

## INFLUENCE OF DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS ON INTER-PARENTAL CONFLICT IN RUIRU SUB-COUNTY KIAMBU COUNTY KENYA

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**ABSTRACT:** *This paper analyses demographic factors that influence inter-parental conflict in Ruiru Sub-county, Kenya. The demographic factors include parental level of education, parental occupation, and age at marriage. The paper is drawn from a study that was undertaken in Ruiru Sub-county, Kiambu County in Kenya seeking to examine the effect of inter-parental conflict on academic achievement motivation among form three students. This paper thus makes reference to both the children's and parents' perceptions of how these factors influence inter-parental conflict. Guided by Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of needs theory and Martin Selgman's Learned Helplessness Theory, the study adopts a mixed method research design targeting form three students in the 31 public and private secondary schools in Ruiru Sub-county and their parents. A total of 281 randomly sampled students and 10 participated in the study through a Children Perception of Inter-parental Conflict Questionnaire (CPIC) and Focus Group Discussion Protocol for the selected parents. Data analysis was done both descriptively and using inferential statistics. These demographics factors were found to influence inter-parental conflict at different levels and therefore a recommendation was made that parents make effort to manage and resolve conflict before it escalates into hostilities and violence.*

**KEYWORDS:** Demographic Factors, Inter-Parental Conflict, Academic, Students, Parents, County

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### INTRODUCTION

Healthy family environments are very crucial for the development of children since in such environments, provision of physical safety, emotional security, well-being as well as acquisition of behaviours that allow them to become independent are guaranteed. These environments also provide them with critical social experiences that promote engagement in effective self-regulation among the children. Children who are drawn to conflict by blaming themselves develop low self-esteem and depression and develop a sense of helplessness (Cummings & Davies, 2002; Maina, 2010; Muola, 2010; Riffat, 2011). In this paper, the authors discuss how inter-parental conflicts are on the rise as a result of family demographic factors with respect to how they are jeopardizing the well-being of children.

The main objective of the study was to establish whether demographic factors in particular parental level of education, parental occupation, and age at marriage of the parents influence inter-parental conflict. Focus is therefore on how children and their parents perceive these demographic factors to influence inter-parental conflict. Inter-parental conflict in this study refers to the disagreements between parents. The disagreement can be as a result of differences in opinions, values, judgements and views. Also, demographic factors have been explained as socioeconomic characteristics of a population expressed statistically such as parental level of education, parental occupation and age at marriage.

Several demographics influence inter-parental conflict in various ways. For example, young aged couples below 20 year poses a great risk of marital conflicts and divorce. Majority of such marriages hardly exist for five years. Ages 21-30 years age-range seem to have few marital problems than those below the age of 20 years (Lehrer & Yeon, 2017; Mbwire, 2016) This can be explained by the fact that the longer couples stay in a marriage, the less chances of getting divorce and such couples have established ways of dealing with marital disputes (Burchinal, 1965 as cited in Tawiah, 2014; Lehrer & Yeon, 2017; Lee, 1977; Masua, 2016; Mbwire, 2016).

The conflict between spouses is a normal and necessary part of family life. One major factor that plays a large role in a child's development is the witnessing of inter-parental conflict (Cummings & Davies, 2010). Exposure to this conflict has been shown to negatively influence children directly. Witnessing parents' anger is physiologically and affectively stressful for the children. Inter-parental conflict is said to be more disruptive to children than divorce or the loss of a father (Grych & Fincham, 1990).

In light of the above, this study sought to establish whether parental level of education, parental occupation and age at marriage influence inter-parental conflict in Ruiru sub-county.

## LITERATURE UNDERPINNING

Literature on the influence of demographic factors on inter-parental conflict in Ruiru Sub-county is scarce. Hardly has any research been undertaken to study the phenomenon yet the increasing rate of inter-parental conflicts in the region is alarming. This has consequently affected families, schools, churches, the government, and the society as whole (Maina, 2010; Muola, 2010). Inter-parental conflicts lead to children maladjustments which in turn result into negative effects on social, cognitive, educational and social-biological functioning (Cummings & Davies, 2002). The students' lives are enclosed or imprisoned if they continue being exposed to violent environments and their self-esteem will generally be affected. This explains lack of motivation among students which is a major complain from teachers in schools (Muola, 2010; Riffat, 2011) especially in Ruiru sub-county.

While various studies have focused on achievement motivation in general, this paper engages authors in assessing the aspect of academic achievement motivation as a result of inter-parental conflicts arising from parents' demographic factors. There has also been very little research done to indicate which gender is most affected by inter-parental conflict and whether parental education, occupation and age at marriage have effects on inter-parental conflict (Betram, 2005; Cummings & Davies, 2002; Maria Vairami, 2007; Morbech, 2017; Morrison, 1993; Muola, 2010).

The demographic factor on parental level of education might positively affect marital relationships through parental psychological well-being (Dush *et al.*, 2008; Lewis *et al.*, 1999). Large amounts of evidence for the beneficial nature of education in marriage exist, as studies have demonstrated a negative relationship between parental educational levels and marital conflict. Other studies have shown a positive association between educational attainment and greater marital satisfaction. In addition, a study conducted by Hosokawa suggests that parental education is the strongest and most important predictor of parenting behaviour (Bornstein, 2003 as cited in Hosokawa, 2017). Regarding the relationship between educational level and parent/child interactions, higher education is likely to promote the ability to process

information and enable parents to acquire more knowledge and skills about childbearing and child development, allowing parents with higher education to use more effective strategies for childrearing.

Many studies have found that higher maternal education levels were associated with more supportive parenting, which is also associated with positive cognitive, behavioural, emotional, and physical child outcomes (Conger *et al.*, 2010; Mills *et al.*, 2016; Repetti, 2002). While few studies have investigated the influence of paternal education levels on fathers' involvement in childrearing, some studies have found paternal education levels to be somewhat associated with parent/child interactions (Blair, 1994; King, 2004; Lerman, 2000 as cited in Hosokawa, 2017). For example, a study by Musau revealed that fathers with higher educational attainment tend to be more involved, show more positive engagement, and be more accessible to their children than fathers with a lower education level (Musau, 2014).

Most of the studies that have been done in the United States have suggested that the risk of divorce and marital instability is significantly higher among those who have lower levels of education (Teachman & Polonko, 1990; Greenstein, 1995; South, 1995 as cited by Musau, 2016). Furthermore, studies done in China found education to be positively related to marital stability with high education being related to lower likelihood of divorce or separation. In addition, studies done in Canada and Australia, found little difference in the risk of marital instability and educational attainment (Bracher *et al.*, 1993; Balakrishnan *et al.*, 1987 as cited by Musau, 2016). The study findings in Australia indicated that, men with higher levels of education are less likely to separate compared to those with low levels of education; however, highly educated women had an increased risk of separation (Jalovaara, 2003; South, 2001). Contrary to these findings, Bumpass *et al.* (1991) found that in United States, the rates of divorce were lower among highly educated women even after controlling the age at marriage.

Bradbury *et al.* (2005) found that, in most of the European countries couples where the wives had less than secondary education were more likely to separate. The rates of divorce were seemingly lower if the husband is in a higher educational category than his wife; than they are among couple of the same educational status (Bumpass *et al.*, 1991; Heaton, 2002) and are highest if the wife is in a higher educational category than her husband. In regards to subjective accounts, individuals with higher levels of education are more likely to cite incompatibility as the cause of divorce (Amato & Priviti, 2003).

In Musau (2016), a study in Machakos aimed at establishing demographic and spatial temporal dimension of marital instability among women in the rural areas and its effects on the livelihood. The study adapted a case study design. It constituted 300 women aged between 15-49 years who were separated, divorced, and deserted by husbands. Results revealed that there was so much variation in education attainment of the respondents and their husbands which was linked to marital instability. The rate of high marital instability was on those with low level of education.

With reference to the theories guiding this study, authors revisit Abraham Maslow's Hierachy of needs theory; Martin Selgman's Learned Helplessness Theory, Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and Grych and Fincham's Cognitive Contextual Framework theory.

In Abraham Maslow's theory of hierarchy of needs, Maslow (1970) focuses on a person's self-actualization need which is characterized by tolerance, welcoming uncertainty, acceptance of

self and others, creativity, need for privacy, autonomy, genuine caring for others, sense of humour and directedness. Satisfaction of one need in the hierarchy prompts another need and this follows the order of basic needs, then psychological needs, safety needs and self-actualization needs. It is however difficult for one to progressively achieve these needs in a conflict-brooded homestead. Safety needs here are key to the couples in creating a sense of belonging and love within the family. Students/ children who witness their parents fight also feel insecure in their homes. They always fear that the parents might separate one day or hurt themselves or them (Cummings and Davies 2010).

Martin Selgman's Learned Helplessness Theory on the other hand as advanced by Seligman's (1975) explains that depression occurs when a person learns that their attempts to escape negative situations make no difference. Learned helplessness is passive behavior which is characterized by instability to learn. A state of learned helplessness may affect the achievement motivation and academic success of students, because it involves psychological factors that play an important role in learning like self-efficacy. Students become passive and will endure aversive stimuli or environments even when escape is possible (Seligman, 1975). A parental conflict prone family where fighting is the order of the day, has individuals living in fear and develop a sense of helplessness. This is described by symptoms of depression where they get emotionally disturbed, sad with lassitude and a hopeless outlook on life.

## METHODOLOGY

The study was undertaken in Ruiru Sub-county. Ruiru Sub-county was chosen because it has a higher catchment of public and private secondary schools; the county is cosmopolitan with people of diverse cultures and social inclinations therefore, the respondents for this study represented this diversity, and it was accessible and familiar to the authors, making it possible to trace the respondents. The target population was all the Form three students in the 31 public and private secondary schools in Ruiru Sub-county and parents. The language adopted for the interview was English. This study adopted a mixed method focus on collecting, analysing and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Thematic analysis was the analytic technique used to analyse data in the qualitative study. *Martin Selgman's Learned Helplessness Theory and Abraham Maslow hierarchy of needs theory* were the theories guiding this study. The study used questionnaire and focus group discussion. Data analysis was through deductive approach since the aspects of the data were determined prior to data analysis. Three sampling procedures were employed in this study hence purposive sampling, proportionate sampling and simple random sampling. Purposive sampling was used to select Ruiru Sub-county, form three students, and FGD parent participants all of who entailed a mixed gender group. Proportionate stratified sampling was used to select schools from the stratum of public and private schools, categories. Random sampling was chosen because it provides every sample of a given size an equal and independent chance of being selected as a member of the sample; it also yields research data that can be generalized of an error that can be determined statistically (Orodho, 2004).

The sample size of the schools and students constituted 20% and 20% respectively as presented in table 1.

**Table 1: Sample Size**

Accessible population Sample				Sample Size		
School Type	Students	Boys	Girls	School	Boys	Girls
Public	13	515	433	3	103	87
Private	18	231	226	4	46	45
Total	31	746	659	7	149	132
Grand total	31	1405 (100%)			20%(7)	20%(281)

Source: Sub-County Director of Education Ruiru Office

### Findings of the Study

The demographic factors discussed in this paper include parental level of education, parental occupation, and age at marriage. The authors thus sought to establish how these influenced inter-parental conflict in Ruiru sub-county, Kiambu County as discussed below.

### Parental Level of Education and Inter-parental Conflict

Table 2 indicates that there was a significant correlation between father's level of education and conflict properties ( $r_{(281)} = 0.119$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), self-blame ( $r_{(281)} = 0.123$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), Stability ( $r_{(281)} = 0.162$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and Threat ( $r_{(281)} = 0.182$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). It was also noted that there was no significant correlation between all items of CPIC and mothers level of education. When the hypothesis was advanced further, taking into consideration the specific domains of Children Perception of Inter-parental conflict (CPIC): conflict properties, self-blame, stability, and threat, which indicated a significant correlation of the fathers' level of education. The results indicated that there was a significant relationship between the fathers' level of education and inter-parental conflict in some domains. The null hypothesis that stated: There is no significant relationship between parental level of education and inter-parental conflict was therefore rejected since the fathers' level of education was correlated to the CPIC of conflict properties, self-blame, stability, and threat.

**Table 2: Parental Level of Education and Inter-parental Conflict**

CATEGORY	FAED	MOED	CP	SB	S	TH	TR
FAED	1						
MOED	.594**	1					
CP	.119*	0.016	1				
SB	.123*	-0.042	.318**	1			
S	.162**	0.067	.322**	.307**	1		
TH	.182**	0.1	.505**	.213**	.263**	1	
TR	0.074	-0.007	.452**	.260**	.223**	.539**	1

\*\*significant at  $p < 0.01$ .  
\*significant at  $p < 0.05$ .

**Key:** FAED-Father's Level of Education, MOED-Mother's Level of Education, CP-Conflict Properties, SB-Self Blame, S-Stability, TH-Threat, TR-Triangulation.



The FGD findings on the parental level of education indicated that parental level of education may influence conflict between couples. Respondents indicated the conflict is more intense when the woman is more educated than the man and earns a better salary than him. There is little or no conflict in a home when the wife is less educated or even when she is not educated. The reasons given for the conflict is that there are communication problems between the couple:

Parental level of education brings conflict which may even lead to divorce especially if the wife is the one who is highly educated; if the other way, there is no problem. This is because the male ego always feels intimidated if the woman is more educated. In a family where the male is more educated has no problem even if the woman is not educated. When both of them are educated there is no much problem compared to a family where the wife is more educated and earns a higher salary. (Parent male 3)

Another participant added that:

Parental level of education matters. You see we won't communicate in the same 'wavelength' (at the same level). We will keep conflicting over trivial matters. That is even more with women than men who are more educated especially when they keep bragging about their education. A man who is a professor can marry a class eight leaver and they can cope very well. You see, we live in a patriarchal society where males want to dominate in the society and should be higher all the time! (Parent female 2)

The above respondent also narrated a story of a pastor who had married an undergraduate. The wedding took place while she was still schooling. After completing her school and on getting a job the pastor could not tolerate her he kept accusing her of not respecting him. The marriage ended up breaking and they both got remarried. The girl to a graduate like herself and the pastor married a class eight leaver.

According to the findings of the study the fathers' level of education had detrimental effects on the children's cognitive emotions regulation in the above mentioned domains in the event of a conflict between their parents. The findings are in line with Grych and Fincham's Cognitive-contextual frame work theory (2007), which proposes that the students' perceptions and interpretations of inter-parental conflicts play a central role in their behaviour. This means that the less educated the fathers are, the more difficult it is for students to be able to adjust when faced with conflict from their homes. Such students blame themselves for what is happening at home as some reported, "It's usually my fault when my parents argue", they also feel threatened. "I get scared when my parents argue. . ." Fathers that have a higher intelligence may be good at dealing with conflicts within the marriage and maintaining marital relationships. Such fathers are expected to be economically independent, they may be more likely to have social skills, communication skills which play an important role in marriage relationship and which can reduce inter-parental conflict.

The above results of the study are similar to the study done by Musau (2016), whose results revealed that there was so much variation in education attainment of the respondents and their husbands which was linked to marital instability. The study also revealed that there was high marital instability in homes with husbands who had low level of education. This is consistent with the FGD results which indicated that the parental level of education matters so much in

marriage. The conflicts were considered to be higher when the wife is more educated than the husband than when the husband is more educated. The interpretation of these results are that inter-parental conflict is high in homes where the fathers have low education attainment and vice versa while the mothers' lack of educational attainment does not much influence conflict between them.

These findings agree with the FGD as explained in the words of a parent who reported that:

Girls are very emotional they have a tendency of 'carrying' (bearing burdens) for other people. They also tend to sort the problems and seek to know who between the father and the mother the cause of the problem is. On the other hand, boys don't exhibit their emotions. They suffer inwardly and cannot express their feelings. When they can't handle the stress anymore they can commit suicide or kill their fathers. (Parent male 2)

### Parental Occupation and Inter-parental Conflict

To find out the relationship between parental occupation and Inter-parental Conflict in relation to the academic achievement motivation of children, Pearson Moment correlation was run for all items. The quantitative data findings indicated that there was no significant correlation between the parental occupations and inter-parental conflicts. It was also discovered that there was no significant relationship between all items of CPIC and parental occupations. Therefore, the null hypothesis that stated: there is no significant relationship between parental occupation and inter-parental conflict was not rejected. This is shown in table 3.

**Table 3: Parental Occupation Effects on CPIC**

	CP	SB	S	TH	TR	MOC	FOC
CP	1						
SB	0.318**	1					
S	0.322**		1				
TH	0.505**	0.213**	0.263**	1			
TR	0.452**	0.260**	0.223**	0.539**	1		
MOC	-0.001	0.012	0.063	0.033	-	1	
FOC	-0.039	-0.076	0.033	-0.021	-	0.226**	1

### Key:

CP- Conflict Properties, SB – Self Blame, S-Stability, TH-Threat, TR-Triangulation

MOC Mother's Occupation

FOC Father's Occupation

The findings of the FGD indicated that due to the demands of some professions, inter-parental conflicts could arise especially because of the unavailability of one spouse. It also seems that apart from the conflicts such marriages end up in divorce. The examples given of such occupations were some businesses like in brewing industry, hospital work like nurses,

computer programmers, pastors, air hostesses and those working in the defence forces. These FGD findings seem to disagree with the quantitative data findings which revealed no significant effect on inter-parental conflict as indicated in the response below:

There are some occupations in which parents do not give time to the families. One is very busy and we have seen parents conflict and ending up divorcing for example businessmen like brewers are never available for their children. They are always out working. Some professionals' jobs are also very demanding like mine...Nurse (Parent male couple 3).

The same findings were echoed by another parent who supported the idea and said that:

Not only are there conflicts but marriages literally break. Some professions are addictive like computer programming; one can have the computer the whole day and remain comfortable alone. Why can't they be like gynaecologists who don't carry work home? (Parent couple, female 4).

Another participant agreed with this and attempted to summarize this by outlining some professions that are demanding and which if care is not taken can lead to inter-parental conflict and at times divorce in a family.

The participant who was the oldest in the group summarized the discussion by saying that, "all careers are demanding and that one needs to create time for the family" (Parent male couple 5).

These findings have mixed results. This could be as a result of the differences in sample characteristics (samples) that were used for the study. The qualitative data seem to agree that the occupations affect the bonding at home which in return brings coldness which makes the marriage unstable, but the quantitative data does not agree as it indicates that a parent's occupation does not make the parents/couples conflict.

The findings of the students' participants indicated that there was no significant relationship between the kinds of occupation that the parent has with inter-parental conflict. In other words, the fact that one is a doctor does not mean that they will always conflict at home.

### Age at Marriage and Inter-parental Conflict

**Table 4: The relationship between the parental age and inter-parental conflicts**

	MA	FA	CP	SB	S	TH	TR
MA	1						
FA	.683**	1					
CP	.009	-.026	1				
SB	-.013	-.001	.349**	1			
S	-.002	.010	.363**	.312**	1		
TH	.091	-.006	.519**	.216**	.296**	.1	
TR	.073	.015	.517**	.285**	.233**	.573**	1

**Key:** CP- Conflict Properties, SB – Self Blame, S-Stability, TH-Threat, TR-Triangulation

MA Mother's Age

FA Father's Age



The question on age at marriage was given much attention by the FGD participants. They had so much to talk about as revealed in the following responses:

True, age can influence. Yes... if the gap is too big you might have conflict because one keeps annoying the other person. There is a difference in the way they handle things for example when they are too young like for instance 19 years. These couples are very young. They are not able to make sober decisions. They also get tired of marriage early. They are also too young to get into marriage for their anatomical purposes. Below 20 years is very low. (Parent male 3)

This is further showed by the following discussions among participants:

When a girl gets married at an early age for instance at 13 years, they end up suffering from identity issues and may be tempted to get another husband whom they can cope up with. This is because they realize that they may not be able to cope up with responsibilities that come with marriage. (Parent female 2)

To me I think the ideal age of marriage is when one is out of college that should be between 24-30 years. At this time, they have matured socially physically and cognitively and can make logical decisions. Story is told of a 13-year old girl who had gotten married but went back home because according to her, the husband's demands were very high. (Parent male 4)

Women should also not get married at 50 because it is at this stage that they are experiencing mid-life crisis. Men have their issues as well as women . . . I got married at 17 and my husband was 15 years older than me. He was too mature for me but there I was with my childish tendencies. I almost quit because the conflicts were the order of the day. Were it not for my husband who understood me and handled me delicately I would have left him. It was even worse when we got our first born . . . My daughter should not make a similar mistake. (Parent female 5)

Three issues might be pointed out from the findings: first, the participants were in agreement that early marriages (below 20), may lead to conflict and divorce. Second, the age gap can increase the intensity of conflicts and third, marriages at 23-30 work better than others.

The findings of the students' participants are in agreement with Alder (2010), whose results indicated that there was not a statistically significant relationship between marital satisfaction and age at marriage. Her samples were women from different races.

The FGD findings agree with Booth and Edwards (1985), who found out that marital timing can affect the quality of marriage and that early marriages increase marital instability. In addition, Mbwirire's (2016) results also revealed that young age below the age of 20 years posed a great risk of marital conflicts and divorce. They indicated that the majority of such marriages hardly exist for five years because those who enter marriages at such a tender age face a lot of challenges which they are not able to handle cognitively. They also indicated that a 21-30 year's age range seem to have few marital problems than below the age of 20. Still, they indicated that the longer couples stay in a marriage, the less chances of getting divorced since such couples have established ways of dealing with marital disputes. The findings are

also in agreement with Lehrer and Yeon (2017) whose findings indicate that marital instability decreases with age of marriage.

The findings of the students' participants can be attributed to sample characteristics. Moreover, the FGD findings can be explained by the fact that when people enter marriage at an early age, they have inadequate role performance. There is also the availability of attractive alternatives and external pressure bearing on the marital relationship. However, people who delay in marriage are more mature and less likely to make mistakes regarding their own traits and those of their partners. They are expected to make better and informed decisions in the marriage market and have more stable unions. There is a likelihood that they have entered marriage when they have completed a higher level of education a factor that contributes to stability in marriage and less conflicts. Therefore, as the age of marriage increases, marital instability decreases (Lehrer & Chen, 2013).

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The students' results revealed that parental level of education has significant effects on inter-parental conflict in inter-parental conflict domains of self-blame, stability and threat. Besides, the FGD results showed that the parental level of education has effects on inter-parental conflict. In homes where the parents are educated, there are fewer conflicts as opposed to those homes where they are not educated. This was attributed to the benefits that come with education as revealed in the literature. The results therefore confirmed the quantitative data results.

The findings from students' perspective showed that the fathers' level of education, and not the mothers', correlates with inter-parental conflict in self-blame, stability and threat. These results are in agreement with literature on parental level of education which tends to imply a positive relationship between fathers' education level and their children's achievement motivation (Gupta, 2014). Additionally, the FGD findings revealed that the parents' level of education has effects on marital stability. The findings as depicted by parents therefore showed that both maternal and paternal education influences them in their thinking, communication and processing and other parent-parent and parent-child related issues and relationships.

On whether there was any relationship between a parent's occupation and inter-parental conflict. The students pointed out that there was no significant relationship between the kind of the occupation that their parent has with inter-parental conflict. This was however inconsistent with Xu (2017), whose study found that parental occupation might make parents have better social status and more resources which enhance marital happiness. The FGD findings revealed that parents' occupation can influence inter-parental conflict especially when the parents are working in very demanding jobs which denies them time with their families or when they were working far. Some of the occupations cited were: medical like nurses, computer programming, air-travel related jobs and defence forces.

The authors also sought to find out whether there is any relationship between the age at marriage and inter-parental conflict. From the perspective of the students, findings showed that the parents' age has no effect on inter-parental conflict. However, the parents' findings on the age of marriage were found to have a significant relationship with inter-parental conflict. These findings agree with Lehrer and Yeon (2017) and Mbwirire (2016), which indicated that individuals marrying at a younger age may be less compatible with each other, and less prepared for marriage. The findings do not agree with Adler (2010), who indicated that there

was no significant relationship between marital satisfaction and age at marriage. The difference in results may be as a result of social cultural factors such as ethnicity. Therefore, the findings had mixed results.

## **IMPLICATIONS TO REASERCH AND PRACTICE**

Despite the availability of studies focused on parental conflict, there has been little to relate how some parents' demographic factors are related to these conflicts. This study investigated the influence of inter-parental conflicts as a result of level of parents' education, their occupation and age at marriage. The study is therefore beneficial to researchers as a point of reference. Practically, based on the findings of this study, parents should further their education as educational attainment is attributed to less inter-parental conflicts. Results also indicated the need for parents to balance work and family roles so that they can have close relationships with their children which may to moderate the impact of inter-parental conflict. Finally, there is need for policy makers to make information on conflict management widely available to parents and provide funding for research into both the short and long-term effects of inter-parental conflict interventions in supporting families to flourish.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

First, parental level of education was found to have a significant relationship with inter-parental conflict but in favour of fathers in quantitative data. The results are further reinforced by qualitative data findings which show that parental level of education influence inter-parental conflict. The quantitative findings also support the work of Eze (2002) who revealed that some men, due to their experience and higher qualification, believe that they will be more compatible with women. They believe they will be able to communicate effectively with them and would be easily understood by them. However, fathers especially, should be provided with seminars in which they can be taught on how to moderate the conflicts at home to reduce the conflict that affect their children. Similar interventions should also be made in regard to the qualitative data findings. Both genders should be educated especially the fathers.

Second, parental occupation was found not to have a significant relationship with academic achievement motivation in quantitative data but was there in qualitative data. Parents and teachers should aim at creating conducive home and school learning environments which will enhance the students' academic achievement motivation and fight inter-parental conflict. They should also be available for their children to provide the warmth that is needed for them to feel loved and also learn to balance in work. More specifically, parents should avoid engaging in professions that are very demanding to an extent that they have no time for their children. Besides, students should be guided on the development of resilience and fathers should gain the skills needed for emotional regulation in times of conflicts.

## **Further Research**

The following suggestions were made for consideration for future research:

1. The quantitative data of this study revealed a significant relationship between the parental level of education and inter-parental conflict and vice versa. A more intense qualitative research need to be carried out on a larger sample size to verify the findings.
2. The results of this study may not be generalized to all the sub-counties in Kenya because it used a small sample drawn from only one County. In order to control the effects of cultural, geographical and, or class differences, the study should be replicated in other counties and with students in different levels like form one, two, and four and parents in all classes of life.
3. No significant relationship was found between parental occupation and inter-parental conflict, in quantitative data but there is a significant relationship in qualitative data, more studies are recommended at the same level to marry the results and avoid inconsistency.

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