% of the conflicts between couples lasted for over five years. Most of these conflicts (82.2%) were found to lead to injuries. This study presents a methodological research gap for it obtained feedback from the couples who could have given dishonest feedback due to shame on parental conflicts. This study filled this gap by obtaining feedback from students who witness the parental conflicts.

Onyango, Odhiambo and Maito (2013) carried out a study on social dimensions of parental conflict in Maseno, Western Kenya. This study utilized a case study research design. This design was appropriate for the study because it consisted of a detailed and intensive analysis of a single case, ACK Maseno North Diocese. Fifteen

respondents were purposefully selected from each of the eight zones to give a total sample size of 120. Study findings revealed that 89% of respondents were aware of marriages, which had parental conflict. About 81% of these respondents claimed they knew spouses who still stayed within abusive marriages. The study location and target group for this study differed from that of the current study. The study sample of 120 respondents was also too small for results to be used to generalize for parents in Murang'a County. The study only relied on purposive sampling while the current study relied on simple random sampling and stratified sampling techniques.

### **2.3.2 Type of Parental Conflicts**

Jayachandran (2017) in a study in Tamil Nadu, India classifies parental conflicts as either destructive or constructive. According to Jayachandran (2017), destructive parental conflict includes inter-parental aggression or violence, withdrawal during conflict, non-verbal conflict, inter-parental and parent- child verbal hostility, aggression by members directed towards objects, threats and conflicts about child related themes. On the other hand, Jayachandran (2017) defines constructive conflict as the one that exists when parents agree on how conflict can be resolved and how the conflict is not a serious threat and eventually can be worked out. Conflict is a necessary part of normal family life. However, if parental conflict takes the form of destructive rather than constructive conflict, it can have negative consequences for both children and parents.

George et al., (2016) studied the prevalence of domestic violence and its associated factors among married women in a rural area of Puducherry, South India. A community-based cross-sectional study was carried out in a rural area of Puducherry,

South India. Married women in reproductive age group were interviewed using structured pretested questionnaire. Domestic violence was assessed using 12 questions that were used in National Family Health Survey-3. Results established that of 310 study participants, 56.7% of them reported some form of domestic violence, 51.3% reported psychological violence, 40% reported physical violence, and 13.5% reported sexual violence. A statistically significant association was found between illiteracy of women and domestic violence (AOR: 4.3, 95% confidence interval: 1.1–15.7 P: 0.03). Physical, sexual, psychological, and verbal abuses were the most frequent types of domestic violence reported in this review. Pregnant women between the ages of 20 and 30 years were the most common victims of domestic violence. This study looked at violence meted on women alone and not all forms of marital conflicts. While the current study used descriptive survey, the reviewed study relied on descriptive cross-sectional study design. The sample used was also too small for its findings to be generalized to every married women world over.

Wu, Wong, Yu, Fok, Yeung, Lam and Liu (2016) carried out a study to examine the parenting approaches and family functionality in Hong Kong. The study cross-sectional and descriptive comparative design to examine the differences that exist between families based on internet accessibility. The study sample size was 1163 respondents who were required to fill a structured questionnaire. Majority of the non-addicted internet users indicated that their marriage was highly functional (82.1%), while majority of couples (38.4%) who were addicted to internet use indicated that their marriage was characterized by conflicts and was severely dysfunctional. The reviewed study focused on parental conflicts as a source of internet use and addiction

while the current study was conceptually different for it focused on parental conflict regardless the source and therefore more broad and generalizable.

Özmete and Bayoglu (2013) carried out a study to examine the both the frequency and intensity of parental conflicts in Ankara in Turkey. The sample size of the study comprised of 180 respondents. Data was collected using structured questionnaires based on a likert scale. The study established that parental conflicts were based on household chores such as cleaning up homestead (Frequency=42.2%, mean=2.59), meals (frequency=39.4%, mean=2.52) and taking care of things (frequency=33.9%, mean=2.68). Other sources of parental conflict were found to be related to money expenditure (frequency=23.9%, mean=2.67) and family rules such as the right time to arrive home (frequency=33.9%, mean=2.48). The study concluded that parental conflicts varied in intensity and frequency between one family structure to another. Since the study by (Özmete & Bayoglu, 2013) was done in Turkey and whose results could not be generalizable to Kenyan context, the current study sought to fill this contextual research gap.

Onoh *et al.*, (2013) studied the prevalence, pattern and consequences of intimate partner violence during pregnancy at Abakaliki Southeast Nigeria. A cross-sectional study on pregnant women was conducted at the Antenatal clinics of the Federal Medical Centre, Abakaliki, Ebonyi State of Nigeria between April and June 2011. The participants were pregnant women who came for antenatal visits. A semi-structured questionnaire was designed for cross-sectional survey of pregnant women attending antenatal clinic between April and June 2011 at the Federal Medical Centre Abakaliki. A total of 321 questionnaires were correctly filled and then analysed using

Epi info software 2008 (Atlanta Georgia, USA). Results established that out of the 321 booked pregnant women, 44.6% (143/321) reported having been abused in the index pregnancy. Verbal abuse (60.1%) 86/143 was the most common type of abuse and most pregnant women resorted to praying (31.5%) 46/146, crying (24.7%) 36/146, and begging (22.6%) 33/146 as their major reactions to IPV. Eleven (7.7%) 11/143 pregnant women were hospitalized while (21%) 30/143 sustained emotional and physical injury. This study focused on violence during pregnancy whereas the current study looked at conflict throughout the course of marriage. A cross-sectional design was also employed while the current study relied on descriptive survey study design.

### **2.3.3 Levels of Social Adjustment among Secondary School Students**

Dar and Scholar (2014) studied the adjustment problems among Kashmiri adolescents. It was a descriptive survey study comprising of three hundred adolescents taken from higher secondary schools of three districts of Jammu and Kashmir. From each district, 50 adolescent boys and 50 adolescent girls were selected by using simple random sampling technique. Youth Problem Inventory was used to collect the data. The result showed that the adolescent boys and girls of Kashmir had high adjustment problems in various areas like family, school, social and on a personal front. It was found that the adolescent boys and girls of Kashmir did not differ significantly with each other in adjustment problems.

This indicated that both adolescent boys and girls of Kashmir were maladjusted in their lives. This study looked at adjustment in the sense of students adapting to new

environment and not problem behaviours exhibited by adolescent secondary school students. The sample of this study was also too small, as a sample of 300 participants cannot be used to generalize findings to all secondary school students around the world. Further, while the study utilized simple random sampling as the current study, the current study went further and employed stratified and purposive sampling techniques.

Akande and Ikediashi (2017) studied patterns of psychological adjustment among adolescent students in secondary educational institutions in Nigeria. It specifically examined the various patterns of adjustment among adolescents in the domains of physical, emotional, psychological and social developmental problems in both rural and urban settings. One hundred and three adolescents were randomly sampled from six secondary educational institutions in Oredo Local Government Area. An Adjustment Pattern of Adolescents Questionnaire (APAQ) with forty items was used in the survey. The research findings indicated that there was no significant difference in the physical adjustment, emotional adjustment, psychological adjustment and social adjustment. A sample size of 103 students used by this research was too small to be generalized to all adolescents attending secondary schools in Africa, Murang'a County included. The study also relied entirely on t-test while the current research employed both descriptive and inferential statistics data analysis techniques.

Famakinwa, Olagunju and Akinnawonu (2016) conducted a study on psychosocial challenges of public secondary school students in a semi-urban area of Southwest-Nigeria. The study was descriptive with cross-sectional design. A total of three hundred and fifty seven respondents who accurately completed the questionnaire

were included in the study. Multi stage sampling technique was used. The calculated sample size for the research study using Yemen's formula was 360. The findings revealed a good number of the respondents were able to identify with some of the psychosocial health problems such as bullying (43.1%), anger (33.9%), hunger in school (40.1%) and thought of committing suicide (21.8%). The sample size used by the study was too small and the study used descriptive statistics alone for data analysis. The current study however utilized both descriptive and inferential statistics data analysis techniques to present the study results.

National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (2017) sought to find out the social adjustment problems that adolescent orphans undergo in a classroom set up in Kerala state in India. The study explored social adjustment in classroom on three dimensions, namely; lack of co-operation, feeling of insecurity and inferiority complex. The study sample comprised of 130 adolescent orphans selected from 10 orphanages in 5 districts of Kerala state. Sample distribution comprised of 65 rural adolescent orphans and 65 urban adolescent orphans. The study found out that that both the rural and urban adolescent orphans faced social adjustment problems in the classroom such as lack of co-operation, feeling of insecurity and inferiority complex. The study however revealed that adolescent orphan boys had more social adjustment problems as compared to social adjustment problems of girls. Since the reviewed study was done in India, there existed a contextual research gap that was filled by the current study which was done in Kenyan context.

Mathil (2016) carried out a study to examine the pattern of social adjustment of adolescent from different family structures in Sirsa district in India. The study adopted normative survey research method. The sample size for the study was obtained from senior secondary school student aged 13-19 years. The sample size comprised of 50 adolescents from joint families and 50 adolescents from nuclear families. Data for the study was collected using adjustment inventory. The study established that there were significant differences between the social adjustment of adolescents belonging to nuclear and joint families ( $t=2.64$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). In this regard, the study established that the mean score for social adjustment of students from nuclear families was 9.84 and those from joint families was 8.72. The study however established that adolescents' level of social adjustment from both the nuclear and joint families was related at a correlation coefficient of 0.480, which was significant at 5% significance level. This study opened a contextual research gap for a study to be done on Kenyan context since the reviewed study was done in India.

Jayachandran (2017) sought to find out the level of social adjustment among higher secondary school students in Tamil Nadu district in India. The study adopted survey research design and comprised of 132 secondary school students selected through simple random sampling. The study gathered data through administering social adjustment inventory to the respondents. The study established that 90.4% of secondary school students had high social adjustment while only 6.1% and 3.5% of the secondary school students had an average and low level of social adjustment respectively. This study presents a contextual research gap for it was done in India and therefore the current study was done on Kenyan context.

In African context, a study by Teseletso (2015) carried out a study that sought to find out whether there were differences in social adjustment of HIV positive and HIV negative adolescents in Botswana. The study adopted comparative research design and targeted secondary school students from secondary schools in Gaborone district in Botswana. The sample size for the study comprised of 97 respondents; 62 HIV negative and 35 HIV positive adolescents. Data for the study was obtained using adjusted social adjustment scale. It was established by the study that HIV positive adolescents had social adjustment problems as compared to those presumed to be HIV negative. In this regard, the study found out that HIV positive adolescents scored higher on emotional symptoms ( $3\pm 2$  as compared to  $2\pm 2$  for HIV presumed negative adolescents), conduct problems ( $3\pm 2$  as compared to  $1\pm 2$  for HIV presumed negative adolescents) and peer problems ( $4\pm 2$  as compared to  $2\pm 1$  for HIV presumed negative adolescents  $2\pm 1$ ). Though on African context, social adjustment of adolescent in Botswana may differ from Kenyan due to different family cultures and therefore a contextual research gap that the current study sought to fill.

In Kenya Context, Orwa, Aloka and Gudo (2016) carried out a study among teen-mothers in Kenyan secondary schools to examine their social adjustment. The study adopted mixed research design to achieve its objectives and was qualitative in approach. The target population for the study comprised of 217 teen-mothers in day secondary schools in Rarieda sub-county. The study obtained its data through administering open ended questionnaires to the teen-mothers as well as interviews. The study established that teen mothers were faced with social adjustment problems whereby majority of them kept imagining that other students were talking about them. The study further revealed that teen-mothers were not willing to freely mingle with

other students regarding social events. It was also established that teen-mothers in secondary schools in Rarieda sub-county kept quiet and took a long time to make friends with fellow students. This study presents both contextual and methodological research gaps. Methodologically, the reviewed study was qualitative in approach while the current study was quantitative in approach. Contextually, the study was done in Rarieda sub-county in Siaya County while the current study was done in Murang'a County.

Nyaga (2015) studied the contributions of selected Microsystems to antisocial behaviours among adolescent students in secondary schools in Manyatta Sub-County, Embu County, Kenya. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The target population was 11,329 students from 46 public schools, which were either County boarding schools or co-education day schools in Manyatta, Embu County. The sample of 320 students was obtained through random sampling while eight deputy principals were selected from sampled schools. The study reported that out of the 320 respondents, the following students had observed the various antisocial behaviours among their fellow students, stealing 20% (64), truancy 15.89% (51), bullying 14.04% (45), drug abuse 12.28% (40), disrespecting teachers 3.51% (12), misuse of school fees 3.51% (12) and vandalism 1.05% (4). This supported the deputy principals' observations and the records in the black books, that truancy was the most common antisocial behaviour while bullying was the least. School registers showed that truancy was higher in co- education day as compared to boarding schools. This study however, differed from the current study by location and theories used to guide the research. While the reviewed study looked at Microsystems to antisocial behaviours among adolescent students, the current study focused on

parental conflicts and social adjustment problems among adolescent students and therefore a conceptual research gap.

Gatua (2014) carried out a study that sought among other objectives to examine the level of social adjustments of students in secondary schools in Nakuru and Uasin Gishu Counties in Kenya. The study adopted descriptive survey research design and targeted all the 14,619 form four students from the two counties. The sample size used by the study was 336 students who were required to fill a social adjustment inventory that contained 20 items. Teacher counsellors and school administrators were also sampled in the study and their participation was through interviews. The study established that students from rural schools and those from urban schools had different levels of social adjustments. In respect to this, the study established that 9.3% of students from rural schools had low social adjustment, 15.1% of them with moderate social adjustment and 75.6% of them had high level of social adjustment. Focusing on students in urban schools, the study found out that 6.1% of them had low level of social adjustment, 7.3% of them with moderate social adjustment and 86.6% with high social adjustment. Contextually, the study by Gatua (2014) was done in counties other than the Murang'a County where the current study was done.

#### **2.3.4 Relationship between Parental Conflict and Adolescence Social Adjustment**

In China, Nan, Hongjian, & Esther (2017) studied interparental conflict and infants' behaviour problems looking at the mediating role of maternal sensitivity. This study examined the associations between mother-reported interparental conflict and young children's behaviour problems over the first 2 years of their lives in a sample of 212 mothers and infants using a descriptive study design. Results indicated that

interparental conflict was associated directly with infants' externalizing problems over time but was associated indirectly with infants' internalizing problems over time via compromised maternal sensitivity within distressing contexts but not through maternal sensitivity within non-distressing contexts. Such findings add to a limited body of research suggesting that the early interparental relationship context is relevant for infant adjustment. While this study studied mothers and infants, the current study looked at adolescents students specifically in secondary schools and parental conflicts. The study also used a smaller sample size of 212 participants, which was too small for the results to be generalized to the study area.

In a study conducted by Lee and Lee (2016) carried out an observational study on infant reactions during live interparental conflict. A descriptive study design was used by the researcher. A community sample of 74 infants, aged 6-14 months, participated with their parents. Behavioral observations were made of parents' marital conflict and their infants' reactions. Parents reported on their emotional states during conflict, infants' history of exposure to interparental conflict, and infant temperament. Multilevel modelling indicated that infants showed differential responses to marital conflict; destructive and depressive conflict were associated with increased infant discussion attending and negative reactions, whereas constructive conflict was associated with decreased discussion attending and negative reactions. This study was observational by nature while the current study was a survey. The study was interested on behaviour problems among infants while the current study focused on social adjustment problems among adolescent secondary school students. The study also used a sample of 74 respondents who were mothers hence the findings could not be generalized to Murang'a County.

Bolze, Schmidt, Böing and Crepaldi, (2017) carried out a study on a unified model exploring parenting practices as mediators of marital conflict and children's adjustment in America. Married mothers of 121 children between the ages of 6 and 12 completed questionnaires measuring marital conflict, parenting practices and child adjustment. Analyses revealed significant direct paths from destructive marital conflict to negative parenting practices, psychological control, and both children's internalizing and externalizing behaviour. The target group or mothers of children aged 6 to 12 years differed from that of the current study, which was secondary school students, aged 14-19 years. The study instrument used also differed from that of the current study. The study also relied on a smaller sample size of 121 hence its findings could not be applied to the situation in Murang'a County.

In Iran, Parsa, Yaacob, Redzuan, Parsa and Esmaeili (2014) studied the effects of inter-parental conflict on college student's self-efficacy in Hamadan. The main objective of the study was to determine the effects of inter-parental conflict on college student's self-efficacy. This cross-sectional study was conducted on 374 randomly selected college students of Medical Science University aged 17 to 19 years old in Hamadan, Iran. Data was collected by a structured questionnaire. Results of Pearson correlation coefficient indicated that low inter-parental conflict had positive significant correlation with high students' self-efficacy, while high inter-parental conflict had negative correlation with low self-efficacy ( $p < .05$ ). The result of the study also showed that within CPIC subscales perception of threat to self had highest negative relationship with self-efficacy, followed by conflict properties and self-blame. The target population for the study was college students while the current study was interested in secondary school students. A cross-sectional study design was

used while the current study used a descriptive survey study design. The sample size of 374 was also too small for findings to be generalized to other adolescents across the world.

In India, Lindblom *et al.*, (2017) studied early family relationships predict children's emotion regulation and defence mechanisms by utilizing a descriptive study design. The study sample consisted of 703 Finnish married or cohabitant couples. Of the participating couples, 56% had received successful ART ( $n = 392$ ) and were recruited from five infertility clinics in Finland, whereas 44% were naturally conceiving couples (NC;  $n = 311$ ) and were recruited at Helsinki University Central Hospital while participating in routine ultra-sonographic examination. The results showed that functional early family relationships predicted children's efficient emotion regulation, whereas dysfunctional relationships predicted reliance on defence mechanisms in middle childhood. Further, results showed a timing effect for neurotic defences, partially confirming our hypothesis of early infancy being an especially important period for the development of defence mechanisms. The age of children studied is younger than the one studied by the current study in Murang'a. While the study relied on data from parents and married couples, the current study entirely relied on data from students.

A study by Kumar and Mattanah (2017) carried out a study to examine the effect of parental conflict on adolescents in the United States of America. The study samples a total of 188 students aged between 13-19 years. The study revealed that 68.2% of the students faced inter-parental conflicts in their homes as a result of diverse causes. It was established that parental conflict was significantly related to feeling of depression

and loneliness at a correlation coefficient of 0.18 and 0.31 and p-values less than 0.05. The study concluded that students from families whose parents were involved in inter-parental conflicts were more likely to face social adjustment challenges in their schools. The reviewed study was done in United States of America while the current study was done in Kenya and therefore contextual research gap.

Nan, Hongjian, & Esther (2017) examined the influence of parental conflict on coping tactics of adolescents in China. The study sample 524 adolescents for grade 7 to grade 11. The study used closed-ended questionnaires to gather data for the study. The study established that coping tactics such as conciliation, avoidance, and assertion behaviors increased with increase in frequency and intensity of parental conflicts. The study further established that avoidance was negatively related to the frequency of parental conflicts. Social adjustment challenges were observed with an increase in parental conflicts in families in China. China faces different cultures and therefore studies done in which would not be generalizable to Kenyan context and therefore the need for the current study.

Nazir, Saeed, Sohail, Sher, Azhar and Safdar (2012) investigated the effect of parental conflicts on adolescents in Punjab in India. The study sample consisted of 200 students and the respondents were required to fill a research questionnaire. The study established that 50.8% of the students witnessed parental conflicts in their homes. The study further revealed that 36% of the conflicts were caused by lack of trust while 34% of the conflicts related to in-laws. The effects of the parental conflicts was related to feeling of emotional disturbance (frequency of 40.8%), feeling of inferior compared to other students (frequency of 38.8%), feeling of insecure

(frequency of 48.3%) and 61.7% of the students felt anxious whenever they saw their parents conflicting. The study further revealed that the students from families facing parental conflicts struggled with social adjustment issues. In this regard, 45.8% of the students whose parents were conflicting felt lonely, 67.0% depended on what others say, 52.0% focused on their failure more than their success while 39% feared criticism, rejection, or disapproval from fellow students. Contextually, the current study differed with the reviewed study in that the current study was done on Kenya context. Methodologically, the reviewed study used a small sample size of 200 as compared to the current study that used a sample size of 400 respondents.

Ernest-Ehibudu, Ijeoma, Obikoya, & Oluwatoyin (2017) carried out a study to examine the influence of parental conflicts on the level of student social adjustment in secondary schools in Nigeria. The study used correlational research design and sample 258 secondary school students from Rivers State in Nigeria. Social adjustment scale and Family conflict scale were used to collect data for the study. The study established that established that there was a significant correlation between family conflicts and student social adjustment at a correlation coefficient of 0.394 and  $p < 0.05$ . The study further established that 51.8% of the variation on social adjustment of students in secondary schools in Nigeria was due to changes in level of parental conflicts in Rivers State in Nigeria. The current study sought to fill the identified contextual research gap by carrying out a study on parental conflicts in Kenyan context.

A study by Ngozi, Peter and Stella (2013) carried out a survey on the influence of parental conflict on adolescents' psychosocial adjustment Nigeria. The study utilized a sample of senior secondary two students (N=150) who were selected using stratified random sampling technique from 5 secondary schools in Lagos. Results of the study revealed a significant influence of parental conflict on adolescents' psychosocial adjustment. The sample size used by this study was too small and the study respondents were from two secondary school students while the current study gathered data from from three students in Murang'a County Kenya.

In the context of Ghana, Ubaidi (2017) focused on the effect of dysfunctional families and social support on the psychological wellbeing of adolescents. The study used survey research design and adopted quantitative approach. The study targeted senior high school students from Greater Accra in Ghana. The study used a sample of 188 students who comprised of 94 girls and 94 boys. A mean score of 12.79 was obtained concerning parental conflicts in students' homes with a standard deviation of 8.516. Due to parental conflicts, students rated their families as functional or dysfunctional. In respect to this, a mean score of 75.53 and a standard deviation of 28.70 for dysfunctional families were obtained while a mean score of 188.61 and a standard deviation of 20.22 for functional family were also obtained. The study concluded that parental conflicts threatened the level of family unity to a large extent. The current study sought to fill this contextual result gap by carrying out a study in Kenyan context in establishing if the results would be comparable.

A study by Kariuki and Aloba (2015) studied the relationship between perceptions of inter-parental conflicts and involvement in delinquent behaviours among selected

Kenyan adolescent students. A descriptive survey study design was employed. The study involved 410 respondents from public schools in Nairobi, among them 53.4% adolescent girls and 46.6% adolescent boys. Findings of the study showed that there existed significant and positive association between inter-parental conflict and adolescent students' engagement in non-illegal deviant behaviour. On the other hand, the study revealed that there were no significant association between adolescent students' perception of inter-parental conflict and their engagement in minor-illegal deviant behaviour. The study findings further revealed the existence of a significant and positive relationship between students' perceptions of alcohol use by parents and the adolescents' engagement in deviant behaviour. Though the research design designs were similar in both studies, the sample size employed was too small in the reviewed study. The reviewed study did not at the same time find out if gender differences in social adjustments with respect to parental conflicts exist. Kariuki and Aloka (2015) was done on an urban set up and therefore family values may vary with rural setup and therefore by carrying out a study in rural set up like Murang'a County helped to fill this contextual research gap.

Bochere (2017) carried out a study to examine the relationship between parental conflicts and bullying among secondary school students in Kiambu County. The study adopted correlational research design and targeted 13,772 students from 55 secondary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County Kiambu County. The study used a sample size of 346 respondents chosen through stratified random sampling. Data for the study was collected through administering questionnaires to the study respondents. It was established that 92.3% of the students observed low level of parental conflict,

while 6.3% experienced moderate parental conflict and with only 1.3% of the respondents experiencing high parental conflict.

Bochere (2017) further established that there was significant relationship between parental conflict and being a victim of bullying in school ( $\chi^2(1)=26.45$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). It was also established that there was a significant relationship between parental conflicts and a student being a perpetrator of bullying in school ( $\chi^2(1) = 18.589$ ,  $p=0.001$ ). The study concluded that students from families whose parents are involved in parental conflicts face social adjustment challenges. However, this study was done in within a sub-county in Kiambu while the current study was broad and was done in Murang'a County.

### **2.3.5 Gender Differences in Social Adjustment**

Packiaselvi and Malathi (2017) carried out a study to examine the social adjustment among high school students in Coimbatore District in India. The study adopted survey research design to achieve its objectives. A sample of 148 high school students from five schools in Coimbatore District was chosen through simple random sampling. The study established that 56.36% of boys had high level of social adjustment while 42.72% of them had moderate level of social adjustment and 0.91% of them had low level of social adjustment. Among the girls, 78.95% of them had high level of social adjustment while 21.05% of them had moderate level of social adjustment. The study concluded that girls had higher level of social adjustment when compared to the level of social adjustment of the boys. This study presents a methodological research gap for its utilization of small sample size of 148 while the

current study utilizes a sample size of 400 respondents and therefore improving the generalizability of the study.

Alam (2017) sought to establish whether gender differences affected the level of social adjustment in secondary school students in Aligarh district in India. The study adopted descriptive research design. A sample of 220 students selected through random sampling from both rural and urban areas, and from both private and public schools. The study participants were aged between 16-17 years. Data for the study was collected using social adjustment inventory for school students. The mean score for social adjustment of boys was 6.87 while that of girls was 7.73. Using t-tests, the study established that there were significant differences in the level of social adjustment based on student gender ( $t=2.21$ ,  $P<0.05$ ). These results favouring boys were attributed to adaptive nature of boys to keep high confidence and feeling of self-worth.

Bhagat (2016) sought to establish the main influence of gender in social adjustments of students in their adolescent stage in Jammu state in India. The study sample 200 students who comprised of 100 boys and 100 girls from 8 schools in Jammu state in India. The study collected data using social adjustment inventory that contained 20 items on social adjustment. The study established that there were significant differences in the level of social adjustment of students based on their gender. In respect to this, the study obtained  $F=6.24$  which was significant at 1% significant level ( $p<0.01$ ).

A study by Makwana and Kaji (2014) carried out a study to examine the social adjustment among secondary school students in Ahmedabad Gujarat District in India. The study specifically sought to test the null hypothesis that there was no significant difference in social adjustments of secondary school students in Ahmedabad Gujarat District in relation to student gender. The study purposively sampled 120 secondary school students who comprised of 60 girls and 60 boys. The respondents were required to answer questions contained in social adjustment inventory. The study established that boys had a social adjustment mean score of 11.75 while the girls had a mean of 10.93. Using t-test, the study established that there were significant differences in social adjustment of secondary school students in Ahmedabad Gujarat District based on their gender ( $t=2.11$ ,  $P<0.05$ ). The null hypothesis was rejected and the study concluded that boys had higher social adjustment than girls did. The reviewed study utilized a sample size of 100 respondents and where the current study though could not be generalizable to a larger population. Therefore, there was a need for a further study utilizing a larger sample size such as the current study with a sample size of 400.

A study by Singh, Tripathi and Mahato (2014) sought to establish whether there were gender differences in social adjustment of students in high school at Raipur city. The study adopted stratified random sampling to select a sample of 186 students who comprised of 72 boys and 114 girls. The students selected were aged between 13 years to 18 years. The study obtained its data by using Bell Adjustment Inventory. The mean social adjustment of boys was 2.361 while that of girls was 3.77. The study further established that there were no significant differences in the level of social adjustment between the students genders due to t-statistic value ( $t=0.101$ ) less than the

critical value and p-value greater than 0.05. The small sample size of 186 respondents used by the current study limited the generalizability of the study findings and therefore the need for a study utilizing a larger sample size as the current study, which utilized a sample size of 400 respondents.

Paramanik, Saha and Mondal (2014) carried out a study to examine social adjustment among secondary school students in India in respect to their gender. The study sampled 471 students who comprised of 234 boys and 237 girls. Adjustment Inventory (AI) was used to collect data in regard to social adjustments of students. The mean score for the social adjustment of boys was found to be 91.61 while that of girls was found to be 87.72. The study further established that there were significant differences in the social adjustment scores between the two genders of students. This was due to an  $F=0.480$  which was significant at 5% significance level. The reviewed study was done in India while the current study was done in Kenya and therefore a contextual research gap.

Dar and Tali (2014) sought to examine the social adjustment challenges that are faced by adolescents from Kashmiri area in northern region of India. The study adopted descriptive research design. The sample of the study was 300 adolescents, which comprised of 150 girls and 150 boys from higher secondary schools in 3 districts of Jammu and Kashmir. The adolescents' age ranged between 16 years to 19 years. The study gathered data by using a questionnaire adopted from Young Problem Inventory. The mean score of boys in social adjustment scale was 69.32 while the mean score for girls was 67.01. The study established that there were no significant differences

between the social adjustments of students due to a t-statistics value of 0.35, which was less than the critical value of 1.96 at 5% significance level.

Dar and Scholar (2014) studied adjustment problems among Kashmiri adolescents. It was a descriptive survey study comprising of three hundred adolescents taken from higher secondary schools of three districts of Jammu and Kashmir. From each district, 50 adolescent boys and 50 adolescent girls were selected by using simple random sampling technique. Youth Problem Inventory was used to collect the data. The results depicted that the mean score of the adolescent boys and girls on family problems was 25.86 and 26.47 respectively, on school problems 16.66 and 15.07 respectively, on social problems 4.90 and 4.31 respectively, and on personal front, it was 20.89 and 22.09 respectively. It was observed that the two groups did not differ significantly in their adjustment problems. The result showed that the adolescent boys and girls of Kashmir did not differ significantly with each other in social adjustment problems.

Deka (2017) studied adjustment problems among adolescent girl students of secondary schools of Morigaon District of Assam, India. A sample of eighty adolescent girl students was taken from the randomly selected secondary schools, out of which forty from urban areas and forty from rural areas. The sample was collected by using simple random sampling technique. Descriptive survey method was used to collect data. Adjustment Inventory was used to collect data. The results revealed that there was no significant difference between adolescent girl students from urban and rural areas in relation to their educational adjustment problems but a significant

difference was found between urban and rural adolescent girls in relation to the social and emotional adjustment problems.

In Nigerian context, Alkali (2016) carried put a study to examine among other factors the differences that exist in social adjustment of secondary school students in Niger state in Nigeria. The study adopted descriptive research design and targeted all senior secondary school students from the seven zones of Niger state. The study used as sample size of 384 students who were selected through stratified random sampling. Social adjustment scale was used to collect data on social adjustment of secondary school students. The mean score of social adjustment for male was found to be 94.9872 while that for female was found to be 94.8057. Using t-test, the study established that there were no significant differences in the level of social adjustment between the student genders. Since the reviewed study was done in Nigeria that upholds different values in regard to families from Kenya due to different cultures and religion, a study on Kenyan context was deemed important.

Kariuki and Aloka (2015) studied age and gender differences in involvement in non-illegal and minor-illegal delinquent behaviours among adolescent students in secondary schools in Nairobi, Kenya. Quantitative and qualitative data was collected through the use of a descriptive study design. The participants comprised 219 females and 191 male students selected by use of stratified and simple random sampling methods. Data was collected using a researcher-designed questionnaire. The findings revealed that adolescents' gender differences in involving in non-illegal delinquent behaviours was  $\chi^2$  (2df, N=410) =3.709,  $p = .157 > .05$ . On the other hand, the adolescents' gender difference in involvement in minor-illegal delinquent behaviours

was  $\chi^2$  (2df, N=410) = (16.021)  $p = .000, < .05$ . The descriptive statistics indicated that some, 58% (females) and 40.3% (males) never got involved in minor illegal delinquent behaviours, while 10% (females) and 5.2% (males) never got involved in non-illegal delinquent behaviours. Some 57% (males) and 42% (females) were involved in occasional minor-illegal delinquent behaviours while 2.1% males were involved in persistent minor-illegal behaviours. The results reveal that female students did not get involved in persistent minor-illegal delinquent behaviour. On the other hand, 76.4% (males) and 74.9% (females) got involved in occasional non-illegal delinquent behaviours while 18.3% (males) and 15.1% (females) got involved in persistent non-illegal behaviours. The results indicate that more males than females were involved in non-illegal and minor-illegal delinquent behaviours.

Focusing on secondary schools in Kisumu East Sub-County, Adhiambo, Odwar and Ayere (2017) carried out a study to establish social adjustment of secondary school students and to establish whether there were gender differences in social adjustment of the students. The study adopted cross-section research design. The study targeted 4500 form four students and through stratified random sampling, a sample of 450 students was selected. Data on social adjustment was obtained by examining the level of student engagement in the school. The mean score for social adjustment of boys was 15.63 while that of girls was 15.15. The study established that there were no significant differences between social adjustments of boys and that of girls in secondary school in Kisumu East-County ( $F=0.489, p<0.05$ ). Though on Kenyan context, a study by Adhiambo, Odwar and Ayere (2017) presents a contextual research gap for it was done in Kisumu County while the current study was done in Murang'a County.

The reviewed studies have presented a collection of studies done either through experiment, observation or through surveys (Shirish, 2012). It has shown examination of results of past studies with a view of opening research gaps for the proposed study (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). The purpose of empirical review was to show previous attempts by other researchers to address the problem under investigation in the current study also show the areas that were not addressed by the previous studies (Sekaran & Bougie, 2011).

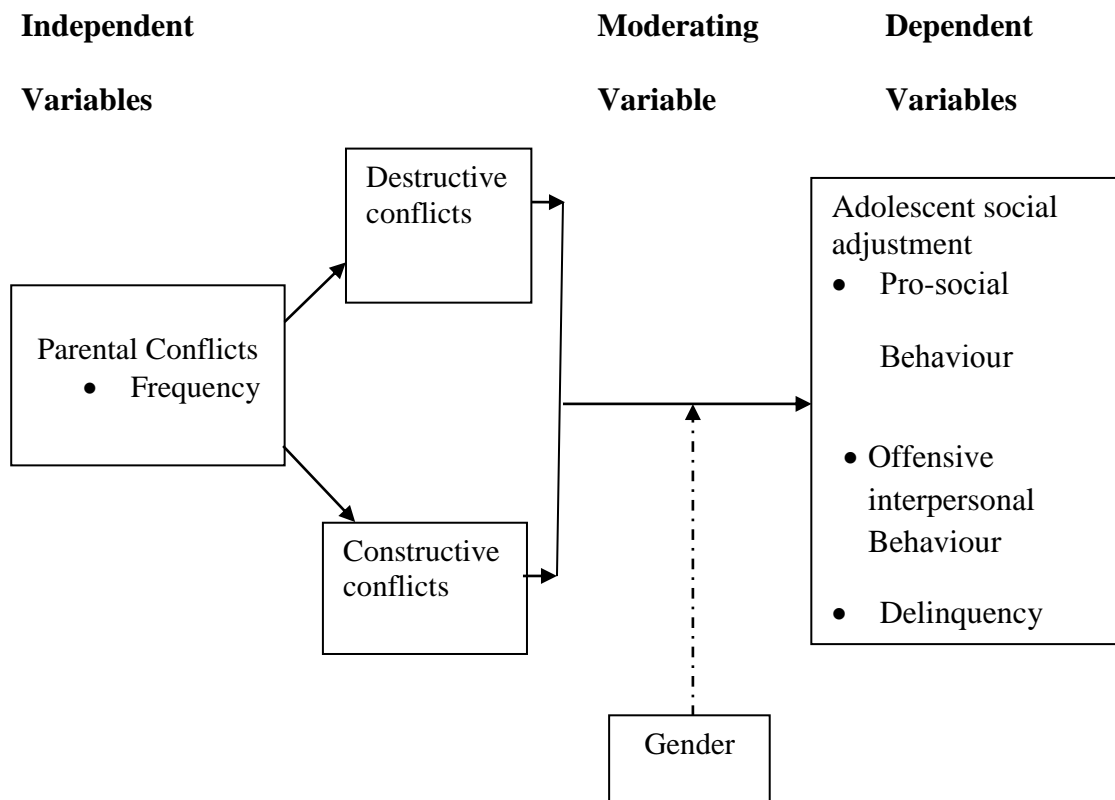
#### **2.4 Summary of Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

The study reviewed relevant theories that guided the study in regard to its objectives as well as relevant literature in support of the study variables from diverse contexts. In regard to theoretical review, the study reviewed two theories; attachment theory by Bowlby (1969) and interpersonal theory by Sullivan (1953). Attachment theory guided the study in regard to the relationship between parental conflict and social adjustment of adolescents. Based on attachment theory, it was found that a child witnessing destructive parental conflict is constantly worried of the possibility of losing one of the parents through separation thus developing anxiety towards separation. Both fear of separation and avoidance of close relationship influence the child's interaction with peers thus affecting their social adjustment during adolescence. Interpersonal theory guided the study on how parental conflict influence how adolescents perceive their parents as being supportive or unsupportive, thus dictating their pattern of adjustment and competence. Based on interpersonal theory, parental conflicts was seen to translate to social incompetence where the child is ill equipped to engage in relationships leading to difficulties in social adjustment.

The literature reviewed in this study indicated that parental conflicts were witnessed in families in diverse contexts. The reviewed literature further showed that adolescents across the globe experienced social adjustment challenges at different levels and due to different reasons. From global perspective, studies by Kumar and Mattanah (2017) in the United States of America, Nan, Hongjian, & Esther (2017) in China and a study by Nazir, Saeed, Sohail, Sher, Azhar and Safdar (2012) in India showed that there parental conflicts affects the level of social adjustment among the adolescents. On African context, studies by Teseletso (2015) in Botswana, Ubaidi (2017) in Ghana, Ernest-Ehibudu, Obikoya and Oluwatoyin (2017) in Nigeria and Kusekwa (2016) in Tanzania indicated that parental conflicts affects the level of social adjustment among the adolescents. Likewise, in Kenyan perspective, studies by Orwa, Aloka and Gudo (2016) in Rarieda sub-county, Gatua (2014) in Nakuru and Uasin Gishu Counties, Njenga (2016) in Kikuyu Sub County, Bochere (2017) in Kiambu County, Kariuki and Aloka (2015) in Nairobi County and a study by Adhiambo, Odwar and Ayere (2017) in Kisumu East Sub-County presented several research gaps. From the literature reviewed, it was found out that no study has been done in Murang'a County involving parental conflicts and social adjustment among adolescents.

## **2.5 Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework of the study provides a diagrammatical presentation of the relationship between independent variables and dependent variables. This relationship is as proposed by the theoretical framework and review of the literature.



**Figure 2:1:** The Conceptual Framework for the Relationship between Parental Conflicts and Social Adjustment of Adolescent Students

**Source:** Author; 2017

The framework presented in Figure 2.1 shows the relationship between the independent and dependent variables of the study. The independent variables are destructive parental conflicts, constructive parental conflicts and frequency of the parental conflicts. The dependent variable is the social adjustment by adolescents. As shown, the study proposes that exposure to both types of conflicts and the frequency of the conflicts has an implication on adolescents’ social adjustment. Further, the study proposes that the relationship inferred between the independent and dependent variables are moderated by the gender of the respondents. That is, though type and frequency of conflicts affects adolescents’ social adjustment, such effects, differ depending on the gender of the adolescent.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The purpose of the study was to establish the relationship between parental conflict and social adjustment of adolescent students in secondary schools in Murang'a County. This chapter gives a description of the research methodology, including research design, population and sample size, sampling procedure, methods of data collection, presentation, data analysis and ethical considerations that were put in place before embarking on the actual research.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

This study adopted a correlational research design with a quantitative approach. Correlational research design seeks to establish the relationship that exists between two measured variables (Dowdy, Wearden, & Chilko, 2011). The current study sought to establish the relationship between parental conflict and social adjustment of adolescent students in secondary schools in Murang'a County and therefore correlational research design was deemed relevant. Correlational research designs are advantageous in that it can be used to show the strength and direction of relationship between two measured variables for informed intervention strategies (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The quantitative research approach enabled conversion of information collected on parental conflict and social adjustment into numerical value that easily provided a clearer presentation of the responses provided by the respondents (Shirish, 2012).

### **3.3 Study Variables**

The independent variable of the study was the parental conflicts. The parental conflict constructs included destructive parental conflicts, constructive parental conflicts and frequency of the conflicts. The dependent variable was social adjustment of adolescent students in secondary schools. This variable was measured by the level of pro-social behaviour, offensive interpersonal and delinquency behaviours. The moderating variable was gender of the adolescent students. The study established the relationship between parental conflict and social adjustment of adolescent students in secondary school in Murang'a County. The study also showed the variation in the level of adolescent student social adjustment depending on the gender of the respondents.

### **3.4 Site of the Study**

The study was conducted in Murang'a County. The Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (2014) revealed that 37% of women from former Central Province counties; Nyeri, Kirinyaga, Murang'a, Nyandarua and Kiambu county who had ever been married had suffered physical violence by a husband, 17% had suffered sexual violence, and 30% had suffered emotional violence. Again, there is not study that has been carried out in Murang'a County to depict the association between the reported parental conflicts and social adjustment of secondary school students and therefore the choice of Murang'a County. The County is densely populated but with diverse distribution varying from one sub county to the other. The Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (2014) revealed that 37% of women from former Central Province counties Murang'a included had had suffered physical violence by a husband, 17%

had suffered sexual violence, and 30% had suffered emotional violence. It is on this reason that the current study was carried out in Murang'a County.

### **3.5 Target Population**

This study targeted the adolescents in public secondary schools in Murang'a County. According to Murang'a County Integrated Development Plan of 2013-2017, the county has 249 schools with 108,774 students (58523 boys and 50251 girls), 206 of the schools are mixed, and 25 are girls' only while 18 are boys' only schools (Murang'a County Government, 2017). The population was appropriate since the secondary schools students are generally at the adolescence stage. The school environment prompts students to apply social skills in order to fit in the school fraternity.

### **3.6 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size**

The study purposefully sampled from three students only, in every school. From three students were chosen for all of them were within the late adolescence (14 to 21 years) as explained by the interpersonal theory adopted in this study and therefore their social adjustment would be in line with the theoretical basis of this study (Packiaselvi & Malathi, 2017). Purposive sampling techniques involve selecting certain units or cases based on a specific purpose rather than randomly (Upagade & Shende, 2012). This technique is used to select a purposive sample that represents a broader group of cases as closely as possible. Advantage of purposive sampling is that the researcher is able to obtain data from the most appropriate respondents rather than including everyone into the study randomly (Chawla & Sodhi, 2011). The choice for form three was based on the fact that they have spent considerable time in the school

environment and their social adjustment abilities tested adequately than form one and two and therefore could provide more valid information on social adjustment. In addition, the form fours were preparing for the national examination and therefore not accessible.

The study also used stratified sampling to categorize students according to gender and school types. The stratified sampling helped to capture students from mixed schools and single gender schools available in Murang'a County. Stratified sampling ensures all the possible characteristics of the population were captured and therefore no biasness in sample representation (Gavora, 2015). Simple random sampling was then used to select individual schools within a given stratum in the county. This was done by writing the names of all secondary schools in each stratum on pieces of paper. The pieces of paper bearing names of individual schools were folded and put into separate boxes according to stratum they belonged into and the required number of schools randomly picked as per the sample size. Further, simple random sampling was used to draw the participating students from each school selected. The simple random sampling ensured that all members of the selected school had an equal chance of being sampled. If the school had more than one stream of form three classes, one class was randomly selected.

The desired sample size for the study was computed using the following formula by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) from a given finite population (P) such that the sample was within  $\pm 0.05$  of the population proportion with a 95% level of confidence.

$$S = \frac{X^2NP(1-P)}{d^2(N-1) + X^2P(1-P)}$$

Where:

S = Required Sample Size

X = Z value taken as 1.96 for 95% confidence interval

N = Population Size

P = Population proportion assumed to be 0.5

d = margin of error, taken as 0.05

$$s = \frac{3.84 \times 108774 \times 0.5(1 - 0.5)}{0.0025(108774 - 1) + 3.84 \times 0.6(1 - 0.5)}$$
$$s = 383$$

Therefore, the sample size for the study was 383 adolescents in secondary schools.

The expected questionnaire return rate of 95.75% and therefore used a sample of 400 secondary school students, which made to 100%.

The sample size was then allocated proportionately to the two genders. The boy's sample is 216 out of 58528 boys while girl's sample was 186 out of 50251 girls which represent 54% and 46% of the population respectively. The allocation is as shown in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1: Sample Frame for Study**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Sample size</b>
<b>Girls</b>	50251	184
<b>Boys</b>	58523	216
<b>Total</b>	<b>108774</b>	<b>400</b>

The county has 249 secondary schools. The study however involved 28 secondary schools, which represent 11% of the school population. According to Gavora (2015) a sampling fraction of between 10-20% of total population in descriptive research is

acceptable while Upagade and Shende (2012) postulates that a sample size of between 10% and 30% is appropriate representative of the population for social sciences. The population of school consisted of, mixed schools 206, boys only 18 and girls only 25 which represented 83%, 7% and 10% respectively. The 28 schools sampled were therefore allocated proportionately as shown in Table 3.2

**Table 3.2: Sample Size Distribution per School Type**

<b>Schools</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>School Sample size</b>	<b>Girls sample size</b>	<b>Boys Sample size</b>
<b>Mixed schools</b>	206	23	141	187
<b>Girls</b>	25	3	43	-
<b>Boys</b>	18	2	0	29
<b>Total</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>216</b>

The inclusion criteria used by the researcher for individuals to be involved in the study were that the respondents must be a form three student and who lives with both parents, that is, mother and father. The students had to be living with both parents to adequately and accurately report on parental conflict.

### **3.7 Research Instruments**

To obtain the required data, the study employed both open and closed ended questions in the questionnaire. Sekaran and Bougie (2011) state that structured questions necessitate getting as much information as possible from the limited space on the form. Questionnaires were used to collect data from adolescents this is because in survey designs, questionnaires provide the most productive tool (Shirish, 2012). In addition to demographic data of the adolescents, information regarding frequency of parental conflict, types of parental conflicts and social adjustments were obtained

through standardized instrument, that is, Children's Perception of Inter-parental Conflict Scale (CPIC) and Reda-Norton scale.

### **3.7.1 Measurement of Social Adjustment of Adolescents**

To measure the social adjustment of adolescents, the scale developed by Reda-Norton (1995) was adapted. The scale assesses peer ratings and self-ratings of adolescents on six sub-scales: (1) delinquency, (2) pro-social behaviour, (3) under-controlled behaviour, (4) depression (5) offensive interpersonal behavior and (6) social anxiety. However for the purpose of this study the researcher used three subscales i.e. delinquency, pro-social and offensive interpersonal behaviour. The adolescents used the three subscales to self-report on social adjustment issues. Ratings based on a 3-point Likert scale was used where the respondents indicated how true each statement on social adjustment issues was (0 = Not at all true, 1 = Somewhat true, and 2 = Very true).

### **3.7.2 Measurement of Frequency and Type of Parental Conflict**

Frequency and type of parental conflict was assessed using the Children's Perception of Inter-parental Conflict Scale (CPIC). This scale is suitable for pre-adolescents and adolescents (Moura, Dos Santos, Rocha and Matos, 2010). Grych, Seid and Fincham (1992) developed the Children's Perception of Inter-parental Conflict Scale (CPIC), a theory-based instrument that measures specific aspects of parental conflict from the child's perspective. The CPIC consists of 48 items organized into nine subscales: Frequency ("I often see my parents arguing."), Intensity ("When my parents have an argument they yell a lot."), Resolution ("Even after my parents stop arguing they stay mad at each other."), Threat ("I get scared when my parents argue."), Coping

Efficacy (“I don’t know what to do when my parents have arguments.”), Content (“My parents often get into arguments about things I do at school.”), Self -Blame (“It’s usually my fault when my parents argue.”), Triangulation (“I feel like I have to take sides when my parents have a disagreement.”), and Stability (“My parents have arguments because they are not happy together). The relevant subscales for this study were Frequency and Intensity subscales, where the frequency subscale was used to infer the frequency of parental conflicts, and intensity subscale the type of parental conflicts (constructive and destructive) as perceived by the adolescent student.

To establish whether the respondents experience low or high parental conflicts, the response of the respondents on each of the six items were scored. The score were as follows: for a ‘true’ response, a score of two was awarded, ‘sort of true’ response a score of one and ‘not true’ response a score of zero. The types of parental conflicts experienced by students were determined by student’s response to the intensity subscales of (CPIC). The score were as follows: for a ‘true’ response, a score of two was awarded, ‘sort of true’ response a score of one and ‘not true’ response a score of zero. Whether it is constructive or destructive conflict that was perceived was determined by the proportion of the respondents’ total score per item. The higher the number of respondents to the affirmative determined the type of parental conflict perceived depending on what the item was testing.

The level of social adjustment of students in secondary schools was determined through the scale developed by Reda-Norton (1995). Three subscales of delinquency, pro-social and offensive interpersonal behavior were used to determine the social adjustment of the students. The score were as follows: for a ‘true’ response, a score of two was awarded, ‘sort of true’ response a score of one and ‘not true’ response a

score of zero. The pro-social behaviours were determined by scoring the pro-social subscale response by the participating students. The offensive interpersonal behaviour was determined by the response to the offensive interpersonal subscale items. The delinquency behaviour was determined by the response to the delinquency subscale items. .

### **3.8 Pilot Study**

Before the study was conducted, a pilot study was carried out in Murang'a County in selected 5 schools which were not later included in the study sample. The pilot sample size was 40 students (10% of the sample size) from the 5 selected schools. It implies that the pilot study results would be close to what would be expected in sampled schools and therefore will enable proper assessment of research instrument. The pilot study was carried to contextualize the standard instruments that were used, that is, Children's Perception of Inter-parental Conflict Scale (CPIC) and Reda-Norton (1995) scale. Feedback from the pilot study enabled the researcher to make the necessarily changes on the potential problem areas identified in the instruments. This enhanced the validity and reliability of the research instruments. The pilot study also helped the researcher to familiarize himself with the area of study for planning data collection process.

### **3.9 Validity and Reliability of the Instruments**

Validity, according to Sekaran and Bougie (2011) is the degree to which a test measures what it purports to measure. The validity of the research instruments was ascertained by use of subject matter experts. With their guidance and advice 35 items from the CPIC instrument that were not relevant to the research problem were

removed. Only 13 items testing frequency and type of parental conflicts were retained. This was intended to improve on the content validity of the instruments. The language as used in the original form of the instrument was also revised to fit the local English version. This improved the face validity of the instrument. On the Reda-Norton (1995) instrument, 31 items were removed retaining 39 items that were relevant to the research problem. The language of the original format was also revised.

On the other hand, Cronbach's Alpha test of internal consistency was used to test the reliability of the research instruments. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for CPIC instrument was 0.81 and that for the Reda-Norton (1995) instrument was 0.84. The recommended reliability level for social science studies is 0.7 (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). This was evidence that the instruments were appropriate measure to assess specific aspects of parental conflict as perceived by secondary school students.

### **3.10 Data Collection Procedures**

The researcher first obtained an introduction letter from the graduate school of Kenyatta University. With the introduction letter, the researcher applied for permission from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). Upon receiving the permit from NACOSTI, sought for Authorization Letter from Murang'a County Director of Education as well as Authorization Letter from Murang'a County Commissioner. After this arrangement, the researcher visited the sampled schools for introduction and also to seek appointment for data collection. On the appointed dates, the researcher directly administered the questionnaires to the respondent's with the help of research assistants. Research assistants were trained

prior to the actual data collection to help in the distribution of the questionnaires to the students. The training involved going through the research instruments. The purpose of the study and the ethical issues to be observed were emphasized to the assistants. The researcher and research assistants clarified any area which required clarification before the respondents filled the instrument.

### **3.11 Data Analysis and Presentation**

The data obtained for this study was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics and presented using tables. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 was used for data analysis. To establish the frequency and type of parental conflict in families of students in secondary schools in Murang'a County, the study used frequencies, percentages, mean, median, mode, standard deviation and skewness. Similarly, to assess the level of social adjustment of students in secondary schools in Murang'a County, the study used frequencies, percentages, mean, median, mode, standard deviation and skewness. To examine the relationship between parental conflict and social adjustment of adolescent students in secondary schools in Murang'a County, the study used Pearson (r) correlation coefficient between scores of parental conflict and social adjustment scores of the students. The null hypothesis of Pearson correlation states that there is no significant correlation between the two measured variables. To find out if there are any gender differences in social adjustments of students in secondary schools in Murang'a County, the study used t-test on the mean score of social adjustment for both boys and girls. The significance level for both statistical tests was chosen to be 0.05 in order to reduce both Type I and Type II error. The p-values show whether a relationship is significant or insignificant. A p-value less than 0.05 (significance level) would imply that an observation is

significant and it does not occur by chance alone. A p-value greater than 0.05 would imply that an observation is not significant and it only occurs due to chance alone.

### **3.12 Data Management and Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations applicable when conducting research with human subject in social science was adhered. The researcher explained the purpose of the study to the students for informed consent purposes. This was very important since the study was based on emotionally disturbing issues and was also working with minors. After this, the respondents were asked to voluntary participate in the study. Those participants that wished not to take part in the study were allowed to do so without victimization. The respondents were assured of the confidentiality of the data and that the information obtained from them was not shared with any other person and was only used for purposes of this study. The respondents were allowed to fill the questionnaire in their privacy and also were instructed not to provide any identifying details about themselves in any part of the questionnaire.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

#### 4.1 Introduction

The study aimed at establishing the relationship between parental conflicts and social adjustment of adolescent students in secondary schools in Murang'a County, Kenya. The chapter begins with demographic characteristics of the respondents followed by the presentation of the results on the research objectives.

#### 4.2 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

A total of 28 secondary schools consisting of 23 mixed schools, 3 girls' and 2 boys' only schools in the county were visited from which, 400 respondents who met the inclusion criterion successively filled and returned the questionnaires. The response rate was therefore 100%.

Out of the 400 respondents, 184 were female while 216 were male. Additionally, 328 of the respondents (both girls and boys) were drawn from mixed schools, 43 girls from girls' only schools while 29 boys were from boys' only schools as shown Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1: Gender Distribution of the Respondents**

			Gender of Respondents		Total
			Female	Male	
Type of School	Mixed	Frequency	141	187	328
		%	35.3	46.8	82.0
	Boys Only	Frequency	0	29	29
		%	0.0	7.3	7.3
	Girls Only	Frequency	43	0	43
		%	10.8	0.0	10.8
Total	Frequency	184	216	400	
	%	46.0	54.0	100.0	

Most of the students (82%) were from mixed secondary schools, followed by those in girls' only schools (10.8%) and lastly those in boys only schools (7.3%). According Murang'a County Educational Statistics of 2016, there were 206 mixed secondary schools, 25 girls' only while 18 were boys' only schools. This implies mixed secondary schools are many compared to the rest of school categories and that's why there were a high percentage of mixed secondary schools as obtained in the current study per Table 4.1.

Data were also collected on the age distribution of the respondents and the findings are presented in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2: Age Distribution of the Respondents**

<b>Age ( Years)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
15.00	29	7.3
16.00	97	24.3
17.00	160	40.0
18.00	79	19.8
19.00	32	8.0
No. Response	3	0.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The age of the students was ranged between 15 years and 19 years. Out of 400, 40% of the participating students were 17 years of age, 24.3% were aged 16 years, 19.8% were aged 18 years, 8.0% were aged 19 years and only 7.3% of them were aged 15%. The range of the respondents' age was within the late adolescence (14 to 21 years) as explained by the interpersonal theory adopted in this study and therefore their social adjustment would be in line with the theoretical basis of this study (Packiaselvi & Malathi, 2017).

A further analysis of the respondents' age was conducted in order to show the nature of data distribution and whose results are as indicated in Table 4.3.

**Table 4.3: Descriptive Statistics for the Respondents' Age**

<b>Descriptive Statistics</b>	<b>Value</b>
Mean	16.97
Median	17.00
Mode	17.00
Std. Deviation	1.03
Skewness	0.10

From Table 4.3, the mean, mode and median were approximately equal (Approximately 17 years) and given the low value of skewness ( $sk= 0.1$ ), the distribution of the age of the respondents can be said to be approximately normally distributed. A standard deviation of 1.03 indicates that the age of the respondents on average differed with only one year and therefore the respondents were within the same age bracket. Again, from the demographic information collected, the respondents were at the adolescent stage and therefore capable of being aware of occurrences of parental conflicts. A study by Kumar and Mattanah (2017) involving students aged between 13-19 years indicated that parental conflicts caused social adjustment challenges to the students. Similarly, Kariuki and Aloka (2015) established that children aged 13 years to 18 years experienced parental conflicts leading to delinquent behaviours. On the same context, Mathil (2016) established that senior secondary school student aged 13-19 years faced social adjustment problems. In light to the above studies, the age group that participated in the current study was capable of giving reliable feedback on parental conflicts and social adjustment.

Data were also gathered on the highest educational level achieved by both parents and the findings are presented in Table 4.4.

**Table 4.4: Cross Tabulation of Parental Education**

			Fathers Level of Education			Total
			University	Secondary Level	Primary Level	
<b>Mothers' Level of Education</b>	University	Frequency	46	10	3	59
		%	12.5	2.7	0.8	16.0
	Secondary Level	Frequency	43	144	15	202
		%	11.7	39.1	4.1	54.9
	Primary Level	Frequency	7	34	66	107
		%	1.9	9.2	17.9	29.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	96	188	84	368	
	<b>%</b>	26.1	51.1	22.8	100.0	

Table 4.4 shows that 12.5% of the students come from families who's both parents had attained university qualification and 11.7% from families whose father had university level of education and their mother had secondary level of education. The study also found out that only 1.9% had their father with university level of education and their mother had primary level of education. It was further established that 2.7% of the students come from families whose father had secondary level of education and mother had university level of education. It was also established that 39.1% of students had their both parents with secondary level of education. The study revealed that 9.2% of the respondents came from families whose fathers had secondary level of education and mothers had only primary education. It was noted also that 0.8% of the students came from families whose fathers had primary level of education and mother had university level of education. This study also established that 4.1% of the students come from families whose father had only primary level of education and their mothers had secondary level of education. Lastly, the study revealed that 17.9%

of the students come from families whose both parents had only primary education.

In summary, 16.0% of mothers had university level of education, 54.9% of them had secondary level of education and 29.1% of them had only primary education. Focusing on fathers, 26.1% of the fathers had university level of education, 51.1% of them had secondary level of education while 22.8% of fathers had only primary level of education. The level of education of couples was very important in determining the level of conflicts between parents. This is supported by a study by Wu, Wong, Yu, Fok, Yeung, Lam and Liu (2016) in a study to examine the parenting approaches and family functionality. Wu, Wong, Yu, Fok, Yeung, Lam and Liu (2016) indicated that the level of education of parents determined the level of inter-parental conflicts. Özmete and Bayolu (2013) further indicated that the level of education affected the level of conflicts between couples.

### **4.3 Findings from the Study**

The findings were provided as per the five objectives of the study.

#### **4.3.1 The Frequency of Parental Conflicts in Families of Students in Secondary Schools**

The findings in this section were guided by the first objective of the study which was to establish the frequency of parental conflicts in families of students in secondary schools in Murang'a County. The frequency of parental conflicts was deduced from a set of six statements in appendix II section B: statements; 1, 3, 5, 6, 8, and 10 that required the respondents to cite the frequency in which parental conflicts occurred or was observed. The respondents were required to answer the statements by citing "not true", "sort of true" or "true". The results of the frequency subscale are presented in

Table 4.5.

**Table 4.5: Frequency of Parental Conflict**

Statement (N=400)	Not True		Sort of True		True		No Response	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
I never see my parents arguing or disagreeing.	131	32.8	57	14.3	178	44.5	34	8.5
They may not think I know it, but my parents argue	207	51.8	69	17.3	103	25.8	21	5.3
My parents are often mean to each other even when I'm around.	219	54.8	55	13.8	102	25.5	24	6.0
I often see or hear my parents arguing.	154	38.5	63	15.8	148	37.0	35	8.8
My parents rarely argue.	124	31.0	63	15.8	173	43.3	40	10
My parents often harass and complain about each	251	62.8	46	11.5	79	19.8	24	6.0

The results indicate that out of 400 respondents, 44.5% have never seen their parents arguing or disagreeing. Further, 51.8% indicated that it is not true on the statement, ‘they may not think I know it, but my parents argue or disagree a lot’; 54.8% indicated as not true that their parents are often mean to each other even when they are around; 38.5% indicated not true that they often see or hear their parents arguing; 43.3% indicated as true that their parents rarely ever argue while 62.8% indicated as not true, that their parents often harass and complain about each other around the house. Based on the responses reported in Table 4.5, it can be said that majority of the students indicated no conflict perceived between their parents. However, the rest of the respondents either failed to respond or affirmed having perceived parental conflicts.

Descriptive statistics for the parental conflict scores was done in order to establish the

measure of parental conflict frequency on average from the diverse responses given by the respondents as shown in Table 4.6.

**Table 4.6: Descriptive Statistics for the Parental Conflict Scores**

		<b>N</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Skewness</b>
Parental Score	Conflict	<b>322</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>12.00</b>	<b>5.15</b>	<b>2.64</b>	<b>0.13</b>

To obtain the mean in score for parental conflicts, for a ‘true’ response, a score of two was awarded, ‘sort of true’ response a score of one and ‘not true’ response a score of zero for each of the six items. Therefore the maximum score was 12 and minimum score was 0. From Table 4.6 the mean score for respondents was 5.15 and in respect to the findings, a mean score of 5.15 is below the score of 6.0 in a scale ranging from 0-12. Likewise, a standard deviation of 2.64 in a scale of 12 points is considered low and therefore there was high level of consensus in regard to the six items measuring the frequency of parental conflicts. In respect to this, it was concluded that the students perceived low frequency of parental conflict.

Further, all responses of ‘not true’ were coded as low frequency of parental conflict and response of “true’ and ‘sort of true’ were coded as high frequency of parental conflict. In doing this, all negatively stated statements among the six statements measuring the frequency of parental conflicts were reverse coded using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. The grouping of scores simplified the interpretation of the data as shown in Table 4. 7.

**Table 4.7: Levels of Parental Conflict**

<b>Parental Conflict</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Low	223	55.8
High	99	24.8
Total	322	80.5
No Response	78	19.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The results shows that 55.8% of the respondents perceived low frequency parental conflict while 24.8% perceived high frequency of parental conflict. The findings therefore reveal that the frequency of parental conflict in Murang'a County as perceived by the secondary school students was relatively low. These results are consistent with those by Kusekwa (2016) who established that 21.1% of the students indicated that the parental conflicts were intense and frequent while 74.4% of the respondents indicated that the conflicts were witnessed a few times. Kusekwa (2016) also noted that 4.4% of the respondents did not experience parental conflicts at their homes.

However, the findings in this study differed with that by Njenga (2016) whose study established that 51.1% of the couples always engaged in conflicts with their spouse, 26.7% of couples also cited that quite often they engaged in conflicts while only 13.3% of them cited that they rarely engaged in conflicts with their spouse. It was further noted from Njenga's (2016) study that 8.9% of couples never engaged in conflicts with their spouses. Despite low level of parental conflicts as identified in the current study, Ubaidi (2017) noted that there is no given number of parental conflicts and incidences that a child has to be exposed to in order to infer social adjustment problem at adolescence. In respect to this, Ubaidi (2017) recommended absence of parental conflicts.

#### **4.3.2 Types of Parental Conflicts in Families of Students in Secondary Schools**

The second objective of the study sought to find out the type of parental conflict in families of students in secondary schools in Murang'a County. Type of parental conflicts was measured using the intensity subscales in CPIC scale. According to Özmete and Bayolu (2013), parental conflicts can either be destructive or constructive. The destructive conflicts are characterized by intense verbal and physical aggression while constructive conflicts are resolution oriented. The type of parental conflict was deduced from a set of seven statements in appendix II section B: statements; 2, 4, 7, 9, 11, 12 and 13. The score were as follows: for a 'true' response, a score of two was awarded, 'sort of true' response a score of one and 'not true' response a score of zero. True and sort of true responses were combined to indicate the presence of parental conflict since sort of true is an indicator of somehow the respondent has witnessed conflict even though not in large scale. The type of parental conflict, whether constructive or destructive conflict, it was determined by the proportion of the respondents' total score per item. The higher the number of respondents to the affirmative determined the type of parental conflict perceived depending on what the item was testing. If the higher proportion of the respondents indicated "Not True, response, then the type of parental conflict was perceived to be constructive and if the response is "True", the type of parental conflict was perceived to be destructive. The results for the analysis of the intensity subscale are as shown in Table 4.8.

**Table 4.8: Types of Parental Conflicts**

Statement	Not True		True		No Response		Interpretation
	F	%	F	%	F	%	
My parents get really mad when they argue.	242	60.5	131	32.8	27	6.8	Constructive
When my parents have a disagreement, they discuss it quietly.	196	49	178	44.5	26	6.5	Constructive
When my parents have an argument, they say hurtful things to each other.	254	63.5	122	30.5	24	6.0	Constructive
When my parents have an argument, they shout at each other.	244	61	132	33	24	6.0	Constructive
My parents hardly ever shout when they have a disagreement.	143	35.8	233	58.3	24	6.0	Destructive
My parents have broken or thrown things during an argument.	260	65	115	28.8	25	6.3	Constructive
My parents have pushed or thrown each other during an argument.	281	70.3	95	23.8	24	6.0	Constructive

From the findings in table 4.8, 60.5% of the students indicated as not true that parents get really mad when they argue, 49% indicated as not true that when their parents have a disagreement they discuss it quietly, 63.5% indicated as not true that when their parents have an argument they say hurtful things to each other, 61% of the respondents indicated as not true that when their parents have an argument they shout at each other. It was also noted that 70.3% indicated as not true that their parents have pushed or thrown each other during an argument while 58.3% indicated as true that their parents ever shout when they have a disagreement.

The findings in table 4.8 show that the respondents perceived both destructive and constructive type of parental conflicts with majority (5 statements out of 6 statements) perceiving constructive compared to destructive conflicts (1 statement out of 6 statements). Those perceiving constructive conflicts, characterized parental conflicts as generally devoid of violence, shouting among other aggressive acts. Conversely, those who perceived destructive conflicts associated parental conflicts with shouting, throwing of items and parents pushing and shoving each other during arguments.

The findings on the characterization of constructive conflicts as devoid of violence, shouting among other aggressive acts corresponds with earlier findings by Wu, Wong, Yu, Fok, Yeung, Lam and Liu (2016) who found out that such conflicts exists when parents agree on how conflict can be resolved and how the conflict is not a serious threat and eventually can be worked out. The findings in this study are in disagreement with the findings by a study carried out by Kusekwa (2016) who established that parental conflicts were associated with fear, depression, stress, loneliness, anger and nightmares. Similarly, the study findings differ with those by Njenga (2016) who established that 6.7% of the conflicts lasted for one year, 17.8% lasted for between two to five years while 75.5% of the conflicts between couples lasted for over five years. Njenga (2016) further established that most of these conflicts (82.2%) were led to injuries and therefore destructive.

#### **4.3.3 The Level of Social Adjustment of Students in Secondary Schools in Murang'a County**

The level of social adjustment of students in secondary schools in Murang'a County was determined by use of a scale developed by Reda-Norton (1995). The scale was used for self-ratings by the respondents on three sub-scales; delinquency behaviours,

offensive interpersonal behaviours and pro-social behaviours.

#### 4.3.3.1 Delinquency Behaviour of the Students

The delinquency behaviour of the students was realized from a set of eleven statements in appendix II section C: statements 4, 8, 9, 11, 14, 19, 21, 22, 25, 26 and 34. The score were as follows: for a ‘very true’ response, a score of two was awarded, ‘somewhat true’ response a score of one and ‘not at all true’ response a score of zero.

The results for frequency of delinquency behaviours were as shown in Table 4.9.

**Table 4.9: Frequency of Delinquency Behaviours of the Students**

Statement	Not at All True		Some What True		Very True		No Response	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
	I have been in trouble with school	299	74.8	38	9.5	51	12.8	12
I argue with teachers	290	72.5	47	11.8	50	12.5	13	3.3
I have bad friends	278	69.5	69	17.3	44	11	9	2.3
I usually lie and cheat	221	55.3	97	24.3	67	16.8	15	3.8
I often skip classes or day of school	287	71.8	43	10.8	43	10.8	27	6.8
I often use drugs or alcohol	301	75.3	37	9.3	47	11.8	15	3.8
I often get into fights	303	75.8	48	12	35	8.8	14	3.5
I have ever spent out all night or run away from home	224	56	38	9.5	122	30.5	16	4
I start fights with others	322	80.5	28	7	31	7.8	19	4.8
I often smoke cigarettes	325	81.3	33	8.3	27	6.8	15	3.8
I steal	294	73.5	37	9.3	41	10.3	28	7.0

From table 4.9 the results indicate that among the statements that had the highest percentage response of “not at all true” were: I have been in trouble with school administration (74.8%), I often use drugs or alcohol (75.3%); I often get into fights (78.3%); I start fights with others (80.5%); and I often smoke cigarettes (81.3%). The

respondents further disagreed that they argue with teachers (72.5%), had bad friends (69.5%) and often skipped classes or day of school (71.8%). This implied that in Murang'a County there were few incidences of troubling the school administration, skipping classes, arguing with teachers, fighting and smoking cigarettes among the adolescent students. The study carried out further analysis to provide descriptive statistics of delinquency behaviour scores in order to describe the tendency of the respondents on average in responding to the items as shown in Table 4.10

**Table 4.10: Descriptive Statistics of Delinquency Behaviour Scores of the Students**

<b>Descriptive Statistics</b>	<b>Value</b>
Mean	4.78
Median	4.00
Mode	3.00
Std. Deviation	3.59
Skewness	1.20
Range	24.00
Minimum	0.00
Maximum	24.00

The maximum possible score was 24. A respondent scoring 12 and above in this subscale was considered high on delinquency behaviour. From Table 4.10, the mean score obtained was 4.78, below the average of 12.0, indicating that majority of the respondents rated themselves low on the delinquency behaviour scores. The data was found not to be normally distributed due to a deviation between the mean, mode and median. There was relatively low consensus due to a standard deviation of 3.59. The data was relatively symmetric data due to a mean score of 4.78 which is close to zero. Mean score below 12.0 was considered low while mean score of 12 and above was considered high. The overall level of delinquency behaviours among the respondents is as indicated in Table 4.11.

**Table 4.11: Level of Delinquency Behaviour of the Students**

<b>Delinquency Behaviour</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Low	299	74.8
High	22	5.5
Total	321	80.3
No Response	79	19.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100.0</b>

From Table 4.11, majority of the respondents, 74.8% rated themselves low in delinquency behaviours inferring low level of delinquency behaviours among the students in secondary schools in Murang'a County.

#### **4.3.3.2 Offensive Interpersonal Behaviour of the Students**

The offensive interpersonal behaviour of the students was inferred from a set of sixteen statements in appendix II section C: statements 2, 5, 6, 7, 12, 13, 16, 17, 18, 20, 29, 30, 31, 33, 36 and 39. The score were as follows: for a 'true' response, a score of two was awarded, 'sort of true' response a score of one and 'not true' response a score of zero. A respondent scoring 50% and above in this subscale was considered to be high on offensive interpersonal behaviour. The results for the frequency of the offensive interpersonal behaviours of the students are as shown in Table 4.12.

**Table 4.12: Frequency of Offensive Interpersonal Behaviours of Students**

Statement	Not at All Not True		Some What True		Very True		No Response	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
I am mean and cruel to others	281	70.3	64	16.0	41	10.3	14	3.5
I am usually untidy, dirty, smells bad	350	87.5	20	5.0	21	5.3	9	2.3
I hate not getting my own way	158	39.5	103	25.8	127	31.8	12	3.0
I am bossy and aggressive	223	55.8	99	24.8	63	15.8	15	3.8
I often act younger than my age	253	63.3	63	15.8	75	18.8	9	2.3
I am easily annoyed or have bad tempers	160	40.0	96	24.0	132	33.0	12	3.0
I usually complain	191	47.8	105	26.3	94	23.5	10	2.5
I initiate quarrels with other students for no good reason	272	68.0	56	14.0	58	14.5	14	3.5
I am usually a bother or annoy others	268	67.0	72	18.0	47	11.8	13	3.3
I usually get offended easily	221	55.3	98	24.5	65	16.3	16	4.0
I usually make fun of others	150	37.5	91	22.8	140	35.0	19	4.8
I often destroy my own or other students things	301	75.3	36	9.0	30	7.5	33	8.3
I am picked on and made fun of by others	207	51.8	88	22.0	77	19.3	28	7.0
I often act childishly	277	69.3	47	11.8	40	10.0	36	9.0
I usually threatens others	269	67.3	52	13.0	50	12.5	29	7.3
I am disliked by others	263	65.8	78	19.5	32	8.0	27	6.8

From table 4.12 among the statements that received a high percentage of “not at all true” response were: I am mean and cruel to others (70.3%); I am usually untidy, dirty, smells bad (87.5%), I often destroy my own or other student’s things (75.3%); I often act childishly (69.3%) and I usually threaten others (67.3%). Other statements that the respondents disagreed with include: I am bossy and aggressive (55.8%); I often act younger than my age (63.3%); I usually get offended easily (55.3%); I am picked on and made fun of by others (51.8%) and I am disliked by others (65.8%). On

the other, respondents agreed that: I hate not getting my own way (Some What True=25.8%, True=31.8%); am easily annoyed or have bad tempers (Some What True=26.3%, True=23.5%) and I usually complain (Some What True=22.8%, True=35.0%). A further analysis provided descriptive statistics of the offensive interpersonal behaviours as shown in Table 4.13.

**Table 4.13: Descriptive Statistics of Offensive Interpersonal Behaviour of the Students Scores**

<b>Descriptive Statistics</b>	<b>Value</b>
Mean	8.79
Median	8.00
Mode	6.00
Std. Deviation	4.81
Skewness	0.45
Minimum	0.00
Maximum	24.00

A mean score of 8.79 in scale of 0-24 was considered low score in offensive interpersonal behaviours. Relatively high standard deviation of 4.81 indicated that there was low consensus among the respondents rating themselves low on the offensive interpersonal behaviour scores. The data was considered highly symmetrical due to a skewness of 0.45 which was very close to zero. Significant differences on the mean, mode and median indicated that the data was not normally distributed. To capture the overall level of offensive interpersonal behaviours of the respondents, a summary of the scores was done and the results were as shown in Table 4. 14. Very True and Somewhat true responses were combined to indicate the presence of offensive interpersonal behaviour since somewhat true is an indicator of somehow the respondent has high offensive interpersonal behaviour. “Not True” response was considered low level of offensive interpersonal behaviour.

**Table 4.14: Level of Offensive Interpersonal Behaviour of the Students**

<b>Offensive Interpersonal Behaviour</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Low	297	74.3
High	21	5.3
Total	318	79.5
No Response	82	20.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100.0</b>

From Table 4.14, 74.3% of the respondents rated themselves low on offensive interpersonal behaviours implying low level of offensive interpersonal behaviours among students in secondary schools in Murang'a County.

#### **4.3.3.3 The Pro-social Behaviour of the Students**

The pro-social behaviour of the students was construed from a set of twelve statements in appendix II section C: statements 1, 3, 10, 15, 23, 24, 27, 28, 32, 35, 37, and 38. The results for pro-social behaviours are shown in Table 4.15.

**Table 4.15: Frequency of Pro-Social Behaviour of the Students**

Statement	Not at All True		Some What True		Very True		No Response	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
I am liked by others	56	14.0	172	43.0	164	41.0	8	2.0
I am good at sports	118	29.5	99	24.8	173	43.3	10	2.5
I have many friends	108	27.0	80	20.0	202	50.5	10	2.5
I am good looking	61	15.3	80	20.0	249	62.3	10	2.5
I often help others	70	17.5	67	16.8	245	61.3	18	4.5
I trusted and depended upon by classmates	177	44.3	101	25.3	104	26.0	18	4.5
I am not selfish	94	23.5	56	14.0	233	58.3	17	4.3
I am friendly	73	18.3	67	16.8	244	61.0	16	4
I make friends, but slowly	136	34.0	118	29.5	369	92.3	31	7.8
I am outgoing and active in social activities	121	30.3	108	27.0	139	34.8	32	8.0
I am trustworthy, loyal	79	19.8	77	19.3	211	52.8	33	8.3
I have close friends	58	14.5	59	14.8	255	63.8	28	7.0

From table 4.15 the results show that among the statements that had high percentage of very true as the response were ‘I am good looking, I often help others, I am friendly, I make friends, but slowly and I have close friends, with 62.3%, 61.3, 61%, 92.3% and 63.8% respectively. In order to establish the tendency of respondents in responding to the items in the questionnaire, descriptive statistics were computed for pro-social response and the result was as shown in Table 4.16

**Table 4.16: Descriptive Analysis of Pro-social Scores of the Students**

Descriptive Analysis	Value
Mean	15.19
Median	16.00
Mode	16.00
Std. Deviation	4.071
Skewness	-0.35
Range	24.00
Minimum	0.00
Maximum	24.00

From Table 4.16 the results show that while the maximum score was 24 the mean score was 15.19. This implied that on average, the respondents regarded themselves as pro-social. A mean of 15.19, mode of 16.00 and median of 16.00 indicated that the data was normally distributed due to relatively equal mode, mean and median. However, a relatively high standard deviation implied that there was relatively low consensus among the respondents in responding to the items in the questionnaire. Low skewness of -0.35 indicated that the data was highly symmetrical.

To capture the overall level of pro-social behaviours among the students a summary of the response was done and the results were as presented in Table 4.17. In this regard, Very True and Somewhat True responses were combined to indicate the presence of pro-social behaviour of the students since sort of true is an indicator of somehow the respondent has high pro-social behaviour. “Not True” response was considered low level of offensive interpersonal behaviour.

**Table 4.17: Level of Pro-social Behaviour of the Students**

<b>Pro-social Behaviour</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Low	79	19.8
High	249	62.3
Total	328	82.0
No Response	72	18.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100.0</b>

From Table 4.17 it shows that overall 62.3% of the respondents rated themselves as high in pro-social behaviours implying high level of pro-social behaviours among students in secondary schools in Murang’a County.

Combining the three measures of social adjustment, the study concluded that on

average the students did not have social adjustment issues due to low level of delinquent behaviours, low offensive interpersonal behaviours and high pro-social behaviours among the students in secondary schools in Murang'a County.

Findings by Mathil (2016) were in line with the findings in the current study. Mathil (2016) found out that there were few incidences of social adjustment problems among the youths especially those from extended families. However, the findings in the current study are in disagreement with those by National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (2017) who found out that adolescent orphans faced social adjustment problems in the classroom such as lack of co-operation, feeling of insecurity and inferiority complex. Similarly, the study findings in the current study differed with those by Jayachandran (2017) who found out that that 90.4% of secondary school students had high social adjustment problems such as emotional symptoms, conduct problems and peer problems.

The findings in a study by Orwa, Aloka and Gudo (2016) differs with the findings of the current study in that, Orwa, Aloka and Gudo (2016) established that adolescents were faced with social adjustment problems whereby majority of them kept imagining that other students were talking about them. Orwa, Aloka and Gudo (2016) also revealed that adolescents were not willing to freely mingle with other students regarding social events. Findings by Orwa, Aloka and Gudo (2016) also showed that students in secondary schools kept quiet and took a long time to make friends with fellow students. Similarly, the findings in the current study differs with those by Gatua (2014) who found out that 75.6% of students had high level of social adjustment.

#### **4.3.4 Relationship between Types of Parental Conflicts and Social Adjustment of the Adolescents in Secondary Schools in Murang'a County**

To determine the relationship between parental conflict and social adjustment of adolescent students, Pearson correlation coefficient between scores obtained in the type of parental conflict and social adjustment status of the students was computed. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation is applied when the data on the two variables is quantitatively measured and scores obtained on each of the variables. Pearson Product Moment Correlation is applied when both the variables are ratio or interval measurements; and linearly related. To ensure that the data was interval data, the ordinal responses for parental conflicts (True=2, Sort of true=1, and Not True=0) and those for social Adjustment (Very True=2, Somewhat True=1, Not At All True=0) were coded. The study further calculated the mean scores for each of the variables on the responses for each of the respondent. Since the computed mean score were interval data, the mean score were used to establish the relationship between parental conflict and social adjustments as presented in Table 4.18

**Table 4.18: Correlation between Parental Conflict Mean Scores and Social Adjustments Mean Scores**

		<b>Parental Conflicts</b>	<b>Pro-Social Behaviours</b>	<b>Offensive Interpersonal Behaviours</b>	<b>Delinquency Behaviours</b>
<b>Parental Conflicts</b>	Pearson r	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
	N	322			
<b>Pro-Social Behaviours</b>	Pearson r	-0.104	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.092			
	N	265	328		
<b>Offensive Interpersonal Behaviours</b>	Pearson r	0.241*	-0.177*	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.003		
	N	259	288	318	
<b>Delinquency Behaviours</b>	Pearson r	0.171*	-0.116*	0.600*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.006	0.046	0.000	
	N	262	295	293	321

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Pearson correlation shows both magnitude and direction of the relationship between two measured variables. In regard to magnitude of relationship, correlation coefficient ranges from -1 to +1. A correlation coefficient of -1 implies a perfect negative correlation while a correlation coefficient of +1 implies a perfect positive correlation. A correlation coefficient of zero implies that the two variables are not related. A correlation coefficient in the range of  $|0| < r < |0.300|$  implies that the strength of relationship is weak, a correlation coefficient in the range of  $|0.300| \leq r < |0.700|$  implies that the strength of relationship is moderate, a correlation coefficient in the range of  $|0.700| \leq r < |1|$  implies that the relationship is strong.

In regard to the direction of relationship, the sign that accompanies the correlation coefficient indicates the direction of the relationship which can be either negative or positive according to the sign. A positive correlation would imply a directly proportional relationship while a negative correlation would imply an inverse relationship between the two measured variables.

Relationship between parental conflict scores and the pro-social behaviour scores among students in secondary schools in Murang'a County was found to be negative ( $r=-0.104$ ), weak (in the range of  $|0|<r<|0.300|$ ). This implied that high parental conflicts may result low to pro-social behaviours among the adolescent students. The higher the Parental conflicts the low the intention and willingness to help others among the adolescent students.

In regard to relationship between parental conflict and offensive interpersonal behaviours, the study found out that there was a weak positive correlation ( $r=0.241$ ) between parental conflict and offensive interpersonal behaviours among students in secondary schools in Murang'a County. Therefore led to the rejection of the null hypothesis for the Pearson correlation. It implied that an increase in parental conflicts led to an increase in offensive interpersonal behaviours.

The study further found out that there was a weak positive correlation ( $r=0.171$ ) between parental conflicts and delinquency behaviours among students in secondary schools in Murang'a County. This implied that an increase in parental conflicts led to an increase in delinquency behaviours among students in secondary schools in Murang'a County.

The study further found out that both offensive interpersonal behaviours and delinquency behaviours among students in secondary schools in Murang'a County were related negatively to pro-social behaviours at correlation coefficients of  $-0.177$  and  $-0.116$  respectively. This implied that an increase in offensive interpersonal behaviours and delinquency behaviours among students in secondary schools in Murang'a County lowered the level of pro-social behaviours. In addition, the study

found out that both offensive interpersonal behaviours and delinquency behaviours among students in secondary schools in Murang'a County were positively related ( $r=0.600$ ). This implied that a student who displayed either of the behaviours was likely to be connected with the other behaviours.

In totality, the Pearson correlation coefficient results revealed that there was indeed a relationship between parental conflicts and social adjustment among the secondary schools students in Murang'a County. The results show that students who had a high experience of parental conflicts were more likely to portray offensive interpersonal and delinquency behaviours in the course of their interaction with other students and school administration. On the contrary, those who experienced low parental conflicts were more likely to be pro-social and less likely to portray offensive interpersonal behaviours or delinquency behaviours.

The findings of the study have collaborative value both from theoretical perspective and in respect to earlier findings of other studies both outside the country and in local context. Kumar and Mattanah (2017) in the United States of America established that parental conflict was significantly related to feeling of depression and loneliness. The study by Kumar and Mattanah (2017) concluded that students from families whose parents were involved in inter-parental conflicts more likely to face social adjustment challenges in their schools which is in line with the findings of the current study. A study Nan, Hongjian, & Esther (2017) concluded that adolescents in China faced social adjustment challenges with increase in parental conflicts in families in China. This is the case in Murang'a County according to the findings of the current study. Nazir, Saeed, Sohail, Sher, Azhar and Safdar (2012) in India revealed that the students from families facing parental conflicts struggled with social adjustment

issues which are in line with the findings of the current study.

Ernest-Ehibudu, Obikoya and Oluwatoyin (2017) in Nigeria found out that there was a significant correlation between family conflicts and student social adjustment as it is the case in Murang’a County. The findings in this study are further in line with the findings by Bochere (2017) in Kiambu County who found out that there was a significant relationship between parental conflicts and a student being a perpetrator of bullying in school. The findings in this study are also in consistent with those by Kariuki and Aloka (2015) who found out that parental conflicts were seen to affect the student social adjustment where it was associated to delinquent behaviours.

#### **4.3.5 Gender Differences in Social Adjustments of Adolescent Students in Murang’a County**

To establish the gender differences in social adjustments, the differences between male and female behaviours in respect to pro-social, offensive interpersonal and delinquency behaviours were assessed. The assessment was conducted through a t-test for the respondents’ social adjustment mean scores. The mean difference in the social adjustment score obtained by the respondents was computed and the results were as shown in Table 4.19.

**Table 4.19: Mean Differences in Adolescent Social Adjustment Scores**

<b>Social Adjustment</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Pro-social Score	Female	148	15.18	4.02
	Male	180	15.21	4.12
Offensive Interpersonal Behaviours Score	Female	148	8.44	4.88
	Male	170	9.09	4.75
Delinquency Behaviours Scores	Female	144	3.95	3.06
	Male	177	5.46	3.84

According to the results in Table 4.19, female had a slightly lower score on pro-social

(mean=15.18) as compared to male with a mean score of 15.21. Table 4.19 further shows that the mean score for both offensive interpersonal and delinquency behaviours was different for male and female. The male gender had a higher mean score in both offensive interpersonal and delinquency behaviours at 9.09 and 5.46 respectively compared to female 8.44 in offensive interpersonal behaviours and 3.95 in delinquency behaviours. To establish whether there were significant differences between social adjustments between the two genders, the study used a t-test. T-test assumes that: the dependent variable is continuous (interval/ratio); the dependent variable is approximately normally distributed and that the dependent variable does not contain outliers. Since the t-test use the mean scores for social adjustment, the data was considered continuous. Earlier findings indicated that the data on social adjustment was normally distributed and did not contain outliers. This led to carrying out a t-test whose results are shown in Table 4.20.

**Table 4.20: Gender Differences in Adolescent Social Adjustment Mean Scores**

<b>Social Adjustment</b>	<b>T-statistic</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>
Pro-social Behaviour Score	-0.066	326	0.947
Offensive Interpersonal Behaviour Score	-1.211	316	0.227
Delinquency Behaviour Scores	-3.834	319	0.000

The null hypothesis for t-test states that there is no significant difference in the level of measured variable in regard to two mutually exclusive categories of population. In this study, it was established that there were no significant differences in the level of Pro-social behaviour between girls and boys in secondary schools in Murang'a County ( $t = -0.066$ ,  $df = 326$ ,  $P > 0.05$ ). Therefore the null hypothesis for the t-test was accepted at 5% significant level. This implied that although males were found to

have a higher mean than females in pro-social behaviours, this difference can be attributed to chance and it can be said that both males and females show pro-social behaviours equally.

In respect to gender differences in offensive interpersonal behaviour mean scores, the study established that there were no significant difference in offensive interpersonal behaviour mean scores between girls and boys in secondary schools in Murang'a County ( $t = -1.211$ ,  $df = 316$ ,  $P > 0.05$ ). This led to acceptance of the null hypothesis for the t-test was accepted at 5% significant level. This implied that the observed differences in offensive interpersonal behaviour mean scores between girls and boys in secondary schools in Murang'a County were by chance.

The study established that gender differences in delinquency behaviour mean scores was significant at 5% significance level ( $t = -3.384$ ,  $df = 319$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ). This led to rejection of the null hypothesis of t-test and led to conclusion that boys were more likely to have delinquency behaviours than girls in Murang'a County.

These finding among secondary school students in Murang'a County comparable with earlier studies. Packiaselvi and Malathi (2017) concluded that girls had higher level of social adjustment when compared to the level of social adjustment of the boys. This differs with the findings obtained in this study in regard to delinquency behaviours by Alam (2017) who established that there were significant differences in the level of social adjustment based on student gender. Similarly, Bhagat (2016) found out that there were significant differences in the level of social adjustment of students based on their gender. These results differ with the findings in the current study in regard to differences in pro-social behaviour score and offensive

interpersonal behaviour score with respect to gender which were found to be insignificant in the current study. The findings by Singh, Tripathi and Mahato (2014) that there were no significant differences in the level of social adjustment between the students genders and that by Paramanik, Saha and Mondal (2014) that there were significant differences in the social adjustment scores between the two genders of students, differs with the findings in the current study.

Dar and Tali (2014) established that there were no significant differences between the social adjustments of students. Similarly, Alkali (2016) established that there were no significant differences in the level of social adjustment between the student genders. Adhiambo, Odwar and Ayere (2017) found out that there were no significant differences between social adjustments of boys and that of girls in secondary school students. These studies concur with the findings of the current study in regard to pro-social behaviour score and offensive interpersonal behaviour scores in secondary schools students in Murang'a County.

#### **4.4 Summary of Chapter**

This chapter presented research findings in regard to frequency of parental conflicts, type of parental conflicts and level social adjustment of students in secondary schools in Murang'a County. The chapter further gave results in regard to the relationship that exists between parental conflicts and social adjustment of the adolescents in secondary schools in Murang'a County. The chapter contains results for differences in social adjustments based on student gender. The chapter further analyzed the data presented as well as discussion of the findings. In discussing the study findings, the chapter focused on other related studies on parental conflicts and social adjustment.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The chapter presents the summary, conclusions of the findings and recommendations based on the findings of the study. The chapter concludes by suggesting further studies.

#### **5.2 Summary of the findings**

The summary of the findings were presented as per the objectives of the study.

##### **5.2.1 Frequency of Parental Conflicts in Families of Students in Secondary Schools in Murang'a County**

The findings showed that the majority of the secondary school students in Murang'a perceived low frequency parental conflicts. As indicated by the mean score obtained in the frequency of parental conflicts frequency subscale, the study established that on average, there was low frequency in parental conflict perceptions. Only few of the students reported high perceived parental conflicts.

##### **5.2.2 The Type of Parental Conflict in Families of Students in Secondary Schools in Murang'a County**

On the type of parental conflicts, the findings showed that secondary schools students perceived both constructive and destructive parental conflicts. However, the findings revealed that majority of the students, perceived constructive parental conflicts as compared to destructive conflicts. The findings revealed that those perceiving constructive parental conflicts reported largely solution oriented disagreements

devoid of physical and verbal aggressions. Conversely the results indicate that those who reported perceiving destructive parental conflicts described arguments among their parents that were characterized by shouting, throwing of items and parents pushing and shoving each other.

### **5.2.3 The Levels of Social Adjustment among Secondary Schools Students in Murang'a County**

On social adjustment, the secondary schools students in Murang'a County were predominantly pro-social with majority rating themselves high on pro-social behaviours. The findings further reported majority of the students rated themselves as low in both offensive interpersonal and delinquency behaviours. While majority of the students rated themselves as high in pro-social, they also indicated to have portrayed numerous offensive interpersonal and/or delinquency behaviour. This implied that though predominantly pro-social the secondary school students in Murang'a County occasionally exhibited offensive interpersonal and/or delinquency behaviour.

### **5.2.4 Relationship between Parental Conflicts and Social Adjustment of the Secondary Schools Students in Murang'a County**

The findings showed a relationship between parental conflicts and adolescent students social adjustments. It was found that the Pearson ( $r$ ) coefficient correlations between parental conflicts and both offensive interpersonal and delinquent behaviours were positive and significant at 5% significance level. Subsequently, the result showed that those students who reported high parental conflicts also reported high in both offensive interpersonal and delinquent behaviours.

However, the results also showed a negative but not significant relationship between parental conflicts and pro-social behaviour. While the results showed likelihood for students experiencing high parental conflicts to have reported low on pro-social behaviours the data available did not show significant outcomes. Consequently, the findings could not sufficiently attribute low pro-social behaviours to high experience in parental conflicts.

#### **5.2.5 Gender Differences in Social Adjustments of Adolescent Students in Murang'a County**

The findings showed an existence of gender difference in social adjustment among secondary school students in Murang'a County. It was established that there were no significant differences in the level of Pro-social behaviour between girls and boys in secondary schools in Murang'a County. In respect to gender differences in offensive interpersonal behaviour mean scores, the study established that there were no significant difference in offensive interpersonal behaviour means scores between girls and boys in secondary schools in Murang'a County. On the other hand, the study established that gender differences in delinquency behaviour mean scores was significant at 5% significance level.

#### **5.3 Conclusion of the Study**

The following conclusions were drawn from the study.

In respect to establishing the frequency of parental conflict in families of students in secondary schools in Murang'a County, the study concluded that there was no perceived parental conflict.

In finding out the types of parental conflicts in families of students in secondary schools in Murang'a County, the study conclude that the students perceived both destructive and constructive type of parental conflicts with majority perceiving constructive compared to destructive conflicts.

In the context of assessing the level of social adjustment of students in secondary schools in Murang'a County, the study concluded that there was low delinquency behaviours and offensive interpersonal behaviour. On the same context, the study further concluded that there were high pro-social behaviours among students in secondary schools in Murang'a County.

On the objective to examine the relationship between parental conflict and social adjustment of adolescent students in secondary schools in Murang'a County, the study concluded that parental conflict was related to delinquency behaviours, offensive interpersonal behaviour and pro-social behaviours of students in secondary schools in Murang'a County.

In finding out if there is any gender differences in social adjustments of adolescents in Murang'a County, the study concluded that there were no significant differences in the level of Pro-social behaviour and offensive interpersonal behaviour mean scores between girls and boys in secondary schools in Murang'a County. The study also concluded that there were significant gender differences in delinquency behaviour mean scores.

#### **5.4 Recommendations of the Study**

Based on the finding of the study, the following recommendations were made for policy makers, implementers, researchers and other stakeholders.

1. The study recommends that schools administration to strengthen the guidance and counseling departments and ensure that all guidance and counseling teachers are trained. These teachers can then assess and identify social adjustment challenged students due to parental conflicts and offer professional intervention.
2. The study further recommends that teachers and counseling personnel be appropriately sensitized to identify internalizing or externalizing symptoms and establish the underlying problem with an intention of offering appropriate intervention. Thus the two set of symptoms should be used as indicators of socially challenged students by teachers and counseling personnel.
3. The study also recommends parental sensitizations on parental counseling with the aim of minimizing parental conflicts effect on children. This could take the form of creating awareness of destructive conflicts and constructive parental conflicts as well as its preventive measures.

#### **5.5 Suggestions for Further Research**

1. Further research into parental conflicts and adolescent social adjustment at wider scope in terms of a wider range of parameters for testing social adjustment, inclusion of more types of respondents including parents and teachers can be carried out.
2. Further research on relationship between types of parental conflicts and adolescents' social adjustments where a more diverse cohort of adolescents are

involved, example, adolescents that are in tertiary institutions or in employment should be carried out. This will provide a holistic understanding of effects of parental conflicts in respect to social adjustment by adolescence across the board.

3. Research into other factors affecting adolescents' social adjustment apart from the parental conflicts is also recommended. This will ensure that all underlying factors for problems in social adjustment by adolescent are identified for purposes of intervention.
4. Further research to explore other possible consequences apart from social adjustment challenges as a result of exposure of adolescents to destructive parental conflicts is also necessary.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX I: Introduction Letter and Consent Form for Study Participants

#### INTRODUCTION

My name is Joel Kiambi, a PhD student at Kenyatta University. I am undertaking a study on ‘**Relationship between Parental Conflict and Social Adjustment of Adolescent Children in Murang’a County, Kenya.**’ The research is for educational purpose and may give information useful in developing programmes for counseling social adjustment challenged adolescent and parents experiencing marital conflicts. You have been selected as potential respondent in this research. **You are not required to write your name on this questionnaire.** You are kindly requested to participate in this study by responding to the questionnaire. Take time to read the instructions for each section carefully and give a response for each question as honestly as possible. Responses to question are based on what you really know or have experienced. There is no right or wrong response only your most sincere response is required. Your response will be handles with confidentiality and will only be used for this purpose. Completing the questionnaire is voluntary.

Please confirm that you have read the above information and accepted to participate in the survey by signing the following consent form.

#### Consent

I have read the above information and understand that the survey is voluntary and that confidentiality and anonymity are guaranteed to me as a participant. I therefore hereby accept to participate in the survey.

Participant’s signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX II: Research Instruments

### Introduction

### Code....

This questionnaire is an attempt to establish your relationships with your parents at home and your peers at school and in the community. Please answer the questions honestly and diligently following the instructions given. The answers you give will be treated confidentially.

### SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Age..... years

2. Gender

Male [ ]                      female [ ]

3. Type of school:    Mixed [ ]      Boys only [ ]                      Girls only [ ]

4. Who do you live with at home?    Both father and mother [ ]    Mother only [ ]  
Father only [ ]

5. What is the highest level of Education of your parents?

#### Mother

#### Father

University [ ]

University [ ]

Secondary level [ ]

Secondary level [ ]

Primary level [ ]

Primary level [ ]

No formal education [ ]

No formal education [ ]

## SECTION B: PARENTAL CONFLICT

In every family there are times when the parents disagree with each other. Below are some things that children sometimes think or feel when their parents have arguments or disagreements. We would like you to tell us what you think or feel when your parents argue, disagree or quarrel by answering each of the sentences below. If you do not have both parents **SKIP** this section B and go to section C. Tick the most

	Statements	True	Sort of True	Not True
1	I never see my parents arguing or disagreeing.			
2	My parents get really mad when they argue.			
3	They may not think I know it, but my parents argue or disagree a lot.			
4	When my parents have a disagreement they discuss it quietly.			
5	My parents are often mean to each other even when I'm around.			
6	I often see or hear my parents arguing.			
7	When my parents have an argument they say hurtful things to each other.			
8	My parents rarely argue.			
9	When my parents have an argument they shout at each other.			
10	My parents often harass and complain about each other around the house.			
11	My parents hardly ever shout when they have a disagreement.			
12	My parents have broken or thrown things during an argument.			
13	My parents have pushed or thrown each other during an argument.			

appropriate response. TICK ONE ANSWER ONLY PER STATEMENT.

**Note:** The questionnaires on parental conflict were adopted from Children's Perception of Inter-parental Conflict Scale (CPIC).

**SECTION C: SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT OF ADOLESCENTS**

The table below contains statements describing how you interact with others at school. Indicate how much the statement is true for you TICK ONE ANSWER PER STATEMENT

	<b>Statement</b>	<b>Not at all true</b>	<b>Somewhat true</b>	<b>Very true</b>
1	I am liked by others			
2	I am mean and cruel to others			
3	I am good at sports			
4	I have been in trouble with school			
5	I am usually untidy, dirty, smells bad			
6	I hate not getting my own way			
7	I am bossy and aggressive			
8	I argue with teachers			
9	I have bad friends			
10	I have many friends			
11	I usually lie and cheat			
12	I often act younger than my age			
13	I am easily annoyed or have bad tempers			
14	I often skip classes or day of school			
15	I am good looking			
16	I usually complain			
17	I initiate quarrels with other students for no good reason			
18	I am usually a bother or annoy others			
19	I often use drugs or alcohol			
20	I usually get offended easily			
21	I often get into fights			
22	I have ever spent out all night or run away from home			
23	I often help others			
24	I trusted and depended upon by classmates			

	<b>Statement</b>	<b>Not at all true</b>	<b>Somewhat true</b>	<b>Very true</b>
25	I start fights with others			
26	I often smoke cigarettes			
27	I am not selfish			
28	I am friendly			
29	I usually make fun of others			
30	I often destroy my own or other students things			
31	I am picked on and made fun of by others			
32	I make friends, but slowly			
33	I often act childishly			
34	I steal			
35	I am outgoing and active in social activities			
36	I usually threatens others			
37	I am trustworthy, loyal			
38	I have close friends			
39	I am disliked by others			

**Note:** The questionnaires on social adjustment were adopted from Reda-Norton scale.

## APPENDIX III: Authorization Letter from the Graduate School



### KENYATTA UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL

E-mail: [dean-graduate@ku.ac.ke](mailto:dean-graduate@ku.ac.ke)

P.O. Box 43844, 00100

NAIROBI, KENYA

Tel. 8710901 Ext. 57530

Website: [www.ku.ac.ke](http://www.ku.ac.ke)

Our Ref: C82/CTY/20479/2010

DATE: 1<sup>st</sup> March, 2016

Director General,  
National Commission for Science, Technology  
and Innovation  
P.O. Box 30623-00100  
**NAIROBI**

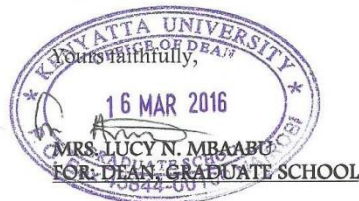
Dear Sir/Madam,

**RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION FOR MURIITHI JOEL KIAMBI- REG. NO. C82/CTY/20479/2010**

I write to introduce Mr. Muriithi Joel Kiambi who is a Postgraduate Student of this University. He is registered for Ph.D degree programme in the Department of Psychology.

Mr. Kiambi intends to conduct research for a Ph.D Proposal entitled, "Relationship Between Parental Marital Conflict and Social Adjustment of their Adolescent Children in Murang'a County, Kenya".

Any assistance given will be highly appreciated.



EO/rwm

## APPENDIX IV: Authorization Letter from Ethical Review Committee



KENYATTA UNIVERSITY  
ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Email: [chairman.kuerc@ku.ac.ke](mailto:chairman.kuerc@ku.ac.ke)  
[secretary.kuerc@ku.ac.ke](mailto:secretary.kuerc@ku.ac.ke)  
[ercku2008@gmail.com](mailto:ercku2008@gmail.com)  
Website: [www.ku.ac.ke](http://www.ku.ac.ke)

P. O. Box 43844 - 00100 Nairobi  
Tel: 8710901/12  
Fax: 8711242/8711575

Our Ref: KU/R/COMM/51/777

Date: 20<sup>th</sup> July, 2016

Muriithi Joel Kiambi  
Kenyatta University,  
P.O Box 43844,  
Nairobi

Dear Muriithi,

APPLICATION NUMBER PKU/478/1578- "RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTAL MARITAL CONFLICT AND SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT OF THEIR ADOLESCENT CHILDREN IN MURANG'A COUNTY, KENYA." - VERSION 2

1. IDENTIFICATION OF PROTOCOL

The application before the committee is with a research topic, "Relationship between parental marital conflict and social adjustment of their adolescent children in Murang'a County, Kenya." -Version 2.

2. APPLICANT

Muriithi Joel Kiambi, Department of Psychology

3. SITE

Murang'a County, Kenya

4. DECISION

The committee has considered the research protocol in accordance with the Kenyatta University Research Policy (section 7.2.1.3) and the Kenyatta University Ethics Review Committee Guidelines AND APPROVED that the research may proceed for a period of ONE year from 20<sup>th</sup> July, 2016.

5. ADVICE/CONDITIONS

- i. Progress reports are submitted to the KU-ERC every six months and a full report is submitted at the end of the study.
- ii. Serious and unexpected adverse events related to the conduct of the study are reported to this board immediately they occur.
- iii. Notify the Kenyatta University Ethics Committee of any amendments to the protocol.
- iv. Submit an electronic copy of the protocol to KUERC.

When replying, kindly quote the application number above.

If you accept the decision reached and advice and conditions given please sign in the space provided below and return to KU-ERC a copy of the letter.

  
DR. TITUS KAHIGA  
CHAIRMAN ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

I, Muriithi Joel Kiambi, accept the advice given and will fulfill the conditions therein.

Signature.....  ..... Dated this day of... 4<sup>th</sup> July 2016.

cc. Vice-Chancellor  
DVC-Research Innovation and Outreach



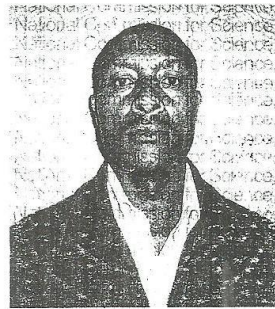
**APPENDIX V: Authorization Certificate from the NACOSTI**

**THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:  
MR. MURIITHI JOEL KIAMBI  
of KENYATTA UNIVERSITY, 901-1000  
Thika, has been permitted to conduct  
research in *Muranga County***

**Permit No : NACOSTI/P/16/90970/13245  
Date Of Issue : 22nd August, 2016  
Fee Recieved : ksh 2000**

**on the topic: *RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN  
PARENTAL MARITAL CONFLICT AND  
SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT OF THEIR  
ADOLESCENT CHILDREN IN MURANG'A  
COUNTY, KENYA***

**for the period ending:  
22nd August, 2017**



.....  
**Applicant's  
Signature**

  
.....  
**Director General  
National Commission for Science,  
Technology & Innovation**

**APPENDIX VI: Authorization Letter from Murang'a County Director of  
Education**



**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION  
STATE DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION**

Email: cdemuranga@gmail.com  
Telephone: 060 2030227  
When replying please quote

COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION,  
P.O BOX 118 – 10200,  
MURANG'A.

Ref: MGA/CTY/GEN./64/VOL.II/133

DATE: 31<sup>ST</sup> August , 2016

Muriithi Joel Kiambi,  
P.O. Box 351-10200,  
**MURANG'A.**

**RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION**

The County Education office is in receipt of your request and authority letter from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation, reference no. NACOSTI/P/16/90970/13245 dated 22<sup>nd</sup> August, 2016 to carry research on "**Relationship between parental marital conflict and social adjustment of their adolescent children in Murang'a County, Kenya.**"

Authority is granted to carry out research in **Murang'a County** - for a period ending **22<sup>nd</sup> August, 2017.**

  
L.K. KARUNTIMI  
COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION  
**MURANG'A**

## APPENDIX VII: Authorization Letter from Murang'a County Commissioner

REPUBLIC OF KENYA



THE PRESIDENCY

MINISTRY OF INTERIOR AND CO-ORDINATION OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Telephone: 060-2030467  
Email: ccmuranga@gmail.com

*When replying please quote*

COUNTY COMMISSIONER  
MURANG'A COUNTY  
P. O. BOX 7-10200  
MURANG'A

**REF.NO.PUB.24/11/VOL.II/120**

**31<sup>ST</sup> AUGUST, 2016**

MR. MURITHI JOEL KIAMBI  
Kenyatta University  
P.O Box 43844-00100  
**NAIROBI.**

**RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION**

Following your application for authority to carry out research on "***Relationship between parental marital conflict and social adjustments of their adolescent children in Murang'a County, Kenya***". I am pleased to inform you that you have been granted authority to undertake research in Murang'a County for the period ending **22<sup>nd</sup> August, 2017.**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Henry K. Charles'.

HENRY K. CHARLES  
For: **COUNTY COMMISSIONER**  
**MURANG'A COUNTY**

## APPENDIX VIII: Map of Murang'a

