

IMPACT OF FAMILY INSTABILITY ON TEENAGERS' SELF-CONCEPT AND
DEVELOPMENT OF FRIENDSHIPS: A CASE OF RUAI, NAIROBI COUNTY,
KENYA

BY

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DECLARATION

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

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to all parents who have been privileged to have children under their care. I also dedicate it to the government institutions and religious organizations that interact with children and parents since they can influence the family environment that is critical for the development of children.

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ABSTRACT

The theoretical case for effects of family instability on children's self-concept rests on the premise that each of the transitions of parents, partners and step-parents into and out of the household requires adjustments that can be stressful and confusing to the child. This study, therefore, investigated the relationship between family stability/instability and teenagers' self-concept and development of peer friendships. The research was guided by Attachment Theory and Family Systems Theory in data collection, analysis and interpretation of data results. Using descriptive causal-comparative design, and adopting purposive sampling technique, the study selected a sample of 51 high school age children of between 14 and 20 years in Ruai, Nairobi County in Kenya. Out of the sample of 51, 30 were drawn from Children Homes and the remaining 21 were drawn from churches within Ruai Area. Among the respondents, 15 were males while 36 were female. The participants were selected from unstable and stable family structures. Questionnaires, scales and focus group discussions were used in the data collection. Analysis of data was done using descriptive and inferential statistics with the help of IBM SPSS Version 20.0 program where the significance level was set at ≤ 0.05 . The results were presented in tables, percentages and graphs. Findings of the study indicated that there was no statistical significance in as far as development of self-concept is concerned implying that there could be other factors that influence the development of self-concept. However, the findings demonstrate a very strong significance between family instability and the teenager's ability to develop and maintain peer friendships. In the current study, it emerged that teenagers living with two biological parents indicated a more satisfactory self-concept compared to their counterparts from the unstable family structure. The study also established that the attachment relationship between the parent and the child is a critical variable in the development of self-concept. This study could be used as a basis for renewed focus on the family as an important socialization point for children's future social development. The government and non-government actors should come up with policies that protect the interest of children for a safe and secure future of the society at large.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Family Instability: Transitions in the structure of the family from stable family structure to the unstable family structure and vice versa.

Family Stability: A situation in which biological parents (mother and father) of a teenager are staying together with minimal conflicts. They jointly participate in the nurture of the child.

Family structure: The physical composition of the family, for example two parent family, single parent family, divorced parent, step parent family among others.

Interpersonal relations: How a person relates with other people based on a relational scale.

Parent-Child Attachment: An enduring emotional bond between parents and a child.

Peer Friendship: Formation of close relations with other people of the same age bracket.

Self-concept and self-esteem: These terms will be used interchangeably to denote the evaluative perception of self in terms of affect and cognitions regarding one's abilities.

Stable family structure: Traditional two-parent family which is largely without major conflicts. In the event of conflicts, they are resolved amicably.

Unstable family structure: A family context that is characterized by parents' separation, cohabiting romantic partner's moving into, or out of the home of a single parent, divorce, the remarriage of a single parent, conflicted spousal relationship (on and off relationship) and failure of a remarriage.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Introduction

Although the concepts of marriage and family have multiple meanings to different classes of people, family life holds a prominent position in the Kenyan society. Policies related to families and socialization of children is of national concern. The country has legislative documents that govern marriage and family issues with children taking a prominent position. In these documents, the rights to quality parental care, access to medical care, access to quality education and protection of the child's overall welfare are clearly articulated (Children Act, 2001; Marriage Act, 2014; Protection Against Domestic Violence, 2015). Kenyan Parliament has for instance enacted the Children Act, which propagates the interests of Children in the family context. The Act obligates the parents to take care of the interests of the child in the event of separation or divorce.

The changing trends in Marriage/Family structures and the long held traditional marriage values are a dominant theme in contemporary debates across societal strata. Though diverse in form, parenting remains a primary vehicle for nurturing and socializing children in Kenya. A stable home environment, parenting and a consistent parent-child interaction may lead to positive developmental outcomes on family members including children and youth (Anderson & Sabatelli, 1999).

Indeed, abundant debate exists between individuals and cultures, past and present, regarding the way a child should be trained. Despite these debates on child rearing, one common thread across many different cultures throughout history is the notion of the

family as the party responsible for training the child, a position that is shared by the Bible. Proverbs 22:6 declares, “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it” (NIV Study Bible).

Conversely, there is an on-going debate on the role of marriage and family in the overall stability and economic wellbeing of a state. Whereas, this may be viewed as far-fetched, Lerman and Wilcox (2015) argue that strong families often serve as seedbeds for the kind of virtues—such as a strong work ethic and the capacity for delayed gratification—that success in a vibrant free market requires. Growing up in intact, two-parent homes makes children, especially boys, more likely to avoid disciplinary problems and stay on track in school, and makes both young men and women more likely to be gainfully employed later in life. Young adults often access job opportunities through family networks—again, especially if they come from intact, two-parent families. In other words, families help to supply the human and social capital that undergirds successful free-market economies in today’s world.

Background of the Study

The structure of families in Europe and America has changed tremendously over the years. Whereas in the past the family was stable and generally took the form of two biological parents, gradually non-traditional forms have become increasingly more common commensurate to increased cases of separation, divorce, co-habitation, re-marriage and partnering Scott, (Ryberg, Wilcox & DeRose, 2015). The transitions or change of family structure impacts on the overall development of children in these families.

Children are the silent casualties of family transitions with high probability of adverse outcomes. In Sweden for example, the likelihood of children experiencing separation by age 15 almost doubled from 20% to 35% between 1970 and 2000 (Thomson & Eriksson, 2013). This implies that the child will either be reared with a single parent or a step-parent.

Scott, Ryberg, Wilcox and DeRose (2015) aver that children in North America, Europe and Oceania are more likely to live with one parent than those in Asia and Africa. They further argue that majority of children are more likely to live with both parents in Asia and Middle East since marriage tends to be more common in those areas whereas alternative to marriage, including cohabitation are more popular in Europe, Central/South America and North America. They also point out that Sub-Saharan Africa and Oceania fall in between.

Even though the story in Africa may not be at same level with Europe and America, globalization has made it easier for values, beliefs and other influences to be shared at a much faster pace. While prevalence of marriage varies widely, marriage is on the decline in Africa and in some regions cohabitation is the preferred option. The percentage of reproductive age adults who were married in Egypt dropped from 80 percent to 64 percent in 2013. In Democratic Republic of Congo, married adults were estimated to be 60 percent for the adult population in 2007 compared to 51 percent in 2013. It will be interesting to see how the changing place of marriage in society and the increasing popularity of cohabitation will affect the wellbeing of children world over (Scott, Ryberg, Wilcox & DeRose, 2015).

Women Educational Researchers of Kenya (WERK, 2007), conducted a research involving 589 street children in Nairobi. In their findings they cited domestic conflicts among the three major reasons why children to go to streets. Other key reasons were money and food.

Similarly, a study commissioned by the consortium of street children (CSC) brings the following shocking statistics:

- i. In 1999 it was reported that there were over 50,000 street children in Nairobi and the government estimated that their numbers grew at 10% per year.
- ii. In 2001 it was stated that conservative estimates indicated that 300,000 children live and work on the streets in Kenya, with over 50% of them concentrated in and around the capital Nairobi
- iii. In 2001 another report estimated that there were about 40,000 street children in Kenya, with about half concentrated in Nairobi Kenya.
- iv. It was estimated in 2007 that there were 250,000 – 300,000 children living and working in the streets across Kenya, with more than 60,000 of them in Nairobi.

The National and County Governments in Kenya have tried to initiate programs to eliminate street families. Interventions include establishment of rehabilitation centers in Nairobi, enlistment of grown street children into the National Youth Service (NYS) and development of youth talents through the Youth fund project. These initiatives have failed to stem the influx of children/teenagers into the streets. Perhaps the main reason

why street children are in the street is the breakdown of the family structure (Manning, 2015). Considering that one of the major reason why these children are in Streets is domestic conflict, it can be deduced that the instability in the family structure has contributed to the current state of affairs.

Records from the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics of the 2008 census indicates that in Nairobi County, 46,143 families were polygamous, 36,881 families were widow/widower, 21,573 families were divorced cases and 34,272 families were separated. We argue that the actual figures could be higher now since these are figures for over 8 years ago. An examination of records at Milimani courts paints a grim picture considering that many separations do not end up in courts of law. While divorce cases filed at the Nairobi High Court are largely of civil marriages, divorce cases filed at Milimani are drawn from Christian marriages. Between 2001 and 2005, the number of divorce cases filed at Milimani courts were 1,013. By 2008, the numbers rose to 1739. All children living in these conditions are at risk of developing a negative self-concept if the findings of previous researches in this area hold true.

There is a comparability argument over living conditions of children growing up in various family structures as well as how transmission of family structure across generations has changed. There may be variations of how children cope with unstable family structures that are prone to transitions. While others may be at a higher risk of developmental problems, others may be at a lower risk depending on the cultural norms transmitted through generations (Bernadi & Radl, 2014; Bernadi & Boertien, 2016).

A physical rupture in the relationship with a parent can hinder the process of

Individuation and identity formation, for which attachment is crucial. This experience can deprive a child of a needed role model as well as a source of income for the Family (Wauterickx, Gouwy & Bracke, 2006).

A growing body of literature avers that children who experience several transitions in family structure may fare worse developmentally than children raised in stable two-parent families and perhaps even than children raised in stable, single-parent families. This is what is referred to as the *instability hypothesis*, which gives a prediction that children are affected by disruption and changes in family structure as much as (or even more than) by the type of family structures they experience (Amato, 2014). Based on this hypothesis it would be important for researchers to seek reinterpretation of the effects of family structure on children's well-being (Furstenberg & Seltzer, 1986).

The link between family characteristics and childhood behavioral outcomes has been studied at length, specifically as it relates to adjustment and success later in life. Due to the implications that early childhood behavioral delays have on later adulthood success (Fronstin, Greenberg, & Robins, 2005) it is important to give attention to the issues surrounding familial characteristics, family environment and interactions.

By and large, researchers have traditionally not settled upon one singular definition of what a stable family is or is not. Many different authors view this concept through varying lenses, which has led to inconsistency throughout the literature. Olson (2000) posits that family dynamic that is chaotic in nature is one in which there is little structure and one in which there are frequent changes and shifts in family relationships and predictability. Furthermore, in a chaotic household, roles tend to be unclear or

frequently changing with little stable leadership. Olson theorizes that those raised in chaotic homes will have significant relational problems later in life. Other definitions include fluidity of family structure. Such fluidity in family structure includes divorce, single parenthood, cohabitation, remarriage, conflicted spousal relationship or a combination of these (Cavanagh & Huston, 2006).

The development of personality traits seems to be strongly influenced by the stability of the family environment children experience (Bryan, 2000). Early life experiences, such as disruptions in family structure, could act as an impediment to a child's personality development.

Huang (2011) points out that one's view of self is an indication of how the person makes sense of him/herself. In most cases this view may be subjective and distorted (Frank, 2011). Parental attitudes towards a child affect his/her self-concept. Pattern of parental reward and punishment for child's behavior is crucial in development of child's self-concept. If the discipline meted on a child does not meet the expectations of the developing child, then the child may develop negative personality characteristics. Parents may be detached, indifferent, neglecting, rejecting, over protective, indulgent and possessive or may also be liberal, cooperative, accepting, sufficiently controlling. This attributes could lead to a positive or negative self-concept. Oswalt (2010) argued that parents play a vital role in helping children to develop a positive self-esteem since parents are the 'others' that children interact with most of the time. A mother's early interaction style has been related to a variety of outcomes, including the development of mother-infant relationship, children's pro-social behavior and later behavioural problems (Juyal & Sharma, 2015).

The child internalizes attitudes of significant others in his/her world towards himself. The gauge of self-evaluation becomes a mirror image of the criteria employed by significant others. Garwood (1986) proposed that school achievement may only be expected when the child feels himself capable of success. Hess and Holloway (1984) identified five processes that link family and academic achievements. These include: verbal interaction between parent and children, expectations of parents for achievements, positive affective relationships between parents and children, parental beliefs and attributions about the child and discipline and control strategy. Abrams and Kaslow (1977) posit that the child will be unable to concentrate on learning in a meaningful way if overly involved in family difficulties.

Parental conflict is a key variable associated with negative outcomes in children/youth from both intact and non-intact families. Research in this area clearly shows that family functioning has a greater impact on outcomes than family structure. High levels of conflict, stress resulting from the separation and/or resulting poverty can all negatively affect the overall mental health of all involved parties. Poor mental health affects the ability of parents, whether married, separated or divorced, to parent effectively, which in turn impacts on children's well-being.

Low levels of parental conflict have been found to act as a protective factor against adverse outcomes. When parental conflict is high, a good relationship with at least one parent is beneficial. Having grandparents and friends to whom children can turn to for support can also be associated with positive outcomes. However, parental separation and divorce can lead to repeated changes in family structure from a two biological parent family to lone parent, to stepfamily status and repeated family

transitions increase the risk of negative child outcomes. Family transitions are also linked to a number of other changes including moving house, school and/or neighborhood and it is these multiple changes that negatively impact on children and are worth investigating.

Justification of the Study

The traditional family structure that basically included a biological father and mother has changed tremendously in the course of time. New family structures including single-parent families are gradually being accepted as normal. Though this trend seems to be alright on the face value, the impact on the children caught up in this maze directly affects their intra and inter personal perspectives. The main ramifications are unsatisfactory self-concept and diminished ability to develop and maintain peer friendships in future. This therefore, is a subject that requires further investigation.

During my practicum in the Marriage and Family Therapy Master's program, I had a chance to work with young people, mostly teenagers from Children's Homes in Ruai Area. In the course of my interaction with the teenagers, it dawned on me that most of them though thankful to GOD that they had a place they called home, they believed that their situation would have been far better, had there not been problems in their families of origin. They expressed hopelessness in their current situation while regretting that they had lost their identity. These episodes in the Homes ignited an interest in me to do this study with a view to highlighting the plight of children/adolescents in dysfunctional families.

Statement of Problem

Available research in family studies note that creation of a stable, safe and healthy parental environment is critical for the development of a child. Warm, sensitive and

responsive care giving provides the foundation for healthy brain development and even increases the chances for success in school (Wolff & Ijzendoorn, 1997). Family stability has a powerful effect on children's emotional well-being, problem solving abilities and future relationships.

Such findings notwithstanding, most urban centers in Kenya are struggling with an upsurge in the number of Children's Homes and Rescue centers meant to give refuge to children/youth between 14 and 20 years who are either abandoned by their biological/foster parents or those escaping unbearable conditions in their families of origin. The increasing number of street children running away from their homes to live in the streets presupposes a major problem in the family unit. Family instability occasioned by marital conflict, separation, divorce or death of a partner culminating in sudden changes in the family structure, threatens to expose the children to negative effects including low self-esteem, poor performance in school and relational problems. In spite of interventions made by the community-based institutions and government the problem seems to persist with the children paying the ultimate price through the manifestation of unsatisfactory self-concept and reduced ability to develop and maintain peer friendships.

This study therefore, undertook to establish and demonstrate the link between family structure, self-esteem and development of peer friendships among teenagers, with the net effect of contributing to the understanding of the impact of family instability on other aspects of life.

Objectives of the Study

- i. To establish the relationship between family instability and low self-esteem among teenagers

- ii. To determine how development of peer friendships is affected by family instability
- iii. To assess the applicability of attachment theory in accounting for teenagers' low self-esteem and development of peer friendships in the current study

Research Questions

This study will be guided by the following questions:

- i. How does a background of family instability affect a teenager's self-esteem?
- ii. What impact does family instability have on development of peer friendships?
- iii. How does parent-child attachment relate to a teenager's self-esteem and development of peer friendships?

Significance of the Study

This study intends to add to the existing body of knowledge on the importance of a secure family environment to the overall development of children. It is important to point out that the family unit is the basic foundation of society. If all is not well at this level then the society will have people without morals and values instilled at the family level. Further, the Government and Religious organizations may use the study to develop policies that will safeguard the family for posterity.

This information can lead to the elimination or prevention of self-defeating attitudes and can provide early warning signs of negative or dangerous living environments. Also, individuals may obtain a higher comprehension of themselves if they acknowledge the social factors that facilitate self-view and feelings.

Scope of the Study

This Research targeted 51 teenagers aged between 14 and 20 consisting both males and females within Nairobi's Ruai area, which hosts many children's Homes and rescue centers. This was important for this study because administrators of the Children Homes confirmed that a majority of the teenagers under their care come from unstable family background. Conversely, churches in the area were used to purposively identify teenagers whose parents according to church elders were of regular and good standing, thereby creating family stability for their children. The above background provided a catchment for respondents from both unstable family structure and stable family structure. Our sample size was based on the fact that samples for qualitative studies are generally much smaller than those used in quantitative studies. Ritchie, Lewis and Elam (2003) argue that there is a point of diminishing return to a qualitative sample—as the study goes on more data does not necessarily lead to more information. According to Ritchie et al. (2003) qualitative samples often lie under 50 while Green and Thorogood (2009) state that "the experience of most qualitative researchers is that in interview studies little that is 'new' comes out of transcripts after you have interviewed 20 or so people".

Limitations and Delimitations

A key limitation to the study was inadequate financial resources that limited the researcher's ability to increase the size of the sample in order to increase the representativeness of the study. Considering the emotive nature of the study, the researcher also faced a challenge of the respondents' reluctance to answer questions that would expose them to their bitter past. This situation may have compromised honesty in

completing the questionnaires. The researcher also assumed that a stable family structure would naturally confer stability to the children in the family which may not necessarily be the case. Consequent to the above challenges the researcher picked the sample from areas that are not far flung as a cost cutting measure. Conversely, the respondents were assured of confidentiality of information to reduce the possibility of respondents inhibiting critical details in the study. Children Homes administrators and Church Elders were used to identify suitable candidates for the sample.

Chapter Summary

A shift emerged from the traditional family unit that comprised the father, mother and children. New family structures including single-parent families are gradually being accepted as normal. Though this trend seems to be alright on the face value, the impact on the children caught up in this maze directly affects their intra and inter personal perspectives. The main ramifications are unsatisfactory self-concept and diminished ability to develop and maintain peer friendships in future. The main objectives of this study gravitate around establishing the relationship between family stability, self-esteem and development of peer friendships among teenagers.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter examines theoretical and conceptual literature available relevant to the proposed study. First is a brief review of literature related to family and its role in the development of self-concept, peer friendships and the relationship between parent child attachment to self-concept and peer friendships. Second is theoretical literature review and conceptual framework that guides the relationship between dependent and independent variables.

Family Stability and Development of Self-Concept

The family is the basic social unit which plays an important role in the care, nurturing and socialization of children. This focus is based on the fact that interactions and stability in the family affect all members including children (Marsanic & Kusmic, 2013). In other words, the family can be viewed as the nucleus of civilization and the basic social unit of society. Huarakaya, DeRose, Lyons-Amos and Wilcox (2017), points out that if the institution of Marriage – norms, customs and laws associated with it, confers stability on the family life, then marriage may matter when it comes to providing a stable family context for the rearing of children. There is growing consensus that the number of parental union transitions matters for children above and beyond family structure, with children being more likely to thrive in stable families and more likely to flounder and develop low self-concept in unstable ones (Manning, 2015).

The development of self-concept starts from birth. This is first evidenced through the emotional attachment of the child and the mother. The quality of interactions may

contribute to or weaken the self-concept of the child. Students' positive self-concept is helpful in achieving success throughout life, while the success in children's lives depends not only on cognitive ability, but also on emotional skills nurtured in a stable family environment (Gliebe, 2012).

As Tabone (2011) reported: "Self-concept is a type of self-appraisal that is created through interaction with one's environment and the influence of significant others. It is one's self-perception surmised from attitudes, feelings, and knowledge about one's skills, abilities, appearance, and social acceptance". Green et al. (2006) believed that positive self-concept would be an extremely important goal for educational programs to promote, and held that it was linked to family stability or instability.

Cavanga and Huston (2008) point out that children born into cohabiting parent families experience the most family instability, followed by single mother families which in turn results to negative self-concept since to children, family instability may mean loss of contact with one parent, changes in the home and decline in parenting quality. Experts posit that most changes in family structure, depending on the context, introduce stress and emotional insecurity to children's lives. Therefore, family instability is associated with negative outcomes for children who are at the center of parental relationships (Craigie et al. 2012).

Alpay (2000) defined self-esteem by first explaining self-image and self-concept. "Self-image is the individual's awareness of person attributes. This is developed at an early stage through the influences of the parents or guardians. Self-concept is "the sum total of a person's perceived and desired mental and physical

characteristics and the person's perceived worthiness from these. Self-concept, therefore, encompasses self-image and self-esteem.

Alpay (2000) constructed self-esteem from three stages of development. In early childhood, the child focuses on specific characteristics and behaviors. His/her self-esteem may reflect the parents' perception of that individual at this time. In middle childhood, the second stage, self-image acknowledges emotions, relationships, and other traits. It is at this stage that issues may arise of self-esteem. Avoidance, compensation, low motivation, and resistance are all behaviors of self-esteem issues. During the last stage, which is adolescence, images of self become more stable, but "depression, moodiness, and sensitivity" may emerge. Other research, completed by Flouri (2004), measured the connection between a child's characteristics, including self-esteem, emotional well-being, and behavioral well-being, and the mother's and father's involvement in that child's life. Children with high self-esteem tended to report high father's involvement, according to this study. Flouri also found that the interaction between the structure of a family and the child's emotional and behavioral well-being predicted a father's involvement. In addition, female child participants reported that the mother's involvement was higher than the father's.

Lyman and Bird (1996) evaluated aspects of self-image and emotional health in adolescents placed in foster care. The findings indicate that foster care is associated with lower scores on measures of self-image. Insecure attachment relationships underlie a negative self-concept in adolescence (Allen et al., 1996). Insecure attachments result in the construction of negative schemas of self and the environment, which contributes to the formation of a poor self-concept.

Children who start out living with both biological parents are therefore more likely to have more stable family lives than children born to single mothers because initial transitions among lone parents might be motivated by a desire to be in union which directly impacts on the self-concept of a child (Amato, 2014). Such researches allude to the relationship between family stability (or instability) and children's self-concept and/or self-worth, which is an interesting area of study.

Based on this literature, we can hypothesize that the quality of family life, specifically the relationship between parents and children, is a factor of an individual's self-esteem. Several of the previously mentioned authors suggested that attachment, affection, and abuse contribute to later psychological well-being or dysfunction; so the current research continues the study that poor family relationships influences the lowering of self-concept. The review confirms that there is a strong relationship between family instability and self- concept. It is therefore, the intention of this study to examine the extent to which family stability or instability can affect the outcomes of a teenager.

Family Stability and Development of Peer Friendships

Amato and James (2010) posit that family structure changes has so far produced evidence that physical and psychological health ratings of children from unstable families are poorer than those of children from intact families. These children view themselves as less competent, exhibit more depression, and experience feelings of withdrawal and distress. Children from unstable family structure tend to have a higher number of sexual partners and are more likely to engage in premarital sex. In addition, these individuals will hold more favorable opinions of divorce itself (Wauterickx et al., 2006).

Kauts and Kaur (2003) evaluated children's behavior in relation to family environment and technological exposure at the preprimary stage. The findings of the study reveal that children's behavior is better in stable families than those in unstable families.

Demo and Acock (1996) evaluated the effect of family structure and family process on adolescent emotional adjustment and well-being. Significant differences were found in family type and process with the greatest differences found in the family process variables. Measures of mother-adolescent interactions were significantly related to adolescent adjustment. Lower levels of interaction between the mother and adolescent were associated with lower levels of perceived self, adjustment, and well-being. In a related study, Young, Miller, Norton, and Hill, (1995) found parental support predictive of adolescent well-being, including interpersonal relations.

Bowlby strongly agreed with this idea as well, writing that "the family experience of those who grow up to become relatively stable and self-reliant is characterized by unfailing parental support" (Bowlby, 1973; quoted in Parker & Benson, 2004, p. 520). Therefore, although peer relationships and other aspects of life outside of the family become increasingly salient during adolescence, the caregiver continues to play the role of a secure base from which the teenager explores the environment.

Therefore adolescents without parent support are at higher risk for utilizing maladaptive mechanisms such as substance abuse or delinquency in an attempt to cope. Moreover, parent support increases the adolescent's ability to successfully interact with others and form positive peer relationships. As a result, the securely attached adolescent

is likely to be sensitive to feedback and less likely to experience peer alienation (Love & Murdock, 2004).

The major tasks of adolescence are significantly influenced by the family context, and concepts from family systems theory such as cohesion and adaptability are integral to healthy adolescent development. In the early attachment relationship the caregiver must meet the needs of the infant and establish a secure base from which to explore. In adolescence, new demands for autonomy must be met to allow the adolescent to explore and differentiate from the family while at the same time remaining emotionally connected to the family. Research indicates that adolescents in unstable families are at a higher risk for developing conduct/behavior, which will make it difficult for them to develop and maintain friendships.

In addition to the physical separation from a parent, a child's psychological well-being can be negatively affected by the tensions and conflicts preceding and surrounding the divorce process (Amato & Afifi, 2010). Children from homes with high inter-parental conflict can feel that they have little control over events in their lives, which has been shown to increase the risk of adjustment problems and development of their own relationships (Burns & Dunlop, 2002). Growing up with perceived marital conflict can cause elevated levels of psychological distress among young adults even after leaving the parental home. Wauterickx et al. (2006) found that high levels of conflict and low levels of family coping had significant negative effects on adaptation to college life.

Parental support evidenced by a reciprocal relationship of trust, understanding, and fairness is an indicator of family stability. Moderate levels of family stability maintain a balance between connectedness and autonomy. Adolescents residing in a

family system with very low levels of support are at increased risk of negative behaviors and peer alienation (Musick & Meier, 2010).

Research findings support a connection between family interactions and adolescent interpersonal relationships. Spoth et al. (1996) reported a relationship between parent-adolescent bonds and adolescent self-esteem which in turn affects the teenager's interpersonal relationships. These effects appear to be long lasting. Adults with divorced parents report a lower level of well-being, suffer from poorer self-image, greater anxiety and depression, and are more likely to be unmarried in their 30s and 40s, compared to their peers who perceived less conflict in their families (Amato, 2014). In an earlier study, Hoelter and Harper (1987) examined the effects of structural and interpersonal family influences on adolescent interpersonal relations. The results indicate that family support was related to adolescent self-esteem and relational issues.

In view of the fact that the target age bracket for this study is largely adolescent, it would be interesting to discover how family instability affects development of peer relations considering that adolescents value peer relations. However, Amato (2014) further argues that peer relationships are important since they fill the void left by the loss of connection with one of the parents despite the fact that peer-oriented teenagers are more vulnerable to antisocial behavior.

Attachment theory, Self-Concept and Development of Friendships

Central tenets of attachment theory proposes that children who do not receive adequate care from the most important people in their lives come to see themselves as not deserving of that attention and affection, which represents their assumption that that is how they are seen by their caregiver. This is based on perceptions of the self as being

deserving of love or not, is hinged on the attachment relationships. If, during the early years of life, a child's attachment figure responds consistently to their signals of distress and attempts to connect in a loving, supportive manner, in addition to the development of a secure parent-child attachment, a working model of the self as worthy of love and caring treatment will likely result (Gomez & McLaren, 2007)

This initial working model of the self as part of the parent-child dyad later forms the basis for the child's individuated sense of self, which develops throughout the first year of life. In this way, parental responsiveness and caring treatment has the power to directly influence fundamental aspects of a child's sense of self. As a result, children who are rejected, over-controlled, or inconsistently responded to may not develop the same positive, secure, coherent working model of the self. This difference is posited to have a strong impact on a person's self-concept, as relationships (particularly those with primary attachment figures) are critical to self-esteem, psychological well-being, and the development and integration of identity (Pace & Zappulla, 2011; Gomez & McLaren, 2007). Symbolic interactionism suggests that the link between close relationships and the self-concept exists because individuals glean information about themselves from the way that they are seen by other people. The opinions of close others, the theory specifies, are particularly important to the construction of a person's identity.

Within attachment theory, early relationships direct the development of the child's internal working models of self and others, which include the child's expectations about the emotional responsiveness of others and his or her own sense of self-worth (Bowlby, 1988; Whiffen & Johnson, 1998). Therefore the repeated findings of correlations between secure attachment and high self-esteem in research studies (e.g.,

Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Collins & Read, 1990) is consistent with attachment theory. Children with secure infant attachments have been found to have higher self-esteem than those with insecure attachments (Main, 1996). Man and Hamid (1998) and Perry et al. (2008)

Attachment style is marked by an individual's internal working model of the self and the other; that is, whether people have positive or negative global evaluations and expectations of themselves and others in social relationships. Alternately, attachment style can also be defined by a person's position on two orthogonal dimensions: anxiety or dependence regarding relationships and avoidance of relationships. A secure attachment style is defined by a generally positive view of the self and others in relationships, or low anxiety and low avoidance. People with secure attachment styles are comfortable with and desiring of intimacy, but are not anxious about acquiring it. A preoccupied attachment style is defined by a generally negative view of the self and positive view of others, or alternately, high anxiety about and low avoidance of relationships. A prototype of this would be a person who constantly seeks intimacy and is very uncomfortable without close relationships, and uses close relationships to maintain positive self-regard. A dismissing attachment style is defined by a generally positive view of the self and negative view of others, and low anxiety and high avoidance. A person characterized by a dismissing attachment style may appear cold or overly-independent and not desiring of intimate relationships, in order to maintain positive self-regard. A fearful attachment style is defined by a generally negative view of the self and others, or high anxiety about and high avoidance of relationships. A prototype of this would be a person who desires intimacy but is simultaneously afraid of it, due to concern about eventual disappointment.

Combining the theories of attachment and family systems, more recent research shows possible correlation between family factors and personal qualities, such as one's image of him/herself. Love and Murdock (2004) hypothesized that parental attachment is one factor in the psychological well-being of an individual. The studies also concluded that negative social-emotional outcomes and residential instability is also linked to adverse cognitive and academic outcomes (Anderson & Leventhal, 2013).

However, Kalmijn (2015) posits that arrangements such as joint custody of children, good inter-parental relations and good early-father relations can substantially improve post-separation contact with the father thereby minimizing the adverse effects of the transition in the family structure.

The central tenets of Attachment theory, tend to confirm a co-relation between the attachment style adopted by a teenager and self-concept besides peer relations. In the current study we propose that the family background (stability/instability) informs the kind of attachment a child adopts with the net effect on self-concept and relational issues.

Theoretical Literature

Under this subsection, I will delve into available literature that explores the relationship between the state of the family stability, self-concept and social relationships through the lenses of attachment theory and family systems theory, the two theories that will guide the description, interpretation and explanation of data results in the proposed study. It is my considered opinion that family systems theory will articulate more clearly the impact of stability/instability of the family on family members especially children/teenagers while attachment theory will give an in-depth perspective of

relationships from childhood that continue to influence various outcomes in adolescents including, self-concept and relational issues.

Attachment Theory:

John Bowlby developed the Attachment theory as an evolutionary explanation describing the emotions infants experience when separated from their primary caregiver (Bowlby, (1969). Bowlby (1958) argued that attachment can be understood well within an evolutionary context where the caregiver provides safety and security for an infant. He posits that infants have a universal need to seek close proximity with their caregiver when under stress or threatened. Based on this premise of seeking and maintaining close proximity to his or her primary caregiver, the infant exhibits certain behavior that encourages this close proximity and therefore, protection. A central tenet of the attachment relationship is that the caregiver provides as a secure base from which the infant explores his/her surroundings (Ainsworth, 1963)

Bowlby proposes that children are born pre-programmed to form attachments with others, because this will help them survive. He further argues that the child would initially form only one primary attachment (monotropy) and that the attachment figure acts as a secure base for exploring the world.

Attachment theory provides that children internalize the experiences of interaction with their primary caregivers and develop mental representations of the caregivers during the second half of the first year of their life. The mental representations are called Internal Working Model (IWM), which are eventually used as a basis to guide relationships with others throughout life. Internal Working Models are internalized as beliefs on the self and others from the ‘cradle to the grave’ (Bartholomew, 1991; Hazen and Shaver, 1987).

Ainsworth et al. (1978) summarized the attachment styles of children as Secure, Anxious-ambivalent, Avoidant and Dismissive. They described these attachment styles as attitudes towards self and others (Bartholomew, 1991; Hazen and Shaver, 1987).

Additional classification of attachment style is disorganized or disoriented.

Children with secure attachment turn out to be people who are more confident, trusting, have positive self-esteem and relate with other people in a more positive way (Gurung, 2011). On the other hand, children who were anxiously attached turn out to be persons who crave proximity and approval of others as a source of positive feelings and values and are prone to experiencing chronic fear of rejection. If approvals are not forthcoming from their significant others, they manifest high levels of anxiety and low self-esteem (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2004). The avoidant attachment style is precipitated by an environment where distancing and self-confidence are prioritized to protect from rejection experience. In most cases the caregiver is distant, cold or rejects the child. Avoidance therefore, becomes a strategy of survival precipitated by the aggression, pain, stress and frustration meted on the child (Hazen and Shaver, 1987). Children classified as having a disorganized attachment style, manifest a mixture of attachment styles because the attachment figure is seen simultaneously as a source of safety and danger. The child may view the parent as frightening, frightened, or dissociated (Main & Solomon, 1990).

Attachment style is formed in infancy, but displays itself once the child begins to separate from his or her mother (Bowlby, 1969). Studies reporting the observation of both toddlers and pre-school age children indicate that children with secure attachment styles are more comfortable engaging in play with strangers (adults and children), smile and laugh more, and are more aware of others' distress than children with insecure

attachment styles (Ainsworth, 1989; Bowlby, 1969). Attachment styles develop through responses from the caretaker (usually the mother) to protect the child (Bowlby, 1969). The child seeks to maintain proximity to the caretaker so that if a dangerous situation arises the caretaker can protect the child. Bowlby points out that from an evolutionary stance, this was important so children remained safe from predators. It was necessary for a child to cry or follow the caretaker in order to maintain the security. When a caretaker leaves the child, some form of attachment behavior is activated to elicit security from the caretaker. A child may follow the caretaker, draw attention by making noise (crying) or both (Bowlby, 1969, 1973, 1980).

The attachment style acts as a prototype for all future social relationships.

Attachment theory suggests that there is a critical period for developing an attachment (0-5 years). If an attachment has not been formed during this period, then the child will suffer from irreversible developmental consequences, such as reduced intelligence and increased aggression.

Scaffer and Emerson (1964) conducted a longitudinal study that observed 60 babies for the first 18 months in their own homes, taking keen interest in: Stranger Anxiety, Separation Anxiety and Social Referencing.

The study concluded that securely attached infants had mothers who responded quickly to their demands and interacted with their child. On the other hand, children who were weakly attached had mothers who failed to interact with them. The most important fact in developing attachments is not who feeds and changes the child's diapers but who plays and communicates with him or her. Therefore, responsiveness is critical in the forming of an attachment style.

Bowlby (1969) posits that the interaction between the primary caregiver and child in the early years of life determines a child's attachment style later on in life. When mothers follow their children's cues and give prompt and appropriate responses to their children's requests for attention, their child develops a secure attachment style (Bowlby). When mothers are inattentive to their children's needs or respond inappropriately to their children's requests for attention or autonomy, the children develop an insecure style of attachment which exhibits itself in anxious or avoidant behavior (Bowlby).

Bowlby (1988) outlined four stages of attachment. The first stage is normative development, which occurs through signaling, sucking, grasping and rooting which seek to minimize the distance between child and caregiver. The infant is born with these behaviors at birth. At first, these signals are not targeted at anyone in particular, but gradually the child is able to direct the behaviors more concisely (Ainsworth, 1989). In the second phase, the child directs the signaling behaviors at a preferred caregiver and use seeking behaviors to be close to them. In the third phase, the child should be able to effectively predict the behaviors of the caregiver due to a pattern of consistency. In the fourth and final phase, the child should develop insight into the caregiver's motives, understand their independence, and develop an appropriate bond. At this point the child believes the caregiver exists independent of the child, and may experience distress due to separation (Ainsworth, 1989).

Wallin (2007) cites Mary Ainsworth, who spent her career collaborating and testing the hypothesis of Bowlby. Ainsworth is credited for introducing the concept of a "secure base" which involves the child's expectation of the caregiver, upon which

Bowlby based the idea of Internal Working Models, which proposes that the expectations are weighted on the basis of mental maps or representations.

Referring to a family's impact on self-reliance, Bowlby (1979) named two sets of influences on personality that are of interest in this current study. The first concerns the presence or absence of a trustworthy figure. The second set concerns the relative ability or inability of an individual, first, to recognize when another person is both trustworthy and willing and, second to collaborate with that person. Bowlby also pointed out that those individuals with well-adapted personalities demonstrate initiative and self-reliance and come from closely knit families with parents who provide encouragement. In a study completed in 1960, findings suggested that self-reliance and the ability to rely on others are products of strong, supportive families and secure attachments.

Among the adolescents who fall within the age bracket of this study, the attachment relationship remains similar in meaning to the earlier attachment, but is expressed differently through trust, communication and alienation. Trust is a measure of perceived security that the parent is responsive to the adolescent's emotional needs. Communication refers to the quality of verbal communication between the adolescent and parent, and alienation is a measure of insecure attachment (Rice, 1990).

Contrary to popular opinion, adolescent boys and girls need not only autonomy but also significant levels of attachment to their parents. Child-parent relationships are essential not only for children, but also for teenagers, since they enable them to deal successfully with developmental tasks, amongst which, are school tasks (Domagala-Zysk, 2006). Adolescents that are more securely attached are more likely to seek out positive information about themselves and accept it than insecurely attached adolescents (Dykas

& Cassidy, 2007). Securely attached adolescents tend to remember interactions, even those that were negative, with their parents more positively over time due to their general positive feelings about their relationship with that parent. In a related study, insecure adolescents showed slower retrieval of emotionally significant childhood memories (Dykas & Cassidy, 2007).

Securely attached adolescents are more likely to have positive perceptions of family, peers and others than insecurely attached adolescents. They are able to generalize the information from the primary attachment relationship to have a more positive outlook on relationships and interaction throughout life (Dykas & Cassidy, 2007).

Research shows that responsive and engaged parenting is associated with children's cognitive development (Kerns, 2008). Specifically, secure attachment was linked to better attention and participation, less insecurity about the self, and a higher grade point average (Jacobsen & Hofmann, 1997). Attachment was also shown to have significantly contributed to better verbal skills, curiosity, and emotional maturity (Aviezer, Resnick, Sagi, & Gini, 2002). Strong evidence exists for a link between secure attachment and school attitudes and overall classroom behaviors. This includes work habits and persistence (Kerns, 2008).

Neufeld and Mate (2013) pointed out that when a child loses attachment to the primary caregiver, a void for attachment remains. This void is definitely filled by peers. Neufeld further posits that what matters most to children/adults is attachment and that the greatest source of frustration are attachments that do not work: loss of contact, thwarted connection, too much separation, feeling spurned, losing a loved one, a lack of belonging or being understood. Because people are generally unconscious of attachment, they are

also unconscious of the link between frustration and attachment not working. However, Weiss (1994) pointed out that Bowlby did not study attachment in adults himself; therefore, the Attachment Theory cannot apply to adult relationships. Weiss's main point is attributed to Bowlby's description of attachment as being directed toward a person conceived as stronger and/or wiser.

Weiss (1994) acknowledged differences between adult attachment and child-parent attachment, arguing that the needs of a child are not the same as the needs of a parent, whereas the needs of two adults are more closely associated. Secondly, children see their caregivers as stronger and wiser, but adults rarely view their partners as greatly superior. Conversely, a child's security relies heavily on the attentiveness of his parent. In adult relationships, security does not rely as heavily on partner reassurance.

Therefore, Attachment theory points to relational bonds within the family context as a primary factor in child and adolescent development. Secure attachment relations are associated with positive development and insecure attachments are related to an increased risk of negative outcomes. According to an attachment paradigm, adolescence is a major transition for integration of personality. Earlier attachment difficulties may be especially problematic during this critical transition leading to an increased risk of developing negative self-concept, peer relations and maladaptive behaviors.

Family instability or transitions through separation, divorce and re-marriage deprive the child of an attachment figure, which effectively impacts on a teenager's self-concept and development of friendships. It is therefore, safe to hypothesize that a stable family structure is more likely to engender proper development of children as they step into adulthood. Attachment theory is premised on the fact that a child who is securely

attached to his or her parents is more likely to develop a positive self-image, develop confidence and can sustain a reasonable relationship with other people.

Family Systems Theory

This theory gravitates around family dynamics including functioning, structures, roles, boundaries and actions occurring within the family members. It explains why family members behave in a certain way in a given situation (Rothbaum et al., 2002; Christian, 2006).

According to Family systems theory, a human family is a multigenerational, natural living system where the family network of relationship serves an important purpose in the family life. It takes into account communication, interaction, separation, connectedness, loyalty, independence and adaptation to stress in the context of the whole family as opposed to the individual alone (Becvar & Becvar, 2003).

Two main assumptions underpinnings in this theoretical framework are that the family is a very strong emotional system, which functions as an organic whole, which influences the life and behavior of its members; the relationships are marked by circular, reciprocal and repetitive motions rather than linear ones. It combines elements of psychological and sociological perspectives where the family is viewed as a complete organization, which functions as rule-governed and self-regulated system (Turnbull, 2011). As such, a shift in one part of the current functioning of the entire family system affects the functioning of other parts of the family (O’Gorman, 2012). Based on this argument, a shift in the composition of a family from a stable posture to unstable will impact on the members’ self-concept and friendships.

The seven major structures of family systems theory are differentiation of self, triangles, nuclear family emotional system, family projection process, emotional cutoff, multigenerational transmission process and sibling position (Casey, 2000; Bowen, 1976).

A change in the family structure affects the role of the family to provide care and meet child's needs and therefore the child's wellbeing. Research indicates that cohabiting biological parents tend to separate more easily and provide lower family environment than married biological parents. Other research provides that cohabiting partners tend to invest less time in children, than would a partner in a marriage where children are his biologically (Waldfogel, Criag & Brooks-Gunn, 2010). On the other hand, children who grow up in families with two continuously married parents or with two married biological parents who create a warm family are emotionally closer to their parents than their peers who come from divorced families or fragile cohabiting couples (Amato, 2005).

The self-concept of adolescence are significantly influenced by the family context, and concepts from family systems theory such as cohesion and adaptability are integral to healthy adolescent development. Cohesion refers to the emotional bonding of family members similar to the earlier attachment bond between infant and mother. In the early attachment relationship the caregiver must meet the needs of the infant and by so doing, establish a secure base from which to explore. In adolescence, new demands for autonomy must be met to allow the adolescent to explore and differentiate from the family while at the same time remaining emotionally connected to the family. Research indicates that adolescents in families with low levels of stability (disengaged) are at a higher risk for developing conduct/behavior disorders, substance abuse, and other behaviors problems (Prange, et al., 1992).

Parental support manifested through a reciprocal relationship of trust, understanding, and fairness is an indicator of optimal family cohesion. Similar to the attachment relationship, a cohesive family remains flexible to changes and adapts the levels of emotional support to achieve balance within the system. Moderate levels of cohesion maintain a balance between connectedness and autonomy. Adolescents residing in a family system with very low levels of support are at increased risk of negative behaviors and peer alienation (Cox & Paley, 1997).

Just like attachment theory, using a systems perspective, parental support is hypothesized to be related to a wide array of positive development outcomes. It is therefore, important at this point to note that changes in the family structure influences family functioning, limiting the time and possibility of the family members to fulfill the needs of the children and create a safe environment for the children to thrive. It is possible that child abuse, neglect and maltreatment are increased in various non-traditional family living arrangements. This study intends to demonstrate that parental divorce, separation and abuse all of which impact on the family stability, increases vulnerability of children to low self-esteem and interpersonal problems.

Conceptual Framework

Family stability or instability plays a key role in the overall development of teenagers. The Model below illustrates how a conflicted family relationship eventually affects the home environment which is critical for the development of self-concept and peer relationships. The main intervening strategy is family cohesion since a dysfunctional family unit is tantamount to a dysfunctional society.

In the figure below, attachment relationship has a positive influence to both the independent variable (unstable family structure) and the dependent variables (self-concept and peer relationships).

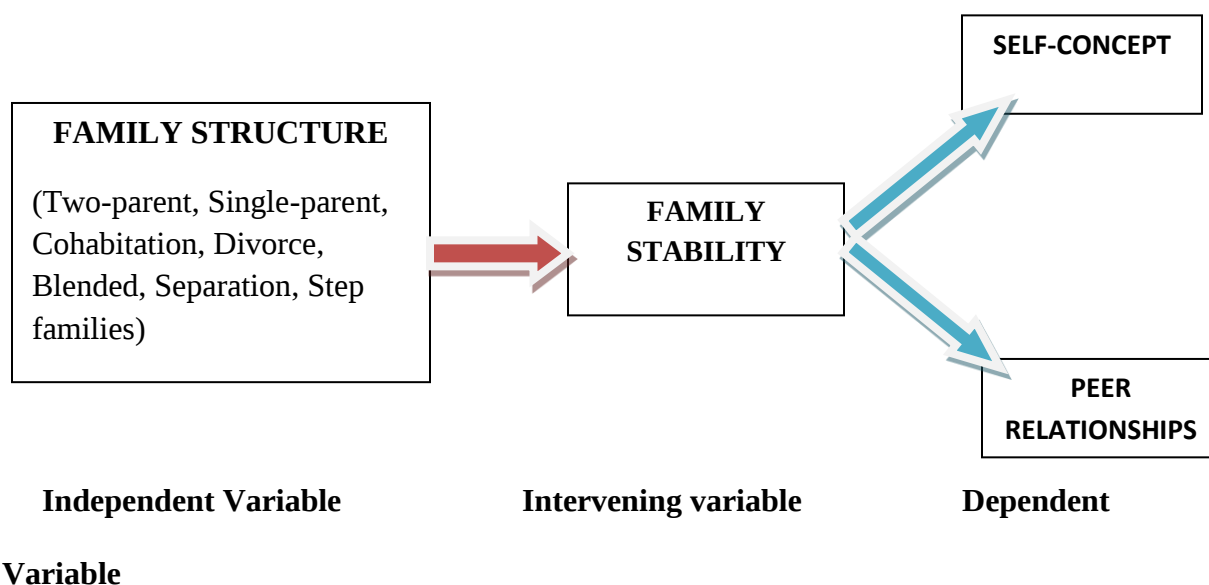


Figure 1: How stability in a given family structure impacts on teenager's on self-concept, and relational issues (Source: Researcher, 2017).

Improved marriages will enhance the home environment which will in turn have a positive impact on the child's self-concept, academic performance and interpersonal relationships.

Summary of Gaps

Whereas a lot has been written about family stability and the wellbeing of a child, sparse information is available about the link between family instability and development of self-concept and peer friendships in Kenya and Africa at large. The rapid breakdown of the traditional family structure from the popular two-parent family to one-parent

family portends far-reaching effects on teenagers/adolescents who are going through transition in their developmental stage. The family systems theory tends to support the notion that both father and mother are the main pillars of the family and any changes in this structure disrupts the balance in the family thereby placing the children in unfavorable conditions. Besides the structure, the parent-child relationship is also crucial in shaping a teenager's perspective of self and others. This is clearly articulated in Attachment theory. Self-esteem and relational issues are critical for teenager's psychological health. They are however hinged on significant relationships within their families of origin. This is the gaps the current study is addressing. The family unit, being the basic level of socialization for children, remains the most important point of reference when young people eventually emerge from their homes to the larger society.

Chapter Summary

Scholars concur with the proposition that development of self-concept starts from birth and is first evidenced through the emotional attachment of the child and the mother. The quality of interactions may contribute to or weaken the self-concept of the child. Some have pointed out that children born into cohabiting parent families experience the most family instability, followed by single mother families which in turn results to negative self-concept since to children, family instability may mean loss of contact with one parent, changes in the home and decline in parenting quality.

Experts posit that most changes in family structure, depending on the context, introduce stress and emotional insecurity to children's lives. Therefore, family instability is associated with negative outcomes for children including poor peer relationships.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

This chapter describes the research design, the location of study, population of the study, sample and sampling procedures, instrumentation, data collection and data analysis procedures.

Research Design

In an attempt to answer the research questions, a combination of both qualitative and quantitative research approaches was deployed. Quantitative method was used in interpretation of data contained in the surveys and self-concept /peer relationship scales, while qualitative method was used in the focus group discussions that offered the researcher an opportunity to get better understanding on how instability of the family is related to low self-esteem and relational issues.

Descriptive Survey research design and co-relational design were adopted in this study with a view to obtaining both an in-depth understanding of a given phenomenon and establishing relationships between variables. Also in this study, focus group discussions were used during which, the participants were also observed as they responded to questions in the schedule. This design was considered appropriate for this study being that the work was intended to collect data from a small group with a view to describing the impact of family instability on teenagers' self-concept and development of peer friendships in Nairobi's Ruai Area.

Area of Study

The study was carried out in Nairobi's Ruai area. Ruai was selected because it is a catchment of Children's Homes and an upcoming residential area with a growing number of families and churches being set up. The area is also cosmopolitan a fact that offered the researcher a cross-cultural perspective. The area is also accessible and familiar to the researcher. This made it possible for the researcher to access respondents with ease.

Population of the Study

The target population of the study is comprised of 400 adolescents between 14 and 20 years from all Children's Rescue/Foster Homes in Ruai since the area offers an opportunity to collect data from young people from different cultures considering that the area is cosmopolitan. Also targeted in the study were youths whose parents are of good and regular standing members of churches (stable family) on recommendation of church elders. This was aimed at comparing their perspective with those from unstable family structures.

Sampling Procedure

The study targeted a sample 51 high schools age youths within Ruai area. For purposes of this study, the participants were chosen using purposive sampling method taking into consideration that they meet the age required and are either from an unstable family structure or perceived stable families. The age bracket was from 14 to 20 consisting of both males and females. In the sample, 29% (15) were males while 71% (36) were females. Out of the 51 participants, 30 were drawn from Children's Homes in the area and the remaining 21 from churches/social groups in the area on recommendation from church elders that their families were stable.

Types of Data

The study data was based on the responses from the participants that were be filled in the family inventory questionnaire, self-concept and peer relationships scales and the audio-recorded data in the focused group discussions.

Method of Data Collection

The study used surveys, which were dispersed through the help of guardians or institution administrators. The researcher later held Focus group discussions based on some responses made in the surveys and scales.

Data Collection Instruments

The data collection instruments included a questionnaire, self-concept scale and a family inventory that collected quantitative data. The materials for this study included the Family Inventory, specifically created for high school age participants. This survey incorporated the Robsons Self-Concept Inventory (Robsons, 1989) (see Appendix I) and an Adolescent Relationships Scales questionnaire (see Appendix I). The participants were instructed to respond to a questionnaire containing 9 demographic questions, 28 questions pertaining to peer relations and Self-Concept. The researcher also prepared a schedule of questions for Focus group discussions that provided a basis for qualitative data (see Appendix I).

Instrument Pre-testing

The data collection tools was administered to 15 teenagers in a children's home in Kahawa West and 15 teenagers in a youth group of PCEA Kahawa West in order to compare the relationship between family stability/instability to a teenager's self-concept, and peer relationships. The feedback from the pilot study assisted in amending the data

collection tools to rid them of any ambiguity. The final drafts were submitted to the supervisor for corrections and final approval. These processes ensured content validity and relevance to the study.

Data Collection

The sample was issued with self-administered questionnaires and scales for obtaining quantitative data and thereafter the researcher conducted interviews with the respondents before having focus group discussions for qualitative data. This ensured that all issues covered in the questionnaire were adequately responded to.

Data Analysis and Presentation

After the respondents filled the necessary questionnaires, they were checked for completeness, during which, those that were not properly filled or completed were omitted in the analysis stage.

Thereafter, raw data was classified into categories of unstable/stable family structure in line with the theoretical underpinnings and research questions. The categorization, analysis and presentation of data was guided by the tenets of Attachment Theory and Family Systems Theory. The categorized data was coded and reduced into tables to avoid mixing of the data. The analysis of data was done using descriptive and inferential statistics with significance levels set at $p = 0.05$ with the help of IBM SPSS Version 20. Also in this study, focus group discussions were used during which, the participants made clarifications on their responses to questions in the schedule comparing with the theoretical underpinnings. The analysis also compared the results as guided by the general principles of Attachment and Family Systems theories.

Reliability and Validity Test

As a reliability test to the respondents/participants of the study, the questionnaire contained questions on self-concept and peer relationship issues that were also in the scales that the respondents filled for purposes of comparing the answers for reliability testing. We also reviewed our instruments to ascertain that they responded to all research questions when administered to the respondents.

Ethical Considerations

A research permit was obtained from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) and a letter of authorization allowing the researcher to collect data in Ruai area.

During this study, all participants were clearly informed that participation was voluntary and that an informed consent attached to the questionnaire clearly outlined the procedures of the research project and any potential risks. The respondents were assured of high levels of confidentiality and that their real identities remain anonymous.

In cases where the respondent did not understand English, necessary arrangements were made to assist the respondents. The researcher was required to seek supervision in the event he was overwhelmed emotionally with the research for purposes of objectivity throughout the study.

Chapter Summary

Data was collected from 51 respondents of between 14 and 20 years of age, during which questionnaires and scales were administered to assess the relationship between family stability/instability and the development of teenagers' self-esteem and peer relationships. Thirty (30) respondents were drawn from unstable family structure

while twenty one (21) were drawn from a stable family structure. The questionnaire was based on a Lickert scale ranging from 1- 4, thus Completely Disagree (CD – 1) to Completely Agree (CA – 4). Focus group discussions were conducted.

Analysis was done with the help of IBM SPSS Version 20.0 for both descriptive analysis and inferential analysis to establish relationships. Before analysis all questionnaires were sorted, coded, classified and tabulated for analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter focuses on data analysis and presentation based on the main objectives of the study. The study adopted both descriptive and inferential analysis for questionnaires administered to the respondents. Questions that were considered most appropriate to manifest the respondents, self-concept and ability to develop peer friendships were selected from the data collection instruments and analyzed while at the same time reviewing their relationship with the tenets of Attachment theory. The chapter also compares the results with other previous research in the area of study.

Effects of Family Background on Self-Esteem

Focus Group Discussion

Sixteen respondents volunteered to participate in the Focus Group Discussion. Ten of the participants were from unstable family structure while the remaining six were from a stable family structure. The group discussions majored on two questions that attracted an almost similar response from both stable and unstable family backgrounds respondents.

The discussion sought to clarify why the respondents chose the answer they picked in the questionnaire and the scales on two key statements: ‘People find me reasonably attractive, and There are many things I would change about myself’.

To the first statement i.e. People find me reasonably attractive; 6 out of 10 respondents (60%) of those in the discussion group from unstable families said they Agreed/Completely Agreed with the statement on the basis of biblical assertions that they were created perfect and in the image of GOD, and therefore they are fearfully and wonderfully made. This according to the respondents meant that GOD found them attractive and this is what really matters to them. On the other hand, 67% (4 out of 6) of those in the discussion group from stable family background cited several things that made them attractive ranging from their looks, neighbourhood, social status, grooming, tribe and family of origin. This revealed that they responded to the question based on what they considered would determine their self-worth.

On the second question, 70% (7 out of 10) of the discussants from unstable family structure cited connection with the absent parent as one thing they would want to change. They also cited economic status, their looks (others felt ugly), environment and performance in school. Conversely, 70% (4 out of 6) of those from stable family background cited they would forge for greater freedom, up scaling of their economic status and change of neighborhood including relocating to overseas.

This means that the respondents agreed or disagreed with the above statements for different reasons, which apparently was motivated by their current self-concept.

Descriptive Analysis of Family Stability and Teenage Self-esteem:

This section deals with how respondents from both stable and unstable family structures responded to questions meant to gauge their self-esteem.

Table 1: Descriptive results of how the sample responded to statements on self-concept

STATEMENT	CD	%	D	%	A	%	CA	%	Total %
Most people find me attractive	5	10	9	18	22	43	15	29	100
There are a lot of things I would change about myself if I could	4	8	4	8	17	34	24	48	100
I often feel humiliated	13	26	14	28	17	33	7	14	100
It would be boring if I talked about myself	16	31	15	29	14	28	6	12	100

In response to the first statement, 28% of the respondents disagreed to the statement that ‘most people find me attractive’ while 72% agreed with the statement.

Interestingly 82% of the respondents agreed with the statement that there are a lot of things they could change about themselves. However, agreement with the remaining two statements was 47% and 40% respectively.

Analysis of self-concept questions

This offers a comparative analysis of family structure in relation to teenage self-esteem while considering their responses to selected questions meant to gauge their self-esteem. The analysis is presented in form of charts and chi-square.

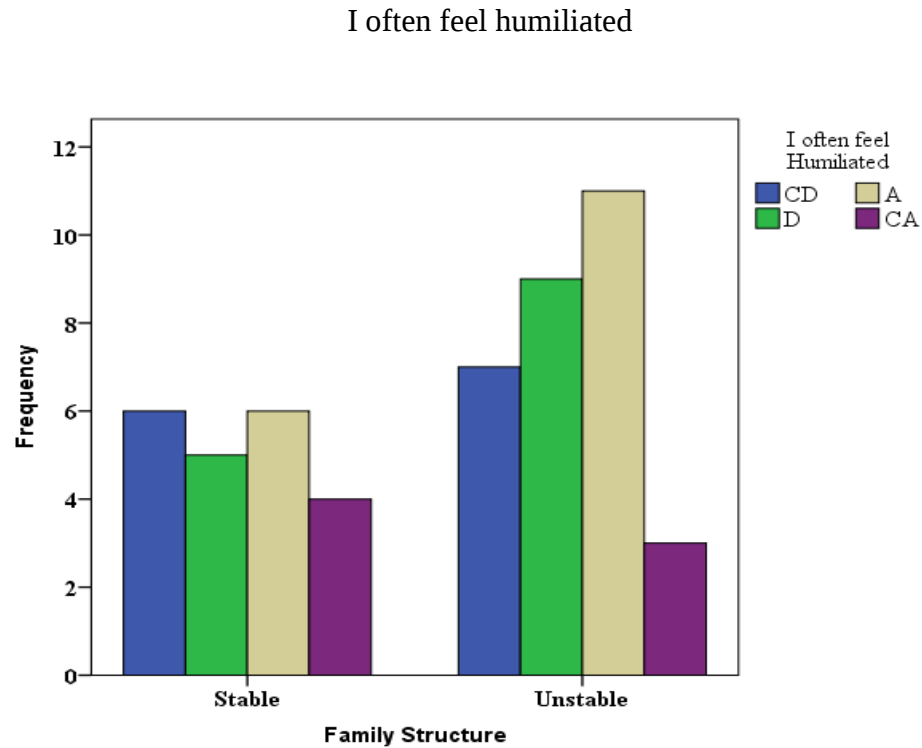


Figure 4.1 I often feel humiliated

Table 2: Chi-Square Tests of family structure and feeling humiliated

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.285 ^a	3	0.733
Likelihood Ratio	1.275	3	0.735
Linear-by-Linear Association	.027	1	0.869
N of Valid Cases	51		

a. 2 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.88.

47% of the respondents from unstable background agreed that they often feel humiliated compared to 40% of their counterparts from unstable background as captured in the chart. As a proxy of self-esteem, this is inferred as family structure influences the feeling of humiliation among respondents. However the level of significance were not statistically significant ($p=0.733$).

There are a lot of things I would change about myself

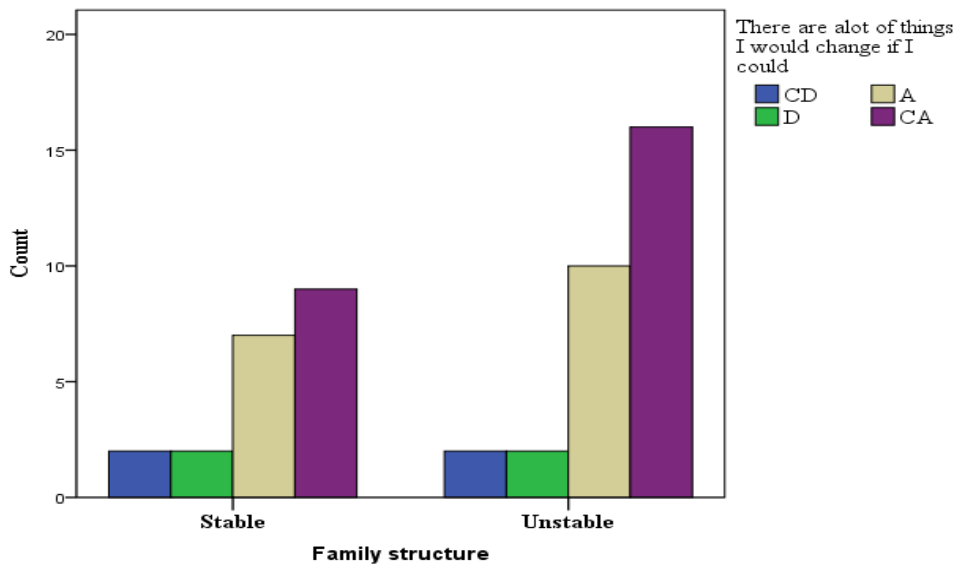


Figure 4.2 A lot of things I would change about myself

Table 3: Chi-Square Tests of family structure and feeling positive that teenage could alter a lot of things if possible

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.288 ^a	4	0.683
Likelihood Ratio	2.623	4	0.623
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.163	1	0.281
N of Valid Cases	50		

a. 6 cells (60.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .40.

53% of the respondents from unstable family background completely agree that there are a lot of things they would change in their lives compared to 40% from stable background. The Pearson chi-square ($p=0.683$) indicates that there was no significant statistical difference between respondents from stable and unstable family structures.

Table 4: Cross tabulation of family structure and being potentially attractive

		Most people find me reasonably attractive				Total
		Completely disagree	Disagree	Agree	Completely agree	
		(CD)	(D)	(A)	(CA)	
Family	Stable	5	14	48	33	100
structure	Unstable	13	17	43	27	100
Total		10	15	45	30	100

Table 5: Chi-square tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.507 ^a	3	0.681
Likelihood Ratio	1.599	3	0.660
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.232	1	0.267
N of Valid Cases	51		

- a. 3 cells (37.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.06

The results in table 4 above shows 81% of respondents from stable family profile generally agree that most people find them reasonably attractive while 70% of the respondents from unstable family structure agree with the statement. Interestingly, 30% of the respondents from unstable background disagreed with the statement while 19% from stable families disagreed with the statement. This implies that more respondents from unstable family structure actually feel that they are not reasonably attractive. However, the Pearson chi-square ($p=0.681$) indicates that there is no significant statistical difference between family stability and self-concept.

Table 6: Relationship of family structure and self esteem

		It would be boring if I talked about myself				Total
		Completely disagree	Disagree	Agree	Completely agree	
		(CD)	(D)	(A)	(CA)	
Family	Stable	29	29	33	10	100
structure	Unstable	33	30	23	13	100
Total		31	29	28	12	100

Table 7: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.700 ^a	3	0.873
Likelihood Ratio	.698	3	0.874
Linear-by-Linear Association	.061	1	0.806
N of Valid Cases	51		

a. 2 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.47.

The results in table 6 above shows 43% of respondents from stable family profile generally agree that it would be boring if they talked about themselves while 36% of the respondents from unstable family structure agree with the statement. The Pearson chi-square ($p=0.873$) indicates that the relationship between family stability and self-concept in this respect is statistically insignificant.

Family Stability and Development of Peer Friendships

Descriptive Analysis

Responses to questions gauging peer-friendships

	CD	%	D	%	A	%	CA	%	Total
I am comfortable depending on others	23	45	16	31	6	12	6	12	100
I worry that I will be hurt if I get close to others	16	31	7	14	12	24	16	31	100
I find it difficult to trust others	3	6	11	21	20	39	17	33	100
I worry others don't value me	3	6	12	24	17	33	19	37	100

The responses posted in the table were varied and the comparison between respondents from unstable and stable family structure will reveal an interesting pattern below in the comparative analysis.

Analysis of Questions on Peer Friendships

The presentation of the results is done in tables and charts considering questions that evaluated the respondent's ability to develop peer friendships. These set of questions can also have a direct bearing on the respondent's self-concept.

Table 8: Level of trust and family structure

		I find it difficult to trust others completely				Total
		Completely disagree	Disagree	Agree	Completely agree	
		(CD)	(D)	(A)	(CA)	
Family	Stable	0	38	38	24	100
structure	Unstable	10	10	40	40	100
Total		6	22	39	33	100

Table 8: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	7.604 ^a	3	0.045
Likelihood Ratio	8.696	3	0.034
Linear-by-Linear Association	.911	1	0.340
N of Valid Cases	51		

- a. 3 cells (37.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.24.

From the results in table 10 above, it was evident that there is significant relationship between nature of family structure and the teenage ability to trust others

($p=0.045$). Majority of the respondents from unstable background reported that they find it difficult to trust others (40% and 40% respectively). In contrast a significant proportion of the respondents from stable background differed sharply that they find it not difficult to trust others (38%) as compared to only 10% who disagreed with the statement. This can be construed that family background positively influences the level of trust among the individuals (Table 10 above).

Table 10: Comparative analysis of family structure and worry to get hurt if get closer to others

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	10.378 ^a	3	0.016
Likelihood Ratio	10.730	3	0.013
Linear-by-Linear Association	.124	1	0.725
N of Valid Cases	51		

a. 3 cells (37.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.88.

Fear of getting hurt if you let people get too close

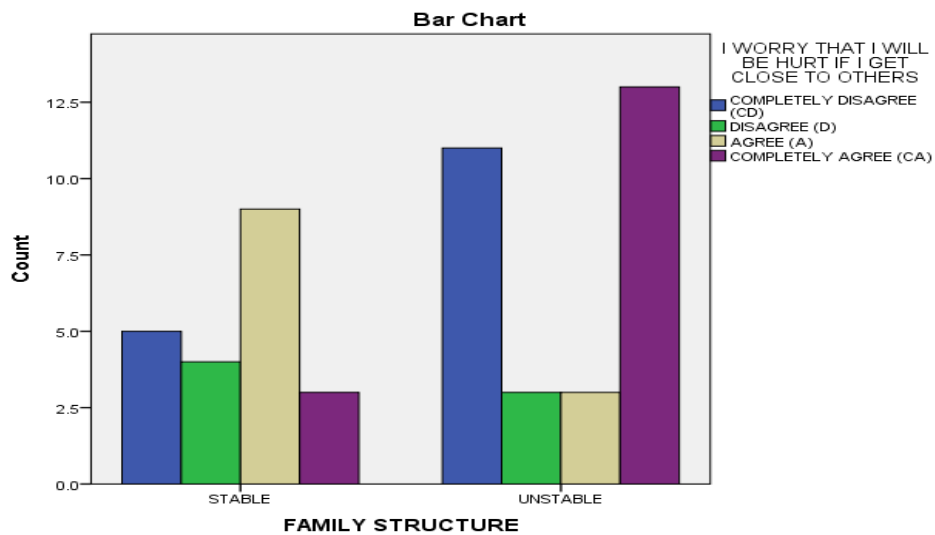


Figure 4.3 I worry that I will be hurt by to others

There is significant relationship between family structure and feeling among respondents that they may get hurt if they get closer to others ($P=0.016$). Higher proportion of the respondents from unstable background completely agree that they are likely to get hurt if they get closer to others (43%) as compared to those from stable background (14%). This is further illustrated in the bar chart below

Table 9: Chi-Square Tests of family structure and feeling of how others value the teenage and how they value themselves

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.166 ^a	3	0.367
Likelihood Ratio	3.241	3	0.356
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.096	1	0.295
N of Valid Cases	51		

a. 3 cells (37.5%) have expected count less than the minimum 5. expected count is 1.24

Fear that others do not value me

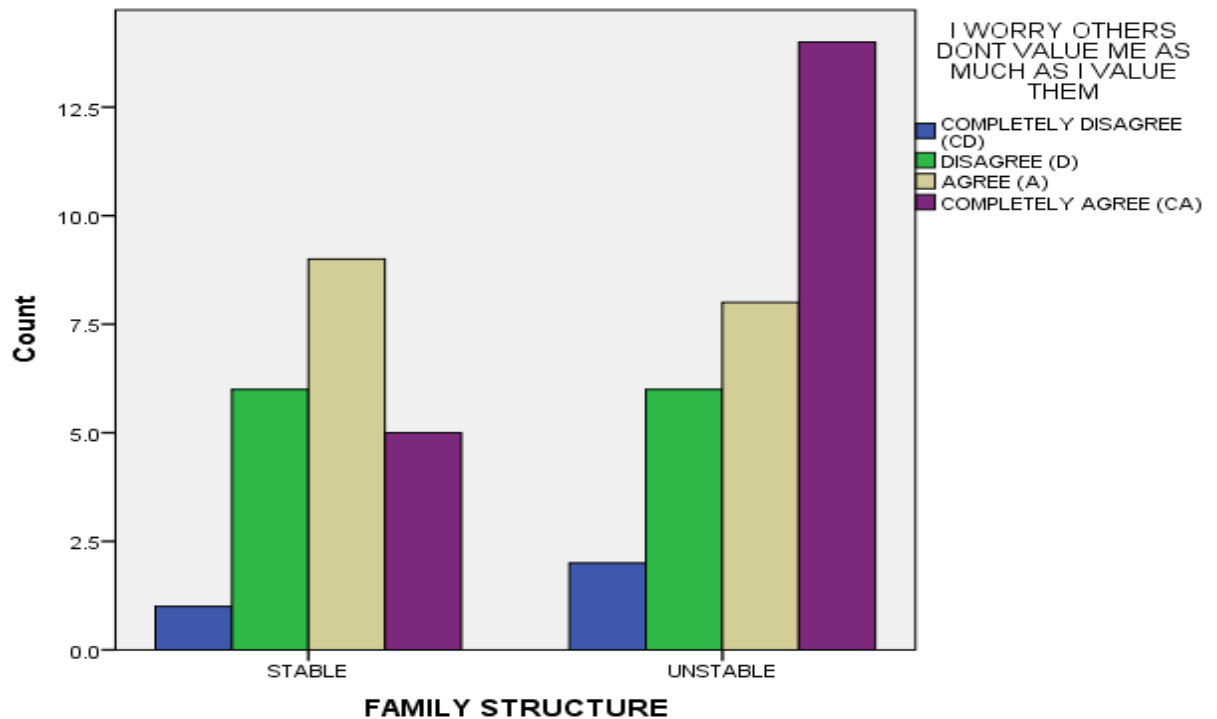


Figure 4.4 I worry others don't value me

There is no significant relationship between family structure and feelings of being valued by others ($P=0.367$). However, higher proportion of the respondents from unstable background agrees that they are not valued by others (77%) as compared to those from stable background (62%).

Table 102: Cross tabulation of teenage dependence and family structure

		I am comfortable depending on other people				Total
		Completely disagree	Disagree	Agree	Completely agree	
		(CD)	(D)	(A)	(CA)	
Family	Stable	29	48	19	5	100
structure	Unstable	57	20	7	17	100
Total		45	31	12	12	100

Table 13: Chi square test

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.263 ^a	3	0.041
Likelihood Ratio	8.487	3	0.037
Linear-by-Linear Association	.327	1	0.568
N of Valid Cases	51		

a. 4 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.47.

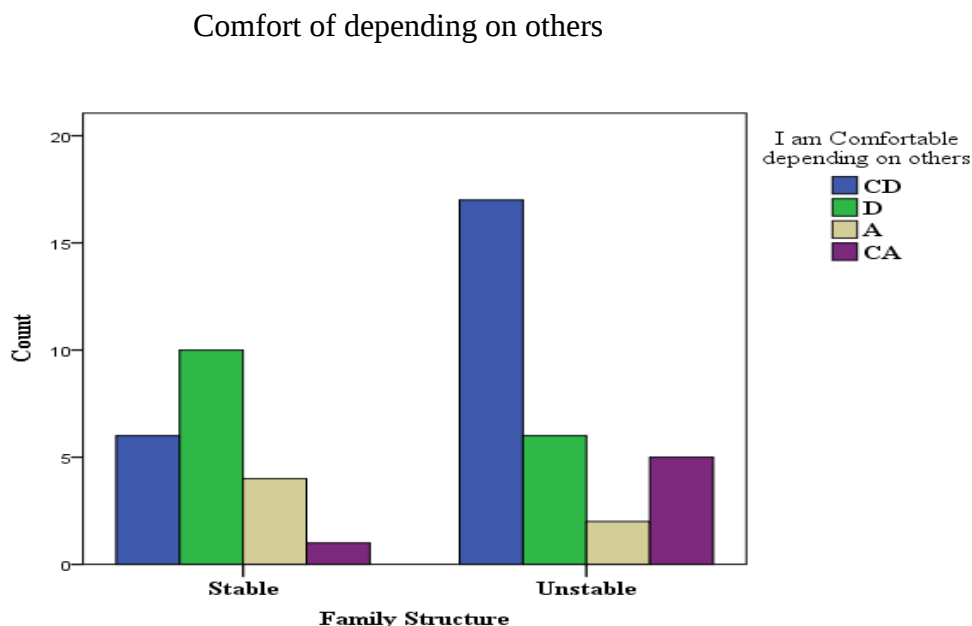


Figure 4.5 Easy to depend on others

Family structure significantly affect the dependence among teenage ($p=0.041$) as shown in table 15 above. Higher proportion of respondents from unstable background completely agreed that they are comfortable depending on others (17%) as compared to those from stable background (5%). Additionally most respondents from stable background disagreed that they were comfortable depending on other (48%) as compared to 20% from unstable background.

Parent-Child attachments and Development of Self-Concept and Peer relations:

Central tenets of Attachment presuppose that children who do not receive adequate care from the most important people in their lives come to themselves as not deserving of attention and affection. The present study demonstrates that parent-child attachment is a critical variable in the development of self-concept and peer relations.

According to attachment theory, a child who receives responsive and sensitive parenting which in the current study is classified as a stable family structure, forms an

internal working model of the care givers (parent/parents) as a trustworthy and dependable source of care when it is needed. This early relationship becomes a model of the self ultimately guiding how one views themselves and others. The current study lends credence to this theory since respondents from unstable family structure tended to score a high index of low self-concept compared to their counterparts from stable family structure. The same trend is noticed when it comes to development of peer friendships, where respondents from a stable family background can easily relate to other people and feel more deserving to be treated well.

The results also affirm the principle of reciprocity that is central in the attachment theory. The theory underscores the critical role played by a responsive and sensitive caregiver in the development of reciprocity in social interactions. Respondents from the unstable family structure manifested a reluctance to trust other persons, which makes it difficult for them to develop peer friendships. Their counterparts from stable family structure had no problem trusting other people. The results therefore confirm that the attachment relationship between a child and the parent at the family set up is bound to affect a teenagers' self-concept and their ability to develop peer friendships.

Discussion

The current study sought to explore the relationship between family stability and development of teenagers' self-concept and peer- relations through the lenses of Attachment theory. The results indicate that there are strong relations in one variable (development of peer friendships) and no statistical significance in another (self-concept). However, representation in form of charts clearly indicated that respondents from

unstable family background manifested more unsatisfactory self-esteem compared to their counterparts from the stable background.

The results of this study tend to agree with previous studies in this field that assert that Parent-Child attachment contribute to a teenager's self-esteem and development of peer friendships (Bulanda & Majumdar, 2009). Generally this study suggests that the quality of parent-child attachment is a key contributing factor to various aspects of self-concept and institution of peer friendships.

Overall, descriptive statistics of this study indicated that respondents agreed or disagreed with some statements based on their family status, orientation, religious beliefs and to some extent perceptions. All these formed a rich interplay of self-concept, ability to develop and maintain friendships and the relevance of attachment theory. Below is a discussion of the findings from each of the three objectives in relation to the related literature.

Family Stability and Self-Concept:

In the current study, the family structure and relationships within the family depicted a statistically no significant relationship despite an age long argument that the family structure directly affects the self-concept of teenagers. However, it is important to note that more respondents from unstable family structure had low self-esteem than those from stable family structure. It is in the family set-up that children are first introduced to a prosocial/empathic orientation and other specific social skills that can be used beyond family boundaries.

Though evidence linking attachment security to family stability among teenagers is scarce, our findings tend to concur with earlier research by Rubin (2003), who posits

that perceptions of self-worth (self-concept) are related to the kind of relationship a teenager/child has with the primary caregivers. Development of a healthy self-concept can therefore be grossly undermined by several transitions in the family unit and prolonged absence of one parent that leads to attachment problems.

Though the family structure has an important part in the development of self-concept, the findings in this area show that there are other variables that inform the formation of self-esteem.

Family Stability and Development of Peer Friendships:

In the current study, our findings revealed a very strong relationship between family stability and the development of peer relationships. Respondents from unstable family background had a problem trusting other people and feared to get too close to people for fear of being hurt. These findings support the attachment theory that links child-parent attachment security with peer-group functioning and relationships (Schneider, Atkinson & Tardiff, 2001).

The fact that respondents from a stable family structure manifested attributes such as trusting others and depending on others, which are critical in development of friendships, confirms that there is a link between attachment security that is engendered at the family level and peer friendships.

Of particular interest is the trust and intimacy characterized in a secure parent-child relationship that ultimately occasion a set of internalized models that would affect the nature and quality of peer relationships (Belsky & Cassidy, 1994). This position lends credence to the findings in the current study where respondents from a stable family structure exhibited an outgoing posture that ultimately makes it easier for them to

develop peer relationships compared to their counterparts from unstable family background.

It is therefore, important to point out that other than the mere structure of the family, the attachment relationship is critical in the development of social skills. The relationship that is reassuring to a child will go a long way in ensuring that they relate positively with their peers.

Attachment theory and Development of Self-Concept and Peer Friendships:

Attachment theory originated from the works of John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth in the second half of the twentieth century. Bowlby noticed consistent patterns of reactions among young children to separation from their primary caregivers especially their mothers (Follan & Minnis, 2010; Hazan & Shaver, 1987). He proposed that infants who remained in close vicinity to their parents, resist being separated from them, and look to them for protection when distressed or threatened (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Ainsworth, posited that a parent's responses during his or her infant's first year is associated with such as signals of distress, attempts to connect, and early displays of autonomy affect the child's development and subsequent behavior (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Bowlby and Ainsworth agreed that relationships between young children and their primary caregivers result in the formation of expectations regarding attachment figures, which forms the basis of attachment theory. Children develop perceptions of how reliable a primary caregiver is and how likely they are to respond to their needs.

Based on the reliability of their primary care givers over the course of the first years of life, children develop either a secure or an insecure attachment style. Throughout their life, the attachment style adopted has implications for their perceptions regarding

how trustworthy other people are, as well as how worthy of love they are (Cassidy, 2001; Hazan & Shaver, 1987).

Childhood attachment experiences are believed to be projected into later life through the formation of internal working models otherwise referred to as mental representations of others. These representations enable individuals to predict and interpret another person's behavior and to plan their own response (Riggs, Cusimano, & Benson, 2011). Through the observation of patterns across interactions with various people, the child learns how to interact with and relate to others, and develops an idea of how they can expect to be treated by other people.

If the child's working model of attachment was within relatively secure relationships, the child will most probably see people as dependable and worthy of their trust. On the other hand, children growing up in the context of an insecure attachment relationship which in this study is denoted by insecure family structure may view other people as unreliable, untrustworthy, and unlikely to care for them. This may result into, excessive fear of abandonment, negative appraisals of the self and aversion to intimacy, (Pietromonaco & Barrett, 2000).

Based on this theoretical tenet, our early attachment experiences largely form the basis for our capacity to relate to others and to ourselves into adolescence and beyond (Pace & Zappulla, 2011). As they age, children with insecure attachment styles often doubt themselves and struggle with feeling of being misunderstood, underappreciated, and worthless manifesting itself as low self-concept. They have low levels of independence and self-sufficiency. (Riggs, Cusimano & Benson, 2011). Their posture

during relationships is motivated by fears of rejection, unreciprocated love and abandonment.

In as far as attachment theory is concerned, self-esteem is a product of the working model of the self and is believed to be formed largely within the context of the attachment relationship (Gomez & McLaren, 2007). In the current study, there is strong evidence that a secure attachment relationship propped up within a stable family structure may be one of the most important variables that determines self-esteem and development of relationships. Beginning in the very early stages of life, attachment theory proposes a steady sense of security and love gives a child the critical ability to establish an autonomous self. A positive, individuated sense of self depends on the caring treatment of the attachment figure, which communicates to the child that they are worthy of this type of treatment.

On the other hand, children who grow in unstable family environment, may perceive other people as rejecting, unreliable, untrustworthy, or hurtful. When parents' interactions with their children are inconsistent, insensitive, controlling, unsupportive, lacking in warmth and affection, or otherwise negative and insufficient, it is likely that an insecure attachment style will develop (Riggs, Cusimano, & Benson, 2011).

Interestingly, not every child from an insecure family background will manifest features of insecure attachment. Based on the current study, some respondents turned out to be extremely resilient despite their unstable background. Conversely, not every child who is raised by caring, present parents will be insulated from all negative outcomes. However, our argument that is backed by the findings of this study is that a secure

attachment within the boundaries of a stable family background is important for the children to develop the social attributes such as trust, empathy, emotion regulation, reciprocal caring and support, autonomy, conflict negotiation, and a healthy self-concept.

Chapter Summary

The findings indicate that teenagers from stable and unstable family background suffer from low self-esteem. However, more respondents from stable family structure exhibited a more satisfactory self-concept compared to their counterparts from unstable family background. On the second objective, the findings indicated that there is a strong relationship between family instability and the teenagers ability to develop and maintain peer friendships.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

This chapter comprises the summary of the findings of the study, their implications, conclusions, recommendations and areas for further research.

Summary of Findings

This study sought to explore the relationship between family stability, development of self-concept and peer friendships in light of the attachment theory. The study aimed to achieve three objectives: Establishing the relationship between family instability and low-self-esteem among teenagers; Determining how development of peer friendships is affected by family instability; and Assessing the applicability of attachment theory in accounting for teenagers' low-self-esteem and development of peer friendships. Below is a summary of the main findings as per each of these objectives.

Family Stability/Instability

Generally respondents from a stable family background, which in the current study denoted teenagers living with two biological parents indicated a more satisfactory self-concept compared to their counterparts from unstable family background. Stability in the home emerged as a strong independent variable for teenager's self-concept. However, it is important to point out that some respondents from other family structures also exhibited a satisfactory self-concept especially if they had a religious belief system. The findings also point out the fact that a stable family background serves as a training center for teenagers on how to relate with other people let alone their peers. The interactions and cohesion in the home sets the tempo in the development of self-concept and friendships.

Interestingly, even teenagers from intact two-parent families stand the risk of developing negative self-concept if their attachment is shaky due to constant quarrels or absence of parents. Kevorikan (2010) confirms this standpoint through a study whose findings were that children absent fathers suffer low self-concept while children with present fathers manifest better performance in class, are not violent and have higher self-esteem.

Family Instability and Self-Concept

The findings indicate no statistical significance between family instability with self-concept. Overall, respondents from unstable family structure were found to be more vulnerable to low self-esteem. In spite of the relationship in the Pearson Chi-Square being averagely 0.6 the charts and scores by respondents from unstable family structure were consistently more than those from a stable family background. This therefore means that there are other variables other than family instability that ultimately affects the self-esteem of teenagers from both stable and unstable family backgrounds. Factors such as the quality of the relationship in the family, the nature of interaction and absence/presence of the parent can ultimately influence the teenager's self-concept.

Family Instability and Development of Peer relations

This variable indicated a very strong relationship. Pearson chi-square for this variable was averagely 0.04 denoting that instability in the family can directly impact on the teenager's ability to develop and maintain peer relationships. It is also interesting to note that the statements picked to test this variable also have a direct bearing towards the respondents' self-esteem. Statements such as 'I worry others don't value me as much as I value them, It is hard to count of other people and I find it hard to trust others completely' can also be used to assess the respondents' self-concept. The view one

respondent holds about their relationship with others is majorly determined by their perceptions about self and how others will respond to their overtures.

Parent-child Attachment

In our study a healthy parent-child attachment relationship was assumed to offer secure attachment of the children through which they can explore the environment while treating the family as a secure base. Analysis of data indicated a relationship between secure attachment in stable families with satisfactory levels of self-concept and maintenance of friendships. When the attachment figures who in this case are biological parents, respond consistently to the signals of distress from a child and tries to connect in a loving, supportive manner, in addition to the development of a secure parent-child attachment, a working model of the self-worth and caring is developed facilitating an environment for friendships. This was demonstrated through our findings that showed a generally satisfactory level of self-concept and ability to easily develop peer friendships among respondents from the stable family structure.

Implications

The current study adds to the existing body of literature on the important subject of self-concept and how it affects other facets of life among teenagers. The results of this research will provide useful grounds for further research on the subject of attachment and self-concept.

This study can also be used to spur interest in the whole area of parent-child relationships. The impact of this relationship on the future social development of children is something that all parents need to know. This information will be invaluable education

to parents who have been privileged to have children but are so preoccupied investing for the children instead of investing in them.

The study may also be useful to schools and religious organizations that interact with children and parents on a daily basis. The material could be used in emphasizing the importance of forging close ties with children for the sake of their own self-concept and future relationships. The organizations can organize for mentorship programs to assist children who have low or no contact at all with one parent.

Governments may also benefit in putting in place policies that would stress on the important position of family in the overall growth and development of society. The attitude towards family life should be such that the family is viewed as the most reliable social support system where teenagers/children will run to when faced with challenges.

Conclusion

The current study explored the relationship between family instability and development of self-concept and peer friendships. The findings established that there was no significant relationship between family structure and self-esteem but there was a strong relationship between family structure and the teenager's ability to develop and maintain peer friendship. Children's perceptions of friendships and to some extent self-concept have their origin in the attachment relationship that is exemplified in the family structure. Self-concept is a self-appraisal that is created through interaction with significant others. This is self-perception surmised from attitudes, feelings and responses exhibited in the family. Parent-Child attachment determines the internal working models of a child will use in determining future relationships. The data collection tools including Questionnaires, Scales and Focus group discussions underscored the importance of close

parent-child relationships that serve as a secure base for children as they grow to adulthood.

The findings of this study demonstrate that there is a link between family stability, attachment (relationships) and the development of self-esteem and peer relationships among teenagers. However, there is need for further research in this area with a view to coming up with clear remedial measures that will engender a safe environment for teenagers to thrive.

Recommendations

In light of the serious impact family portends to the overall stability of society, the study recommends the following:

Parents should make a deliberate effort to create a stable and predictable environment in the home for children to develop through manifestation of cohesion and taking into account the interests of the children even in times of family conflict.

Conversely, Schools should come up with novel initiatives to either accommodate children from unstable families through programs such as adopting a student for the holiday so that the children can have a feel of what family life is all about.

Churches and Children homes could come up with modeling programs for boys and girls in their congregations, who have single parents or who are orphaned/disadvantaged so that they can also experience the love and warmth of the family.

The government could come up with policies that insulate the children from the negative effects of separation, divorce or even parental abuse so that the children can have a holistic development despite transitions within the family structure.

Areas of Further Research

A major limitation in the current study was lack of diversity. The sample was picked from a particular area and most of them were drawn from children homes which offer a homogeneous kind of sample. It would be interesting to expand the sample to include teenagers from secondary schools since this will offer a sample from diverse backgrounds.

Another limitation was the sample size. The current study had a sample of 51 respondents drawn from one geographical region. The limited number of participants inhibited the researcher's ability to gain proper insights into the relationship between family structure and self-concept. Statistically significant findings may perhaps be arrived at if the sample size could be expanded. This is an area that can be exploited for further research.

Conducting a similar study could yield more meaningful result if the sample could be larger and the respondents subjected to other descriptive techniques of collection of data such as interviews to clarify some issues which may be confusing to them.

There is need to include other variables that also inform a teenager's self-concept such as religion in a future study with a view to getting a broader picture other than family instability alone.

Conversely it would be important to further split family structure and look at each individually instead of clustering them all as unstable (single parent, co-habitation, divorce).

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APPENDIX I

IMPACT OF FAMILY STRUCTURE ON SELF-CONCEPT AND PEER RELATIONSHIPS QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between the family structure and a teenager's self-concept and development of peer friendships. All information filled in this questionnaire will be confidential and will never be linked to you. Try as much as possible to answer every item in the questionnaire. Thank you for your cooperation.

Part 1: Bio Data

1. Name: _____

2. Birth Date: _____ / _____ / _____ Age: _____ Gender: _____

3. Level of Education: Primary/Std. _____ Secondary/ Form _____

4. Your parent's current marital status (mark ☐ the one that describes your family structure)

- a. Married (biological father and mother) ☐
- b. Single parent (never married) ☐
- c. Divorced ☐
- d. Separated ☐
- e. Single parent (death of one parent) ☐
- f. Step-father/mother ☐
- g. Cohabitation ☐
- h. Any other ☐

5. What is your father's educational level (mark ☐ as appropriate)

- a. Primary ☐
- b. Secondary ☐
- c. Tertiary ☐
- d. Did not go to school ☐
- e. Any other ☐

6. What is your mother's educational level (mark ☐ as appropriate)

- a. Primary ☐
- b. Secondary ☐
- c. Tertiary ☐
- d. Did not go to school ☐
- e. Any other ☐

7. What is your father's occupation (*mark ☐ as appropriate*)

- a. Full time employment ☐
- b. Part time employment ☐
- c. Self-employed ☐
- d. Volunteer service ☐
- e. Not employed ☐

8. What is your mother's occupation (*mark ☐ as appropriate*)

- a. Full time employment ☐
- b. Part time employment ☐
- c. Self-employed ☐
- d. Volunteer service ☐
- e. Not employed ☐

9. How many siblings do you have (*mark ☐ as appropriate*)

- a. 0 ☐
- b. 1 ☐
- c. 2 ☐
- d. 3 ☐
- e. 4 ☐
- f. 5 and more ☐

Part 2: Self-Concept and Peer Relationships

The following items describe statements about how you feel about yourself and others. Indicate your agreement with the following statement Circling your response using the scale as described below:

1	2	3	4
Completely Disagree (CD)	Disagree (D)	Agree (A)	Completely Agree (CA)

- | | CD | D | A | CA |
|---|----|---|---|----|
| 10. I find it hard to count on other people | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 11. I can never seem to achieve anything worthwhile | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

12. It is very important to me to feel independent	1	2	3	4
13. There are a lot of things I'd change about myself if I could	1	2	3	4
14. I am not embarrassed to let people know my opinion	1	2	3	4
15. I find it easy to get emotionally close to others	1	2	3	4
16. I worry that I will be hurt if I get too close to others	1	2	3	4
17. I am comfortable without close emotional relationships	1	2	3	4
18. I seem to be very unlucky	1	2	3	4
19. Most people find me reasonably attractive	1	2	3	4
20. I worry about being alone	1	2	3	4
21. I am comfortable depending on other people	1	2	3	4
22. I am glad I am who I am	1	2	3	4
23. I am a reliable person	1	2	3	4
24. I find it difficult to trust others completely	1	2	3	4
25. I am comfortable having other people depend on me	1	2	3	4
26. I worry others don't value me as much as I value them	1	2	3	4
27. It would be boring if I talked about myself	1	2	3	4
28. When I am successful there is usually a lot of luck involved	1	2	3	4
29. I often feel humiliated	1	2	3	4
30. Everyone else seems more confident and contented than me	1	2	3	4
31. I am kind of uncomfortable being emotionally close to people	1	2	3	4
32. I often worry about what other people are thinking about me	1	2	3	4
33. I find that people don't want to get as close as I would like	1	2	3	4
34. When something is difficult I find myself giving up	1	2	3	4

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 35. I can like myself even when others don't | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 36. I worry about having people not accept me | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How can you explain self-concept/self-esteem
2. What is the difference between positive self-concept and negative self-concept
3. Why in your opinion do people find you reasonably attractive?
4. Given an opportunity, what would you change about yourself?

Robson SCQ

Name

Date: /

This questionnaire deals with attitudes and beliefs which some people have about themselves.

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement by ringing the single number in each section which represents how you typically feel most of the time.

Since people vary so much in the opinions they hold, there are no right or wrong answers.

	<i>Completely Disagree</i>		<i>Disagree</i>		<i>Agree</i>		<i>Completely Agree</i>	
1. I have control over my own life.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I'm easy to like.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I never feel down in the dumps for very long.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. I can never seem to achieve anything worthwhile.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. There are lots of things I'd change about myself if I could.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I am not embarrassed to let people know my opinions.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. I don't care what happens to me.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. I seem to be very unlucky.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Most people find me reasonably attractive.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. I'm glad I'm who I am.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. Most people would take advantage of me if they could.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. I am a reliable person.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. It would be boring if I talked about myself.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. When I'm successful, there's usually a lot of luck involved.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. I have a pleasant personality.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. If a task is difficult, that just makes me all the more determined.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. I often feel humiliated.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. I can usually make up my mind and stick to it.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. Everyone else seems much more confident and contented than me.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. Even when I quite enjoy myself, there doesn't seem much purpose to it all.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. I often worry about what other people are thinking about me.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. There's a lot of truth in the saying "What will be, will be".	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. I look awful these days.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. If I really try, I can overcome most of my problems.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25. It's pretty tough to be me.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26. I feel emotionally mature.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

27: When people criticise me, I often feel helpless and second-rate.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28: When progress is difficult, I often find myself thinking it's just not worth the effort.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29. I can like myself even when others don't.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30. Those who know me well are fond of me.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Please check that you have responded to every statement

Adolescent Relationship Scales Questionnaire

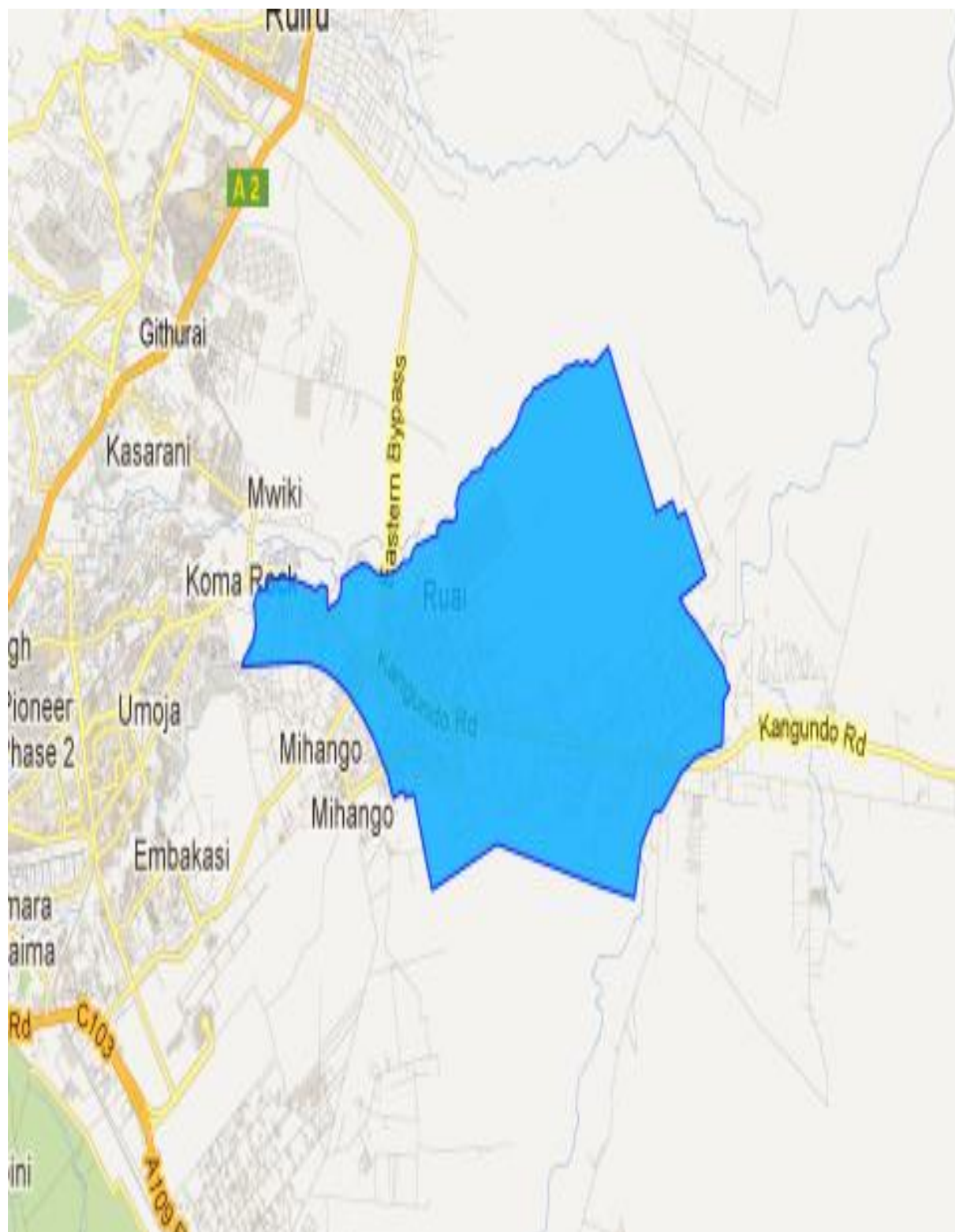
The following is a copy of the *Adolescent Relationship Scales Questionnaire (ARSQ)*. The continuous scales reflect the degree of security, fearfulness, preoccupiedness, and dismissingness and typically is **NOT** used to categorize individuals into attachment categories.

Think about all the people in your life. Now read each of the following statements and rate how much it describes your feelings. Write the number in front of the statements on your level of Agreement or Disagreement as indicated in the scale below

1	2	3	4
Completely Disagree (CD)	Disagree (D)	Agree (A)	Completely Agree (CA)

1. I find it hard to count on other people
2. It is very important to me to feel independent
3. I find it easy to get emotionally close to others
4. I worry that I will be hurt if I become too close to others
5. I am comfortable without close emotional relationships
6. I want to be completely emotionally close with others
7. I worry about being alone
8. I am comfortable depending on other people
9. I find it difficult to trust others completely
10. I am comfortable having other people depend on me
11. I worry others don't value me as much as I value them
12. It is very important for me to do things on my own
13. I'd rather not have other people depend on me
14. I am kind of uncomfortable being emotionally close to people
15. I find that people don't want to get as close as I would like
16. I prefer not to depend on people
17. I worry about having people not accept me.

APPENDIX II
ROADMAP OF RUAI



APPENDIX III

25th July, 2017

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: EVANS ONSANDO REG. NO. MFT/0670/15

Greetings! This is an introduction letter for the above named person a final year student in Pan Africa Christian University (PAC University), pursuing a Master of Arts in Marriage and Family Therapy.

He is at the final stage of the programme and he is preparing to collect data to enable him finalise on his thesis. The thesis title is **"Impact of Family Instability on Teenagers Self-Concept and Development of Friendships: A Case Study of Ruai, Nairobi County, Kenya"**.

We therefore kindly request that you allow him conduct research in your organization.

Warm Regards,

Dr. Lilian Vikiru
Registrar Academics

PAN AFRICA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY
 P. O. Box 56875, NAIROBI - 00200.
 TEL: 0561820/8561945/2013146

25th July, 2017

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Ref. No. **NACOSTI/P/17/17921/18641**

Date: **17th August, 2017**

Evans Onsando
Pan Africa Christian University
P.O. Box 56875-00200
NAIROBI.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on *“Impact of family instability on teenagers self-concept and development of friendships: a case study of Ruai & Nairobi Counties, Kenya”* I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Nairobi County** for the period ending **17th August, 2018.**

You are advised to report to **the County Commissioner and the County Director of Education, Nairobi County** before embarking on the research project.

Kindly note that, as an applicant who has been licensed under the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 to conduct research in Kenya, you shall deposit **a copy** of the final research report to the Commission within **one year** of completion. The soft copy of the same should be submitted through the Online Research Information System.


GODFREY P. KALERWA MSc., MBA, MKIM
FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO

Copy to:

The County Commissioner
Nairobi County.

The County Director of Education
Nairobi County.

CONDITIONS

1. The License is valid for the proposed research, research site specified period.
2. Both the Licence and any rights thereunder are non-transferable.
3. Upon request of the Commission, the Licensee shall submit a progress report.
4. The Licensee shall report to the County Director of Education and County Governor in the area of research before commencement of the research.
5. Excavation, filming and collection of specimens are subject to further permissions from relevant Government agencies.
6. This Licence does not give authority to transfer research materials.
7. The Licensee shall submit two (2) hard copies and upload a soft copy of their final report.
8. The Commission reserves the right to modify the conditions of this Licence including its cancellation without prior notice.



REPUBLIC OF KENYA



National Commission for Science,
Technology and Innovation

RESEARCH CLEARANCE
PERMIT

Serial No.A 15327

CONDITIONS: see back page

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT: MR. EVANS ONSANDO of PAN AFRICA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY, 30091-100 NAIROBI, has been permitted to conduct research in Nairobi County on the topic: IMPACT OF FAMILY INSTABILITY ON TEENAGERS SELF-CONCEPT AND DEVELOPMENT OF FRIENDSHIPS: A CASE STUDY OF RUAI, NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA. for the period ending: 17th August, 2018  Applicant's Signature	Permit No : NACOSTI/P/17/17921/18641 Date Of Issue : 17th August, 2017 Fee Received : USD 9.45  Director General National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation
--	---