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PARENTAL CONFLICTS AND PERFORMANCE IN INTERNAL EXAMINATIONS: THE CASE OF STUDENTS IN MIXED DAY SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study was to investigate how parental conflicts influence internal examination scores. This study was guided by Family System Theory (Bowen). The study adopted mixed- method design combining the elements of both quantitative and qualitative research. From a target population of 6340 subjects, accessible population was 450 respondents comprising of 356 students, 59 class teachers, 15 G/C teachers, and 20 parents participated in the study. The study adopted a purposive and simple random sampling techniques and the desired sample was derived using Krejcie and Morgan sample size formula (1970). Validity was done using Cronbach's alpha and reliability done using Confirmatory Factor Analysis with recommended values of above 0.7 and 0.5 respectively. Data collection instruments were questionnaire, interview schedules, FGD guide, and document analysis checklist. Data was processed and analysed both inferentially and descriptively. The qualitative data was analysed thematically and merged for presentation. Quantitative data was analysed using SSPS version 27 to generate descriptive statistics including frequencies and percentages. The correlation between the variables was done using PPMC. The findings indicated that parental conflicts had negative influence on internal examination scores. The study established that students were unable to complete their assignments as these conflicts denied them time to prepare for exams and complete assignment. The correlation coefficient of parental conflicts on internal examination scores was -0.782. This implied a significant negative correlation between parental conflicts on internal examination scores. Therefore, the study recommended that schools in Nandi Central Sub County, Nandi County, establish structured support system to assist students in completing their assignments by involving them in and after school homework clubs and additional guidance outside classroom. It recommends that schools should initiate outreach programs aimed at educating parents about the critical role they play in their children's academic success.

KEYWORDS: Parental Conflicts, Academic Achievements, Academic Performance

INTRODUCTION

Conflict can be defined as lack of peace in the environment. In a family it refers to a situation where the smooth interaction and relation among the family members is disrupted because of one thing or the other. Parental conflicts have become prevalent all over the world. It is quite normal for spouses to have differences in opinions but if the differences in opinion become very strong leading to active opposition, then it is termed as parental conflict Goel (2023).

According to Goel (2023) parental conflicts can be verbal or physical, and can make children experience unhealthy peer connection, low academic achievements, lack of self-confidence, physical and mental issues. Meredith et al (2018), emphasize that destructive conflicts between parents contribute to children's emotional insecurity which in turn leads to children's broader difficulties in effectively managing their behaviour and emotions, maintaining mental health, making friends and performing well at school. Alms et al (2014) also says that such children's reaction to the situation include fear, anxiety and sadness and are at high risk of experiencing a variety of health problems, disturbed sleep, and difficulty in focusing and succeeding at school. Jayanthi et al (2014) affirmed that academic performance of students could be traced to the home the students come from and the kind of conflicts between the families. The presence of conflicts is an indicator that student's performance will be in bad trajectories.

Batool (2023) indicated parental conflicts in many households and while it may seem unavoidable impact on children. He added that parental conflicts can have long lasting and far-reaching influence affecting everything from their emotional wellbeing and their academic performance. He asserted that children who witness conflicts between parents are withdrawn, anxious and struggle with school life. He observed that, in some cases children develop behavioral problems such as aggression and delinquency which further compounds the effect of parental conflicts. Such children develop insecure attachment styles and constant exposure to frequent conflicts between parents leads to struggle with concentration and difficulties in retaining information. From this, it is evident that home environment has the most powerful influence in determining a child's academic outcomes and conflicts in a family can cause a serious effect on children's academic performance.

When conflicts occur in a home everything crumbles including the education aspirations of children. For children to maximize the learning outcomes, there is a need to have settled emotions when they leave home to school. However, when parents conflict, the children suffer emotional black mail, making them lose the interest in learning activities and consequently scoring low in given achievement tests Arinola (2024). Ndwandwe (2023), in agreement with this, notes that parental conflicts affect the academic achievement of students. Obeta (2014), indicates that children from conflict homes are often at high risk of learning fatigue which implies that children carry the burdens of their parents to school and get unmotivated to participate cognitively in the learning process. As a result, such children

struggle to follow classroom instructions and perform tasks which may position them for high scores in achievements tests.

Porch and Lane (2012) cited in Arinola (2024) were for the idea that family environment where children find themselves goes a long way in determining their learning ability and ultimately academic performance in school work. If the home environment is not intellectually stimulating, students find it difficult to cope with learning instructions and may eventually drop out of school. He identifies home as an overwhelming factor affecting students' performance. A study by Uupindi (2018) carried out on the effects of family conflicts on academic performance of students in Kitutura West, Namibia revealed that family conflicts have negative impact on children's academic performance, leading to failure and school dropout.

In Orwa et al (2016), it is revealed that students who experienced parental conflicts faced social adjustment problems as a result opted to remain silent most of the times and found it difficult to make friends. Such students are withdrawn and passive in a learning environment making it difficult for them to engage with peers. This shows that, the relationship between parents plays a vital role in a child's well-being with a potential to influence everything from mental health to academic achievements

Parental conflicts deny parents time to get involved in their children's education matters resulting to children' poor academic performance at school. Inanga (2018) investigated the effects of marital conflicts on academic performance of private and public schools in Kenya based on a case study of selected schools in Kiambu Sub County. The study revealed that the respondents had low concentration as a result of quarrels between parents / guardians and the majority agreed that their academic performance was affected by marital conflicts. A demographic and health survey report (2018), indicates that parental conflicts in Kenya is shown by persistent cases of domestic violence evident by the constant reports in the local dailies. Domestic violence is a recipe for parental conflicts which leads to separation, divorce and even death influencing school effectiveness of the children from the concerned families. According to Njenga (2016), 75.5% of parental conflicts in the country lasted for over five years, 17.8% lasted for between 2 to 5 years while 6.7% lasted for one year. This shows the magnitude of parental conflicts and how these influence academic outcomes of children hailing from such homes and Nandi Central is not left out either.

The Kenyan constitution recognizes education as a basic human right and as a result has provided free day secondary school education in order to boost learning outcomes and completion. The County government of Nandi awarded 6.08% of its revenue towards education betterment and yet mixed day schools in Nandi Central still post dismal KCSE results while their counter parts from boarding schools are applauded for their good performance as shown in the KCSE (2022) report. This is done amid complains that parents of mixed day school students are not supporting their children in providing conducive home environment and not discussing academic matters with their children due to their

constant conflicts. As a result, few students from mixed day secondary schools gain entry to public universities.

While many studies have been carried out on academic performance in the country, little has been done on parental conflicts on academic outcomes in Nandi Sub County. It's upon this research gap that this study has to be carried out in this region.

Theoretical Framework

The study is guided by the family System Theory advanced by Murray Bowen as quoted by Wendel (2016). It views the family structure as an emotional unit which uses system thinking to describe the unit's complex interactions. According to Bowen, the nature of the family is that, its members are intensely connected emotionally and that is why children are tuned into their family's emotional atmosphere. A family is portrayed as a social institution acting as a social unit for its members and hence as a social organization, being able to maintain individual and societal well-being (Lemanna et al, 2018). Children, who hail from socially stable families, acquire social skills and therefore are competent to handle life challenges and fit well in the society. Wendel (2016), adds that families profoundly affect their members' thoughts, feelings, and actions and that is why they look as though they live in each other's "emotional skin". He says that family members solicit each other's attention, approval, support, react to each other's needs, expectations and upsets making the functions of the family interdependent. Engaging in negative interactions (violence, divorce, quarrelling) affect the children's mental health and academic achievements as they suffer from emotional insecurity leading to the malfunctioning of the family. Cummings and Davies (2010) show that interparental conflict and violence badly affect children's wellbeing hence associated with dysfunctional social skills and relationships. In this theory (FST), when parents disagree the level of differentiation of self in children gets affected. This becomes a problem to the children's development processes as they fail to realize their identity (the self) in such a situation Townsend (2011). Equally, the level of conformity is affected on the way they feel about themselves and others and as result, becomes hard in making friends or joining peers to find love and identity. The theory further postulates that, ineffective problem-solving skills, and distorted interaction patterns between couples are some significant reasons which are highlighted by the family system theory that led to family disintegration. Where family triangles exist, he says that members have respect for one another, solving conflicts becomes a family issue where members iron out their differences thus promoting peace and unity in the family.

The relevance of this theory to the research topic is that, it portrays a family as a closely-knit unit woven together by strong emotions where parental conflicts bring down the cordial relationship among family members, forcing the disintegration of the love triangle meant to cement the family together for its growth. When this occurs, children get entangled in destructive web which results into negative academic outcomes that are reflected in their internal examination scores. It explores not only the key areas in the family that can be detrimental to the family growth and the repercussion to the children but also the positive aspects that can promote its growth and the impact this has on the children.

Research Objective

To investigate how parental conflicts affect internal examination scores in mixed Secondary Nandi Central, in Nandi County.

Hypothesis

HO₁: There is no relationship between parental conflicts and internal examination scores in Nandi Central, Nandi County

METHODOLOGY**Research Resign**

The study adopted a mixed-methods approach which combined elements of both quantitative and qualitative research in order to answer the research question. The researcher used descriptive survey design for quantitative data and phenomenology for qualitative data to provide a more holistic understanding of the research topic (Mugenda, 2003).

Participants

The study area was Nandi central sub county which is found in Nandi County. The sample population was drawn from fifteen (15) mixed day secondary schools in Nandi Central sub County. The target population was 6340 students, while the accessible population was 450 participants comprising of 356 students, 59 class teachers, 15 guiding and counselling teachers and 20 parents from the 15 mixed day secondary schools in Nandi central Sub County, Nandi County.

The students from mixed day schools were purposively sampled because of their daily interaction with their parents in a home environment unlike their counterparts who are in boarding schools. The teachers were purposively sampled from the schools from which the sample population of students was drawn from. The schools of the study were purposively sampled based on the number of students experiencing parental conflicts in their homes and their daily interaction with their conflicting parents. Parents were purposively and randomly sampled to give their observation regarding children's behaviours during their parental conflicts.

Research Instrument

In this study, a questionnaire was administered to the students and class teachers (purposively sampled) in their specific schools. The students were required to respond to a set of questions that target parental conflicts and academic outcomes. The questionnaires were given out to 321 students who were expected to complete the questionnaire without consulting other students. In addition, class teachers (59) who had been purposively sampled responded to the questionnaire. Their opinions, beliefs, perspectives and attitudes were elicited using both closed and open-ended questions from the questionnaire (Kothari, 2019). Through this questionnaire quantitative data was be drawn from the participants.

Data were collected using questionnaire for students and class teachers, in-depth interview guide students experiencing parental conflicts and Guiding and Counselling teachers, Focus Group Discussion guide for parents and document analysis check list for class teachers to give students' academic performance.

Data analysis

Data were analysed descriptively and inferentially, and presented using tables. For authenticity and intensive data, qualitative and quantitative approach was employed. Qualitative data was analysed descriptively and thematically. SPSS Version 27 was used to analyse quantitative data and the results presented in percentages. Inferentially, PPMC was used to test the influence parental conflicts have on the students' academic performance.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Of the 356 sampled students, 320 responded to the questionnaire while 35 were interviewed. One student did not respond to the questionnaire as expected. Table 4.1 presents responses of the 320 students on how parental conflict affects their internal examination scores at school.

Table 4. 1: Descriptive Statistics on parental conflicts and internal examination

ITEM	SA	A	N	D	SD	TOT
Am unable to complete my assignments due to parental conflicts and this leads to low achievements	115 35.9%	91 28.4%	30 9.4%	50 15.6%	34 10.6%	320 100%
My examination performance fluctuates from time to time due to parental conflicts	89 27.8%	113 35.3%	40 12.5%	50 15.6%	28 8.8%	320 100%
Am unable to prepare for examination during my parental disagreements and this makes me perform poorly	99 30.9%	92 28.7%	33 10.3%	66 20.6%	30 9.4%	320 100%
I sometimes miss examination during their disagreements for fear of what may happen while am away	74 23.1%	91 28.4%	39 12.2%	67 20.9%	49 15.3%	320 100%

My parents take interest in my performance during their disagreements	58 18.1%	63 19.7%	67 20.9%	69 21.6%	63 19.7%	320 100%
I always find myself in the wrong company during examination time and this affects my performance	80 25.0%	85 26.6%	14 4.4%	70 21.8%	71 22.2%	320 100%
I don't perform well in quizzes due to lack of preparation during my parents fights	78 24.4%	93 29.1%	51 15.9%	53 16.6%	45 14.1%	320 100%
I avoid examination when my parents fight and makes me post poor results	84 26.3%	82 25.6%	45 14.1%	57 17.8%	52 16.3%	320 100%
My parents are unable to assist with school activities due to conflicts they have hence I perform dismally	86 26.9%	94 29.4%	34 10.6%	51 15.9%	55 17.2%	320 100%
My parents don't care about my academic performance because of their conflicts	88 27.5%	79 24.7%	31 9.7%	51 15.9%	71 22.2%	320 100%

Source: SPSS Output

Legend: Strongly Agree (SA) Agree (A) Not Sure (NS) Disagree (D) Strongly Disagree (DS)

The table shows that, the majority 216 (64.3%) of the students were in agreement that they were unable to complete assignment due to conflicts, a significant number 84 (26.1%) disagreed with that view while 30 (7.4 %) were not sure of the fact. This implies that a significant majority of students, constituting 64.3%, believe that parental conflicts hinder their ability to complete assignments. Conversely, 26.1% of students disagreed with this notion, indicating that they do not attribute their assignment completion difficulties to parental conflicts. The 7.4% who remained neutral may reflect uncertainty or lack of awareness regarding the extent to which parental conflicts affect their assignment completion.

The results in table indicated that significant majority 202 (63.1%) of respondents agreed with the statement that their results fluctuated from time to time due to parental conflicts, 78 (24.4%) disagreed

with statement while 40 (2.5%) were neutral. This implies that a significant majority of students, comprising 63.1% of the respondents, perceive a correlation between their academic performance fluctuations and parental conflicts. On the other hand, the 24.4% who disagreed with the statement might possess coping mechanisms to mitigate the impact of parental conflicts on their academic pursuits. Meanwhile, the 2.5% who remained neutral could indicate a lack of awareness regarding the influence of parental conflicts on academic performance or a genuine absence of such conflicts in their lives.

The findings on the table indicate that 191(59.6%) of the respondents were of a strong opinion that they are unable to prepare for examination during parental disagreements and this makes them to perform poorly, 96 (30.0%) were of the contrary opinion while 33 (10.3%) were not sure of the fact. The 30.0% who disagreed with the statement may not experience such conflicts to a degree that significantly affects their academic preparation, and the 10.3% who were neutral might indicate uncertainty or a lack of awareness regarding the extent to which parental conflicts affect their examination preparation.

The results in table indicate that the majority of the respondents 165 (51.5%) agreed that they sometimes they miss examination during their (parents') disagreements for fear of what may happen while they are a way, 106 (36.2%) disagreed with the fact while 39 (12.2%) were neutral. This implies that 51.5% of the respondents, acknowledge that they sometimes miss examinations due to parental disagreements, driven by fear of potential repercussions while they are away hence prioritize their safety and well-being over academic obligations, consequently, impacting negatively as they miss crucial assessments, potentially resulting in incomplete or poor grades. The 36.2% who disagreed may either possess a sense of resilience or have not experienced situations where parental conflicts directly interfere with their examination attendance and the 12.2% who remained neutral, might indicate a lack of awareness or uncertainty regarding the extent to which parental conflicts influence their examination attendance.

The results on the table indicate that the majority 132 (41.3%) disagreed with view that parents take interest in their examination performance, 121(37.8%) agreed with the opinion while 67 (20.9%) were not sure of the fact. This implies that 41.3% of the respondents believe that parental disagreements coincide with a lack of parental interest in their examination performance stemming from experiences where parental conflicts overshadow discussions or inquiries about their academic progress, leading to a sense of neglect or disinterest from their parents. Amato et al (2000) cited in Hassan (2017) parental involvement in a child's education is related to child's academic achievements and evidence suggests that increased parental involvement leads to academic improvement of which not impressed, the opposite becomes a reality. However, the 37.8% who agreed may have experienced parental conflicts which indeed interfered with their parents' ability to prioritize their examination performance exacerbating the stress and pressure students feel during internal examinations, as they navigate academic challenges without the support or guidance they crave for from their parents. Nonetheless,

the 20.9% who remained neutral might indicate uncertainty or a lack of awareness regarding the extent of parental interest in their examination performance during disagreements.

The findings in table show that majority 165 (51.1%) of the respondents were in agreement that they always find themselves in the wrong company during examination time and this affects their performance, 141(44%) were of the contrary opinion 14 (4.4%) were not sure of the view. This implies that the majority (51.1%), acknowledge the detrimental impact of being in the wrong company during examination periods on their performance. Omoegun (1995) cited in Adebowale (2019) states that a child hailing from a hostile home environment is likely to be happy among the peers to avoid stressful situation including exams not prepared for due to unbearable home environment. The 44% who disagreed may indicate a belief in their ability to maintain focus and resist negative influences during crucial study times. However, the 4.4%, who remained neutral, may indicate uncertainty or perhaps a lack of awareness regarding the impact of company during examinations.

The results in table show that majority 171 (53.5%) of the respondents were of the opinion that they don't perform well in quizzes due to lack of preparation during parental fight, 98 (30.7%) were of the contrary opinion while 15(15.9%) were undecided. This implies that the majority (53.5%), perceive parental fights at home as a hindrance to their exam preparation and subsequent poor performance in quizzes. On the contrary, the 30.7% who disagreed may be possessing coping mechanisms to compartmentalize their academic focus from familial discord and hence perform well. However, the 15.9% were uncertain about the link between parental conflicts and quiz performance, indicating a need for further exploration or awareness regarding the potential effects of home environment on academic outcomes. Nganga (2023) points out that parental involvement enhances cognitive growth as well as positive behaviour adjustments failure to which dismal results are posted from the child.

The results in the table show the majority of the respondents 166 (51.9%) agreed that they avoid exams when their parents fight and this posts very poor results, 109 (34.1%) disagreed with the opinion while 45 (14.1%) were not sure. This implies that the majority, (51.9%) perceive parental fights as a compelling reason to avoid examinations because during this moment the children security takes centre stage and examinations become subsidiary. Conversely, the 34.1% who disagreed may possess coping mechanisms to manage the stress from parental fights during exam periods. However, the 14.1% who were undecided, may possess a potential lack of awareness or understanding of how such external factors can influence academic performance.

The finding on the table indicates that the majority of the respondents 180 (56.3%) were in agreement that their parents are unable to assist them with school activities due to the conflict they have. In support to this, Ndani (2017) emphasizes that, parental involvement is positively related to children's academic aspirations failure to which academic purpose of a child is underscored, 106 (34.1%) were of the contrary opinion and 34 (10.6%) were not sure of the fact. This implies that the majority of the respondents, (56.3%), perceive parental conflicts as a barrier to children receiving assistance on

academic activities, from parents who are preoccupied with conflicts, hence less available, potentially leaving students to navigate their school responsibilities alone. On the contrary, the 34.1% who disagreed may have supportive parents who effectively manage conflicts without impacting negatively their involvement in their children's academic pursuits. However, the 10.6% were unsure about the correlation between parental conflicts and their involvement in academic activities, possibly indicating a lack of clarity or awareness regarding how parental conflicts can affect academic support.

The results on the table also indicated that majority of the respondents 167 (51.7%) were in agreement that their parents don't care about their academic performance because of their conflicts, 122 (38.1%) disagreed with the opinion while 31(9.7%) were not sure. This implies that the majority (51.7%), perceive parental conflicts as an issue that diverts attention and energy of parents away from their children's educational needs, potentially resulting in neglect or indifference towards academic matters. Goodman (2023) is of the view that children who are assisted by the parents in doing academic activities register good performance unlike those whose parents are absent. For the 38.1% who disagreed, indicate a belief that parental conflicts do not significantly impact on the children's academic performance. Nevertheless, the 9.7% who were undecided indicate lack of clarity or understanding regarding the extent to which familial dynamics affect parental involvement in their children's education.

The results on the table below shows class teachers' responses on how parental conflict affects internal examination scores of the students. The data collected was measured on via a six (6) item via 5-point Likert scale to gather information concerning parental conflict and internal examination.

Table 4. 2: Class teachers' responses on parental conflict and internal examination

Item	SA	A	NS	D	SD	TOT
Students from conflict homes don't perform well in internal exams during their parents' disagreements.	19 33%	27 48.2%	4 7.1%	5 8.9%	1 1.8%	56 100%
Students from conflict homes don't complete their assignments	18 32.1%	27 48.2%	9 16.1%	2 3.6%	0 0%	56 100%
Students from conflict homes do their homework carelessly	17 30.4%	30 53.6%	4 7.1%	5 8.9%	0 0%	56 100%

Students from conflict homes avoid exams during their parents' disagreements	25 44.6%	12 21.4%	10 17.9%	7 12.5%	2 3.6%	56 100%
Students from conflict homes resort to examination malpractice like coping due to lack of time for revision when the parents fight	20 35.7%	17 30.4%	7 12.5%	8 14.3%	4 7.1%	56 100%
Students from conflict homes lack examination facilities because parents' attention is diverted to the conflict in the family	15 26.8%	28 50%	6 10.7%	4 7.1%	3 5.4%	56 100%
Students from conflict homes are never worried about their performance	26 46.4%	27 48.2%	3 5.4%	0 0%	0 0%	56 100%
Students from conflict homes feign sickness during examination time	13 23.2%	33 58.9%	4 7.1%	5 8.9%	1 1.8%	56 100%

Source: SPSS Output

Key: Strongly Disagree (SD) Disagree (D) Not Sure (NS) Agree (A) Strongly Agree (SA)

The table shows a significant majority of the respondents 41(81.2%) agreed that students from conflict homes don't perform well in internal exams during their parents' disagreements, 6 (10.7%) were of the contrary opinion 4 (7.1%) were neutral. This implies that a significant majority of the respondents, 81.2%, perceive a negative correlation between students' performance in internal exams and parental disagreements within conflict homes. This implies that, the children are overwhelmed by both internal and external forces, not promoting academic excellence. This perception suggests that the stress, tension, and emotional upheaval resulting from parental conflicts can significantly impact students' ability to concentrate, retain information, and perform well academically (Batool; 2023). For the minority, represented by 10.7%, who disagreed, it may be a recognition of exceptions where students from conflict homes manage to excel academically despite challenging circumstances. However, the 8.1%, who remained neutral on the matter could signify uncertainty or a lack of awareness regarding the specific impact of parental conflicts on students' exam performance.

The responses from the table show that, 35 (80.3%) agreed that students don't complete their assignments during parental conflicts, 2 (8.9%) were of the contrary opinion and, 9 (16%) were not

sure about the fact. This implies that the significant majority (80.3%), perceive a notable hindrance for students from conflict homes in completing their assignments during parental disagreements which impedes on their ability to focus, concentrate, and allocate time effectively towards completing their academic tasks. The 8.9%, who disagreed, indicate a recognition of exceptions where students manage to maintain productivity despite challenging circumstances in their homes. Nonetheless, the 16% who were unsure signify lack of clarity or understanding regarding the specific impact of parental discord on students' academic tasks. The results are in line with the findings obtained in a study conducted by Maganga (2016) who found out that conflicting parents are harsh and always involve their children in their disagreement hence making their children unable to focus on their academics.

The findings in the table show that the majority 47(80.3%) agreed with idea that students from conflict homes are careless with assignments, 5 (8.9%) disagreed with the opinion and 4 (7.1%) were not sure of the idea. This implies that the majority of respondents, (80.3%), perceive a tendency for students from conflict homes to exhibit carelessness in completing their homework assignments influencing their academic endeavours negatively. For the 8.9%, who disagreed, it may indicate a belief that students can overcome the challenges posed by parental conflicts to maintain quality in their homework. However, the 7.1% who were unsure about the correlation between parental conflicts and carelessness in homework completion may signify a lack of clarity or understanding regarding the specific impact of parental conflicts on students' academic responsibilities.

The results on the table shows a great number of the respondents agreed 37(66.0%) that students from conflict homes avoid exams during their parents' disagreement, 9 (16.1%) disagreed while 10 (17.9%) were neutral. This implies that a substantial majority of respondents, 66.0%, believe that students from conflict homes tend to avoid exams during their parents' disagreements. This perception suggests that the emotional strain and turmoil resulting from conflicts within the household can significantly impact students' motivation and willingness to participate in examinations, creating a desire to distance themselves from the tense environment at home giving limited time for book perusal. The devastating effects experienced deny them mental capacity for settlement hence maladjustment in mechanisms that can cause academic excellence hence no confidence to tackle exams Vakili et al (2022). For the 16.1% who disagreed, it may indicate a recognition of exceptions where students still prioritize their academic responsibilities despite challenging circumstances. Nevertheless, the 17.9% who were neutral about the correlation between parental conflicts and exam avoidance signify a lack of clarity or understanding regarding the specific impact of parental discord on students' exam attendance behaviour.

On whether students from conflict homes resort to examination malpractice like coping due to lack of time for revision when the parents fight, 37 (66%) agreed, 9 (16.1%) were of the contrary opinion, and 7 (12.7%) did not agree with the fact. This implies that a significant portion of respondents, 66%, believe that students from conflict homes are more likely to resort to examination malpractice as a coping mechanism when their parents are fighting, suggesting a correlation between familial stress and academic dishonesty. For those who disagreed (16.1%), it could suggest a belief that other factors

might influence students' decisions during exams more significantly than family conflict. However, the 12.7% who remained neutral might indicate uncertainty or a lack of consensus on the relationship between family dynamics and exam malpractice.

The results on the table show that the majority of the respondents 41(76.8%) were in agreement with the statement that students from conflict homes lack examination facilities because parents' attention is diverted to conflicts in the family, 7(12.5%) disagreed while 6 (10.7%) were not sure. Ezeufondu (2022), in agreement with majority indicates that some students miss exams due to inability to acquire school requirements and poor parental care and concern, a consequence of ongoing parental conflicts. However, the 12.5% who disagreed might argue that other factors, such as socioeconomic status or individual priorities within the household, play a more dominant role in determining access to examination facilities. The 10.7% who remained neutral may indicate uncertainty or a lack of consensus on the extent to which family conflicts directly interfere with students' access to examination resources

The findings on the table shows that students from conflict homes are never worried about their performance, 53 (94%) agreed 5.4% were not sure. This implies that a substantial majority (94%) of respondents, believe that students from conflict homes are typically not concerned about their academic performance stemming from the perception that these students are preoccupied with more pressing issues arising from the conflicts within their households, which could overshadow their academic worries. Sarah (2018) indicates that children from hostile environments are psychologically unwell and their overall wellbeing at stake consequently establishing hopelessness in their mental capacity as a result have no reason to live for. However, the 5.4% who expressed uncertainty or neutrality on the matter suggest recognition of the complexity of students' emotional responses to family conflict and the diverse ways in which individuals cope with such stressors.

The responses on the table indicate that the majority 46 (82.1%) of the respondents agreed that students from conflict homes feign sickness during examination time, 6(10.7%), were of the contrary opinion 4 (7.1%) were undecided. This implies that a significant majority, comprising 82.1% of respondents, believe that students may resort to such tactics as a means of coping with the stress or pressure associated with both parental conflicts and academic expectations. On the other hand, the 10.7% who disagreed with this notion may argue that attributing feigned sickness solely to family conflicts oversimplifies the complex reasons behind such behaviour during examinations. Additionally, the 7.1% who expressed uncertainty towards the statement may indicate recognition of the multifaceted nature of students' motivations and experiences, acknowledging that while family conflicts may contribute to academic stress, other factors could also play a role.

From the qualitative aspect, the students experiencing parental conflicts through an in-depth interview, revealed that they are unable to perform well in their examination due to lack of concentration and disturbance when their parents disagree. They indicated that quarrels between their parents is a

hindrance to their exam preparation as a result they don't excel in their exams. The G/C teachers indicated that such students are always anxious and withdrawn as a result unable to exploit their full potential. They added that in most cases these students perform below average. From an open-ended question, the class teachers indicated that such students lack examination materials, parental involvement in their academic journey, and concentration due to mental disturbance as a result don't perform well academically. Through the document checklist, it was revealed that most students from parental conflict homes, performance was below average. Through FGD guide, parents revealed that, children from conflict homes are physically, emotionally and mentally disturbed due to unconducive environment hence perform poorly academically. Therefore, there was a general consensus from all the participants that parental conflicts have a negative effect on internal examination scores from students in Nandi Sub County.

Correlational Analysis

The specific objective of the study was to establish the effect of parental conflict on the examination of students in mixed day secondary schools in Nandi Sub County. Data were analysed using correlation analysis to establish the effect of parental conflict on the academic performance.

Pearson product-moment correlation was used to assess the strength and direction of the relationship of parental conflict and internal examination in mixed day secondary school in Nandi Sub County. The values from the correlation coefficient range from -1 to +1 (Sekran, Bougie & Roger, 2010). The rejection criteria were based on a p-value of 0.05 where values above it was deemed insignificant while values below were significant. The results were shown in table 4.3.

Table 4. 3: Correlation Matrix of parental conflict and internal examination

	PC
IE	-0.770* (0.016)

Source: SPSS Output

Value not in brackets show the correlation coefficients

Value in brackets show the probability values

Where; PC- parental conflict and IE- internal examination

From table 4.3, the correlation coefficient of parental conflict and internal examination is -0.770 with a probability value of 0.016 that is less than a significance value of 0.05. This implies there is a significant strong negative association between parental conflict and internal examination. This means that when there is high rate of parental conflict, the rate at which students from parental conflict homes perform in internal examination reduces. Thus, Parental conflicts can significantly affect students' internal examinations by creating emotional distress and distracting them from studying. Constant exposure to parental discord can lead to heightened stress levels, affecting concentration and memory

retention crucial for exams. Additionally, the psychological toll of witnessing or being involved in conflicts at home may diminish students' overall well-being, manifesting in decreased motivation and academic performance. These disruptions to their emotional and mental state can impede their ability to perform optimally in internal examinations.

From the above findings, it's evident that the majority of students believe that parental conflicts hinder their ability to complete assignments. This perception likely arises from the understanding that conflicts within the home environment can create emotional instability, distractions, and disruptions to daily routines, making it challenging for students to focus on their academic responsibilities (Batool;2023). The findings are also in line with Daniyal et al (2011) who indicated that learners from conflict homes get hard time to focus and complete their assignments due to disturbances from the conflicts from their parents. Exposure to hostile exchanges between parents has a link to emotional and behavioural difficulties that impede the ability to focus on studies, a finding that agrees with Mauki et al (2018) that parental conflicts result in negative effects on cognitive and educational functions. This is further affirmed by Inanga (2017) that performance may suffer during internal examinations due to heightened stress levels or the inability to concentrate effectively having a negative impact on their academic performance.

The majority of students also agreed that parental conflicts significantly hindered their ability to prepare for examinations, consequently leading to poor academic performance. This indicates that parental conflicts have profound impact on children who experience violence in their families; causes behavioural problems and academic difficulties. For these students, such conflicts likely create an environment of stress and tension that disrupts their study routines and mental focus, thereby diminishing their capacity to adequately prepare for exams. This agrees with Meredith et al (2018) that conflicts can affect performance during internal examinations due to a lack of sufficient preparation and increased psychological burden.

CONCLUSION

The objective of the study was to investigate how parental conflicts affect internal examination in mixed day secondary Nandi Central, in Nandi County. Descriptive statistics showed that majority of the respondents agreed that parental conflicts negatively influence student's internal examination. Phenomenological aspect revealed that parental conflicts have a negative effect on academic performance of students. Correlation analysis showed that there is a significant negative relationship between parental conflict and internal examination. Parental conflicts had a correlation value of -0.770 (0.016) with internal examination scores with p-values less than the significant level of 0.05. This implies a significant negative association between the variables. Therefore, it was concluded that parental conflicts negatively affect internal examination of students in mixed day secondary school in Nandi Sub County. The conclusion of the study is based on both descriptive statistics and inferential statistics carried out.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the descriptive statistics, majority of the students were found to be unable to complete their assignment due parental conflicts. Therefore, it is recommended that schools in Nandi Central, Nandi County, establish a structured support system to assist students in completing their assignments amidst parental conflicts. This system could involve after-school homework clubs, peer tutoring programs, or access to online resources to provide students with additional assistance and guidance outside of the classroom. By offering practical support tailored to the unique challenges faced by students experiencing parental conflicts, schools can help mitigate the impact of these disruptions on their academic performance. Furthermore, providing avenues for academic support demonstrates to students that their educational needs are valued and prioritized, fostering a sense of belonging and empowerment that can contribute to their overall academic success and well-being.

It was also established that parents who engage in parental conflicts do not have interest of the academic performance of their children. They don't support their children through provision of basic needs and fee payment. Therefore, it is recommended that schools in Nandi Central, Nandi County, initiate community outreach programs aimed at engaging and educating parents about the critical role they play in their children's academic success. These programs could include workshops on parenting skills, financial literacy, and the importance of providing emotional and material support to their children. By empowering parents with knowledge and resources, schools can help cultivate a supportive home environment conducive to academic achievement. Additionally, fostering positive parent-school partnerships promotes a sense of accountability and mutual support, ensuring that students receive the necessary support both at home and in their educational journey.

From the qualitative aspect, there was a general consensus that parental conflicts have negative effect on academic performance. It is recommended that parents should solve their differences amicably taking care that their children don't witness the negative that goes on between them. If effected, this can give them peace and time to read without stress and anxiety. Parents to get involved in their children's academic journey in helping them set targets, ensuring that they are ever in school by paying their fees in time, providing school necessities, and a peaceful home environment.

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