

**IMPACT OF FAMILY CONFLICTS ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE
AND INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS OF PUPILS IN PUBLIC PRIMARY
SCHOOLS IN NAKURU MUNICIPALITY**

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**A Research Project Report Submitted to the Graduate School in Partial Fulfilment of
the Requirements for the Award of Master of Education Degree in Guidance and
Counselling of Egerton University.**

EGERTON UNIVERSITY

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DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATION

Declaration

I declare that this Project Report is my original work and has not been presented for an award of a degree in any other university.

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Recommendation

This Project Report has been submitted for examination with my approval as the University Supervisor.

Dr. B.E.E Omulema, PhD

Date

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DEDICATION

This research project report is dedicated to my husband and my family for their support and encouragement.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I take this opportunity to acknowledge the contribution of numerous people who in one way or the other contributed greatly to my education and research project in Egerton University. I am grateful to my project supervisor: Dr. B. E.E. Omulema of the Department of Psychology, Counselling and Educational Foundations for his assistance and contribution in making my work come to a fruitful conclusion. I would also like to thank all those who responded to the questionnaires that were distributed. Lastly, my special appreciation goes to my family members for their support, moral encouragement and patience during the entire study period. May the Almighty God bless you all.

ABSTRACT

Today's families experience problems like unfaithfulness, violence, child molestation, divorce and separation. These problems experienced in families affect the children in those families. The purpose of the study was to find out the impact of family conflicts on the academic performance and interpersonal relationships of pupils in public primary schools in Nakuru Municipality. This study employed the descriptive survey research design to determine influence of family conflicts in academic performance and interpersonal relationship of the pupils under study. The target population of the study was public primary school pupils in Nakuru Municipality which has 47870 pupils. The study was carried out among pupils in class seven and eight in ten public primary schools purposively selected within Nakuru Municipality. There were 899 boys and 1124 girls in the ten schools making the accessible population 2023 pupils. The sample comprised a total of 384 pupils and 20 class teachers purposively selected. Questionnaires, developed by the researcher, were used to collect data. Data was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences [SPSS]. It was presented using frequencies, percentages and cross tables because the data was descriptive. The study expected to elicit useful data on the effects that family conflicts have on academic performance and inter personal relationships among pupils. The study findings indicate that both pupils and teachers agreed to the fact that family conflicts affected a pupil's cognitive and affective growth. There was low class concentration if parents or guardians were fighting, because the pupils were always thinking about the happenings at home. It was also established that a majority of pupils did not share with their peers when their parents or guardians were quarrelling. More female pupils were exposed to violence or abuse than the male. The study also revealed that pupils who came from families where there was conflict did not relate well with their teachers. The study also revealed that in most schools there were counsellors from whom pupils experiencing problems could seek assistance. One of the recommendations made by the researcher was that the schools and the Ministry of Education should consider training peer counsellors among the pupils so that they can assist their fellow pupils. Another recommendation was that parents/guardians who experience conflicts in their families should consider counselling options as soon as possible to avoid negative effects on their pupils.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
APA	American Psychological Association
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
PTSD	Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background Information

Conflict can be defined as the lack of peace in an environment. Conflict in a family therefore refers to a situation whereby the smooth interaction and relation among members of a family is disrupted because of one thing or another. It can be between the two parents or between parents and their children. Conflict in a family can be as a result of lack of trust, drunkenness, lack of dialogue, lack of respect, joblessness and idleness. It comes in form of fights, quarrels, spouse battering, child abuses and child molestation. It can result to a bad atmosphere in the home, separation or even divorce.

According to Walker (1999), studies carried out have shown that when one form of violence was found in the family, other forms were more likely to also occur and that violence in the family has a direct relationship to community violence and other forms of aggression and gender based violence. Law enforcement in many countries will not intervene in what is often called a “domestic quarrel” even though psychological research indicates that without such intervention, abusers are unlikely to seek help to stop their battering behaviour. Research has found a strong relationship between violence in the home and violence in the community. Golden (2000) reports that it has been found that prior history of abuse can increase the likelihood of abusive behaviour. According to Steinberg (1996), parental conflict and aggression or a conflict atmosphere in the home is related to offspring’s personal or violent crimes.

Murphy and O’Farrell (1994) highlighted the view that parents play a central role in shaping the child’s development through their influence. Thus if parents keep having conflicts in their homes, children are bound to be affected as they grow up. They also asserted that children learn through imitating and identification with the parents and other significant adults. If the children grow up in a family where violence is a common phenomenon, they may end up doing the same in their families, unless intervention is carried out. The first important influence on children is the family but children and families are interactive members of a large system of social institutions, such as the school, the workplace and

community. Parental involvement and education improve both family and child functioning. It has been found out that parental involvement in a child might have lasting effects on its behaviour. Steinberg (1996) asserts that conflict is a critical aspect of family functioning that often outweighs the influence of family structure on the child's development. He also reports that studies carried out have found that children's healthy and social development is most effectively promoted by love and at least some moderate parental control. According to Seifert and Hoffnung (1997), children who have lived for years in situations of neglect or abuse suffer severe stress. They also state that students often receive long term support from parents or other adults at home as well as strong support from teachers and others at school. Involving parents in learning activities with their children at home is one kind of parental involvement that many educators believe is an important aspect of the child's learning. If the family is undergoing conflict, parents will not have time for their children.

Men, who more often use violence, do so in order to obtain and maintain power and control over others. The APA task force on violence and the family defined domestic violence as a pattern of abusive behaviours including a wide range of physical, sexual and psychological maltreatment used by one person in an intimate relationship against another to gain power unfairly or maintain that person's misuse of power, control and authority. Berk (1999) asserts that problematic school performance is among the more common problems associated with child abuse and neglect. Such children often experience difficulties with social relationship, problem solving and the ability to cope with new or stressful situations. According to studies carried out, some abused or neglected children develop aggressive behaviour patterns, others become withdrawn while others even get PTSD or major depression.

Kiura (1999) asserts that a healthy relationship between husband and wife depends on self-understanding, understanding spouse, balance between individuality, mutual relationship, proper management of conflicts, sexual harmony and sound skills in mutual dialogue and communication. He also says that parents need to assume responsibility for their children's eternal destiny, educate them, prepare them for life and guide them towards the right way. If parents are not in harmony, it follows that their children will suffer too. They not only suffer at home but also when they go to school or visit friends by carrying the burden of their parents with them.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In Kenya today, hardly a week goes by before it is reported in the media that a child or its parents or both have been hospitalized or killed as a result of family conflicts. Other cases reported are those whereby a woman packs and leaves her matrimonial home with her children because she can no longer tolerate her husband's behaviour. There are even cases whereby it is the men who move out of their homes to look for peace elsewhere. There have also been cases of suicidal killings, where the head of the family kills his wife and children before killing himself. There is also the case of street children, some of whom are on the streets because they have run away from violent home environments. These incidents take place not only in rural areas but also in urban ones. Nakuru Municipality has also recorded some of these incidents. When families are in conflict, it affects children in their physical, cognitive, affective and even spiritual growth. Their lives are enclosed or imprisoned if they continue being exposed to a violent environment. For some, such an environment means that they have no access to formal education and their cognitive and affective developments are tampered with. This study, therefore, sought to find out the impact of family conflicts on a pupil especially on his or her academic performance and relationship with peers.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of family conflicts on the academic performance and interpersonal relationships of pupils in public primary schools in Nakuru Municipality.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

This study was guided by the following objectives:

- (i) To determine the extent to which conflicts in a family affect pupils' academic performance.
- (ii) To establish the nature of the relationship between pupils who experience family conflicts and their peers.
- (iii) To establish whether it is the male or female pupils who are more affected by conflicts in families.
- (iv) To establish the nature of the relationship between pupils who experience family conflicts and their teachers.

- (v) To determine the attitude of the pupils who experience family conflicts towards their parents, peers and school.
- (vi) To determine the role of the school's counsellor in assisting pupils who experience family conflicts.

1.5 Research Questions

This study aimed at answering the following questions:-

- (i) To what extent do conflicts in a family affect pupils' academic performance?
- (ii) What is the nature of the relationship between pupils who experience family conflicts and their peers?
- (iii) Who, in terms of male or female, is more affected by conflicts in families?
- (iv) What is the nature of the relationship between pupils who experience family conflicts and their teachers?
- (v) What is the attitude of pupils who experience family conflicts towards their parents, peers and school?
- (vi) What role does the school's counsellor play in assisting pupils who experience family conflicts?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study may be of help to teachers and parents and it will add knowledge to the body of literature on family conflict. The study will be of help to parents and especially those who experience problems in their families. They will understand how problems in a family can affect their pupils' short-term life and to some extent, their future. This will encourage such parents to embrace dialogue and understanding in an effort of trying to solve their problems. In instances where the problems are severe, they can engage the services of a counsellor so that harmony prevails. The study will also contribute to the body of literature on family conflicts and its influence on a primary school pupils' academic performance and interpersonal skills with specific reference to primary schools in Nakuru Municipality. This study dealt with primary schools and thus it will make an improvement to the related situations.

It may also be of benefit to counsellors, especially those stationed in schools. They can be able to offer intervention measures to pupils who come from families that experience conflict in an effort to help them concentrate on their studies and build good relationships with other pupils. The findings may be useful to teachers especially because they spend more time with the pupils at school. They can intervene by referring pupils to the school counsellor or by calling the parents of the pupil and discussing the pupil's behaviour and academic performance.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The study was carried out in Nakuru Municipality, Rift Valley Province. It involved ten public primary schools within the municipality. Two teachers per school and 384 pupils in class seven and eight were involved in filling in the questionnaires. The study was concerned with the impact of family conflicts on pupils in their academic performance and interpersonal relationships. The research was limited to Nakuru Municipality.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

The study had the following limitations:-

- i) It was limited to public schools only.
- ii) It was limited to primary schools in Nakuru District which means results can only be generalized with caution.
- iii) It looked at how family conflicts affect a pupil's academic performance and interpersonal relationships. There are other reasons that affect pupils' performance and relationship with others.

1.9 Assumptions of the Study

The study was based on the following assumptions:-

- (i) The pupils would be willing to honestly fill in the questionnaires
- (ii) The teachers would be willing to provide the correct information on their various experiences with different pupils.

1.10 Definition of Terms

The following terms, which were important to the study, had the following operational meanings:-

Academic Performance: This is how pupils are ranked in terms of educational achievement. In this study, academic performance means how the pupils fair on in their studies as compared to others in the same class.

Child Abuse: The act of harming a pupil in a physical, sexual or emotional way. In this study, child abuse refers to any harm that pupils in public primary schools undergo, be it physical, sexual or emotional.

Conflict: It is a mutual opposition or difference between two parents or between parents and their pupils in a family. It is a state of disagreement or argument in a family. In this study, conflict means the disagreements or oppositions that pupil under study face in their families, either directly from their parents or indirectly when they witness their parents' arguments.

Delinquency: Bad or Criminal behaviour, usually of young people. In this study, it means bad or criminal behaviour practised by public primary school pupils.

Family: It is a social unit made up of people related to each other by blood, birth or marriage. In this study, family is a social unit made up of public primary school pupils and their parents or guardians.

Family Conflict: This refers to problems, oppositions or differences that occur within the family set up. In this study, it refers to problems, oppositions or differences that public primary school pupils face within their families.

Family Violence: Physical force that is intended to hurt or kill within the family set up. It is characterized by serious physical injury, profound psychological trauma or sexual violation. In this study, family violence means physical or psychological injury that pupils experience within their families.

- Impact:** This means to have a powerful effect on something or someone. It can also refer to a force that drives someone into behaving in a certain way. In this study, it means the force that drives pupils to act in a certain way.
- Interpersonal Relationships:** This is how someone communicates with others; the way a person relates to others in a family or school. In this study, it refers to the way pupils communicate with peers in school and family members at home.
- Maltreated Children:** These are children who experience cruelty from their parents. Maltreatment is characterized by minimal physical or sexual harm. In this study, it refers to pupils who are treated in a cruel way by their parents or guardians.
- Primary School:** School for those pursuing the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education. It begins from class one to eight. In this study, primary school refers to those public primary schools within Nakuru Municipality.
- Pupil:** This is anybody, child or adult, who is enrolled in a primary school or who is pursuing the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education. In this study, the pupils include those who come from families where there is conflict and those whose families do not experience conflict.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reflects on the modern view of marriage, the influence of a family on an individual's behaviour, relationship between parents and their children's educational and social life, causes of conflicts in families, impact of family conflicts on children and Guidance and Counselling in Schools.

2.2 The Modern View of Marriage

Marriage is the first step towards starting a family. Kiura (1999) indicated that if two people share a good marriage, then starting a family and taking good care of it would not be a problem. He adds that the vice-versa is true if the marriage is not built on a strong foundation. According to Durazi (2005), there are people who no longer view marriage as a means to personal fulfilment. Majority of women today prefer taking care of their children single-handedly. They argue out that being a mother is a better legacy than being a wife. Durazi quoted what one woman, Elizabeth, said; "The modern woman is against being taken for granted and that is what puts her off the whole marriage thing." It is believed that formal marriage is slowly disappearing since majority of the youth prefer live-in arrangements. Many people see marriage as a form of enslavement, particularly for the woman. In the traditional golden days, marriage was viewed as the ultimate rite of passage for which a girl was prepared from a tender age, (Durazi, 2005). Today's woman is realistic enough and knows that she deserves love and respect from her husband. Durazi also says that women can no longer shoulder the responsibility of making a marriage work; men must do their share as well.

Bokea (2006) believes that while sometimes separation may seem like the only option, people are slowly becoming a society that believes in divorce and separation rather than in marriage for life. She laments that if only people could make the effort in their marriages that they do sustaining other areas of their lives. When recruiting new employees, most employers look for people with superior skills in communication, analysis and public relations. They want team players who are culturally sensitive, able to handle multiple tasks, ready to work long

hours, willing to learn new ways of doing things and so on. She asserts that if they could apply these same skills when handling their family life, things would be much better. She goes ahead to give another example. Many people are very understanding when dealing with their friends but totally unable to extend the same understanding to the one person they claim to love most in the whole world – their spouse. They go out of our way to be courteous to strangers yet courtesy does not exist in their vocabulary when dealing with their partners. The world is changing fast but according to her, today's generation can borrow a thing or two from their grandparents. In the old days, when a member of the community fell out of step with established norms, they were reprimanded immediately and by everyone. If, for example, a married person was known to be unfaithful, it became everyone's business and s/he was dealt with accordingly. She goes on to say that broken families produce broken spirits and with time, a broken society.

Kithaka (2006) says that in the old days, marriage had a purpose and a structure. As such, it operated under a very organized system that was put in place so that if things fell apart, there was a way to pull it all back together again. In the words of Wilfred Subbo, an anthropologist at the University of Nairobi in Kithaka (2006) marriage was ventured into for procreation, security and companionship among other social and psychological needs. Clearly, the fundamental reasons why people get married haven't changed with time but the approach definitely has. First, young men and women were prepared for it by the entire community. Everyone knew what was expected of them and if they fell short of these expectations for one reason or another, it was back to the drawing board. Again, the community was involved because marriage was about bringing people together rather than driving them apart. He asserts that now, strangers meet, sometimes far away from home and decide that since they like each other somewhat, 'why not get hitched'. And just like that, there is a newly wed couple that, more often than not, has no clue what they are doing together. If anyone tries to intervene, even well-meaning friends or relatives, they are asked to get out and not to interfere. But at the first sign of trouble, the union is tossed out the window and life is supposed to go on like before.

According to Kithaka (2006), in the past, marriage was the expected result at the end of the learning curve. It was an obligation that women undertook without question and things generally ran according to plan. Today, they have the freedom of choice, which means they

can marry anyone any time they want – or not. They can choose to get along with the mother – in – law or not. They can choose to be submissive or forceful and not care about what the world thinks of them. Unfortunately, while freedom of choice is a good thing, it hasn't made marriage any better. He asserts that if marriage in the modern world is to survive, people need to be more realistic – and brutally honest – with each other. With this in mind, let whoever wants to get married be sure about why s/he is going into it.

2.3 The Influence of a Family on an Individual's Behaviour

A family is far more than a collection of individuals sharing a specific physical and psychological space, (McLanahan and Sanderful, 1994). A family may be considered a natural social system, with properties all on its own, one that has evolved a set of rules, is replete with assigned and ascribed roles for its members, has an organized power structure, has developed intricate overt and covert forms of communication and has elaborated ways of negotiating and problem solving that permit various tasks to be performed effectively (Goldenberg and Goldenberg, 2000). In the process of growing up, family members develop individual identities but nevertheless remain attached to the family group. These family members do not live in isolation, but rather are interdependent on one another – not merely for money, food and shelter – but also for love, affection, companionship, socialization and other non tangible needs. A well functioning family encourages the realization of the individual potential of its members, allowing them freedom for exploration and self – discovery along with protection and the instillation of a sense of security. This may not be the case in a family that experiences conflicts.

Selfe (1993) asserts that a family is a social unit made up of people related to each other by blood, birth or marriage. It is a social group characterized by common residence, economic co-operation and reproduction. According to him, functions of a family include reproduction of population, care of the youth, stabilization of relationships between adults and transmission of the social culture from one generation to the next. In the present society, there should be a limited number of children in a family. The couple must consider a lot of issues such as income (is it enough to provide food, clothing and education?), size of your house (is there enough space to fit in each individual member and is there privacy?), health of the mother (physical and mental conditions) and personal needs of the children.

According to Grugni (2004), parents who have too many children and who are engrossed in the material problems of a large family are likely to neglect them; this will definitely affect their growth negatively. The birth of a child means that the parent's attention, especially the mother's, will be shifted towards the new life. Children are supposed to bring parents together because they provide them with a common object for their love and concern. However, in some cases, they become a barrier between the parents. Grugni also goes ahead to point out that the husband may feel neglected by the wife who is too busy caring for the child and the wife may think that she is left alone in the new responsibility. Parents need to assume responsibility for their children's eternal destiny, educate them, prepare them for life and guide them towards the right way. This cannot happen if there is no harmony in the family. Parents also need to recognize fully their duties towards God, their family and society. Parents are equally responsible for the task of forming the child. Parent's presence in children's lives is of vital importance. Children need the influence of both parents to shape their personality in a balanced way. Bringing up children is primarily the role of parents. Parents also have a financial responsibility towards their children. They need to be comfortable and their needs met. Discipline must be installed in the home. The goal of discipline is to help the child to become a responsible member of society. The child needs to learn about self-discipline, which comes about with self-awareness and self-acceptance.

Kiura (1999) says that a child's attitudes, standards and values will slowly be formed by what he learns from his or her parent thus parents should lead by example. Britten and Britten (2004) advice parents to spend quality time with their children, to talk to them and show them love. As a parent, one should help their children to learn from mistakes of others. In today's society, parents hardly spend any time with their children. Parents should find time to listen to their children's problems and joys. Kiura (1999) also indicated that when children see that their parents love each other, they are assured that their parents love them. He also asserted that parents should always tell their children the reason why they have to beat them and praise their children more often than they punish them. Researchers have found interdependence between depressed persons and their social contexts. This is especially true in the case of parent's depression and children's adjustment.

According to Downey and Coyne (1990), research on the children of depressed parents clearly documents that depression in parents is associated with problems of adjustment and

disorders, especially depression, in their children. Depressed mothers show lower rates of behaviour and constricted affect, adopt less effortful control strategies with their children and sometimes act hostile and negatively toward them as well. Marital discord and stress might precede, precipitate or co-occur with maternal depression. In such instances, it may be marital turmoil that is the key factor that contributes to children's adjustment problems. Neglectful parenting style is whereby the parent is uninvolved in the child's life. This type of parenting is associated with children's social incompetence and especially lack of self control. Children whose parents are neglectful develop the sense that other aspects of the parents' lives are more important than they are. These children tend to be socially incompetent, showing poor self-control and not handling independence well.

Sasse (1997) indicated that abusive parents are more likely than non-abusive parents to rely on physical punishment and negative control strategies such as hitting, grabbing, pushing, threats and disapproval rather than on reasoning to guide or discipline their children. Poverty, unemployment, marital conflict, social isolation and family pathology can increase the risk of abuse; so can shorter term stressors such as emotional distress, economic or legal problems. Physical abuse in children is linked to aggressive and violent behaviours in adolescents and adults including violence toward non-family members, children, dating partners and spouses.

2.4 Relationship between Parents and their Children's Educational and Social Life

Each child is an individual with its own behaviour and temperamental styles. The mother and father's personalities are important in designing a child's behaviour. A parent-child relationship is interpersonal. According to Jersild (1969), the 'accepting parent' is a loving one, accepts his/her child and knows his/her rights. For the child, consequences of being accepted include the following: child can count on protection from the parents; child acquires an attitude of confidence and trust in those taking care of him/her; when older, the child will extend his capacity for affection to others; child has freedom to grow, venture and try new things; child has better communication skills; child has better chances to learn to accept himself. On the other hand, consequences of rejection include the following: child cannot count on protection and help of parents; child does not have the strength to defend himself; other members of community, for example, peers may assault the child/do not accept him;

child is seen as constantly failing; child has difficulty in learning good behaviour; child learns not to accept affection/to expect nothing but the worst thus his guard is always up against everyone he encounters; there is no free flow of emotions thus everyone cuts him off and lastly, s/he may not have confidence in him/herself.

According to Waithaka (2006), violence between partners is often viewed as a couple's private affair because it often involves 'only' the husband and wife. The truth is that this violence often has a bigger impact on the children. This could be attributed to the fact that children born to a couple grow up regarding the mother and father as one unit. They become attached to both parents and learn to depend on them for their survival. As a result, children become extremely overwhelmed after witnessing violent scenes between their parents and the parent – child relationship they have been relying on for nurture, safety and help is threatened by this violence. Waithaka (2006) also asserts that usually, it is men who are perpetrators of domestic violence and because children form a special relationship with their mothers' right from birth, any form of suffering experienced by the mother greatly affects them. Their reactions may include acute fear for their own and their mother's safety. Many women tolerate abusive marriages for the sake of their children. But the sad fact according to Waithaka (2006) is that children reared in violent homes grow up largely confused about the meaning of love, violence and intimacy. Often, men who batter their wives also harass the children. Studies have established that about half of battering husbands also physically assault their children. In later years, the father's rage is re-directed to the children when they attempt to defend their mother.

Waithaka (2006) indicated that generally, children are not aware of the cause of the violence and they are subjected to living in a constant state of fear that it might happen again. Shantz and Hartup (1992) established that most children from homes where parental abuse is prevalent suffer irreversible damage in some or all aspects of their development, which can be difficult to reverse. The long term effects of domestic violence on children vary with the child's age. Infants are fragile and can easily be injured in violent homes. Generally, infants require relaxed and responsive care-takers. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), mothers who are battered may be so preoccupied with stress that they cannot respond to their infant's needs. These children are likely to be under-weight, have problems sleeping and eating, whine constantly and be generally unresponsive adults. As a result, many infants from

violent homes show signs of health problems, stunted growth and neglect. Children between three to five years still rely on their care takers for the control of emotions and behaviour. They turn to their parents for psychological support and emotional refuge. In the event of domestic violence, they feel helpless and become increasingly aware of the unrest. The hostility overwhelms them because they have not yet acquired the ability to deal with such frightening events. Consequently, they tend to show signs of behavioural and emotional problems. At this age, children are likely to blame themselves for the violence and suffer unthinkable guilt. These children have feeding and sleeping difficulties and they often get nightmares. All this affects their ability to concentrate in school. They also lag behind in language and communication development. In addition to chronic fear and anxiety, they also experience frequent illness. They become clingy and display unusual separation anxiety. They withdraw from peers and enjoy causing pain by hitting and biting.

Waithaka (2006) goes ahead to say that children between the ages 6 to 12 years have expanded their social circles to include friends and members of the extended family. Nevertheless, the parents still occupy a special place in their lives and are viewed as role models. They regard the aggressive father as enviably powerful but also fear him. They are concerned about the victimised mother and at the same time, they are angry with her for being weak. The natural respect that a child has for the mother gradually wanes and s/he becomes unruly not only to her but to all authority. In many cases, boys become remarkably disrespectful towards females. In addition, the children are ashamed of their homes and isolate themselves in an attempt to keep the violence a secret. For consolation, they keep the violence a secret. They may also turn to bad habits such as drug abuse and undesirable sexual behaviour.

Edleson (1997) asserts that problems among children who have witnessed assaults of one parent by another in the home include psychological and emotional ones such as aggression, hostility, anxiety, social withdrawal and depression. There are also cognitive functioning problems such as lower verbal and quantitative skills and the development of attitudes supporting the use of violence. Other long term development problems according to Edleson include depression, trauma related symptoms and low self esteem among women and trauma related symptoms alone among men. These problems appear to be magnified or decreased by a number of moderating factors including whether or not the child has been a victim of

physical abuse, a child's age and gender, the amount of time that has passed since witnessing violence, where the child is living, how a child perceives his/her relationship to adults in the home and the degree of perceived family support for the child. He also says that problems associated with children's witnessing of domestic violence can be divided into three main categories:

i) **Behavioural and Emotional Problems:** They exhibit more aggressive and antisocial as well as fearful and inhibited behaviour and show lower social competence than other children. They were also found to show more anxiety, low self esteem, depression, anger, and temperament problems than children who did not witness violence at home. Children from homes where their mothers were being abused have shown less skill in understanding how others feel and examining situations from other's perspectives when compared to children from non-violent households. Peer relationships, autonomy, self control and overall competence were also reported significantly lower among boys who had experienced serious physical violence and been exposed to the use of weapons between adults living in their homes. Another aspect of the effects on children is their own use of violence. Social learning theory would suggest that children who witness violence may also learn to use it.

ii) **Cognitive Functioning and Attitudes:** According to Edleson (1997), academic abilities were not found to differ between witnesses and other children. He also asserts that increased violence exposure associated with lower cognitive functioning. One of the most direct consequences of witnessing violence may be the attitude a child develops concerning the use of violence and conflict resolution. Jaffe, Wilson and Wolfe (1986) suggest that children's exposure to adult domestic violence may generate attitudes justifying their own use of violence. Spaccarelli, Coatsworth and Bowden's (1995) findings support this association by showing that adolescent boys incarcerated for violent crimes who had been exposed to family violence believed more than others that acting aggressively enhances one's reputation or self-image. Boys and girls appear to differ in what they learn from these experiences.

iii) **Longer Term Problems:** A number of studies have mentioned much longer term problems reported retrospectively by adults or indicated in archival records. For example, witnessing violence as a child was associated with adult reports of depression, trauma related symptoms and low self esteem among women. There was also trauma related symptoms

among men. Witnessing violence appeared to be independent of the various cases accounted for by the existence of parental alcohol abuse and divorce.

Santrock (1997) observed that Children are prone to victimization because unlike adults, children are obliged to live with other people, to travel collectively and to work in high density, heterogeneous environments, which is what schools are. In short, children have difficulty gaining access to the structures and mechanisms in society that help segregate people from dangerous associates and environments. The dependency of children created a spectrum of vulnerability for victimizations. John and Frank (1990) found out that the sensitive psychological vulnerability of children in their dependent relationship to their caretakers renders bad parental behaviour which is a major threat to normal child development. Research has found out that since children live in families, more of their victimization that are more dependency related should involve more perpetrators who are parents and family members. This pattern occurs because the responsibilities created by children's dependency status fall primarily on parents and family members. They are the main individuals in a position to violate those responsibilities in a way that would create victimization.

Social resources associated with academic competence include school, family and peer systems. Family factors associated with academic competence include parenting styles and parental involvement. According to Eckenrode, Laird and Doris (1993), parental involvement in education is related to a child's academic achievement and evidence suggests that increasing parental involvement leads to academic improvements. They also assert that parents influence the development of academic achievement through direct involvement with schools, for example, when they contact school about their child or attend parent – school functions. They also affect achievement through their attitudes and behaviour, for example, by communicating strong educational values, conveying the value of effort, expecting and encouraging their children to succeed academically and monitoring or helping with their child's schoolwork at home. For maltreated children, dealing with fears about abuse and searching for security in relationships with adults can take precedence over performing competently at academic tasks. Being physically abused has been linked with children's anxiety, personality problems, depression, conduct disorder and delinquency.

According to Malinosky – Rummell and Hansen (1993), when children grow or during the adult years, maltreated children show increased violence toward other adults, dating partners and marital partners as well as increased substance abuse, anxiety and depression. They conclude that child maltreatment places children at risk for the development of a wide range of problems and disorders. At school, maltreated children have serious discipline problems. Their non-compliance, poor motivation and cognitive immaturity interfere with academic achievement – an outcome that further undermines their chance for life success, (Eckenrode, Laird and Doris, 1993). Children’s friendships are important in that they serve six functions: companionship, stimulation, physical support, ego support, social comparison and intimacy/affection (Gottman and Parker, 1987). In companionship, friendship provides children with a familiar partner and playmate, someone who is willing to spend time with them and join in collaborative activities. Concerning stimulation, friendship provides children with interesting information, excitement and amusement. In physical support, friendship provides time, resources and assistance while in ego support; it provides the expectation of support, encouragement and feedback that helps children maintain an impression of themselves as competent, attractive and worthwhile individuals. As far as social comparison is concerned, friendship provides information about where the child stands vis-à-vis others and whether the child is doing okay. In intimacy and affection, friendship provides children with a warm, close, trusting relationship with another individual in which self disclosure takes place.

2.5 Causes of Conflict in Modern Families

According to Lowry and Rankin (1977), conflict is a natural, genetically determined response pattern within humans, as an instinctive means of coping with the physical and social environments. Sasse (1997) defines conflict as a disagreement/struggle between two or more people. Conflict is bound to be worse between people with stronger emotional intimacy. Many people engage in conflict mainly because they do not employ good decision – making procedures. Fighting is a matter of power-sharing, that is, everyone would like to get his or her own way and no one likes to lose. Howse also says that many couples neglect consideration of how they are going to make decisions and consequently often end up fighting about how the decision was made, even though they have little difficulty about the decision itself. Anger in the family could result to avoiding responsibility, neglect, thoughtlessness, unfaithfulness and rejection. According to him, marital conflict is all about

differences. Without trust between two people, conflicts cannot be resolved. Negative feelings will prevail. According to James Coleman in Howse (1989), conflict can be divided into rational, irrational, overt, covert, acute, chronic, basic, non-basic, personal and interpersonal. According to Gitaari (2002), causes of conflict include the following:

2.5.1 Unrealistic Expectations

These include men expecting their wives to be like their mother or better than the mothers; men expecting their wives to be angels; women expecting their husbands to be like their fathers (if they were good) or a man who is always at home and is soft. Some of the couples get into marriage with the view of changing some of their spouses' traits. They fail to understand that it is virtually impossible to change a grown up. Instead, compromise and tolerance should be exercised.

2.5.2 External Pressure

The following factors closely affect the couple and can sometimes, if not well handled, create marital conflict. They include:

- (i) Extended Family: One may have in-laws living with them and wanting to spend 'what belongs to their brother or sister'.
- (ii) Mothers – in – law: Some men listen to their mothers instead of their wives; others let their mothers run their families for them.
- (iii) Career: Men may engage in very busy careers that they do not have time for their families. Women may also have equally competitive careers. This means that the couple has no time for each other and for their family.
- (iv) Separation by employment: This is whereby the husband and wife are working in different parts of a country. This makes adjusting to each other very difficult and each is independent. Thus, when they are able to live together again, none is ready to submit to the other because each person is used to making their own decision.

2.5.3 Children Related Problems

These include lack of children (lack of a girl means no wealth while lack of a boy means no future); replacing spouse with children (giving too much attention to the children at the expense of your partner); number of children to have (in-laws may insist on having a child named after them and this may mean getting more children than what one initially expected); birth control methods (some couples may detest all family planning methods and thus they continue getting more children than they can raise).

2.5.4 Money Problems

If one's partner does not know how much money you earn and spend, it can result in insecurity, competition and tension. If a husband divides all the money as he deems fit without involving the wife in decision-making, there could arise major problems. Mistrust and suspicion will always come in. There could also be a problem of lack enough money. It results in tension and disharmony between husband and wife. Loss of employment is another problem and so is impulse buying.

2.5.5 Communication Breakdown

A couple needs to take and have a common understanding about children and money among others. When communication is poor or misunderstood, there are problems. Causes of poor or wrong communication include different cultures and where one has been brought up (rural or urban setting). Some communication killers include explosion (being angry and complaining) and silence (refusing to point out when one wrongs you). According to Sasse (1997), conflict can be divided into two. That is, constructive conflict or destructive conflict. Constructive conflict occurs when people work together to solve a problem and they come to a better understanding of each other. After the conflict, they feel better about each other. Destructive conflict occurs when people attack each other instead of trying to solve the conflict. This leads to weakening of relationships. For example, a wife may complain that the husband doesn't eat her food and the husband could become rough and impatient and yet all these are just masking the main issue which is lack of fulfilment as far as sexual needs are concerned. Lack of sexual harmony can cause frustrations in the family.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) ecological model often has been used to integrate research on multiple risks for family violence at four levels of analysis. He is supported by other people. The four levels are:-

- (i) **Individual Characteristics:** - Personality factors such as low self – esteem, poor impulse control, external loss of control, negative affectivity and heightened response to stress all increase the likelihood that an individual will perpetrate family violence. According to Kantor and Straus (1990), alcohol or drug dependence also plays a role both as a background risk factor and as an immediate precipitant of family violence. According to Lung and Daro (1996), age seems to play a role in child victims as younger children are more prone to be seriously injured as a result of family violence.
- (ii) **Immediate Social Context:** - Studies have examined a host of contributing factors, including family structure and size, acute stressors such as the loss of a job or death in the family and characteristic styles of resolving conflicts or parenting. Coping style of life as well as stress contributes to the development of family violence.
- (iii) **Broader Ecological Context:** - Violence in the family is also related to qualities of the community, in which the family is embedded, such as poverty, absence of family services, social isolation and the lack of social cohesion in the community. According to Garbarino and Kostely (1992), family violence is a social as well as a psychological indicator. High levels of unemployment, inadequate housing, daily stresses and community violence contribute to an increased risk of child maltreatment. According to Furstenberg (1993), families prone to violence are less likely to socialize with their neighbours and they feel that they cannot ask for help from others or participate in community events.
- (iv) **Societal or Cultural Context:** - According to Finkelhor and Dziuba – Leatherman (1994), family violence is perpetuated by broad cultural beliefs and values, such as the use of physical punishment, extremes in family privacy and violence in the popular media. Societal policies may not cause family violence, but many of our practices appear to condone it.

A variety of studies indicate that humans and other animals are prone to respond to a variety of unpleasant stimuli, including stressful family interactions with aggression, (Berkowitz, 1983). From this perspective, frustration and anger in close family relationships is expected and the task of socialization is learning to recognize emotions and control aggressive impulses. Other investigations have noted that the familiarity (or intergenerational transmission) of family violence is consistent with biological as well as environmental models of causation, because families quite obviously share genes as well as environments, (DiLalla and Gottesman, 1991). Holtzworth – Munroe and Stuart (1994) identified three primary types of spouse batterers: -

Type 1: They are generally violent and antisocial. They tend to be violent across situations and potential victims. They are also more likely to abuse alcohol, be more belligerent and contemptuous and have antisocial personality traits.

Type 2: They are family only and make up the majority of spouse abusers, who tend to abuse only in the family, commit less severe acts, are less aggressive in general, suppress angry emotions and feel remorseful. They are often dependent and jealous and are unlikely to have personality or other disorders.

Type 3: They are dysphonic – borderline or emotionally volatile. They also tend to be violent only within their family. They are more socially isolated and socially incompetent than other batterers. They are often depressed, feel inadequate and are emotionally volatile. They are more likely to have schizoid or borderline personalities.

2.6 Impact of Family Conflicts on Children

Marital conflicts exist when there are major differences of opinion between people which persist and remain unsolved, (Kiura, 1999). Shantz and Hartup (1992) say that family conflicts range in frequency. Some could be rare while others occur very frequently. Conflict serves the functions of testing and changing the structure of family relationships. Family conflicts are difficult to escape. They carry great consequences for individuals, relationships and society. All family conflicts have elements of power struggle and intimacy struggle. It is a consequence of transitions in an individual's development. Problems in families include adultery, customs and traditions in intermarriages, lack of forgiveness, alcoholism, HIV/AIDS, gossip, lack of communication, finances, divorce, mistrust, wife beating and rape.

According to Nguru (2006), the growing number of marriages in trouble is alarming. This means that more families are experiencing conflict and more children have problems as a result of these conflicts. The main problem is that marriage is no longer about family honour. People are getting married for the same reasons their parents did, but they are not the same people. Whereas before, a marriage was arranged on the basis of social status and inter-family relations, now it is solely about personal happiness, which is why men and women are finding it easier to walk out. It is evident that more women than men are walking out. This is because women are more communicative and maintain strong social support. Men, on the other hand, will not talk about any perceived failure because of their huge egos. So they are left by their wives while still wondering how – or whether- to tackle their marital problems. Gitaari (2002) points out that people need to be educated about relationships and marriage needs a formal social support system. It makes sense, especially when you think of all the problems that children experience such as drug abuse, violence in its worst forms, truancy and running away from home – which can be traced back to their parents' relationships with each other. Nguru (2006) asserts that in marriage, there is a serious lack of openness and that is a major cause for concern. Marriages based on deceit are also better off annulled. Infidelity can never be justified but unfaithful partners are constantly giving reasons why they do it instead of acknowledging that they have done something terribly wrong.

The sooner people realise that marriage is a serious commitment, the sooner they can attain that state of nirvana they are all looking so desperately for. According to Sasse (1997), family violence creates a home environment where children live in constant fear. Kantor and Straus (1990) indicated that children who witness family violence are affected in ways similar to children who are physically abused. They are often unable to establish nurturing bonds with either parent. They are at a greater risk for abuse and neglect if they live in a violent home. Families under stress produce children under stress. They add that children exposed to family violence are more likely to develop social, emotional, psychological and/or behavioural problems than those who are not. Recent research indicates that children who witness domestic violence show more anxiety, low self esteem, depression, anger and temperament problems than children who do not witness violence in the home. The trauma they experience can show up in emotional, behavioural, social and physical disturbances that affect their development and can continue into adulthood. Berlin (2004) asserts that children who grow up in an intact two parent family with both biological parents present do better on

a wide range of outcomes than children who grow up in a single – parent family. Single parenthood is neither the only, nor even the most important cause of the higher rates of school dropout, teenage pregnancy, juvenile delinquency or other negative outcomes we see but it does contribute independently to these problems. Children in intact families are less likely to drop out of school, become a teen parent, be arrested or be unemployed. Marriage can help children only if it is a healthy one. A healthy marriage, according to Berlin (2004), is characterized as high in positive interaction, satisfaction and stability and low in conflict. Unhealthy marriages are characterized by substantial parental conflict which pose a clear risk for children's well being both because of the direct negative effects that result when children witness conflict between parents and because of conflicts' indirect effects on parenting skills. Marital hostility is associated with increased aggression and disruptive behaviours on the part of children, which in turn seem to lead to peer rejection, academic failure and other antisocial behaviours.

According to El- Sheikh (2006), family stress can have a devastating effect on children. He established in a study carried out a link between children's perceptions of their parents' marital stress and the quality of sleep the children experienced. The more discord the children sense between their parents, the more the amount and quality of their sleep declines, but even mild levels of stress were found to be harmful. He adds that loud family quarrels can be harmful to children. According to Edleson (1997) some studies go beyond the obvious to include impact of mild discord – the cold stares, icy comments and mutual avoidance that never rise to the surface, at least in front of the children. He also found out that parents may not be as successful in hiding marital problems as they think, and may be harming their children in the process. These studies also found out that children perceived marital problems to a greater extent than the parents realized. Marital conflict and divorce can create serious instability in the family and insecurity in a child.

Consequences of divorce are split families, poor parent – child relationships and in some cases economic deprivation. This immense disruption in the home life can create a situation that serves as a dysfunctional learning experience in all aspects of a child's life, but especially in the area of interpersonal functioning. Poor parent – child relationships due to divorce and inter- parental conflict can cause these children to have less secure attachments with parents. The happier they perceive their parent's marriage to be, the more secure they are. Also

associated with divorce is the exposure of children to dysfunctional learning experiences. Children model the aggressive tactics they see their parents using while others model avoidant strategies of conflict resolution and learn to turn their anger inward. Divorce has also been associated with economic deprivation, which causes a disrupted home life which, in turn, is associated with subsequent diminished academic achievement, low occupational attainment and poverty. Research has shown that children of divorcees are likely to divorce themselves thus parental divorce is indeed associated with interpersonal and intimacy problems in adulthood. Young adults of both sexes from broken homes experience difficulty in establishing intimate interpersonal relationships. Children of divorce who experienced high levels of pre and post divorce conflict have been shown to have decreased beliefs in the benevolence of people and the impersonal world and in the dependability of their future spouses, decreased trust in their parents and less optimism about their future dating relationship and marriage.

Marital discord has been associated with a number of maladjustments in children, including aggression, conduct disorders and anxiety. Both marital conflict and child adjustment are multidimensional constructs. Not all expressions of marital conflict are stressful for children. A study found out that child problems are more highly associated with unhappy marriages that were quarrelsome, tense and hostile rather than to unhappy marriages characterized by apathy and indifference. Studies using a divorced sample indicate that marital conflict present before and after divorce is related to a range of negative outcomes. According to Cummings and Dories (1994) studies indicate that conflict predicts child problems above and beyond indexes of marital satisfaction. The frequency, intensity, content and resolution of conflict in particular may affect the stressfulness of marital conflict for children and thus may be related to the existence of child problems. As far as frequency is concerned, increased exposure to inter parental conflict potentially could have two contrasting effects. It might lead to fewer behaviour problems because children become desensitized to marital conflict or it may sensitize children to conflict and lead to a greater incidence of adjustment problems. Intensity in Marital conflicts range from calm discussion to physical violence. It may be that exposure to low intensity conflict, even if it is frequent is unrelated to child problems and that marital conflict is upsetting to children only when it involves hostility or physical aggression.

According to Emery and Laumann-Billings (1998), conflict in a context concerning the child may be more distressing to the child and thus may be more closely related to behaviour

problems. How conflicts are resolved may moderate their impact on children. Parents who successfully resolve their conflicts provide positive models of problem solving for their children. This may lead to increased social competence and coping skills. Poor conflict resolution may produce continued tension in the family and lead to more frequent episodes of conflict. Research on the association between marital conflict and child behaviour problems indicates that:

- (i) Exposure to more frequent episodes of inter-parental conflict leads to greater distress in children and a greater incidence of behaviour problems.
- (ii) Exposure to more intense forms of marital conflict is also related to child problems and is more upsetting to children than less intense conflict.
- (iii) Children as young as two years may be sensitive to the content of conflict.
- (iv) Inter parental conflict is associated with adjustment problems in both boys and girls.
- (v) Age is related to immediate responses to conflict but appears to be unrelated to the incidence or severity of behaviour problems.

There is a difference between family maltreatment, characterized by minimal physical or sexual harm or endangerment and family violence, characterized by serious physical injury, profound psychological trauma or sexual violation. Research carried out in the USA in 1996 found out that maltreated children suffered such injuries as loss of consciousness, broken bones, third degree burns and schooling loss that required special education services. Other identified, moderate and inferred cases included educational neglect, where parents failed to ensure children's attendance at school, physical abuse or emotional distress for up to 48 hours, emotional abuse, inferred sexual abuse and modern physical neglect. Many estimates of spouse abuse similarly include acts of aggression that cause relatively minor physical harm. Studies have shown that up to one third of abusive married couples are so defined by acts of pushing, throwing objects or grabbing at each other, whereas about 4% of couples engage in serious acts of violence such as choking, beating up or kicking a partner. Other experts have asserted that 80% of children are victims of sibling violence like pushing, grabbing or hitting siblings. According to Edleson (1997), 40% to 75% of children exposed to marital violence are estimated to be victims of physical child abuse and children living with an abused mother have been found to be 12 to 14 times more likely to be sexually abused.

Family violence can cause a wide range of adverse consequences for victims including serious physical injury, immediate and delayed psychological distress or disorder and a variety of practical upheavals such as placement in foster care or the need to flee the home. The consequences of victimization are a function of at least five broad classes of variables: - The nature of the abusive act like hitting or forced sex; Individual characteristics of the victim; The nature of the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator; The response of others to the abuse and factors correlated with abuse that may exacerbate its effects or in fact, may account for some of the putative consequences of abuse. It is clear from studies carried out that victims of all forms of family violence are at an increased risk for a variety of psychological problems. These range from aggression to anxiety and depression. Evidence indicates that children who are victims of violence are at an increased risk for becoming violent themselves as adults (Widom, 1989). Emery (1982) asserts that because fear is children's most immediate response to violence, processes more subtle than direct imitation must account for this continuity. The family composition or parental absence perspective proposes that a deviation in structure from a family with two first-married parents, biologically related to their children, is associated with increases in problem behaviour in children. Children and adults from homes with an absent parent due to either divorce or death have more problems in adjustment than do those in intact families. These problems range from academic achievement to socio-economic attainment and conduct disorders.

Finkelhor and Dziuba-Leatherman (1994) indicated that child Maltreatment takes the following forms: Physical abuse like assaults on children that produce pain, cuts, bruises and burns; Sexual abuse like sexual comments, fondling and intercourse; Physical neglect like less food, clothing, medical attention or supervision; Emotional neglect like failure to meet child's need for affection and emotional support; Psychological abuse like ridicule, humiliation, scapegoat, terrorizing that damage children's emotional, social or cognitive functioning. Widom (1989) indicate that adults who abuse or neglect their children usually have a history of maltreatment in their own childhoods, unrealistic expectations and poor control of aggressive impulses. He adds that unmanageable parental stress is strongly associated with all forms of maltreatment and the family circumstances of maltreated children impair the development of emotional self – regulation, self – concept and social skills. Over time, these youngsters show serious learning and adjustment problems, including difficulties with peers, academic failure, severe depression, substance abuse and delinquency, (Cicchetti

and Toth, 1998). The home lives of abused children overflow with opportunities to learn to use aggression as a way of solving problems. Demeaning parental messages, in which children are ridiculed, humiliated, rejected or terrorized result in low self esteem, high anxiety, self blame and efforts to escape from extreme psychological pain.

Widom (1989) concluded that abused children seem to display more aggressive behaviour than comparison children. For some children, witnessing marital violence is as detrimental to healthy adjustment as experiencing physical abuse. Wolfe, Sternberg, Lamb, Guterman and Abbott (1986) found out that children are more likely than adults to report levels of maladjustment that varied depending on recent or concurrent exposure to family violence. They also found out that girls were at more risk for internalizing and externalizing behaviour problems than boys.

2.7 Guidance and Counselling in Schools

Okut, Ndambuki, Karuguti, Oidi, Nasirembe, Kafu and Ayieko (2005) define guidance as a continuous process of determining and providing for developmental needs of pupils both at home and in school. It involves informing, educating, advising and assisting an individual with an aim of bringing about acceptable behaviour. Counselling, according to Ongoma and Silsil (2008) is the skilled and principled use of relationships that develop self-knowledge, emotional acceptance and growth. It seeks to address and resolve problems, help one in decision making and also assists one to cope with crises. They further state that modern schools have been plagued by myriad problems, requiring teacher counsellors to be well-equipped, with not only knowledge but both the expertise and personality to address the various maladies.

There are quite a number of families where fights and quarrels are the order of the day. This makes the pupils feel insecure and lack affection. Others are those whose parents are separated, leaving them with one parent. This situation has created pupils who are always seeking attention. Okut *et al* (2005) say that home problems drive pupils into destructive habits. The pupil does not get adequate parental attention and psychological support. Such pupils result to destructive habits due to unfavourable living conditions. As a result of domestic violence pupils can face economic deprivation, substance abuse, parental rejection,

victimization by physical or sexual abuse, academic failure, gang affiliation and possession of dangerous weapons.

This means that school counsellors need to intervene at all levels of the pupils' development. The school environment is worth living in when inter-personal relationship and active consultations take place freely among members of staff and pupils. In addition to working with educational professionals to meet the learning needs of all pupils, Ongoma and Silsil (2008) suggest that effective teachers develop good working relationship with parents. This is because parents are a source of valuable information about the characteristics, abilities and needs of the pupils. They can assist by reviewing skills at home and monitoring the pupils' learning. They have also highlighted behaviour which will help to identify pupils who need counselling as follows:-

- (i) Pupils who are untidy and unkempt
- (ii) Absent minded pupils in class
- (iii) Pupils who doze and sleep in class especially during the day
- (iv) Those that come late for lessons or not at all
- (v) Those that present incomplete homework or do not do it at all
- (vi) Those that are rude, violent and loners
- (vii) Those whose academic performance fluctuates from time to time.
- (viii) Students always in wrong company
- (ix) Those that show resistance towards authority
- (x) Those who look stressful and anxious
- (xi) Those that feel tired in school due to sleepless nights
- (xii) Those that show destructive behaviour.
- (xiii) Those that appear forgetful or have poor memory.

Ongoma and Silsil (2008) further highlight the following ways in which pupils can reach a school counsellor:-

- i) School administration whereby the principal or deputy refers cases to the school counsellor.
- ii) Teachers such as subject teachers, games teachers and house masters interact with pupils on a daily basis therefore a pupil who displays any social maladjustment can be asked to see the school counsellor.

- iii) Informal interactions whereby counsellors can interact with pupils informally and invite them for a talk without arousing their curiosity.
- iv) Boarding masters or mistresses easily identify pupils who fight others, are accused of stealing and continuously break school rules. They can then be referred for counselling.
- v) Class teachers can refer a pupil to a school counsellor when they notice a drop in performance.
- vi) Parents can take the initiative to make phone calls or visit the school personally to talk about their pupils. A parent who has observed a change of behaviour from the pupil during the holiday needs to share it with the counsellor.
- vii) A pupil can take their own initiative and go to the counsellor themselves.

Pupils need guidance and counselling so as to make appropriate choices for their future. It also helps them identify their potentials and know the right directions to follow. After a pupil has been guided or counselled, they understand that the problems affecting them are as a result of their development. They also realize that some of their problems are just a phase that they are passing through. Guidance and Counselling helps the pupils know how to handle the problems they come across thus they appreciate and accept themselves as they are. Good conduct or behaviour can also be cultivated when a pupil undergoes guidance and counselling.

The role of parents in the welfare of their pupils, even in school should not be underestimated. According to Ongoma and Silsil (2008), close cooperation between the teachers and the parents is vital to the success of the pupils. The school counsellors should cultivate enough trust in the parents to have them contribute positively to the school. Teacher counsellors and parents should take an active role in the affairs of their pupils through proper guidance and counselling. They should also encourage dialogue with the pupils both at home and in school and give adequate support to each other.

2.8 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by the following theories: Erickson's theory, Behavioural theory and Abraham Maslow's theory on hierarchy of needs.

Erickson's theory is divided into various stages based on a child's age. The first stage is trust versus mistrust. Many problems experienced in this stage like lack of food could lead to insecurity and hostility. The second stage is autonomy versus shame/doubt. When pupils' needs at this level are not met, they are likely to shift into great shame and doubt. The third stage which is between 2-6 years is initiative versus guilt. Here the pupils create their social world. Failure to meet their demands leads to development of an inner sense of guilt hampering the normal social development process and this may result into build-up anxiety. The fourth stage is industry versus inferiority. This is between 6-12 years and during these years; pupils have tasks of facing and meeting the family, peer and school expectations. Problems at this stage include feelings of inadequacy, poor self image, fear of school, lack of concentration, poor memory, excessive competition, expressing anger and sexual disadvantages. In this study, pupils in homes where there is conflict will lack trust towards their parents because those parents are not providing basic needs for them. They will also be very ashamed of their background or family set-up because of the problems in those families. Some of the pupils feel guilty and think that they are the reason why their parents are fighting. Such feelings of guilt and low self esteem lead to inferiority complex, which in turn leads to poor academic performance and poor interpersonal relationship with peers.

Behavioural theory proposed by Pavlov holds the view that the person is the product of his/her environment whereas the radical behaviourists such as Skinner ruled out the possibility of self-determination and freedom. Behaviour modification aims to increase a person's skills so that the number of the response options is increased by overcoming disturbing behaviours that restrict choices. Bandura (1977) supports the belief that pupils learn their behaviour from others whom they interact with through observation or modelling. He believed that the mind, behaviour and the environment all play an important role in the learning process. Pupils model parents, peers, siblings, authority figures, teachers and others whom they admire and trust. In this study, the environment where pupils grow up shapes their future. Pupils who grow up in an environment full of conflicts between their parents will exhibit different behaviours as compared to those who have grown up in a peaceful environment. Each pupil who observes or witnesses conflict or violence is bound to produce

coping mechanisms. It is these mechanisms that will affect the pupils' academic performance and interpersonal relationships.

This study was guided by Abraham Maslow's theory on hierarchy of needs. Maslow (1970) focuses on self-actualization of a person. Some characteristics of a self-actualized person include tolerance, welcoming uncertainty, acceptance of self and other, creativity, need for privacy, autonomy, genuine caring for others, sense of humour and directedness. He divided human needs into five categories. The most basic category is the physiological needs. These include food, shelter, clothing and education. When pupils lack these basic needs, they cannot grow and their concentration is on their discomfort. If pupils are hurt by conflicts in the family, they may not acquire all the needs that they need. After the basic needs, a person yearns for safety needs. This is the need to feel secure. Pupils who witness their parents fighting all the time do not feel safe in that home. There is the fear that the parents might separate or even hurt them. Maslow also talked about the belonging needs. This refers to the need to be accepted and to affiliate with others. If pupils are communicating well with parents, they will feel accepted. In most cases parents who are fighting do not have time to make the pupils feel needed. Pupils are bound to think that they are the cause of their parents' fights and this makes them feel that they are not loved. Esteem needs come fourth on the hierarchy. This need makes one gain approval from others. When a couple is fighting, they cannot gain approval from the pupils and other society members. Therefore this need is not fulfilled. The highest need on the hierarchy is self actualization. This need makes one feel self fulfilled and realize one's potential. If all other needs are not fulfilled, one cannot reach the stage of self actualization. It all starts at the physiological needs. These physiological needs can only be fully and satisfactorily met in a loving family without any conflicts.

2.9 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a collection of concepts or models from literature which inform a research study. It relates a study to existing ideas or principle. The model below shows the conflicts that exist in a family and which pupils can be exposed to. As a result of experiencing these conflicts, pupils' academic performance and interpersonal relationship may be affected. If there is no intervention in form of guidance and counselling, the pupils may grow up to become disturbed and unstable. They may use the modelling effect to repeat

the same in their families. A disturbed and unstable individual may eventually mean a disturbed and unstable society. In the figure, Guidance and Counselling appears as the intervening variable with an arrow pointing towards independent variable (family conflicts) and another towards the dependent variables (academic performance and interpersonal relationships). These arrows show the direction of influence.

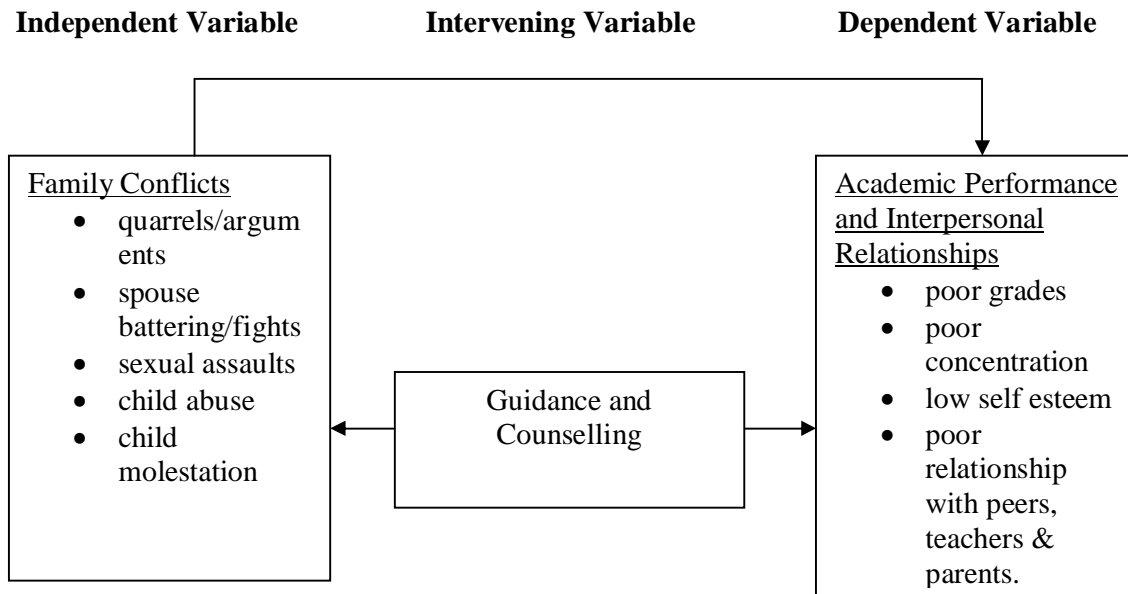


Figure 1: Effect of Guidance and Counselling on Family Conflicts, Academic Performance and Interpersonal Relationships of Pupils.

When there is intervention in form of Guidance and Counselling, pupils may achieve high academic standards, high self esteem and good interpersonal relationships. Their concentration level in class will be high. Guidance and Counselling also helps the families in that a peaceful environment without fights/quarrels is created once more. There is also provision of basic needs and parents/guardians can focus on their pupils' academic performance.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

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

3.2 Research Design

The research design to be applied in a study is dictated by the type of study one wants to conduct. This study was intended to find out the impact of family conflicts on the academic performance and interpersonal relationships of pupils in public primary schools in Nakuru Municipality. The research design adopted was descriptive survey research design, a research design where the researcher does not have direct control of independent variables and there is no treatment or manipulation offered to any variables. It attempted to describe such things as possible behaviour, attitudes, values and characteristics, (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999). A descriptive survey research technique is the most appropriate when the purpose of study is to explore and create a detailed description of a phenomenon.

3.3 Location of Study

The study was carried out in Nakuru Municipality, Rift Valley Province. It was concerned with public primary schools within the Nakuru Municipality only. It was selected for the following reasons:-

- i) It has a high catchment of public primary schools.
- ii) The municipality is cosmopolitan with people of diverse cultures and social inclinations. The respondents for this study therefore represented this diversity.
- iii) It was accessible and familiar to the researcher. It was therefore possible to trace the respondents.

3.4 Population of the Study

The target population of study was public primary school pupils in schools within the Nakuru Municipality. The total number of these pupils was 47870. The accessible population was pupils in class seven and eight in ten public primary schools within the municipality which had been purposively selected. The total number of these pupils was 2023. Two teachers in each school filled in questionnaires. Table 1 shows the number of students in each of the ten schools while table 2 shows the sample per school.

Table 1

Distribution of Pupils by Gender in Ten Public Primary Schools within Nakuru Municipality

Schools	Number of Boys		Number of Girls	
	Class 7	Class 8	Class 7	Class 8
Mama Ngina	88	82	77	86
St Josephs	49	36	56	43
Harambee Khalsa	51	61	61	42
Kenyatta	49	32	51	55
St Mary's			110	99
Free Hold	43	38	43	51
Langalanga	55	59	48	51
St Xavier's	42	36	32	26
Pangani	44	49	52	52
Racetrack	40	45	42	47
TOTALS	461	438	572	552

3.5 Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

The sample size was selected using purposive, stratified and simple random sampling procedures. The researcher purposively sampled out ten public primary schools within Nakuru Municipality. These schools were picked from different zones within the municipality. This was to ensure that the sample was adequately distributed within the municipality area. In each of these schools, class seven and eight pupils who constituted the sample were selected using stratified random sampling. This was because they were considered mature enough to know what goes on in their families thereby being in a better

position to assess the effects of family conflicts on their academic performance and interpersonal relationships objectively and fill in the questionnaires given. The class teachers of class seven and eight in the schools selected were purposively selected into the sample. This was because they are in charge of their classes. It was considered that these teachers had first hand information on the problems their pupils go through. As class teachers, they easily noted any changes, especially negative ones that their pupils were undergoing. They were therefore best placed to provide information on the effects of family conflicts on pupils' academic performance and interpersonal relationships. Lastly, simple random sampling using random numbers table was used to select the specific number of pupils in each selected school. The pupils corresponding to the number picked were included in the sample. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), in social sciences, the following formula was used to determine the sample size.

$$n = \frac{Z^2 pq}{d^2}$$

Where n =desired sample when population is greater than 10,000

Z =the standard normal deviate at the required confidence level [1.96]

p=the proportion in the target population estimated to have characteristics being measured. [0.5]

q= 1-p [0.5]

d=the level of statistical significance set. [0.05]

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 (0.50) (0.50)}{(0.05)^2}$$

$$= 384$$

Therefore in the ten schools visited, the researcher collected data from a total of 384 pupils and 20 class teachers.

Table 2

Summary of Sample Schools and the Number of Pupils in Each School

Schools	Sample per School	Class 7	Class 8)
Mama Ngina	63	32	31
St. Josephs	35	17	18
Harambee Khalsa	41	21	20
Kenyatta	35	17	18
St Mary's	40	20	20
Free Hold	33	16	17
Langalanga	40	20	20
St Xavier's	27	13	14
Pangani	37	19	18
Racetrack	33	17	16
Total	384	192	192

3.6 Instrumentation

The researcher used questionnaires to collect data. Both pupils and teachers filled in the questionnaire.

3.6.1 Validity

The instruments were validated using criterion related validity and specifically predictive validity which referred to the degree to which obtained data predict future behaviour of subjects, (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999). Piloting was done in two schools outside the Nakuru Municipality. Their responses were analysed to determine if they meet the objectives and research questions of the study.

3.6.2 Reliability

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), a coefficient of 0.08 or more implied that there was a high degree of reliability of the data. This was the reliability coefficient that was accepted. The method used to establish the reliability coefficient was internal consistency method because it gave high reliability. The specific method under this used was Kuder-Richardson because it was easy and it gave a high reliability.

3.7 Data Collection Procedures

Before the researcher conducted the study, a permit was sought from the Municipal Education Officer. Upon getting the permit, the researcher made appointments to visit the ten schools to get permission from the school heads. The researcher then administered questionnaires which were filled in by the selected respondents (pupils and teachers). This was done with help from two research assistants. The respondents filled in the questionnaires by following the instructions given.

3.8 Data Analysis

Data analysis was carried out using the Statistical Package of Social Sciences [SPSS] software. Descriptive statistics, that is, means and standard deviation were worked out and presented using frequencies, percentages and cross tables. The mean was used because it took into account each score in the distribution and it was more stable than the median and mode, (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999). Standard deviation was advantageous because it responded to the exact position of every score relative to the mean of that distribution and it was sensitive to extreme scores, (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999). Frequency distribution tables were used because they enable the reader to see the trend of the distribution more easily by simply looking at numbers in the table.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents research findings, interpretation of data and discussion of research results. The discussion addresses the research objectives of the study which were:-

- i) To determine the extent to which conflicts in a family affect pupils' academic performance.
- ii) To establish the nature of the relationship between pupils who experience family conflicts and their peers.
- iii) To establish whether it is the male or female pupils who are more affected by conflicts in families.
- iv) To establish the nature of the relationship between pupils who experience family conflicts and their teachers.
- v) To determine the attitude of pupils who experience family conflicts towards their parents, peers and school.
- vi) To determine the role of the school's Counsellor in assisting pupils who experience family conflicts.

The data collected on each study objective was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Descriptive statistics. The chapter further gives a discussion of findings and a comparison with similar studies done. The results and discussions presented were based on a total of 384 public primary school pupils and 20 public primary school teachers who filled in questionnaires.

Demographic Details

Table 3 shows the number of pupils who filled in questionnaires in terms of their classes.

Table 3

Distribution of Pupils per Class

	Frequency	Percent
Seven	207	53.9
Eight	177	46.1
Total	384	100.0

Most of the pupils who filled the questionnaires were female. This is shown in Table 4 that 59.1% are female.

Table 4

Distribution of Pupils by Gender

	Frequency	Percent
Male	157	40.9
Female	227	59.1
Total	384	100.0

4.2 Results of Research Objective 1: Extent to which Conflicts in a Family affect Pupils' Academic Performance.

This objective aimed at finding out the effects of family conflicts on a pupil's academic performance. Another aim of this objective was to find out how pupils relate with their parents in their homes; how they communicate; how they are punished; whether they experience fights by their parents; whether they are abused; their parents interests in their academic work and concentration level of pupils in school in relation to the experiences of those pupils at home. This research in Table 5 revealed that majority of pupils (60.4%) are rarely beaten by their parents but quite a number (31.5%) are beaten moderately and (8.1%) are frequently beaten.

Table 5

Distribution of Pupils' Cases of Beatings

	Frequency	Percent
Rarely	232	60.4
Moderately	121	31.5
Frequently	31	8.1
Total	384	100.0

These results may be interpreted to mean that the majority of pupils who are rarely beaten by their parents attend to their academic issues well. The ones who are moderately and frequently beaten may experience serious learning and adjustment problems including difficulties with peers, academic failure, severe depression, substance abuse and delinquency. This is according to Cicchetti and Toth, 1998.

A majority of pupils stated that their parents rarely disagreed. Table 6 shows that 52.1% rarely have disagreeing parents as opposed to 5.5% who have parents who always disagree. Disagreement causes lack of concentration in school work for a pupil. A pupil who is anxious cannot concentrate in class and this translates to poor academic performance.

Table 6

Pupils' Cases of Disagreement with Parents/Guardians

	Frequency	Percent
Always	21	5.5
Frequently	43	11.2
Rarely	200	52.1
Never	120	31.2
Total	384	100.0

This research also showed that most of the parents or guardians are interested in their pupils' academic performance. In table 7, 79.9% of parents are always interested, 9.6% are frequently interested while 1.8% are never interested in their pupils' academic performance.

The more a parent shows interest in a pupil's academic performance, the more likely that pupil will perform well in school work. According to Eckenrode, Laird and Doris (1993), parental involvement in Education is related to a child's academic achievement and evidence suggests that increasing parental involvement leads to academic improvement. This is because the parent will notice his/her pupil's weak areas and ask the concerned teacher for extra assistance. For the pupils whose parents rarely or never have interest in their school work, they are likely to perform poorly in their academic work.

Table 7

Pupils' Opinion on their Parents' Interest in Academic Performance

	Frequency	Percent
Always	307	79.9
Frequently	37	9.6
Rarely	33	8.6
Never	7	1.8
Total	384	100.0

Most pupils (68.5%) agreed to the opinion that the level of concentration in class is low if parents or guardian are fighting. This finding concurred with Edleson (1997) whose study found that increased violence exposure associated with lower cognitive functioning. Table 8 shows this. This low level of concentration occurs because the pupil is thinking about the happenings at home. The pupil experiences anxiety and uncertainty about the future. According to Waithaka (2006), children are not aware of the cause of the violence and they are subjected to living in a constant state of fear that it might happen again. This pupil does not know what to do to stop the fighting. They also do not know if they will find the weaker parent alive, hurt or dead. Some of the pupils also blame themselves for the problems of their parents. When this happens, there is the tendency to run away from home. With all these thoughts going through a pupil's mind, class concentration level goes down. Eventually, this pupil cannot perform well academically.

Table 8

Pupils' Concentration Level after Parents'/Guardian's Fights

	Frequency	Percent
High	41	10.7
Average	80	20.8
Low	263	68.5
Total	384	100.0

This research also found out that most pupils (48.2%) strongly agree and (30.2%) agree to the opinion that if parents or guardians are fighting, this will affect their academic performance. Table 9 shows that only 9.1% of pupils disagree with this opinion.

Table 9

Pupils' Opinion that Parents'/Guardians' Fights Affect their Academic Performance

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	185	48.2
Agree	116	30.2
Disagree	48	12.5
Strongly Disagree	35	9.1
Total	384	100.0

When parents or guardians are fighting, they have little or no time for their pupils. They do not give the pupils any input as far as academics are concerned. According to Eckenrode, Laird and Doris (1993), pupils' non-compliance, poor motivation and cognitive immaturity interfere with academic achievement – an outcome that further undermines their chance for live success. The non-compliance, poor motivation and cognitive immaturity come in when the parents or guardians do not guide these pupils. They cannot offer their guidance or input when they are fighting. Most of the teachers also agreed that there is low class concentration for a pupil who has experienced conflicts. These pupils may be physically in class but their minds may be elsewhere. They think about the happenings at home and some even blame themselves. Others even try to find solutions for those problems.

Table 10 shows that when frequency of beating by parents/guardian is moderate, about 16 pupils are not assisted by their parents/guardians in doing homework. When this frequency is rare, about 76 pupils get assistance from parents/guardians. The results of this cross table emphasize that conflicts in homes affect pupils' academic performance. Pupils who are rarely beaten by their parents enjoy the highest assistance from them when they are doing school work. This means that they may perform well academically because a parent's involvement in their academic work makes them confident. Cummings and Dories (1994) state that the frequency, intensity, content and resolution of conflict in particular may affect the stressfulness of marital conflict for children and this may be related to the existence of child problems. Thus if a parent or guardian frequently beats a pupil, that pupil will have problems in many areas.

Table 10

Frequency of Beating of Pupils by Academic Assistance by Parents

		Assistance by Parents/Guardians in Doing Homework				Total
		Always	Frequently	Rarely	Never	
Frequency of Beating by Parents/Guardians	Rarely	76	46	84	26	232
	Moderately	54	23	28	16	121
	Frequently	12	9	7	3	31
Total		142	78	119	45	384

A majority of pupils (117) had an above average academic performance when the frequency of beating by parents/guardians was rare as shown in cross Table 11. The results of this table emphasize on harmony in the family for a good performance. The good performance will come from high concentration in class and parent/guardian input, something that cannot happen when the parents or guardians are beating the pupils. When they assist their pupils, these pupils are confident enough to excel.

Table 11

Frequency of Beating of Pupils by their Academic Performance

		Academic Performance of Pupil			Total
		Above Average	Average	Below Average	
Frequency of Beating by Parents/Guardians	Rarely	117	108	7	232
	Moderately	47	67	7	121
	Frequently	9	15	7	31
Total		173	190	21	384

When pupils were not abused or molested by parents or guardians, a majority enjoyed the interest of their parents/guardians in their academic performance. These results agree with Shantz and Hartup (1992) who established that most children from homes where parental abuse is prevalent suffer irreversible damage in some or all aspects of their development, which can be difficult to reverse. Academic performance is one such aspect. A parent or guardian who abuses or molests a pupil has no time to assist that pupil academically. When this interest lacks, the pupil is most likely not to perform well academically. The fights between parents or guardians mean that they have no time to look at their pupils' academic performance. Thus even when a pupil performs well in school but comes from a violent home, the parents or guardians do not acknowledge the good performance. Without encouragement from home, this pupil will lack the drive to maintain the good performance. However, when there is a positive reaction on a pupil's academic performance, the pupil will be encouraged to maintain or improve his/her performance.

4.3 Results of Research Objective 2: Nature of the Relationship between Pupils who Experience Family Conflicts and their Peers.

This research objective was aimed at establishing how pupils who come from homes where there is conflict relate with their age mates and peers in school. Table 12 shows that majority of pupils who filled the questionnaires (92.2%) have good relationship with their peers in school as opposed to 7.8% who do not. The results of this table are supported by Gottman

and Parker (1987). They state that pupils' friendships are important in that they serve six functions: companionship, stimulation, physical support, ego support, social comparison and intimacy/affection. The family is the basic social unit for pupils. When a pupil is able to associate freely and in harmony with members of the immediate family, then they are able to create and maintain good relationships with peers at school. Without a good relationship at home, a pupil cannot sustain a good relationship with peers in school.

Table 12

Pupils' Good Relationship with Peers and Openness about Family Conflicts

Pupils	Good Relationship with Peers	Openness on Family Conflicts
Yes	354	65
Percentage	92.2 %	16.9%
No	30	319
Percentage	7.8 %	83.1%
Total	384	384

Table 12 further shows that a majority of pupils, 83.1% do not share with their peers when their parents or guardians are quarrelling. Only 16.9% do so. This may be analysed to mean that they are ashamed of what is happening at home and they would not want their friends to find out or even judge them based on their families. Waithaka (2006) says that children after the age of six years have expanded their social circles to include friends and members of the extended family. Nevertheless, the parents still occupy a special place in their lives and are viewed as role models. This means that when the parents or guardians are fighting, the pupils' views change to negative ones. In most cases, these pupils are not comfortable sharing their views about their families.

This research also found out that a large number of pupils (37%) agree and (33.3%) strongly agree to the opinion that conflict between parents or guardians affects relations with peers. Table 13 shows this as well as the fact that only 11.7% strongly disagree with this opinion. The findings in table 13 are supported by Cicchetti and Toth (1998). They say that youngsters from violent homes show serious learning and adjustment problems, including difficulties with peers, academic failure, severe depression, substance abuse and delinquency. When pupils experience family conflicts, they feel ridiculed, humiliated and rejected. This

contributes to low self esteem, high anxiety and self blame. They cannot, therefore, relate well with their peers/friends.

Table 13

Pupils' Opinion that Conflicts between Parents/Guardians Affect Relations with Peers

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	128	33.3
Agree	142	37.0
Disagree	69	18.0
Strongly Disagree	45	11.7
Total	384	100.0

4.4 Results of Research Objective 3: Male or Female Pupils who are Affected by Conflicts in Families.

This objective was aimed at finding out whether it is the male pupils or the female ones who are more affected by the conflicts in the family. Results show that it is the female pupils who are more affected. These findings may therefore be interpreted to mean that the female pupils are weaker academically and they have worse relationships than their male counterparts.

Their self esteem may be lower than that of the male pupils.

The highest number of female pupils (130) was rarely affected by the beatings of parents/guardians while the lowest number of male pupils (12) was frequently affected by the beatings of parents/guardians. This has been reflected in table 14. This cross table supports the results that it is the female pupils who are more affected. More female pupils than male are frequently beaten by parents or guardians. This is likely to affect their performance in school and among peers.

Table 14

Frequency of Beating of Pupils by Gender

Frequency of Beating	Male	Female	Total
Rarely	102	130	232
Moderately	43	78	121
Frequently	12	19	31
Total	157	227	384

Spaccarelli, Coatsworth and Bowden (1995) state that boys and girls appear to differ in what they learn from violent experiences. Boys who have been exposed to family violence acted more aggressively than girls. Wolfe, Sternberg, Lamb, Guterman and Abbott (1986) concur with the findings of this research because they found out that girls were at more risk for internalizing and externalizing behaviour problems than boys.

4.5 Results of Research Objective 4: Nature of the Relationship between Pupils who Experience Family Conflicts and their Teachers

This objective was aimed at establishing how pupils who come from families where there is conflict relate with their teachers in school. A pupil who has experienced family conflicts feels unwanted, humiliated and rejected at home. According to Furstenberg (1993), families prone to violence are less likely to socialize with their neighbours. These feelings persist even in school. The pupil's low self esteem cannot allow him or her to approach a teacher and talk about problems at home. This pupil feels as if s/he would be rejected if the teacher knew what happens at home. The tendency therefore is to keep quiet about the conflicts.

After the nuclear family, school is the next place for a pupil to feel accepted and valued. If the home environment is friendly, the school environment will serve as a place to extend the friendship. Even though majority of teachers have a friendly relationship with their pupils, it does not mean that the pupils feel free enough to share the problems they experience in their homes with those teachers. The pupils may share other issues with the teachers leaving out their family problems so that they are not looked down upon by those teachers.

This study found out that 55% of teachers always talk with pupils who have problems and 30% frequently do the same. This is shown in Table 15 which also reveals that only 15% of teachers rarely talk with pupils who have problems. The role of a teacher in school is not only academic but also social. When a pupil has a problem, a good teacher will want to find out what the problem is. The teachers who rarely talk to pupils with problems may not have guidance and counselling background. This means they feel inadequate to counsel such a pupil.

Table 15

Teacher's Frequency of Sharing with Pupils who have Problems

	Frequency	Percent
Always	11	55.0
Frequently	6	30.0
Rarely	3	15.0
Total	20	100.0

All the teachers who filled the questionnaires assist pupils from conflict homes. Teachers are in a good position to give assistance to pupils. However, the teachers can only give assistance to pupils who open up completely. Pupils who are scared of losing their self esteem will probably hide the truth about their violent homes from the teachers. They may talk about totally different issues to their teachers in an attempt to cover up their family weaknesses. Teachers are in a good position to alert parents about their pupils' bad behaviour. They also play a correctional role whereby, together with parents, they assist the pupils change for the better.

4.6 Results of Research Objective 5: Attitude of Pupils who Experience Family Conflicts towards their Parents, Peers and School

This objective sought to find out how pupils who experience family conflicts feel about their parents or guardians, their peers and the school. It sought to find out whether the parents/guardians, peers and school have a positive or negative impact in the lives of these pupils. Table 16 shows that a majority of pupils (78.6%) have a positive attitude towards

their peers as opposed to 21.4% whose attitude is negative. These findings mean that majority of pupils are from families which do not experience conflict. According to Kiura (1999), a child's attitudes, standards and values will slowly be formed by what he learns from his or her parent thus parents should lead by example. When pupils feel loved and needed in the family, they extend the same love to their peers. Those from families which experience conflict do not have a good example and can therefore not extend the same to their peers.

Most of the pupils (85.7%) hold a positive attitude towards their school as opposed to 14.3% as shown in table 16. School is an extension of a pupil's social life. A pupil from a violent home will have negative attitude towards school as s/he views it as a prison. Such a pupil will always be at loggerheads with teachers for not being in school on time, not concentrating in class or even not finishing assignments. Due to being caught on the wrong often, such a pupil will hate going to school. Pupils whose families are stable will be confident, attentive and obedient at school. They will not be punished often thus will have a positive attitude towards school.

The majority of pupils in this study have a positive attitude towards their parents/guardians. This is also shown in Table 16. Positive attitude holds 82.3% while negative attitude has 17.7%. Kiura (1990) indicated that when children see that their parents love each other, they are assured that their parents love them. Since majority of pupils have a positive attitude towards their parents, they do not experience conflicts in their families. They view their parents in a positive way because the parents provide a secure and safe environment at home for them.

Table 16

Pupils' Attitude towards their Peers, School and Parents/Guardians

Pupils' Attitude	Positive	Percentage	Negative	Percentage	Total
Peers	302	78.6%	82	21.4%	384
School	316	82.3%	68	17.7%	384
Parents/Guardians	275	71.6%	109	28.4%	384

4.7 Results of Research Objective 6: Role of the School' Counsellor in Assisting Pupils who Experience Family Conflicts

This objective sought to find out whether there is a school counsellor in the school from whom pupils can seek assistance. This study revealed that majority of the pupils (71.6%) are aware of the availability of guidance and counselling services in their school where they can seek assistance. Table 17 shows this. This knowledge is vital to the pupils because it means that they do not have to suffer when in problems. They can always seek assistance when they are in school.

A majority of teachers (90%) in the same table 17 agreed that there is a school counsellor in their schools. This means that pupils can get assistance as soon as possible. Intervention by a counsellor to pupils will assist them perform better academically. The pupils' self esteem improves and they are able to have good relationships with their peers.

Table 17

Pupils and Teachers' Awareness on the Availability of a School Counsellor

	Pupils	Teachers
Yes	275	18
Percentage	71.6%	90%
No	109	2
Percentage	28.4%	10%
Total	384	20

According to Emery and Laumann-Billings (1998), parents who successfully resolve their conflicts provide positive models of problem solving for their children. This may lead to increased social competence and coping skills. Therefore, Guidance and Counselling is important for both the pupils and the parents. According to Ongoma and Silsil (2008), close cooperation between the teachers and parents is vital for the success of the pupils. They further say that school counsellors should cultivate enough trust in the parents to have them contribute positively to the school.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter gives a summary of the study, how it was conducted, the findings and the objectives that were attained. It gives a brief of the findings of the study, implications of these findings and the recommendations towards averting family conflicts. Finally, areas which require further investigation are indicated.

5.2 Summary

The study was an assessment of how family conflicts affect a pupil in terms of academics and the pupils' relationship with others. The objectives of this study were:-

- i) To determine the extent to which conflicts in a family affect pupils' academic performance.
- ii) To establish the nature of the relationship between pupils who experience family conflicts and their peers.
- iii) To establish whether it is the male or female pupils who are more affected by conflicts in families.
- iv) To establish the nature of the relationship between pupils who experience family conflicts and their teachers.
- v) To determine the attitude of the pupils who experience family conflicts towards their parents, peers and school.
- vi) To determine the role of the school's counsellor in assisting pupils who experience family conflicts.

This study was conducted in Nakuru Municipality, Rift Valley Province. Purposive sampling was used to select ten public primary schools within Nakuru Municipality. In each of these schools, class seven and eight pupils who constituted the sample were selected using stratified random sampling. The class teachers of class seven and eight in the schools selected were purposively selected into the sample. Statistical analysis was employed to draw conclusions according to stated research questions. Based on the

analysis and subsequent interpretation of results, the study came up with the following conclusions in relation to the stated objectives:-

- i.) When there are conflicts in a family, pupils' performance at school is negatively affected.
- ii.) Conflicts in a family affect a pupil's relationship with peers; thus they do not have a good relationship.
- iii.) More female pupils are exposed to violence, abuse or molestation than the male.
- iv.) Family conflicts create bad communication between a teacher and pupils which leads to poor academic performance.
- v.) Pupils who experience conflicts in families have a negative attitude towards their parents/guardians, teachers/school and their friends/peers.
- vi.) Most schools have a school counsellor whose role is to assist pupils deal with problems that they experience.

5.3 Conclusions

The following conclusions were made on the basis of the findings:-

- i) When there is conflict in the family, a large number of parents/guardians spend little time discussing academic issues with their pupils.
- ii) Most pupils do not confide to their peers when their parents are fighting.
- iii) More female pupils have average or poor academic performances since they are more exposed to conflicts/violence.
- iv) School attendance for pupils who are experiencing conflict is poor and this negatively affects the teacher – pupil relationship.
- v) Pupils from violent homes do not have all their school needs met by their parents, have poor relations with peers and are rarely in school.
- vi) School counsellors play a major role in pupils' academic performance and relation with peers.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the above conclusions, the researcher made the following recommendations:-

- i) Parents or guardians who are experiencing conflicts in their families should consider counselling options as soon as possible to avoid negative effects on their pupils.

- ii) The schools and the Ministry of Education should consider training peer counsellors among the pupils so that they can assist their fellow pupils.
- iii) Subject teachers should refer any pupil to the guidance and counselling officers when they detect a problem in them.
- iv) Teachers in schools should frequently organise parents days whereby parents or guardians go to school and together with the pupils get a full report on the pupil's overall performance.
- v) Parents and teachers should unite with a common goal of fully assisting pupils to excel academically and socially.
- vi) All schools should have a school counsellor from whom pupils can seek assistance.
- vii) The Ministry of Education should introduce in-service training in guidance and counselling for all teachers who do not have basic training in guidance and counselling skills. This will equip the teacher with skills to handle pupils who require assistance.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

Based on the observations during the study, the researcher recommends further research in the following areas:-

- i) The role of the School Counsellors in Primary and Secondary Schools.
- ii) The role of Parents or Guardians in their Pupils' overall growth.
- iii) The role of Peer Counsellors in Primary and Secondary Schools.

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APPENDIX A: PUPIL'S QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear respondent,

My name is Irene W Maina, a postgraduate student in the department of Psychology, Counselling and Educational Foundations at Egerton University. I am carrying out a research whose objective is to find out if family conflicts affect a child's performance and relationship with others. Kindly be part of this effort by filling in this questionnaire. Please note that your cooperation in answering the questions will be highly appreciated. All the information received will be used for the sole purpose of this particular research project and will be kept confidential.

Thank You.

Instructions: Tick the appropriate responses in the spaces provided.

Section A: Introduction

1. Class: Seven [] Eight []
2. Gender: Male [] Female []
3. How many of your parents live with you?
One [] Both [] None []
4. My parents/guardians are at home
Always [] Frequently [] Rarely []
5. How do you rate your relationship with your mother/female guardian?
Very Friendly [] Friendly [] Not Friendly []
Not applicable []
6. How do you rate your relationship with your father/male guardian?
Very Friendly [] Friendly [] Not Friendly []
Not applicable []
7. How do you rate your communication with your parent/guardian?
Very good [] Good [] Adequate [] Inadequate []
8. How do you rate your communication with your parent/guardian after they have quarrelled?
Very good [] Good [] Adequate [] Inadequate []

9. My parents/guardians beat me.

Rarely [] Moderately [] Frequently []

10. When my parents/guardians punish me, they are justified (I am on the wrong)

Always [] Frequently [] Rarely [] Never []

11. My parents/ guardians disagree

Always [] Frequently [] Rarely [] Never []

12. My parents / guardians abuse/molest me

Yes [] No []

13. My parents/guardians fight between themselves

Yes [] No []

Section B: Academics versus Family Conflicts

14. My parents/guardians assist me in doing my homework/schoolwork.

Always [] Frequently [] Rarely [] Never []

15. My parents/guardians are interested in my academic performance.

Always [] Frequently [] Rarely [] Never []

16. When my parents/guardians see my grade, they are

Praising [] Indifferent [] Critical []

17. I am an _____ pupil.

Above Average [] Average [] Below Average []

18. If my parents/guardians are quarrelling/fighting, my level of concentration in class is

High [] Average [] Low []

19. In my opinion if parents/guardians are quarrelling/fighting, children cannot perform well in school.

Strongly Agree [] Agree [] Disagree []

Strongly Disagree []

20. My attitude towards my parents/guardians is

Positive [] Negative []

21. I look forward to going home after school.

Yes [] No []

22. I look forward to being in school all the time

Yes [] No []

Section C: Relationship with Peers

23. I have a good relationship with my friends in school.

Yes [] No []

24. I can tell my close friends anything I feel.

Yes [] No []

25. When my parents/guardians are quarrelling, I can talk to my friends about it.

Yes [] No []

26. In my opinion, if there is conflict between parents/guardians, children find it hard to relate well with their friends.

Strongly Agree [] Agree [] Disagree []

Strongly Disagree []

27. My attitude towards my friends is

Positive [] Negative []

Section D: Relationship with Teachers

28. If my parents/guardians are quarrelling/fighting, I can talk to my teacher about it.

Yes [] No []

29. My attitude towards my school is

Positive [] Negative []

Section E: Role of The School Counsellor

30. There is a counsellor in my school from whom I can seek assistance.

Yes [] No []

APPENDIX B: TEACHER'S QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear respondent,

My name is Irene W Maina, a postgraduate student in the department of Psychology, Counselling and Educational Foundations at Egerton University. I am carrying out a research whose objective is to find out if family conflicts affect a child's performance and relationship with others. Kindly be part of this effort by filling in this questionnaire. Please note that your cooperation in answering the questions will be highly appreciated. All the information received will be used for the sole purpose of this particular research project and will be kept confidential.

Thank You.

Instructions: Tick the appropriate responses in the spaces provided.

1. How do you rate your relationship with your pupils?

Very Friendly [] Friendly [] Not Friendly []

2. How do you rate the communication between you and your pupils?

Very good [] Good [] Adequate [] Inadequate []

3. I am able to detect if there is a problem with my pupils.

Yes [] No []

4. If one of my pupils has a problem, I make time to talk to him/her.

Always [] Frequently [] Rarely []

5. In my opinion, pupils are affected academically when their parents quarrel.

Yes [] No []

6. In my opinion, pupils who come from families with conflicts do not socialize with their friends.

Yes [] No [] Sometimes []

7. There is low class concentration for a pupil when she or he has experienced conflict between his/her parents.

Yes [] No []

8. Pupils whose families experience conflict are in school

Always [] Frequently [] Rarely []

9. Pupils whose families experience conflict look forward to going home after school.
Yes [] No []
10. Parents who experience conflict are concerned with their children's academic performance.
Always [] Frequently [] Rarely []
11. Parents who experience conflict talk to teachers about its effects on their children.
Yes [] No []
12. In my opinion, family conflicts affect a child's overall growth.
Strongly Agree [] Agree [] Disagree []
Strongly Disagree []
13. Children who come from families where there is conflict have all their school needs met by their parents.
Always [] Frequently [] Rarely []
14. Children who come from families where there is conflict have a positive attitude towards school.
Yes [] No []
15. It is the _____ pupils who are more affected by the conflicts in the families.
Male [] Female []
16. I have been able to assist some of my pupils who come from families where there is conflict.
Yes [] No []
17. There is a counsellor in the school who assists pupils with problems.
Yes [] No []

ALL COMMUNICATIONS TO BE ADDRESSED TO THE MUNICIPAL TOWN CLERK

THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF NAKURU

Telephone (051) 2216380
Fax: (051) 2210037



MUNICIPAL OFFICES,
P.O.Box 124,
NAKURU
KENYA

YOUR REF:

OUR REF: S/10/A/1/2008/JJ/PWW

24th June, 2008

Irene W. Maina,
P.O. Box 10117-20100,
NAKURU

Dear Madam,

RE: RESEARCH PROJECT

Reference is made to your letter dated 12th June 2008 regarding the above subject matter.

Authority is hereby granted to enable you carry out research on the Impact of family conflicts on the academic performance and interpersonal relationships of pupils in public primary schools within Nakuru municipality.

By copy of this letter, the Municipal Education Officer is requested to assist the attaché.

Yours faithfully

G. PKEMEI (MRS)
FOR: TOWN CLERK

c.c Municipal Education Officer

When replying please quote our reference number: