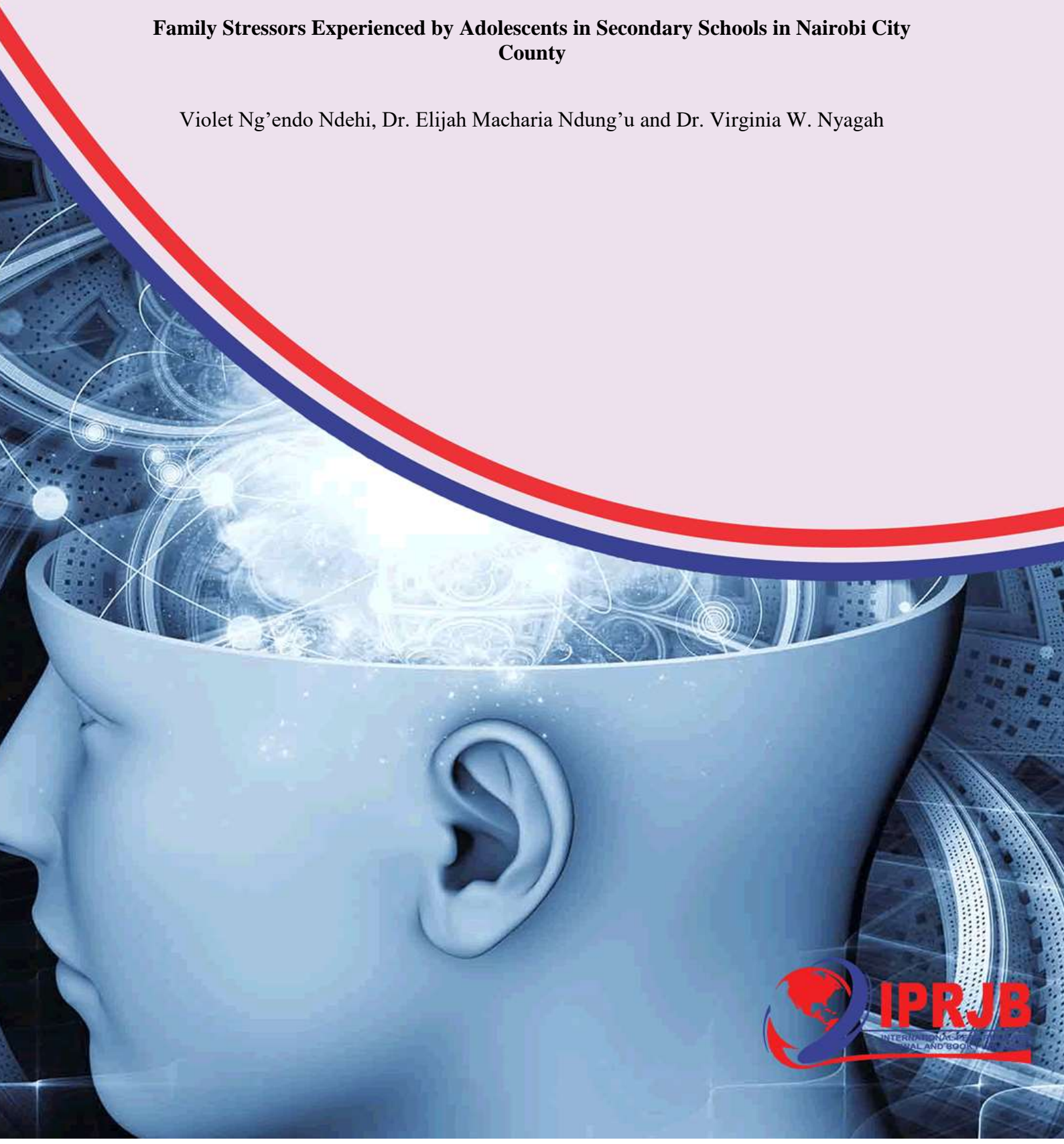


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**Family Stressors Experienced by Adolescents in Secondary Schools in Nairobi City
County**

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Secondary Schools in Nairobi City County**



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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of this study was to determine the different sorts of family stressors among adolescents in secondary schools in Nairobi County have observed.

Methodology: The study employed a parallel convergent mixed-method design with a target population of 38,641 adolescents in Nairobi County secondary schools. Quantitative Data was collected from 398 adolescents in forms 2 and 3 via simple random sampling. All school categories were represented through cling cluster sampling, while simple random sampling selected respondents within each school. Qualitative data was purposively obtained from 10 students, 10 parents, and 10 teachers. Proven psychometric tools like Assessment of identity Development in Adolescence, Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, Children's Perception of Inter-Parental Conflict Scale, and Dhaka Stress Scale-Adolescent collected quantitative data. Pearson coefficient correlations were calculated using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 25) to explore relationships between variables.

Findings: The study established the types of family stressors and confined itself to parental conflict and family changes. The findings of the study revealed that a slight majority of secondary students experienced less intense parental conflict. However, the study results also showed slight high rate of separation, followed by extramarital affairs and divorce among the families' stressors. Additionally, the qualitative data analysis showed that parental conflict, separation, and divorce were among the few family stressors unanimously reported by all three respondent groups (parents, teachers and students). Furthermore, both the students and parents reported domestic violence as one of family stressors.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: The study was anchored on Family Systems Theory. The study recommended the involvement of a counsellor, a chaplain and the government. There should also be a wide spread training of parents and the wider community. These interventions should be implemented not only within schools but also within communities. Therefore, parents, teachers, Non-governmental Organizations, churches, the government and stakeholders in psychological counselling must collaborate and implement interventions. This can create a more robust and holistic support system by adopting a comprehensive approach encompassing educational institutions and community settings.

Keywords: *Family Stressor, Parental Conflict, Family Changes, Adolescent Behaviour.*

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INTRODUCTION

Bodenmann (2013), in a Swiss literature review, analysed the various stressors affecting family systems. Bodenmann (2013) reviewed past qualitative and quantitative studies by himself and others. One of these reviewed studies was a two-year longitudinal study conducted in 1997. According to Bodenmann (2013), families function as a system characterized by interconnections among its members, as cited by Segrinand & Flora (2005). Consequently, one cannot understand individuals without considering their family backgrounds (Segrinand & Flora, 2005). This idea concurs strongly with Bowen's Family Systems Theory that was reviewed in the theoretical framework section.

The simplest family system is a dyad which consists of the parents. Dyadic stress is a type of family stress that involves both spouses, either directly or indirectly. When the same stressful event faces both partners, and there is tension inside the relationship (for example argument with one's partner), direct dyadic stress arises (Psych Central, 2022). Indirect dyadic stress happens when one partner's stress spreads through the intimate relationship between the couple, affecting both (McEwen, 2017). According to McEwen (2017), the definition of dyadic stress can be easily expanded to family systems with the family stressors analyzed by their source, intensity, duration and the persons affected (McEwen, 2017).

Some examples of external family stressors suggested by American Psychological Association. (2022) include financial stress and in-laws. Internal family stressors include conflict between family members, such as parental conflict (American Psychological Association, 2022). Psych Central (2022) see family stressors as having two levels of intensity. On one hand, critical life events are immense and affect all family members, for instance, serious illness, unemployment, death in the family and life-changing events like childbirth or children leaving the nest. On the other hand, minor everyday stressors which include being late for an appointment or stress at work (Psych Central, 2022)

Family stressors can also be classified according to duration. Haines, Deaux and Lofaro (2016). suggests acute vs chronic as classifications of family stress duration. Acute family stressors tend to be temporary, such as relocation of the family. Chronic stressors tend to be stable and can last over a very long time, such as a parent's unemployment (Haines, Deaux and Lofaro, 2016). Finally, family stressors can also be classified by the affected persons. While some stressors affect one or some family members, other stressors affect the entire family. A child's illness, for example, may stress the patient and the parent who stays at home to take care of him/her. From the above effort to classify family stressors, one can extract the following as some types of family stressors: parental conflict, financial difficulties, tension with in-laws, family changes such as illness or death of a family member, unemployment, relocation and childbirth. These goes in line with two of this study's variables: parental conflict and family changes.

In USA a study by Gustavsen, et al., (2015) identified parental conflict, including separation or divorce, as a significant stressor arising from the family (Gustavsen, Nayga, & Wu, 2015). However, not all family stressors are related to family conflict. Housing mobility, for example, was found to cause stress in adolescents in the USA (Fowler, Henry, and Marcal, 2015). In South Africa, family changes other than changes in family structure, such as the mother's death, made teenage girls vulnerable to early sexual debut (Nyirenda, McGrath & Newel, 2010). Hjelm et al. (2017) showed an association between higher degrees of perceived stress on the one hand, and food shortages and household deaths, on the other in Zambia. This shows that,

compared to other characteristics of poverty, the want of food is a considerable stressor. In sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in rural areas with seasonal variations in food availability, food insecurity is prevalent and acts as a prominent source of insecurity. The experience of uncertainty about the next meal, prioritizing food over other necessities, and the shame associated with inadequate food for children contribute to stress among individuals facing food insecurity. In sub-Saharan Africa, food insecurity and hunger have been identified as major stressors. The stress brought on by food insecurity may help to explain the association between inadequate food supplies to households and a higher likelihood of depression in the area. Furthermore, the study revealed no correlation between stress and spending on consumption, ownership of assets, or receiving monetary transfers, suggesting that perceived socioeconomic position or relative poverty may be more important in determining levels of stress. Additionally, the grant amount provided may not have been sufficient to impact stress levels, and other factors, such as the certainty of payment implementation, may also have an impact on stress. Finally, the study also found that bereavement was linked to higher levels of perceived stress.

Recent research has explored the connection between family stressors and problematic adolescent behaviour in East Africa. For example, the Kinyanda et al. (2011) study showed that in addition to mental disorders, lower socioeconomic status and disadvantaged childhood experiences were factors associated with suicide in northern Uganda. A study conducted by Ngesa et al. (2020) in Siaya County, Kenya, aimed to explore the prevalence of complicated grief among children who had lost a parent. The findings revealed a significant presence of elevated pathological grief symptoms among a substantial number of these children. The study also identified that factors such as the number and separation of siblings were linked to increased degrees of grief symptoms. Additionally, the closeness of the child with their deceased mother was found to contribute to increased grief symptoms. These results highlight the remarkable occurrence of complicated grief in parentally bereaved children in Siaya County and provide insight on the influence of sibling relationships and the child's bond with the deceased mother. According to the Marital Status in County and District research by the Kenya Bureau of Statistics (2009), Nairobi County had the highest divorce and separation cases in the Country. Considering that Nairobi County was separately found to have the highest rate of drug abuse in the nation (NACADA, 2016), the study of the impact of family stressors such as marital conflict on identity crisis and antisocial behaviour in the county will be very timely.

A qualitative longitudinal study on poverty and subjective stress was conducted in Zambia from 2010 to 2014 by Hjelm, Handa, de Hoop, and Palermo (2017) to examine whether or not unconditional cash transfers helped reduce stress and poverty for low-income families. Two cluster randomized controlled trials' secondary data were examined. Only food insecurity was found to be linked with stress, but the other two indices of family poverty (consumption expenditure and asset ownership) were not. The death of a household member, however, was consistently connected to increased stress. This research added to the current study's understanding of food insecurity as a form of poverty, a factor not accounted for in the other global studies. The present research examined the effects of parental conflict and family transitions on adolescents as well as other types of family stressors.

A quantitative cross-sectional study of disabilities, poverty, and parental stress was conducted in Kenya by Hunt et al. (2021). Researchers polled 465 caregivers in a non-profit child development program using a demographic survey including 10 Washington Group Questions on Adult Disability and the Parenting Stress Index-Short Form. Stress levels were shown to be

higher among carers of handicapped children compared to those of typically developing children. The study also indicated that the financial situation of disabled people's families was worse than that of non-disabled people's families. In addition, it was shown that parents with impaired children experienced higher levels of stress than those without disabled children. The current study looked at how different types of familial stresses affect adolescents going through an identity crisis, while the previously evaluated studies identified these stressors.

Statement of the Problem

Family support plays a crucial role in helping adolescents navigate adolescence and develop resilience. However, family stressors, such as parental conflict and family changes, can hinder this support. Scholars have not focused on the causes of adolescent antisocial behaviour, particularly the impact of parental conflict and family changes. Stressors such as economic often leads to overworking parents, resulting in limited family time and guidance for adolescents. Current approaches to address adolescent antisocial behaviour, such as expulsion and imprisonment, do not effectively resolve underlying issues. Therefore, it is crucial to create healthier and more effective rehabilitation techniques. The present study aimed to identify the different sorts of familial stressors that adolescents in secondary schools in Nairobi County have observed. Nairobi County has experienced high divorce and separation rates (Kenya Bureau of Statistics, 2009) and the highest substance abuse rate in the country (NACADA, 2016). The study's findings offer insightful analysis and suggestions for dealing with these problems.

Theoretical Framework

Family Systems Theory

In early 1960, a researcher and psychiatrist Bowen developed the Family Systems Theory. This theory holds that families are emotional units where relationships are networks based on how the family functions. According to Family Systems Theory, an individual's emotions can be better appreciated when viewed through the lens of his or her family relationships even when family members may not be equally close to each other. Therefore, any stressor that affects one person can affect the other members (Khan, 2020). The theory consists of eight related concepts, all of which are associated with anxiety. These concepts are self-differentiation, triangulation of parental conflict to a child, emotional dynamics within the immediate family, including spousal conflict, familial projection patterns, emotional disengagement, intergenerational transfer, sibling hierarchy and societal emotional dynamics (Bowen 1960). Out of these eight components, only three are directly related to the variables of this study: "self-differentiation, triangulation of parental conflict to a child, emotional dynamics within the immediate family" (Bowen 1960). These concepts build on each other sequentially with the third one – nuclear family process expanding and connecting the previous two.

A person's capacity to function independently and make self-directed decisions while remaining emotionally bonded to their family system is referred to as differentiation. (Brown, 1999). A key attribute of self-differentiation is the capacity to tell the difference between emotions and thoughts (Alzoubi, 2022). The failure to differentiate successfully is called fusion. Fusion is typically characterized by such a strong reliance on the acceptance and approval of others that individual choices are sacrificed in achieving the system's harmony. An example of this is bullying, which can manifest as a form of fusion, where individuals are unable to accept that others may hold different opinions. In this case, they dogmatically impose their views on others (Courses.aiu.edu, 2021). This strong reliance on the acceptance and

approval of others suggests a weak sense of self which is related to identity crisis; one of the key variables of this study. Bullying as a result on fusion suggests that some antisocial behaviour does rise out of identity crisis.

Triangles are the smallest stable relationships in a family. While the two-person relationship is the smallest one, it is unstable when subjected to stress such as conflict. In such a case, a third family member can be pulled in to help restore stability. For example, an adolescent can be drawn into the conflict between his/her parents, perhaps being forced to take sides. Whereas there is room for the diffusion of anxiety in a three-person system, the adolescent may pull in other family members to form a series of interlocking triangles if the original triangle is inadequate to resolve or defuse the conflict (Khan, 2020). Bowen's concept of triangulation helped this study understand how family stressors such as parental conflict spread to the adolescent and the latter's response to this stress contagion. Family stressors is one of the three variables of this study. Parental conflict is a crucial sub-variable of the family stressor variable of this study.

The third concept in Bowen's theory is the nuclear family emotional process that builds and expands on the first two described. This nuclear family process describes the four degenerative steps, beginning with the couple's conflict, through which conflict in an undifferentiated family progresses. This conflict then leads to emotional illness of a spouse, which may lead to the projection of a problem to adolescents (The Bowen Center for the Study of the Family, 2021) and finally emotional distancing (Nuclear Family Emotional Process — The Bowen Center for the Study of the Family, 2022).

The first step is conflict between the couple. The freedom to disagree is, in Bowen's view, one of the fundamental agreements made between parties to an intimate relationship. (Yektatalab, Oskouee & Sodani, 2017). To live up to this expectation, each dyad member needs to be highly differentiated, allowing them to grow in their love for each other through conflict resolution. If, on the contrary, it is a fused relationship, the couple will treat the disagreement as a personal affront leading to avoidance and the projection of the anxiety they have about themselves on the other.

Secondly, this relationship fusion can trigger a vicious cycle of extreme reciprocal roles in the conflict in which one person gets their way while the other always gives way to preserve the relationship. According to Bowen's theory, the person who always gives way is likely to develop symptoms of helplessness such as depression (Bergs, Hoofs, Kant, Slangen & Jansen, 2018).

Thirdly, a child starts to manifest symptoms of parental conflict when he/she reacts with anxiety to the tension in the relationship between the parents. This anxious response is therefore regarded incorrectly as the child's internal challenge. The child's symptoms, therefore, create a detouring triangle where attention is diverted to the child. While this may relieve the tension in the marriage, it can distract the parents from actively pursuing closeness in their marital relationship (Bergs, Hoofs, H., Kant, Slangen & Jansen, 2018).

Finally, family members may resort to increasing emotional distance to reduce the intensity of conflict, which results in emotional isolation ("The Bowen Center for the Study of the Family", 2022). This progression is particularly harmful to adolescents because they are at the stage of growth where, according to Erikson, they either develop a strong identity or fail to do so, resulting in role confusion (Erikson, 1963). The triangulation resulting from fusion in the parent's conflict impairs the development of the adolescent's strong sense of self because fused

parents are a negative role model for identity development. Poor identity development on the part of the adolescent is an identity crisis which instigates antisocial behaviour as a coping mechanism. Bowen's theory was, therefore, applicable in this study in modelling the impact of family stressors in general and specifically, the nature and progression of parental conflict and its impact on adolescents.

Research Gaps

The researcher reviewed studies from all over the world on family stressors in adolescents. There may be geographical differences in the events that resulted in family stress and the intervention strategies. For example, in the affluent USA, the relocation of a family was a significant stressor (Fowler, Henry & Marcal, 2015). On the other hand, a study in the much poorer Zambia showed that material poverty only becomes a stressor when it gets to the point of food insecurity (Hjelm et al., 2017). There may also be geographical differences in mitigation techniques with specialized professional counselling being seen to have a positive impact by the 2016 Kazakhstan study by Berdibayeva, Garber, Ivanov, Satybaldina, Smatova & Yelubayeva (2016), while religiosity was beneficial to Zimbabwean refugees in South Africa by (Makiwa, 2018). Considering the possible geographic variability in family stressors and intervention strategies, studying the relationship between various family stressors and identity crisis behaviour in Nairobi County, Kenya, would be interesting. It would also be enlightening to know the various mitigation strategies that have been deployed and their perceived effectiveness.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a parallel convergent mixed-method design with a target population of 38,641 adolescents, parents, and teachers in Nairobi County secondary schools. Quantitative Data was collected from 398 adolescents in forms 2 and 3 via random sampling. All school categories were represented through cling cluster sampling, while simple random sampling selected respondents within each school. Qualitative data was purposively obtained from 10 students, 10 parents, and 10 teachers. Proven psychometric tools like Assessment of identity Development in Adolescence, Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, Children's Perception of Inter-Parental Conflict Scale, and Dhaka Stress Scale-Adolescent collected quantitative data. Pearson coefficient correlations were calculated using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 25) to explore relationships between variables.

FINDINGS

This study sought to find out the type of family stressors witnessed among high school students in Nairobi County, Kenya. The family stressor variable for this study was made of two sub-variables: parental conflict and family changes.

The parental conflict sub-variable was measured by the Children's Perception of Inter-Parental Conflict Scale (CPIC), which measured the nature, conduct, and causes of parental conflict as perceived by the adolescent. The major scales of the CPIC that were most relevant to this study were Conflict Properties and Triangulation. The Conflict Properties scale is made up of the Frequency, Intensity and Resolution sub-scales. The total scores from a three-question Likert scale were calculated, where higher scores indicated increasingly negative forms of conflict and appraisal (Grych, Seid & Fincham, 1992). The measures of central tendencies of these scores as well as minimum and maximum values, are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Prevalence of Parental Conflict Experienced by Adolescents

	Conflict Frequency	Conflict Resolution	Conflict Intensity	Conflict Properties	Triangulation
Mean	4.88	4.93	5.20	15.02	5.92
Median	5.00	5.00	4.00	14.00	6.00
Mode	4.00	6.00	4.00	16.00	6.00
Standard Deviation	2.64	2.57	3.93	7.21	3.23
Coefficient of Variation	54%	52%	76%	48%	55%
Min	-	-	-	-	-
Max	12.00	12.00	14.00	38.00	16.00
Skew	0.4	(0.1)	0.5	0.5	0.2

As shown from Table 1 above, parental conflict experienced by the respondents was evenly distributed, as evidenced by the skewness values between -0.5 and 0.5. When the skewness value falls between -0.5 and 0.5 (inclusive), it suggests that the distribution is roughly balanced, with a similar number of data points on both sides of the mean (Gawali 2023). With a coefficient of variation of 76%, however, there was more variability in conflict intensity compared to other subscales, which ranged from 48% to 55%. The coefficient of variation (CV) is used to compare the variability of different datasets (Hayes, 2023). The high CV of conflict intensity means that some adolescents experienced high levels of parental conflict intensity while others experienced very low levels of intensity. With conflict frequency, resolution and triangulation, on the other hand, the differences in experience were not as big.

Comparing the major scales – Conflict Properties and Triangulation, the former has a very large maximum value. As seen in figure 1, there is a range of conflict properties values above the maximum score of triangulation. This means that the nature and frequency of parental conflict can be more than the extent that the adolescent is drawn into it through triangulation.

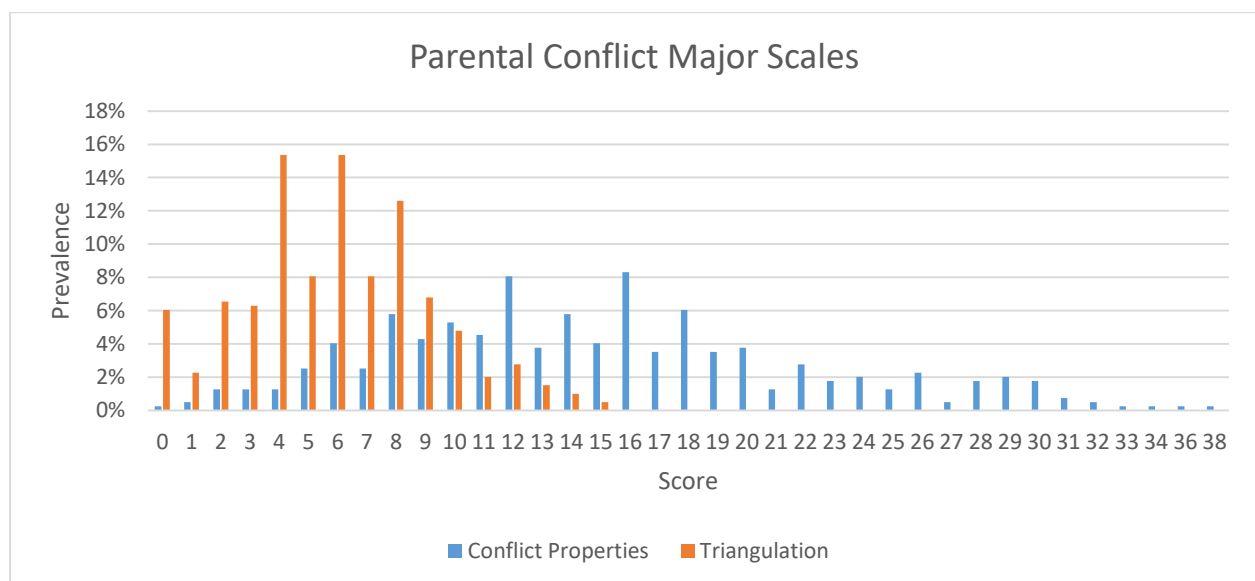


Figure 1: Parental Conflict Major Scales

The study used the Dhaka Stress Scale for Adolescents (DSS-Ad) to identify the types and intensity of family stressors due to family changes experienced by adolescents. The frequency of each stressor is shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis of Family Changes

Stressor	Frequency	% affected
Death of close family member	274	69%
Excessive parental pressure for academic performance	263	66%
Outstanding achievement of a sibling	229	58%
Serious illness of a family member	228	57%
Mother beginning to work	218	55%
Birth of a sibling	209	53%
Downgrading financial status of the family	190	48%
Discord with sibling	184	46%
Loss of a job of a parent	175	44%
Discord with parents	165	42%
Parental discord	162	41%
Serious illness requiring hospitalization of a parent	155	39%
Relocation of family	151	38%
Serious illness requiring hospitalization of a sibling	146	37%
Change in family role and responsibility	143	36%
Brother or sister leaving home	137	35%
parental separation	134	34%
Increase absence of a parent from home for changing profession	107	27%
Having step parent	82	21%
Extramarital relationship of parents	71	18%
Divorce of parents	56	14%
Death of a parent	47	12%
Imprisonment or jail sentence of a parent	32	8%

The findings in Table 2 reveals that the type of family stressor most witnessed by students was the death of a close family member (69%). Conversely, the least reported type of family stressor experienced by the students was a parent's imprisonment or jail sentence (8%). On face value, the frequency of 274 seems high for the death of a family member, while in Africa, a close family member can come from the extended family. For instances, in Kenya the extended family member is part of the larger family. More so, bearing in mind with the recently abated COVID-19 pandemic could explain the surprising frequency of this stressor (Kamer, 2022).

To calculate stress levels for each respondent, DSS-Ad assigns a mean stress score to each stressor based on its severity. When applied to the tool's interpretive key, the sum of these mean stress scores resulted in the following stress levels.

Table 3: Descriptive Analysis of Stress Levels from Family Changes

	Frequency	Percentage%	Valid Percentage%	Cumulative Percentage%
Valid	1	.3	.3	.3
High	291	73.3	73.3	73.6
Moderate	69	17.4	17.4	90.7
Mild	36	9.1	9.1	100
Total	397	100.0	100.0	

The findings in Table 3 shows that majority of secondary school students reported high family stressors 291(73.3%), followed by moderate family stress 69 (17.4) and, finally, only 9.1% of reported mild family stressor (9.1%). This is in line with Bodenmann (2013) who suggested, with examples, that family stressors could be classified by intensity, duration, and the persons in the family affected. His examples concurred with some of the stressors from family changes that were measured by this study.

In addition to the quantitative analysis, the present study analysed responses to guided interview questions on the types of family stressors experienced by adolescents in Nairobi County. The stressors reported by students, parents and teachers were grouped into 18 codes and then categorised into 7 themes, as shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Types of Family Stressors

1. Types of family stressors				
Theme	Coding	Students	Parents	Teachers
Parental conflict	Parental separation and divorce	✓	✓	✓
	Parental conflict	✓	✓	✓
	Domestic violence and abuse	✓	✓	
	Death of family member	✓	✓	
Illness and Death in the Family	Terminal illness of a family member	✓	✓	
	Academic pressure	✓		✓
Parenting styles	Pressure for perfection			✓
	Uninvolved Parenting		✓	✓
	Lack of time by parent		✓	
	Communication breakdown between parents and children			✓
	Financial distress	✓	✓	✓
Financial	Inheritance related conflicts		✓	
	Unemployment of parent	✓		
External influences	Religion and culture		✓	
	Social media influence.		✓	✓
	Political losses by parent		✓	
	Conflict between family members	✓	✓	
Family conflict	Sibling rivalry			✓
Substance abuse	Drug abuse by parent	✓		

Parental conflict emerged as the most reported stressor, with all the three respondent groups citing conflict, separation, and divorce as sources of stress. Domestic violence was also

reported by students and parents. Illness and death within the family were identified by both parents and students as stressors.

Parenting styles were also found to be a source of stress, ranging from demanding perfection in academics to being uninvolved and not having time for children. The breakdown in communication between parents and children was classified as a parenting style problem. Academic pressure was reported by both students and parents, while uninvolved parenting was identified by both parents and teachers. Teachers also reported pressure for perfection and breakdowns in communication as stressors, while parents alone cited lack of time as a source of stress.

Financial stressors were also identified, with all three respondent groups reporting financial distress. Inheritance-related conflicts were uniquely reported by parents, while unemployment of a parent was identified by students only as a source of stress. Parent code 04 stated that “lack of basic needs like money, when children request for fees, they lack peace, fights and make noise ‘kelele’ all the time”.

Parents identified external factors such as social media, religion, culture, and political losses as sources of family stress. Teachers concurred with parents on social media influence as a stressor. Conflict between family members, including sibling rivalry, was also identified by all three respondent groups as a source of stress. Finally, students uniquely reported substance abuse by a parent as a family stressor.

Integrating Quantitative and Qualitative Data on Family Stressors Experienced by Adolescents with a Comparative Analysis of Literature Review

The study established the types of family stressors and confined itself to parental conflict and family changes. Parental conflict was measured quantitatively through two scales, conflict properties and triangulation. The former comprised three subscales, the frequency, intensity and resolution of parental conflict. All major scales and subscales were fairly distributed, with skewness values between -0.5 and 0.5. This suggests a similar number of data points on both sides of the mean. However, with a coefficient of variation of 76%, there was more variability in conflict intensity compared to other subscales, which ranged from 48% to 55%. This indicated that some adolescents experienced high levels of parental conflict intensity while others experienced very low levels of intensity. Comparing the major scales, Conflict Properties and Triangulation, the former has a very large maximum value with a range of values above the highest score of the latter. This means that the nature and frequency of parental conflict can be more than the extent that the adolescent is drawn into it through triangulation.

The DSS-Ad tool used to measure the frequency and stress impact of family changes also picked up the prevalence of parental discord (41%), separation (34%), extramarital affairs(18%) and divorce(14%) in the families of the respondent students. The qualitative data analysis showed that parental conflict, separation, and divorce were among the few family stressors unanimously reported by all three respondent groups, parents, teachers and students. Additionally, students and parents reported domestic violence.

Descriptive statistics showed that the type of family stressor due to family changes most witnessed by the students was the death of a close family member (69%). Conversely, the least reported type of family stressor experienced by the students was a parent's imprisonment or jail sentence (8%). While at face value, the 69% prevalence seems high for the death of a family member, the reader should note two things. First, in Africa, a close family member can come from the extended family (Kenya - the extended family., n.d.), which, combined with the

recently abated COVID-19 pandemic (Kamer, 2022), could explain the surprisingly high prevalence of this stressor. Of the 19 stressors tested by DSS-Ad, 11 were spontaneously listed by the qualitative data interview respondents. These are the death of a close family member(69%), excessive parental pressure for academic performance(66%), serious illness of a family member(57%), downgrading the financial status of the family(48%), discord with sibling(46%), loss of a job of a parent(44%), discord with parents(41%), serious illness requiring hospitalization of a parent(39%), serious illness requiring hospitalization of a sibling(37%), the increasing absence of a parent from home for changing profession(27%) and the death of a parent(12%). It is worth noting that while a very high proportion of adolescents experience excessive parental pressure for academic performance, only students and teachers reported this as a stressor in the qualitative data. The parents did not raise the issue. On the other hand, the qualitative data did not raise 8 stressors reported by DSS-Ad. These are the outstanding achievement of a sibling(58%), the mother beginning to work(55%), the birth of a sibling(53%), the relocation of the family(38%), the change in family role and responsibility(36%), a brother or sister leaving home(34%), having a step-parent (21%)and the imprisonment or jail sentence of a parent(8%). Conversely, the qualitative data analysis raised new stressors that DSS-Ad did not capture. These are pressure for perfection and uninvolved parenting under parenting styles, inheritance-related conflicts as a financial stressor, religion, culture, social media influence and political losses by the parent as external influences and substance abuse by the parent.

Furthermore, DSS-Ad calculated the stress levels experienced by each adolescent. Descriptive statistics of these stress levels show that most high school students reported high family stress (73.3%), followed by moderate family stress (17.4) and, finally, only 9.1% reported mild family stress.

The Family Systems Theory by Bowen (1960) underpins the family stressors variable of this study. Many studies have supported the theory since its formulation, including Khan(2020), who confirmed that any stressor affecting one person in a family impacts the others. According to The Bowen Center for the Study of the Family (2021), parental conflict can lead to the projection of the problem to their adolescent children. This assertion has been confirmed by the present study, which measured the children's perception of parental conflict and found an even distribution of the conflict properties of frequency, resolution, and triangulation in the target population. Conflict intensity, however, had a moderate positive skew. Bowen(1960) conceptualised triangulation as spreading the parental conflict to the children where the latter feel sucked into the conflict.

Bodenmann (2013) suggested, with examples, that family stressors could be classified by intensity, duration, and the persons in the family affected. His examples concurred with some of the stressors from family changes that were measured by this study. These family stressors, together with their prevalence, included serious illness of family members (57%), unemployment of a parent(44%), death in the family (69%), childbirth (53%), children leaving home (34%), downgrading the financial status of the family(48%) and relocation of the family(38%). On the other hand, this study measured some stressors that the literature review did not report. Chief among these was the excessive parental pressure for academic performance which had a substantial 66% prevalence and was also raised by the qualitative data. This excessive pressure for academic performance may be alleviated by the recently introduced Competence Based Curriculum (CBC), which aims to reduce harmful competitiveness in academics by increasing the number of specializations open to each learner,

thus reducing the number of competitors for a qualification in a specific skill set. The respondents were all studying under the 8-4-4 education system, which is being phased out.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The study established the types of family stressors and confined itself to parental conflict and family changes. The findings of the study revealed that a slight majority of secondary students experienced less intense parental conflict. However, the study results also showed slight high rate of separation, followed by extramarital affairs and divorce among the families' stressors. Additionally, the qualitative data analysis showed that parental conflict, separation, and divorce were among the few family stressors unanimously reported by all three respondent groups (parents, teachers and students). Furthermore, both the students and parents reported domestic violence as one of family stressors.

Again, on descriptive statistics the study showed that the type of family stressor most witnessed by the students was the death of a close family member. Conversely, the least reported type of family stressor experienced by the students was a parent's imprisonment or jail sentence.

Other family stressors that were reported includes excessive parental pressure for academic performance, serious illness of a family member, downgrading the financial status of the family, discord with sibling, loss of a job of a parent, discord with parents, serious illness requiring hospitalization of a parent, serious illness requiring hospitalization of a sibling, the increasing absence of a parent from home for changing profession and the death of a parent.

It is worth noting that while a very high proportion of adolescent's experience excessive parental pressure for academic performance, only students and teachers reported this as a stressor in the qualitative data. The parents did not raise the issue. Conversely, the qualitative data analysis raised new stressors that DSS-Ad did not capture. These are pressures for perfection and uninvolved parenting under parenting styles, inheritance-related conflicts as a financial stressor, religion, culture, social media influence and political losses by the parent as external influences and substance abuse by the parent.

Conclusion

The study established the types of family stressors and confined itself to parental conflict and family changes. The study concluded that most family stressors were death of a close family member, parental pressure for academic performance, serious illness of a family member, downgrading the financial status of the family, discord with sibling, loss of a job of a parent, discord with parents, serious illness requiring hospitalization of a parent, serious illness requiring hospitalization of a sibling, the increasing absence of a parent from home for changing profession and the death of a parent.

Recommendations

The study recommended that all schools must engage a counsellor and a chaplain and the government. When supporting education, should consider these human resources as necessary as teachers. Teachers with experience in discipline, guidance, and counselling should underpin their experience with a counselling psychology diploma to empower their students to navigate family stressors.

Widespread training of parents and the wider community is necessary to scale up the individual solutions outlined in this study. Therefore, the government, churches and non-governmental

organisations (NGOs) must collaborate and facilitate training programs through workshops and seminars. These initiatives should educate parents and community members on child development, mental health and effective communication techniques. By providing such training opportunities, parents and community members can gain valuable insights and strategies to support the well-being of children and adolescents. This collaborative effort can create a nurturing and supportive environment that fosters positive development and strengthens the community fabric.

Pastors who conduct premarital counselling must receive proper professional training. This training should encompass various aspects of relationships, including communication, conflict resolution, and other relevant topics. By equipping pastors with the necessary knowledge and skills, they can provide comprehensive and effective premarital counselling to couples. This professional training ensures that pastors are well prepared to address premarital relationships' unique challenges and dynamics, ultimately contributing to healthier and more successful marriages.

In addition to interventions by professional therapists, the study also found out that social support and religiosity can be beneficial in building resilience to family stressors. Social support programs can provide individuals and families with resources, guidance, and a network of caring individuals who can assist during stress. In the context of religious or spiritual practices, religion can provide individuals with a sense of purpose, moral guidance, and a supportive community that can help navigate the challenges associated with family stressors and identity crisis.

To alleviate the significant academic pressure imposed by parents on students, the Ministry of Education must undertake the task of harmonising the school curriculum. By doing so, the curriculum can be developed into a well-balanced and comprehensive framework that promotes a healthier learning environment for students.

These interventions should be implemented not only within schools but also within communities. Therefore, parents, teachers, Non-governmental Organizations, churches, the government and stakeholders in psychological counselling must collaborate and implement interventions. This can create a more robust and holistic support system by adopting a comprehensive approach encompassing educational institutions and community settings. This approach will enable the country to address the underlying causes of antisocial behaviour and provide necessary resources and guidance to families experiencing stressors, ultimately fostering a healthier and more harmonious society.

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