

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDENTS' SELF-ESTEEM AND PARENTAL  
MARITAL STATUS AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN  
GICHUGU DIVISION, KIRINYAGA DISTRICT, KENYA.**

**BY**

**Margaret Wanjiru Gitumu**

**A Thesis submitted to Graduate School in Partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
Degree of Master of Education in Guidance and Counselling of Egerton  
University**

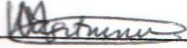
**EGERTON UNIVERSITY**

**AUGUST, 2006**



## DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been previously published or presented for the award of a degree in any university.

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Date 24/8/2006

Margaret Wanjiru Gitumu

## APPROVAL

This thesis has been submitted with our approval as University Supervisors

Sign 

Date 24/8/2006

Dr. M.O. Udoto

Sign 

Date 24/8/2006

Dr. M.C. Chepchieng

2007/12/28

## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated with a lot of love to my beloved Mother Grace Kariuko, my brother John Murigu and Children:- Faith, Martin, Joshua and Grace.

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## ABSTRACT

In any society, the type of family is determined by parental marital status. This parental marital status determines the family environment in which the child is born and brought up. Thus, the family environment is likely to influence a child's self esteem. This is because a network of forces that include parental influence has been known to determine the level of self - esteem of children. In effect, the purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between students' self-esteem and parental marital status among secondary school students in Gichugu division. The study was a survey, which utilized causal-comparative research design. The total number of schools in the division was 21 and the form three students were the target population. In the 21 schools in the division, there was a total population of 1382 form three students. Out of this population, 306 students constituted the sample of this study. In order to get a representative number per school, proportional sampling was done. In selecting the required proportion per school, purposive, stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used. A questionnaire was used to collect the data. The questionnaire was pilot tested to establish its validity and reliability before being administered to the respondents. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to estimate the reliability. Reliability coefficient of 0.78 was obtained and this was considered acceptable for this study. Data analysis was done using descriptive and inferential statistics. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 11.5 was used to aid in the data analysis. One major finding was that the students from two parent families had a higher level of self-esteem than students from single parent families. Following this major finding, it was recommended that guidance and counselling in secondary schools be enhanced to cater for the needs of such students. It was also recommended that the teacher training colleges equip the teachers on ways to enhance the students' self-esteem in an attempt to reach the students with low self-esteem in general and particularly those from single parent families.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

The family and the community in which a child develops form an important key to the development of self-esteem (Rainey & Rainey, 1986). The different types of families in Kenya include single parent families, two parent families and extended families. The types of families in which a child grows in, is determined by parental marital status. All these family types have been known to differently influence the development of a child's self-esteem (Datta, 1984). The types of single parents include the never married, divorced, separated, and widowed. The circumstances leading to never married parent is whereby a pregnancy occurs before one enters the institution of marriage. This could be a result of teenagers engaging in irresponsible sexual behaviour and also in the case of rape. The single parenthood could also be by choice whereby some individuals opt not to get married but get children. Widowhood is a result of death of one partner and the widow and widower have not remarried. Though the single parents discussed above are of different types, they are generally considered as 'single parents'.

Although the widowed are generally more accepted and respected than the rest of the single parents by the Kenyan communities, they still experience problems of discrimination. According to Yvonne (2004), though the magnitude of the problems associated with widowhood differ, discrimination runs across the board. This is because once persons are widowed, they are generally downtrodden by their communities. On the other hand, divorced parents who later choose to be single parents are considered by the society to be failures. At the same time, those who join single parenthood due to premarital pregnancies are thought of

by their communities as irresponsible at the best, and immoral at worst (Ambron, 1986). Due to the negative perception of single parenthood among most of Kenyan communities, the single parent may develop negative self-image, which may directly or indirectly affect their children's self-esteem. This is especially so if the parents may have attributed their negative self image to them. It is likely that this may not be the case for dual parent families especially in the case where the father – mother relationship is stable. The degree of stability of the mother – father relationship either creates in them a sense of security or insecurity. Children who are emotionally secure tend to exhibit a high self-esteem and vice versa (Rogers, 1969; Melgosa, 2000). It is also possible for single parents to come out strongly and bring up their children with love and acceptance which leads to the development of high self-esteem.

Some empirical studies have indicated that there is likely to be a considerable degree of relationship between children's self-esteem and the way they are regarded by their parents (Oersild, Telford & Sawrey, 1975). As such, parents greatly influence the development of their children's self-esteem. This is because parents' attitudes, feelings and actions are always recorded in the child's mind and form a basis of the child's self-esteem. Studies show that the level of self-esteem is a product of the extent to which the child was praised, encouraged or criticized (Rainey & Rainey, 1986).

Besides these factors and conditions that researchers have associated with parents' influence on children's self-esteem, other factors associated with parental influence on their children's self esteem may include social economic status, duration which the child lived in single parenthood situation and gender of the single parent. For instance, Manski, Sanderful, Maclanaham and Powers (1992) found family income to be one of the factors which

influences academic performance and the general feelings a student may have about himself or herself. They noted that families with low income experience stress and are unable to frequently encourage and boost the self-esteem of their children because encouragement from parents is a key factor in development of self-esteem.

The report from Area Education Office in Gichugu Division shows that one third of the parents who applied for bursaries in 2004 were single parents. This therefore, shows that these single parents may be unable to provide their children with basic needs which could affect their children's self-esteem and may strain parent – child relationship. A positive relationship with the father relates to self-confidence, assertiveness and skills in the peer group, initiation of friendship, success in influencing others and non-dependency (Melgosa, 2000). Moreover, mother's love and attention makes a boy feel warm but a low degree of self-confidence whereas the father adds specific elements to the daughter's initial expressiveness by rewarding her and his appreciative attitude (Rogers, 1969).

Self-esteem of children from either single parent or two parent families is a very central issue because it has direct impact on the child's performance in schoolwork (Kridler,2002). This is because low self-esteem negatively affects effective learning while high self-esteem enhances it. It is therefore, with this in mind that this study aimed at investigating the relationship between the marital status of the parents, and students' self- esteem in secondary schools with reference to Gichugu division of Kirinyaga district.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The family environment is a determinant of parental marital status, which influences the level of self – esteem of an individual. Thus, parental marital status is likely to influence the development of a child’s self-esteem. Self-esteem has a bearing on learning in the school. It is clear that individuals with higher self-esteem find it easier to make friends, and are more likely to assume an active rather than a passive role in group discussion, which enhances learning. Moreover, low self-esteem has been linked to problems such as depression, uses of drugs, alcohol abuse, suicide, eating disorders, jealousy and loneliness. Most of these problems are very common in secondary schools in Kenya. Generally, low self-esteem influences the whole of individual’s day-to-day activities. It affects thoughts and beliefs about the world and affects all relationships negatively. The individual achieves far less than his/her potential in many aspects of life and lowers the quality of life. Therefore given that currently in Kenya there is existence of both single and two parent families, it is important to investigate how these types families influence students’ self-esteem so as to enhance children’s self-esteem for effective learning and personal growth.

## **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of the study was to determine the relationship between the students’ self esteem and parental marital status among secondary school students in Gichugu division.

## **1.4 Objectives of Study**

The objectives of this study were to:

- (i). Determine whether there are any differences in self-esteem level between students from single and those from two parent families.



- (ii) Determine the relationship between gender of the single parent and the self-esteem level of students from single parent families.
- (iii) Determine the relationship between parental socio-economic status and students' self-esteem.
- (iv) Determine the relationship between duration of single parenthood and a student's self-esteem.
- (v) Determine whether there are any gender differences in self-esteem among students from single and two parent families.

### **1.5 Hypotheses of the study**

The following hypotheses were tested:

- $H_{01}$ : There is no statistically significant difference in self-esteem level between students from single and those from two parent families.
- $H_{02}$ : There is no statistically significant relationship between gender of the single parent and student's self-esteem level.
- $H_{03}$ : There is no statistically significant relationship between parental socio-economic status and students' self-esteem.
- $H_{04}$ : There is no statistically significant relationship between duration of single parenthood and students' self-esteem.
- $H_{05}$ : There are no statistically significant gender differences in self-esteem among students from single and those from two parent families.

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The study has provided data that sheds light to parents to appreciate the significant role they play in influencing their children's self-esteem. These findings are beneficial to family counsellors, who are supposed to educate parents on effects of single parenthood on children's self-esteem and educates the single parents on measures to take to enhance the self-esteem of their children. Moreover, with these findings, school administrators, teachers and teacher counsellors are going to understand the needs of students from single parents thus try to enhance their self-esteem. These findings are also going to enable the Government and the Ministry of education to understand the needs of the students from single parent families in order to develop appropriate training for teachers dealing with such students. Community-counselling personnel from churches, Non Governmental Organisations and youth organisations are going to use this information to offer psychological and social help to children from different family types. The students ultimately benefit from these interventions and develop high self-esteem necessary for good academic performance and personal growth.

### **1.7 Scope of the Study**

This study only investigated the relationship between student's self-esteem and parental marital status in secondary school students in Gichugu division. The study focused on public secondary schools. Form three students were used because they were thought to have the characteristics, which are stable thus enabling them to give the true feelings when filling the questionnaire. This is because form ones were thought to be excited for joining secondary school, form twos were seen to be undergoing adolescent processes and form fours were taken to be focussing on Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examination. This therefore

made the form threes to be the appropriate group for the study. The students' respondents were only those who lived with biological parents.

### **1.3 Assumptions of the Study**

This study assumed that:

- (i) Parents have most significant influence on the self-esteem development of their children.
- (ii) Socio – cultural and other factors influence the self-esteem of all students in the division uniformly.
- (iii) All students from single parents live with one and only one parent without alternating between parents.

## 1.9 Definition of Terms

The following were operational definitions of the terms used in the study:

**Duration of single parenthood:** In this study, it referred to the period of time the student has lived with a single parent.

**Form Three:** The third level of the secondary education in the Kenyan education system.

**Gender:** Referred to the socially determined personal and psychological characteristics associated with being a male or female namely 'masculinity' or 'femininity' (Garret, 1992).

But in this study gender referred to being a male or a female.

**Mixed Secondary School:** An institution that provides secondary education that enrolls both boys and girls.

**Parent:** This term referred to a person who has begotten or legally adopted a child. In this study, the term refers to a biological father or mother.

**Parental Education:** It meant the total number of years of formal education of parents that ranged from primary, secondary, college and university.

**Parental Marital Status:** It referred to single parents (widowed, never married, divorced and separated) or married to opposite sex spouse.

**Parental Occupation:** An income generating activity of student's parent that ranged from unskilled, semi-skilled and professional.

**Self-Esteem:** This referred to high regard for oneself, good opinion for oneself. It is composed of such elements as the perception of one's characteristics, attitudes, preferences, ideas, feelings, abilities, percepts and concepts of the self in relation to others and the

environment (Murray, 1989). In this study it refers to the thoughts and feeling a student has about himself or herself in relation to others, school and home environment.

**Single Parent:** This refers to the parent who is bringing up children single-handedly. It referred specifically to one of the biological parents of the students in the present study.

**Single Sex School:** An institution that provides secondary education and accommodation for boys only or girls only.

**Socio- Economic Status:** It meant the well being of the student's family which was as a result of combination of both social and economic factors which include parental education, occupation and family income.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the related literature in order to put this study in context of other similar studies. The chapter focuses on literature from various authors as well as other researchers on single parenting, socio-economic status of single parent, duration of single parenthood, self-esteem, gender and self-esteem, parental influence and theoretical framework of the study.

#### 2.2 Single Parenting and Children's Self-esteem

Single parenthood, as stated earlier, may be caused by death, divorce, desertion by the other parent and birth outside marriage. Some women also may feel that getting a husband is not a prerequisite for raising children and may opt to raise children on their own. Usually parents who are victims of unworkable marriages especially single mothers find single parenthood more satisfying as opposed to the tensions and turmoil experienced in their own broken marriages (Waithaka, 2005).

Since parents play a key role in the development of self-esteem, it is not surprising that a disruption in the parental relationship could have an effect on that development. When the divorce has occurred, a major change in parenting takes place simply as a result of the absence of the non-custodial parent. Some children may experience anxiety over the fear that if the love in the marriage relationship can end so too could the love in the parent-child relationship. The effect for children is that *mom* is much less available in addition to *dad* being rarely present. Routines and traditions change drastically, and the world that the child was accustomed to is suddenly turned upside down. Not only do both parents often have less

time for the child, they also struggle with emotional issues and adjustments of their own. As the primary parent struggles to keep emotional balance and still manage the home, children receive less attention. Thus, when the children need more support and nurturing, they often do without.

Many people have misperceptions and misjudgements about single parents in most societies worldwide. Polumbus (2002) puts it clearly that during her pregnancy, she faced discrimination and humiliation for choosing to raise her child alone. Jim, Koons and Featherstone (1990) pointed out that custodial single parents may experience problems in the following areas; change in economic status, grief, self-blame, loss of self-esteem, depression, role overload, social stigma and disruption of customary living arrangements. Other problems include; loneliness, feeling of social isolation, loss of friends, lack of adequate support system, strain from *solo* decision making, child's care arrangements, interpersonal conflicts (with children, ex-spouse, parents and ex-in-laws, babysitters and lovers). Other problems of single parents include sex and dating, custody and visitation continued relations with ex-spouse, concern of a child's loyalty, upset as children are introduced to new friends or lovers of ex-spouse (Jim, Koons & Featherstone, 1990).

Due to many responsibilities and stresses that many single mothers experience their response reaction to children needs and cries significantly decline. When they encounter tough times, single parents often experience difficulties finding someone to turn to and stress often strikes (Waithaka, 2005). Stress negatively impacts on parenting which often add emotional strain on the children. Single parenthood can be tough when children become uncooperative. Such a

situation may plague a single parent with a low self-esteem and this may make the parents to have negative self-image (Atkinson, 1993).

Single parenting was rare in traditional African communities (Mbiti, 1969). Efforts were put towards teaching the adolescents concerning sex. Sex outside marriage was regarded as a taboo and if one was involved in it, cleansing had to take place. This shows that single parenting was never accepted by Kenyan societies. In addition, most Kenyan communities, the negative perception of single parenting may not have changed much. The lack of acceptance by the community makes the single parents to have negative self-image and may use their children to enhance them. Polumbus (2002) observed that single parent families could never be accepted and it is an on going conflict between the parent and the community's acceptance. Swinbourne (1997) observed that single mothers are constantly being told that as parents, they are not as good as married women. An illegitimate child faces legal stigma while a single mother faces social stigma (Green, 2001).

However, some researchers found parental influence to be of no significance to the formation of self-esteem. Cullen (1995) indicated that one of the single parents had said that her home was not a broken home. Cullen continued to explain that parental and child health outcomes are related to larger networks of social support and good communication within the single parent family. This would result in high self-esteem of the children.

It has been suggested by other researchers that there are no significant difference found in self-esteem among children of single parents and two parent families (Guthman & Robles-Pina, 2002). In addition, by confronting the truth of the situation, assessing the true risks and



opportunities, single parents can go beyond the cultural mythologies that put them down and reap great rewards and this would raise the self-esteem of their children (Cullen, 1995). Moreover, Duncan (2000) observed that a single parent may have a greater flexibility in planning time with children because they are not distracted by the expectations or time demands of another adult.

In view of this, the single parent is able to bring up children with high self-esteem. The great majority of children brought up in single parent family do well and the differences in well-being between children from single and two parent families tend, on average to be moderate to small. William's (1997) in Wades World (2005) noted that father presence or absence per se does not significantly influence the level of well being of either daughters or sons. In addition, Christians, Nord and Laura (1991) in Wades World (2005) suggested that positive interaction with any one is what matters for the psychological well being of the child. To elaborate further, they said that various patterns of coresidence did not differ from the children in two parent families on the out come measures, suggesting that during the initial adjustment period after marital dissolution, the absence of a father-figure or the presence of biological father-substitute appears to have no influence on most children's psycho- social functioning. As such children will benefit from harmonious and complementary involvement of relatives, teachers etc (Egterbrooks, 1984 in Wades World 2005).

### **2.3 Self-esteem and its Effect on Children**

Self-esteem is one of the major variables in this study. A survey of the literature available shows that there is no universal definition of the term self-esteem. According to Wylie (1961),

self-esteem is composed of such elements as the perceptions of one's characteristics, attitudes, preferences, ideas, feelings, abilities, percepts and concepts of the self in relation to others and to the environments.

There are several definitions by different scholars and schools of thought. According to Bee (1981), self-esteem is the positive or negative quality of self-concept. Damon (1989) said that self-esteem is an effective evaluation of one's self, generally assessed in terms of positive or negative traits. Muchinsky (1989) defines self-esteem as the extent to which people see themselves as competent and need satisfying.

According to Maslow (1954 and 1970) in his theory of hierarchy of needs in Muchinsky (1989), self-esteem needs include self-confidence, recognition, appreciation, and the respect of one's peers. Satisfaction of these needs results in a sense of adequacy, thwarting them produces feelings of inferiority and helplessness. Self-esteem is widely recognized as a central aspect of psychological functioning and well-being. Self-esteem has been shown to be related to many psychological as well as behavioural variables. For instance, compared to adolescents with low self-esteem, high self-esteem youth are less depressed, are more satisfied with life and they rank lower on psychological and psycho-physiological measures of anxiety, on overt aggression and irritability (Hall & Lindzey, 1985). Thus self-esteem seems to be related to important aspects of psychological well-being. Brodzinsky, Gormly and Ambron (1986) observed that students' self-esteem is essentially their self-judgement of their abilities, influence, and popularity. To a certain extent, it is a mirror image of the judgement of others. Their degree of self-esteem will affect their behaviour by limiting or extending the range of things they will attempt, whether in academic tasks, sports or friendships.

Nemours Foundation (2005) observed that self-esteem is the collection of beliefs or feelings that we have about ourselves. How we define ourselves hugely influences our motivations, attitudes and behaviours. This foundation also gave another definition of self-esteem as the combination of feelings of capability with feelings of being loved. A child who is happy with her achievement but does not feel loved may eventually experience low self-esteem. Likewise, a child who feels loved but is hesitant about her own abilities also end up feeling poorly about herself. Healthy self-esteem results when the right balance is attained. This definition stresses the individual's conception of what he/she is really like or the actual self.

Another definition of self-esteem was given by Fridman (1995), who defined self-esteem as psychological construct which refers to how the self (body and mind) is viewed and valued; that is basically how one feels about himself, how he judges himself as a measuring up in terms of skills, talents, abilities and attributes; and how much he values and respect himself.

A more elaborate definition of self-esteem was given by Krider (2002), who contends that self-esteem steps beyond the initial descriptive phase of self-concept and becomes a feeling of internal worth; that is after evaluating themselves based on the personal values and ideals they have developed, children evaluate themselves based on their perceptions of others. In addition to the individual's perception of which he/she has, this definition puts emphasis on two other important element; the perception of others about the individual and what one thinks he/she ought to be and would like to be. To elaborate further, having high self-esteem is important because it helps one to hold the head high and feel proud of oneself and what one can do. It gives one the courage to try new things and the power to believe in oneself. It lets one respect himself, even when he makes mistakes (Nemours Foundation, 2005).

People with high self-esteem are more cooperative, enthusiastic, considerate, assertive, and respectful tend to be at less risk for depression and hopelessness. High self-esteem is also believed to be one of the fundamental traits of high performance managers and leaders also act independently. Moreover, it has also been suggested that people with low self-esteem avoid trying new things, feel unloved and unwanted, pretend to feel emotionally indifferent, are unable to tolerate a normal level of frustration and are easily influenced. High esteemed people act independently, assume responsibility, take pride in their accomplishments, tolerate frustration, attempt new tasks and challenges, and handle positive and negative emotions and give assistance to others (Child Development Institute, 2005).

#### **2.4 Parental Socio-economic Status and Children's Self-esteem**

Socio-economic status of the parent may be dictated by education level of the parent among other factors. The higher the level of education of the parent, the more paying the occupation and this enhances the family income. Moreover, the existence of institutional barriers as a result sends the underlying message to the children that women are worthy less than men. The majority of working women work out of economic necessity and have considerable financial responsibilities and most of them are either sole wage earners or are single (Equal Rights Advocates, 1999 in Burchill, 2003). A study done by Sklar (1997) in Burchill (2003) indicated that there was income disparities between men and women which presented a large gap. These results would have an effect if the single woman has to live alone and care for the children.

In addition, Equal Rights Advocates (1999) in Burchill (2003) observed that the level of education is directly correlated with job opportunities and stable income. Furthermore, as educational levels decrease, the disparity between male earnings and female earnings widen.

Moreover, Sklar (1997) in Burchill (2003) observed that most single parents are lowest paid and are generally concentrated in low wage jobs such as domestic workers, child care, waitresses and cashiers.

Equal Rights Advocates (1999) in Burchill (2003) indicated that low wages are often interpreted to mean no health insurance, no paid vacation or sick days and no unemployment compensation insurance. Thus single parents experience economic constraints because its only one hand that contributes to the family income hence they are not able to meet their basic needs.

The economic status of single parent is important in assessing their role in the family. Not only is their annual income important but also the cost of living and the major set back is for childcare. Moreover, women are still earning lower wages on average than men and this contributes to low income in the family of single parent (Polumbus, 2002). On the other hand the two parent families may not experience economic constrains because the two parents are involved in the contribution of family income.

According to Maslow's theory, when the basic needs are deprived for long periods, all other needs recede in the background. Such individuals feel insecure; have low self-esteem and feelings of inferiority (Hall & Lindzey, 1985). This implies that the children from single parent families who lack basic needs develop low self-esteem. The educated single parents may have wide choice of job opportunities hence they are able to meet basic needs and those of their children. Such parents may possess a status symbol in society that gives them feelings of high self-esteem.

Studies done by Women Matter (1998) in Burchill (2003) showed that higher education does not only increase women's income, but it improves their self-esteem, increase their children's educational ambitions and has a dramatic impact on sufficiency. These educated parents support and guide their children thus improving their sense of power and worth. Some illiterate and semi-illiterate parents neglect, shame and sometimes ridicule their children. These parents also use isolation, appeals to guilt and other methods of discipline involving the threat of love hence lowering the self-esteem of their children (Rainey & Rainey, 1986).

On the other hand, for poor women and single parents, the formal economy is in persisted economic depression, forcing them to scratch, scrimp and sacrifice to be able to meet even basic monthly necessities (Burchill, 2003). Such parents may not provide the love and acceptance to the children, which are requirements for the development of high self-esteem. James (1976) in Burchill (2003) noted that the importance of having money and material possessions appealed to women who because of their social status, were unlikely to obtain these things by legitimates means thus were led to occupation such as street prostitution which has social stigma. With this stigma, the self-esteem is affected and not only the self-esteem of a single mother but also the self-esteem of the children.

### **2.5 Duration of Single Parenthood and Children's Self-esteem**

The negative effects of single parenthood can occur at any age. However, the children in young adulthood tend to find the experience painful and have a difficult time in adjusting (Lauer, 1998). According to Freud's psycho- sexual stages of development, a child between zero to one year required to suck at the mother's breast in order to satisfy the need for food and pleasure. If a child is denied oral gratification, such a child develops personality

problems, which include mistrust of others, rejecting others love, fear of and inability to form intimate relationships. Thus, children brought up by the father alone develop the above problems hence low self-esteem. At age one to three years, the child is learning and accepting personal power. Since a single parent is experiencing emotional stress, they may be too harsh to instil discipline and withdrawing love, thus the child may experience feeling of inferiority and withdrawal.

At age three to six years, there is the male phallic stage known as Oedipus complex and the female stage known as Electra complex. Where any of the parents is lacking, striving for mother's love and father's love does not occur thus lack of proper identification and feelings of the child. Age six – 12 years is time of socialization as child turns outward and forms a relationship with others. Thus if a child did not go through the phallic stages, such a child develops personality disturbance leading to low self-esteem. Age 12 – 18 years, the themes of phallic stage are revived. If the child did not go through the phallic stages, such a child will not be able to form friendships and invest sexual energy in socially acceptable activities (Meyer, 1979).

Scherman and Susan (1996) observed that it is possible that divorce during an earlier development period may increase the risk of problems in children and this may lead to low self-esteem. This is because each of the parents is need to provide parental acceptance, interest, warmth, respect and closeness which have been noted to be positively associated with children's self-esteem.

It has also been observed that parental divorce is a stressful experience for children at any age and most children exhibit developmental disruption and emotional distress which may lower their self-esteem (Guthman, 2002). Scherman and Susan (1996) explained further, that the outcome in girls who had experienced parental divorce in the anaclitic phase, had more feelings of anger than older girls.

The boys who had parental divorce in the oedipal phase had feelings of anger along with aggressive behaviour, which resulted in low self-esteem. If the divorce occurred at latency stage (six to 13 years) girls experienced sadness and depression, suicide attempts were also frequent among them. At this age, half of the boys were characterized as unhappy about current relationships and concerned about the future and this affected their feelings of worth (Paloosaari, 1994). This shows that male and female children from single parent showed different experiences on parental single parenthood.

## **2.6 Parental Influence on Children's Self-Esteem**

Parents are probably the greatest influence on the development of one's self-esteem. They are the children's primary advocates and they provide the first psychological situation in which the children must survive and thrive. Bornstein (1998), observed that childhood is the phase of life cycle when parent provide experiences that are believed to exert significant and salient influences. This is so because the parents, attitudes, feelings and action are always recorded in the child's mind and form a basis of his or her self-image. The level of self-esteem is a product of the extent, to which the child was praised, encouraged or relentlessly criticised, (Rainey, & Rainey. 1986).



The children who are emotionally secure tend to exhibit a high self-esteem and vice versa. The parents who withhold unconditional love and acceptance create a child who must perform to be accepted, and looks to others for the missing approval. According to Newman (1993), parents' impact on the child's self-esteem in that any negative communication lowers their self-esteem. Those children who have experienced a lot of love and fair discipline have a high self-esteem. They accept who they are because they have been accepted as cherished beings by the parents. Conversely, children who have been pushed around, ignored, physically abused, live in uncertainty and fear as well as those separated from their parent for long periods develop a low self-esteem. Parents who are over permissive, over protective, or label the children as 'stupid' dummies, who cannot do anything right, lead children to develop low self-esteem.

The parent is also important in influencing career choices, which is a product of self-esteem. If they encourage independence and provide emotional support, this makes the child more likely to make use of available information for good career choice (Morrison & McLntyre, 1973).

Coopersmith (1967) as cited in Ambron (1986) examined the characteristic behaviour of the parents of the boys in his study. He found that certain child rearing practices were related to high self-esteem in their parents. Such parents were more accepting and affectionate toward their children; they took an interest in their children's activities and friends and were generally more attentive to their children (Ambron, 1986). However, these characteristics may lack in single parenting whereby the single parent has poor self-image and, thus does not influence the self-esteem of the children positively.

Parents who had child-rearing practices related to high self-esteem were strict, setting clear limits on behaviour; parents of high self-esteem boys enforced them in a firm decisive manner. Even though they were strict, they did not use coercive kinds of discipline to enforce their rules. They were more likely to punish their children by denying privileges than by using physical punishment and withdrawal of affection to control their children. Another characteristic of parents of high self-esteem boys was that they allowed their children greater individual expression (Ambron, 1986). According to Coopersmith (1967) in Ambron (1986), parents who have definite values, who have a clear idea of what they regard as appropriate behaviour and who are able and willing to present and enforce their beliefs are more likely to rear children who value themselves highly.

### **2.7 Parental and Children's Gender and Self-Esteem**

According to Datta, (1984) the stereotyped expectations in relations to sex roles may tend to be reflected in the attitudes of parents and society toward the child. Such differences in attitudes, treatment and expectations may influence the self-esteem of male and female students who are from single parent. Rogers (1969) contends that there is evidence that deprivation of one parent has different effects for boys and girls, depending upon which parent is absent.

Rogers (1969) points out that it is in the first identification of both male and female children with the mother in a long dependency relationship that the basic superego is laid down. This point out that superego may not develop for both girls and boys in case of maternal deprivation. Hetherington (1966) in Meyer (1979) observed that the effects of the father's

absence on sex typing depend on the child's age at the time of separation. Boys who are over 6 when the father left home behaved similarly to boys from intact families.

However, boys who were under 6 when the father left the family, had less masculine sex-role preferences, were more dependent and less assertive than other boys, and tended to have more feminine self-concept. In a study by Hertherington (1972) in Meyer (1979), girls from homes without a father because of death or divorce did not differ in interests, preferences, or behaviour from girls who had fathers present in the home. They tended to be either very shy or uncomfortable with boys or to be promiscuous and inappropriately assertive with boys. If the father had died, anxiety and shyness were most prevalent. If the father had left the family because of divorce, promiscuity and assertiveness were more manifested (Meyer, 1979).

Even with equivalent intelligence, age and social class, teachers found boys without fathers to be less advanced in moral development than boys with fathers. This is because the boys without the father develop poor self-image due to lack of identification (Rogers, 1969). In addition males have only slightly higher levels of self-esteem than females' across most ages (Mattmiller, 1999). Mattmiller, further explains that girls are having their self-esteem systematically destroyed by sexism, harassment and stifling stereotypes. Furthermore, Block and Robins (1993); Kling et al (1999) in Keitingas, Heinonen and Raikkonen (2003) noted that gender may play an important role in the development of self-esteem. However, it can not be ruled out that all children from parents who have divorced or are single parents register low self-esteem.

Josephs, Markus, and Tafarodi, (1992) in Heinomen et al (2003) said that women's self-esteem is more dependent on significant others, whereas men's self-esteem depends more on independent achievements. Also note worthy is that social cultural expectations are gender dependent and there are gender differences in their associations between temperament and family factors. Therefore, it was acknowledged that the development of self-esteem might differ according to the gender of the child (Block, 1983 in Keitikingas Heinonen and Raikkonen, 2003).

## 2.3 Theoretical Framework

Atkinson (1993) contends that self-esteem comes from beliefs about ourselves that develop as we grow up and experiences from other struggles of life. Presumably, this process is very complex with its roots in the ways that our families treat us during early years of our lives, the culture of the society in which we live, our responses to our wider families, friends or enemies and our natural aptitudes that are in-born. Therefore the principles governing Freudian theory of identification, (Meyer, 1979) guide this study in describing student's feelings and self-evaluation when they lack one of the parents to identify or associate with. Psychoanalytic theory of identification (Meyer, 1979) argues that there are two types of identification:

### (i) Anaclitic Identification

Freud (1930) in Meyer (1979) believed that Anaclitic Identification was especially important to the development of girls. Contemporary psychoanalytic theorists explain this identification in the following way. At about the age of three to four the girl develops a strong affection for the father, rivalling the mother for the affection. Because she feels that this will make her mother jealous, and perhaps reject her, the girl gives up her strong desires for the father and

identifies with the mother. This identification is due to fear of the loss of the mother's love. In identification with mother, the girl learns social standards (morality) from the mother as well as the female sex role (Meyer, 1979).

#### **(ii) Identification with the Aggressor**

Identification in boys results from the resolution of the Oedipal complex. At about age three to four, boys develop the desire to possess the mother and become the father's rival for the mother's love. Because the boy realises his father is bigger, stronger and more powerful, he fears his father's retaliation for his incestuous wishes. Freud believed, in fact, that the boy feared the father would castrate him. To avoid this punishment, the boy identifies with the father (identification with the aggressor), which in turn reduces his anxiety about castration and provides the mechanism for him to develop one's understanding of the male sex role and the culture's moral norms. These two types of identification are related to the study because, if proper identification does not occur other stages of development may not be successfully accomplished thus affecting personality and self-esteem of the child. This stage is critical in one's life because the desires in this stage are revived in later stages.

From theoretical framework, children identify with parents at early years of development. As such, the parental marital status plays a major role in students' feelings, attitudes and behaviour in total. Therefore if one of the parents is absent, the child may develop negative feelings more so the inner feelings of self-worth. It is with this understanding that the researcher developed the conceptual model to give the summary of interaction between parental marital status and students' self-esteem. Figure 1 gives a detailed summary of the interaction of the study variables.

## 2.2: Conceptual Model

Independent Variable

Dependent variable

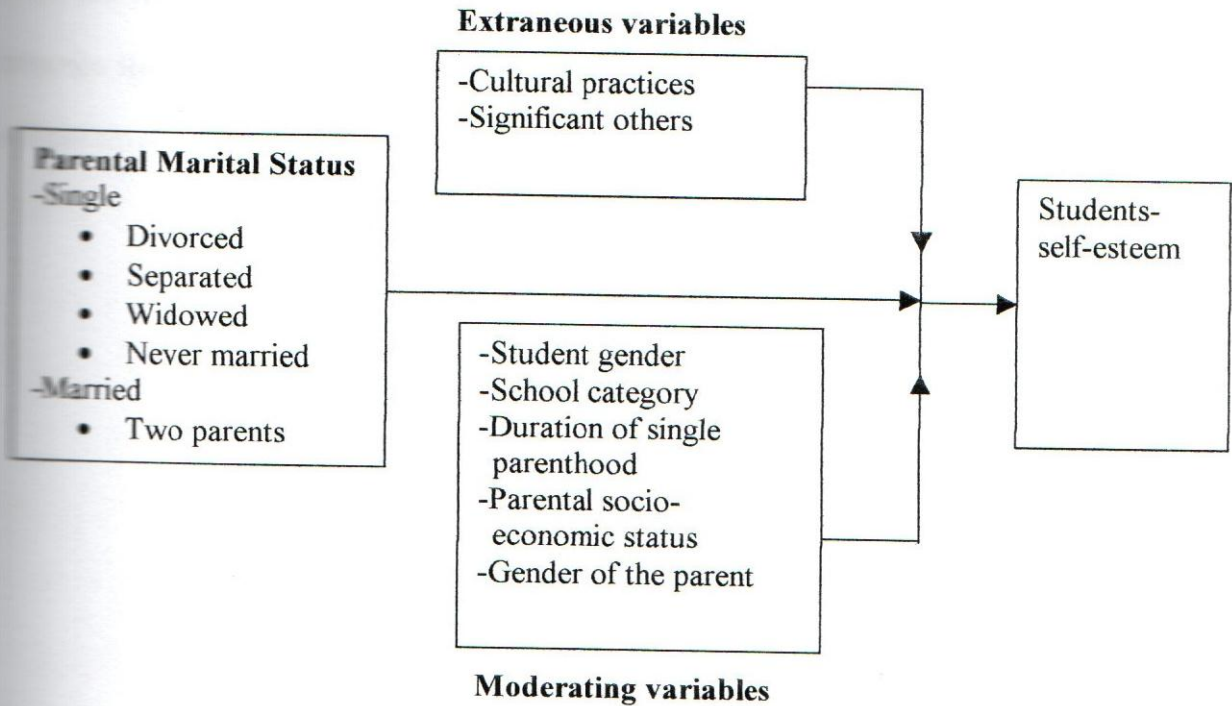


Figure 1

### The Relationship between Students' Self-esteem and Parental Marital Status

Figure 1 shows the interaction between the parental marital status and students' self-esteem. The parents provide the first environment that the child encounters and they also provide the warmth and acceptance at early age (Krider, 2002). With this, understanding, parental marital status such as single or two parent families may affect the self-esteem of the child directly. The moderating variables, which include parental socio-economic status, gender of the parent, duration of single parenthood, students' gender and school category, may affect the students' self-esteem. Other variables, which may influence students' self-esteem are cultural practices and significant others either directly or indirectly. It is the parent who gets a school for the

children. The parent also introduces the children to cultural practices that the child will grow in and adopt. The parent can be a role model, show the children role models or introduce some of the role models to the children. The school category, cultural practices and role models may influence the student's self-esteem either knowingly or unknowingly. Therefore, the student self-esteem as the dependent variable is mostly influenced by the parent.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research design employed in this study. It also describes where the study was conducted, the subjects of the study, the tools for data collection and analysis procedures.

#### 3.2 Research Design

The research design adopted for this study was causal-comparative, which employed survey approach. In this study, the parental marital status was already in existence and students found themselves in it. At the same time no manipulation of the variables was done. This research design uses questionnaires or interview schedule to collect data from participants in a sample about their characteristics, opinions, and experiences, in order to generalize to the population (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996; Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). Surveys are conducted with the intention of describing the nature of existing phenomena so as to employ the data to explain or justify current conditions and practices (Cohen & Manion, 1994).

#### 3.3 Location

The study was carried out in Gichugu division of Kirinyaga district. This location was chosen because it was convenient in terms of the available resources. The division has 4 provincial secondary schools and 17 district secondary schools.



### 3.4 Population

The study targeted Form Three secondary school students, both male and female enrolled in 21 public secondary schools located within Gichugu Division of Kirinyaga District as shown in Table 1. According to the registration of schools in the Area Education Office year 2004, the total population of form three students was 1382.

Table 1

#### Population of Form Three Students in Secondary Schools in Gichugu Division

School Type	Provincial Schools		District Schools		Totals	
	No. of schools	Population	No. of schools	Population	No. of schools	Population
Boys	2	227	2	71	4	298
Girls	2	299	5	336	7	635
Mixed	0	0	10	449	10	449
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>526</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>856</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>1382</b>

Source: Kirinyaga District Education Office (2004)

### 3.5 Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

The schools were stratified by category into provincial schools and district schools. At the same time, the schools were sampled by type, that was girls' schools, boys' schools and mixed schools. The total population of form three students in these schools was 1382. According to Kathuri and Pals (1993), a sample of 306 should participate in the study from such population. In order to get a representative sample per school, allocation by proportion was done (Table 2). Students from two parent families were sampled using simple random

sampling technique while students from single parent families were purposively selected. With the help of class register, the class teacher identified the student from single parent families. The researcher also gave an assurance of confidentiality of information collected. These three techniques were necessary considering the characteristics of the schools and respondent needed for this study. To address the ethical concerns, the students from single and two parent families were taken to the same room and subjected to the same type of questionnaire. The students were also given freedom to sit anywhere they wanted in the room.

Table 2

## Proportional Sample of form three students per school

School	Category	Population	Proportionate sample
Kiamutugu Boys	Provincial	65	14
Kianyaga Boys	Provincial	162	36
Negriambu Girls	Provincial	138	31
Kabare Girls	Provincial	161	36
Murige Boys	District	41	9
Kamandi Boys	District	30	7
Kharia Girls	District	116	26
Mugumo Girls	District	111	25
St Gituba Girls	District	26	6
Kamugumo Girls	District	46	10
Thumaita East Girls	District	37	8
Rwambiti Mixed	District	74	16
Kamiciri Mixed	District	53	12
Kamwathi Mixed	District	70	15
Karacho Mixed	District	63	14
Kanguenyi Mixed	District	47	10
Gatunguru Mixed	District	33	7
Gachatha Mixed	District	32	7
Githure Mixed	District	31	7
Kwote Mixed	District	26	6
Bakenya Mixed	District	20	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>1382</b>	<b>306</b>

### **3.6 Instrumentation**

A questionnaire (Appendix C) was used in data collection for this study. The questionnaire was divided into two sections, that is, section A (personal Data) and section B (Self-Esteem Scale). Section A was developed by the researcher and section B was adopted from Barksdale Foundation (2002).

Section A contained 11 items that aided in collection of students' personal data and parents' information. It included questions on students' age, sex, school category, parental gender, parental socio-economic status and parental level of education. Items on parental socio-economic status and educational level were accorded some values which were then calculated to give the results required.

Section B contained 25 items that measured the self-esteem of the students. Each item was to be responded as strongly agree (5), agree (4), not sure (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1). The self-esteem scores were 125, which were divided into high, moderate and low. The maximum mark was 125 while the minimum was 25. The students, who scored 100 - 125 were said to have high self-esteem, 75-99 was moderate and 74 and below was low self-esteem.

#### **3.6.1 Validity**

Validity is the accuracy and meaningfulness of inferences, which are based on the research results, in other words it is the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of the data actually represent the phenomenon under study (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). The researcher developed the instruments in line with objectives of the study. After developing, adopting and

modifying the research instruments, the validation was sought by having the researcher's supervisors and other research experts review the items. The experts validated the questionnaire by studying the two types of validity. These include construct validity and content validity. Construct validity is a measure of the degree to which the data obtained from an instrument meaningfully and accurately represents theoretical concept. Content validity is a measure of the degree to which data collected using a particular instrument represents a specific domain of indicators or contents of a particular concept (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). In this study, the experts evaluated the questionnaire whether the use of student personal data and self-esteem scale would be used to assess the relationship between students' self-esteem and parental marital status.

### **3.6.2 Reliability**

In the study, internal consistency of the instruments was computed using Cronbach's coefficient Alpha (Henerson, Morrison & Fitz –Gibbon, 1987). Due to the nature of questions (instruments), which were more concerned with perceptual attitude and feelings Cronbach's coefficient Alpha was considered best for the study. This is because it has been known to yield high level of reliability in such questions as compared to others. For a survey research, a minimum sample size of 15 is recommended (Kathuri & Pals, 1993). But in this study a sample size of 49 students was used for piloting. A reliability coefficient threshold of 0.7 is considered respectable and desirable for consistency level (Henerson, Morrison Fitz – Gibbon, 1987). For this study, the reliability was 0.78 which was well above the recommended threshold, thus the instrument was considered reliable.

### **3.7 Data collection Procedures**

The researcher collected the necessary data for the study from 306 Form three students in Gichugu division. The data was collected using the student Questionnaires for personal data and self-esteem scale. Before the commencement of the study, the researcher sought permission from the Ministry of Education Science and Technology. Upon the granting of permission, the researcher visited the 21 Schools to seek permission from the school heads with a letter of introduction and explanation of the purpose of the study. The researcher and the head teachers of all the participating schools set dates for data collection exercise. On the specific dates for each school, the researcher took the questionnaires to the students with the help of class teachers in the school for the purpose of identifying the targeted students. During the data collection exercise, the questionnaires were collected immediately after the students had completed filling the questionnaires. The questionnaires were given serial numbers for the purpose of identification and possible follow-up. This took a period of 28 days. The researcher finally scored and coded the data for analysis.

### **3.8 Data Analysis**

The data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics that included the frequencies, percentages and standard deviation were used to describe and summarise raw data. Also, the inferential statistical techniques such as Chi – square and t-tests were used to test the hypotheses posited in this study. These statistical techniques were used to test the significance of the quantitative data that was analysed to determine whether to reject or accept the stated hypotheses of the study. The data was analysed by use of a computer programme, Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 11.5. All tests were done at 0.05 level of significance. The objectives were achieved through the following:-

- ii. The researcher used t-test on hypothesis one to achieve the first objective. The means of self-esteem were also compared.
- iii. Chi-square was used to analyse hypothesis two in order to achieve objective two. Analysis of contingent coefficient was also done to test the strength of the possible relationship.
- iv. In analysing third hypothesis by use of chi-square, objective three was achieved. Contingent coefficient was also calculated to test the possible relationship between the variables.
- v. The fourth hypothesis was tested by use of chi-square to achieve objective four. Contingent coefficient calculated showed the strength of the relationship.
- vi. To achieve objective five, t-test was done on fifth hypothesis.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1 Introduction

The data analysed in this chapter was on relationship between students' self-esteem and parental marital status. Self-esteem is a major key to success in life. The development of healthy self-esteem is extremely important to the happiness and success of children. Since it is known that parent play a major role in the development of self-esteem, it is not surprising that disruption in the parental relationship would have an effect on that development (Krider, 2002). With this understanding, it was therefore very important to assess the self-esteem level of children in relation to parental marital status. The research data obtained was presented using both descriptive and inferential statistics. In addition, the contents of the findings were presented in form of tables and their implications discussed.

#### 4.2 Student Distribution by Demographic characteristics.

Analyses of the students' distribution were done by their gender, parental marital status and parental gender. Table 3, 4 and 5 give detailed analysis.

**Table 3**

#### **Students' Distribution by Demographic Characteristics**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency (f)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Boys	118	39.2
Girls	183	60.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>301</b>	<b>100</b>



From Table 3, it is explicitly clear that the girls in the sample were more than the boys. This scenario could be explained by the fact that the girls' schools in Gichugu division are more than the boys' schools. From the total of 306 students, 5 students filled part A of the questionnaire, but left out part B thus were disqualified, making the number of students to be 301 as indicated in Table 3. Out of the 301 students, 20 students participated in the study but had one non-biological and biological parent, therefore, they were not considered in the study. In addition, there were 7 students who were found to have filled the questionnaires but left out some items thus their questionnaires were considered incomplete hence left out. The researcher therefore, analysed data of a total of 274 Form three students. It was also necessary to have distribution of student by parental marital status. Table 4 indicates students' distribution by parental marital status.

**Table 4**

**Students' Distribution by Parental Marital Status**

<b>Parental marital status</b>	<b>Frequencies (f)</b>	<b>Percentages (%)</b>
Single parent	77	28.11
Two parent	197	71.89
<b>Total</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>100</b>

Findings in Table 4, indicate that 28.11% and 71.89% students from single parent and two parent families respectively participated in the study. It can therefore be concluded that most students in Form three in the Division come from homes with two parents. Besides distribution by parental marital status, student distribution by the gender of the parent was done. Table 5 indicates students' distribution by the gender of the parent.

Table 5

**Students' Distribution by the Gender of the Parent.**

Parental gender	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
Father	12	15.58
Mother	65	84.47
<b>Total</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 5 indicates that, out of 77 students living with a single parent, only 12 lived with the father while 65 lived with the mother. This could be attributed to the socio-cultural beliefs of the community where the study was conducted. In this community, in the case where the family breaks, it is the mother who moves out with the children and the father is left alone to marry and continue with a new family. Moreover, if a girl gets a child out of wedlock, it is obvious that the mother takes care of the child. In the case of death, the father may decide to take care of the child or children and very few fail to remarry. This may have then contributed to very few students living with the father as shown in the study. This could also be explained by the fact that men are said not to have instinct to nurture and therefore men get women to give nurturance to the children (Silverstein & Auerbach, 1999).

Table 6

Students' Distribution by Parental level of Education

Education level	No. of parents	Percent (%)
No formal Education	7	2.6
Primary	52	18.9
Secondary	106	38.7
College	81	29.6
University	28	10.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 6 shows the educational level of the parents who had the students in Form three who participated in the study. The educational level of the parent was important since it was a variable in the study and it was assessed later to investigate whether it affects the self-esteem of the students. From Table 6, the students' response indicated that 2.6% of the parent did not have education background at all. From this Table, 18.9% had attained primary level, 38.7% had attained secondary level, 29.6% had attained college level and 10.2% had attained university level. Apart from parental level of education, parental occupation was also investigated. The occupation of a parent was divided into three (professional, semi-skilled and skilled). Table 10 indicates the findings.

**Table 7****Student's Distribution by Parental Occupation**

<b>Parental occupation</b>	<b>No. of parent</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
Professional	97	35.4
Semi-skilled	45	16.4
Unskilled	132	48.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Table 7 shows the parental occupation of the students who participated in the study. Of noteworthy, was the high percentage of the unskilled parents of the students who participated in the study and this was suspected to have an influence on students' self-esteem. Another issue the researcher investigated was amount of pocket money given to the students. This was used as an indicator of parental income. Table 8 indicates the amount of pocket money given to the students per term.

**Table 8****Students' Distribution by Amount of Termly pocket Money**

<b>Amount of pocket money</b>	<b>No. of students</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
Below 100	40	14.6
100-200	50	18.2
201-300	42	15.3
301-400	48	17.5
401 and above	94	34.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>100</b>

The amount of pocket money was divided into 5 categories. From Table 8, the students who were given below Kshs. 100 were 14.6%, 100-200, were 18.2%, 201-300 were 15.3%, 301–400 were 17.5%, and 401 and above were 34.3%. Table 8 indicates a higher percentage of those students who were given 401 and above than that of other groups.

#### 4.3 Relationship between Student s’ Self-esteem and Parental Marital Status.

The researcher came up with five objectives for the study. In order to achieve the objectives, both descriptive and inferential statistics were used. The sections that follow indicate each objective and how it was achieved.

##### 4.3.1 Students’ Self-esteem Levels and their Parental Marital Status.

The objective one of the study was to determine whether there was any difference in self-esteem level between students of the single and those from two parent families. To achieve this objective, the hypothesis which stated that there was no statistically significant difference in self-esteem level between students from single and those from two parent families was tested by running a t-test and the results of the analysis are clearly indicated in Table 9.

**Table 9**

**Analysis of Self-esteem levels of Secondary School students by Parental Marital Status.**

Parental Marital status	N	Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	Mean Difference (MD)	df	SD	t-value	Sig (2-tailed)
Single parent	77	80.6	8.1	75	93.9	-1.155	0.000
Two parents	197	88.7		195			0.000

An analysis of the findings in Table 9 indicates that some notable differences in the mean scores of self-esteem levels of students from single and two parent families. The self-esteem scores from two parent families were higher at  $\bar{x}=88.7$  than the mean of students of single parent families at  $\bar{x}=80.6$ . In effect there was a numerical difference of self-esteem of 8.1 points between students from two parents and those from single parent families. An analysis of minimum and maximum students' self-esteem scores by parental marital status was done to show the range. Table 10 indicates the range of self-esteem scores.

**Table 10**

**Variability in Students' Self-esteem Scores as per the parental marital status**

Parental marital status	N	Minimum	Maximum	Range
Single parent	77	51	119	68
Two parents	197	64	125	61

From Table 10, the minimum score of students from single parent families was 51 and the maximum was 119, therefore the range was 68. The minimum self-esteem score of the students from two parent families was 64 and maximum was 125, giving a range of 61. This shows that the self-esteem score of student from single parent families was more dispersed than the self-esteem score of students from two parent families. This means that there are many factors in single parent families causing the variation.

However, there was need to find out whether the mean difference in self-esteem observed between the two groups was significant. As such, t- test analysis was run which showed significant difference ( $t = - 1.155, p < 0.05$ ). The research results indicated significant

difference between the self-esteem of children of single parent families and those of the two parent families. The result indicated that even though both groups tended to have high level of self-esteem, the students from two parent families scored significantly higher than the students from single parent families. This could be attributed the fact that the children with two parents have chances of identifying with the parents; the boy with the father and the girl with the mother while the children from a single parent lack the chances of identifying with the absent parent. As such, the children with single parent probably face difficulties within themselves making the development of self-esteem hampered.

Based on these results, the hypothesis ( $H_{01}$ ) suggesting that there was no statistically significant difference in self-esteem level between students from single and two parent families was rejected. In an attempt to make it clearer, there was need to look at the mean difference of the two groups of students in relation to the parental level of education. Table 11 shows self-esteem mean of students by parental educational level.

Table 11

## Self-esteem Means of Students by Parental level of Education and Marital Status

Parental marital status	Education level	No of students (N)	Mean of self-esteem
Two parents	University	24	94.87
	College	69	89.66
	Secondary	74	87.93
	Primary	26	84.38
	No formal schooling	4	79.86
Single parent	University	4	76.5
	College	12	82.41
	Secondary	33	81.62
	Primary	26	85.34
	No formal schooling	2	80.12

From Table 11, the students who had the highest mean of self-esteem (94.87) were from two parent families with university education level. The students who had the least mean of self-esteem (76.5) were from single parent with the university level of education. These results show that the university education of the two parents has an implication on child's self-esteem. The students from two parent families and had attained secondary education were reported to have higher mean of self-esteem ( $\bar{x}=87.9$ ) than the students whose parents had attained primary education ( $\bar{x}=84.38$ ). Again, the students who had their parents without formal education had a lower self-esteem mean ( $\bar{x}=79.86$ ) than the students whose parent had attained primary level of education ( $\bar{x}=84.38$ ).



This may imply that the two parents who have attained college and university levels may have knowledge of how to encourage their children, give them love, unconditional acceptance which are vital components for improving the child's self-esteem. The parents, who have no formal education, have attained primary education and secondary education, may have failed to give love, warmth to their children either due to lack of knowledge resulting to their children scoring lower than their counterparts. Exposure to education probably equips parents with ability to create an environment that supports or enhances development of self-esteem.

However, those children who are from single parent and attained university level scored lower ( $\bar{x}=76.5$ ) than those students whose single parent attained college level of education ( $\bar{x}=82.41$ ). This indicates that the single parent who attained university education may be having many responsibilities and may not give her/his children warmth and love required for the development of high self-esteem. At the same time, the single parents who have attained college level may have fewer responsibilities thus give their children affection required. This refutes the studies done by Duncan (1996) in Wades World (2005) which observed that children's psychological attainment have been far more strongly correlated with their mother social economic status and education attainment. This is just an observation but some one else can go on and investigate how education of a parent influences self-esteem of the child.

On the other hand, the students of single parents who attained primary education, scored higher ( $\bar{x}=85.34$ ) than the students of single parents who attained secondary education ( $\bar{x}=81.62$ ). The students who had their parent with no formal education had a lower mean of self-esteem ( $\bar{x}=80.12$ ) than the students who had their parent attaining primary education

level ( $\bar{x}=83.34$ ). These results may imply that those single parents who attained primary education may not have many responsibilities and they are always with their children. Since self-esteem is constructed (Child Development Institute, 1998), these single parents have concentrated their efforts in raising their children, enabling them to develop a high self-esteem.

Besides looking at the self-esteem mean of the students by parental education, there was need to look at the mean of self-esteem by the parental occupation. The parental occupation was grouped into professional, semi-skilled and unskilled. The professionals were considered to be the skilled personnel. Table 12 indicates the mean of students' self-esteem by parental occupation.

**Table 12**

**Self esteem Means of Students by Parental Occupation and marital status**

Parental marital status	Parental occupation	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)	Self-esteem mean
Two parents	Professionals	71	25.91	92.48
	Semi skilled	28	10.21	85.11
	Unskilled	98	35.76	90.25
Single	Professional	26	9.48	78.23
	Semiskilled	17	6.20	84.32
	Unskilled	34	12.40	86.25

From Table 12, it was evident that unskilled parental occupation dominated among the students from two and single parents. It is also clear that the students who had the highest mean among the groups were from two parents who were professionals. The lowest mean registered among the groups was of the students from single parent professionals. This implies that the parents with university education (Table 11) secured jobs thus were professionals. This information confirms the results in Table 11, which indicated that the students with high self-esteem level were from two parents with university education. Students from single parents have lower level of self-esteem probably due to parental marital status.

The current findings add support to previous findings. For instance, Child Development Institute (1998) conducted a study that indicated that self-esteem was significantly impacted by the parent. In addition, Guthmen and Robles-Pina (2002) conducted study that showed self-esteem was significantly impacted by the marital status of the parents. Moreover Rogers (1969) put forward that it is in the first identification of both male and female children with the mother in a loving –dependency relationship that the basic super ego is laid down. Rogers continued to say that the boys who fail in this identification are liable to find themselves at variance with very strong held moves, and the stress of this is likely to engender unhappiness. This unhappiness in children would lead to lack of self-acceptance resulting in low self-esteem.

#### **4.3.2 Influence of Gender of Parents on Self-esteem of Students from Single Parent Families**

The second objective of the study was to determine whether there is any relationship between gender of the single parent and the self-esteem of the students from single parent families. It

had been hypothesised that there was no statistically significant relationship between gender of single parent and students' self-esteem level. The hypothesis was tested by running a Chi-square and the results of the analysis are vividly shown in Table 13.

**Table 13**

**Students' Self-esteem by Gender of Parents**

<b>Variable</b>	$\chi^2$	<b>Df</b>	<b>Contingent Coeff</b>	<b>Sig</b>
Father	38.24	2	0.72	0.000
Mother	39.78	2	0.69	0.000

The findings in Table 13 reveal that there is a relationship between gender of the parent and student's self-esteem. Based on this result, the hypothesis (Ho<sub>2</sub>) suggesting that there was no statistically significant relationship between gender of the single parent and student's self-esteem was therefore rejected. This was further confirmed by a contingent coefficient of 0.72 for the children living with the father and 0.69 for the children living with the mother, which showed there was a strong association between the two variables. At the same time, it was important to get the mean of students' self-esteem by gender of the parent and educational level. Table 14 gives the summary of the mean of self-esteem of students by single parent gender and education level.

**Table 14****Mean of Students' Self-esteem by Single Parent Gender and Education Level**

Single Parent's gender	Educational level	No of students	Self esteem mean
Father	No formal education	1	79.23
	Primary	3	82.11
	Secondary	3	79.67
	Colleges	5	78.89
	University	0	0.00
Mother	No formal education	1	79.83
	Primary	23	88.12
	Secondary	30	80.63
	College	7	81.34
	University	4	76.5

The results in Table 14 show that there was no single parent father with university education level among the students who participated in the study. The single parent mother with secondary level of education had the greatest number of students (30) who participated in the study and the least was the parents who had no formal education (1). The overall results showed that the students of the single parent mother who had primary educational level had a higher mean score ( $\bar{x}=88.12$ ) than those students from single parent mothers who had attained college and university levels ( $\bar{x}=75.77$ ).

These results refutes the findings of the research done by Russell Sage Foundation (1996) in Wades World (2005) indicating that mother's education is a primary predicator of child's well being in that this study showed that the single parent mother with primary level of education had the children with the highest mean of self-esteem. Since there was a relationship between parents gender and self-esteem between girls and boys, there was need to examine the mean to assess the difference, therefore, t-test was run.

The differences in self-esteem of students from single parents in Table 14 could have been caused by different methods of socialization and role modelling. Bandura (1969) in Mayer (1979) observed that a child needs a role model for the proper growth of personality in which the self-esteem is one of the personal dispositions. The self-esteem of single parent mothers, who had primary and secondary education, was higher also than their counterparts of single parents who had attained college and university level. The difference in this case may have been caused by the fact that the single parents who had no formal education, primary and secondary education may not have been involved in highly demanding careers thus enabling them to have more time with their children.

The mothers, who attained primary and secondary education may have provided love and warmth, which are prerequisites for the development of high self-esteem. Moreover, these single parents may not be living far from their maternal homes, which also may give the children a time to mingle with the uncles and aunts including the grandparents and these may have played a part in socialization of the children. In addition, Seers (1950) in Mayer (1979) contends that the parent determines the child personality development since the parent influences and teaches their children characteristics. The children who are from single parents

who had attained college and university may have had to compete for attention with other activities of the parent. This then may have led the children to feel neglected and left out thus affecting the self-esteem. There was also need to examine whether there was a relationship between gender of the parent and girls and boys. The researcher ran a chi -square for the two and the results were as in Table 15.

**Table 15**

**Relationship between Students' Self-esteem, their Gender and the Gender of the Parents**

<b>Gender of the students</b>	$\chi^2$	<b>Df</b>	<b>Contingent Coeff</b>	<b>Sig</b>
Boys	6.588	2	0.402	0.000
Girls	6.465	2	0.362	0.000

From Table 15, it is clear that there is a relationship between parental gender and students' self-esteem. The boys' self-esteem seems to be more influenced by parental gender since they had a higher contingent coefficient (0.402) than the girls' (0.362). Since there was relationship between gender and self-esteem between girls and boys, there was need to examine the mean to assess the mean difference. This was done through a t-test analysis. Table 16 shows the mean of self-esteem scores for girls and boys by gender of the parents.

**Table 16****Mean of Self-esteem Scores for Girls and Boys by Gender of the Parents**

<b>Parental gender and students' gender</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Father and Boys	6	85.16	4	7.050	0.000
Father and Girls	6	79.28	4		
Mother and Boys	23	84.2	21	12.21	0.000
Mother and Girls	42	85.95	40		

From Table 16, the analysis of self-esteem levels with the gender of students reveals that the mean for Girls living with the father was lower ( $\bar{x}=79.28$ ) than the mean for boys living with the father ( $\bar{x}=85.16$ ). This probably is as a result of girls missing the mother to identify with. The self-esteem mean for girls living with the mother was higher ( $\bar{x}=85.95$ ) than self-esteem for boys living with the mother ( $\bar{x}=84.2$ ). This implies that students living with same sex parent have a higher self-esteem than students living with opposite sex parent. However, there was need to find out whether these mean differences were significant. Therefore, t-test analysis was run which showed significant difference (father-boys and girls- $t=7.050, p < 0.05$ ; mother-girls and boys  $t=12.21, p < 0.05$ ). T-test was also done for comparison of means amongst the groups. Table 17 gives the result of the analysis.



**Table 17****Students' Self-esteem by Parents and Students Gender**

Parents' and students' gender	N	Mean	Mean difference	Sd	t-value	Df	Sig
Father and boys	6	85.16	0.9	1.36	0.013	4	0.000
Mother and boys	23	84.2				21	
Father and girls	6	79.28	6.67	0.89	8.86	4	0.000
Mother girls	42	85.95				40	

From Table 17 the mean difference of self-esteem for the girls living with the father and girls living with the mother was higher (6.67) than for the boys living with the father and the boys living with the mother. The results also showed a significant difference of self-esteem mean between girls living with the father and the girls living with the mother ( $t=8.86$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). However, the mean difference between the boys living with the father and the boys living with the mother was also significant ( $t=0.013$ ,  $p<0.05$ ).

The gender difference in the development process of self-esteem may reflect difference in socialization practices and socio-cultural expectations (Guthman et al 2002). The African traditional culture where this study was conducted, expectations for each sex were different and depended on the role one was expected to play in the society. Men were expected to play economic roles while women were expected to play domestic and other feminine roles. Such differences in attitudes and expectations may influence the self-esteem of male and female children from single parent family.

Other scholars have put forward their findings in relation to present study and have pointed out that sex of the parent impacts differently on the gender of the child. Keitikingas, Heinonen Raikkonen (2003) indicated that the same sex parent is suggested to be more important for the formation of self-esteem than the opposite sex parent. He further said that same-sex parent may have greater expectations for the child than the opposite sex parent. The results of this study corroborate with Keitikingas et al (2003) findings who observed that the parental behaviours have effect on the psychological characteristics that children will have later.

In support of this study, Keitikingas et al (2003) suggested that the same sex parent is more important for the formation of self-esteem than the opposite sex parent. This is because the same sex parent may have greater expectations for the child than the opposite sex parent. It has also been put forward that biological difference in reproduction contrast gender differences in parenting behaviours. This proposes that the biological experiences of pregnancy and lactation generate a strong instinctual drive in women to nurture infants and children (Silverstain and Auerbach, 1999).

Moreover a study by Downey, Ainsworth and Dufur (1998) in Wades Word (2005) on sex of parent and children's well-being in single parent families, indicated that adolescence from single father families are judged by teachers to be less well behaved and show less effort in class. They also scored slightly less than their single-mother counterparts on standardized tests, both verbal and math, and are perceived to be less academically qualified for courage. Children raised by single father attain on average six months less education. All these are indicators of low self-esteem as indicated in background information.

### 4.3.3 Influence of Parental Socio-economic Status on Students' Self-esteem.

The third objective was to determine whether there was any relationship between parental socio-economic status and students' self-esteem. The hypothesis for this objective stated that there was no statistically significant relationship between parental socio-economic status and students' self-esteem. The indicators of parental socio-economic status were parental education attainment, parental occupation and the amount of pocket money given to the students per term. These three items were accorded some values as it is below. The parental education attainment was divided into; no schooling (1), primary level (2), secondary level (3), college level (4) and university level (5). The parental occupation was divided into; unskilled (1), semi-skilled (2) and professional (3). The amount of pocket money given per term was grouped into; below Ksh. 100 (1), Ksh 100 – 200 (2), Ksh 201 – 300 (3), 301 – 400 (4), 401 and above (5). The calculations were done for every student and the range was 3- 13. These scores were then divided into the following that constituted parental socio-economic status; 3 – 6 (low), 7 – 9 (medium) and 10 – 13 (high). The analysis was done with socio-economic status as the independent variable and students' self-esteem as the dependant variable. Table 18 presents students self-esteem levels and parental socio-economic status.

Table 18

## Students' Self-esteem by Parental Socio- economic Status

Socio-economic Status categories	Self-esteem level						Total	%
	High	%	Moderate	%	Low	%		
High	36	13.1	39	14.2	16	5.8	91	33.2
Medium	27	9.9	43	15.7	27	9.9	97	35.4
Low	23	8.4	44	16.1	19	6.9	86	31.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>31.4</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>46.00</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>22.6</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>100.0</b>

From Table 18, it is clear that most students who were from low parent socio-economic status had moderate self- esteem level (16%). It was also noted that 13% of the students had come from high parental socio- economic status and had high self – esteem level. More over 6.9 % of the students had come from low parental socio-economic status and had low self-esteem. It was important to divide the students by parental marital status and socio-economic status in order to find out from which category was the students' self-esteem influenced more by parental socio-economic status. Tables 19 and 20 give the analysis.

Table 19

**Students' Self-esteem Levels by Two Parents family and Socio-economic Status**

Socio-economic status categories	Self-esteem Level							
	High	%	Moderate	%	Low	%	Total	%
High	32	16.2	30	15.22	13	6.598	75	38.07
Medium	18	9.13	34	17.25	23	11.67	75	38.07
Low	14	7.10	22	11.16	11	5.583	47	23.85
<b>Total</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>32.48</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>43.65</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>23.85</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>100</b>

From Table 19 the students from two parent families who were from high socio-economic status and had high self-esteem level were 16.2 %. The students who were from low parental socio-economic status and had low self-esteem level were 5.58 %. Most of the students were from medium parental socio-economic status and had moderate self-esteem level.

**Table 20****Students' Self-esteem Levels by Single Parents Family and Socio-economic Status**

<b>Socio-economic status categories</b>	<b>Self-esteem Level</b>							
	<b>High</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
High	4	5.19	9	11.68	3	3.89	16	20.77
Medium	9	11.68	9	11.68	4	5.19	22	28.57
Low	9	11.68	22	28.57	8	10.38	39	50.64
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>28.57</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>51.94</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>19.48</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>100</b>

From Table 20 the students from single parent family who were from high socio-economic status and had high self-esteem level were 5.19 %. It was clear that most students from single parents were from low parental socio-economic status and they had moderate self-esteem level. After noting that most students from two parents' families were from medium socio-economic status and those from single parents families were from low parental socio-economic status, and had moderate self-esteem level, the students were divided by gender, parental marital status and socio-economic status. Table 21, 22, 23 and 24 show the details of the analyses

**Table 21****Self-esteem levels of Boys from Two parent families by Socio-economic Status**

Self-esteem Levels								
Socio-economic status categories	High	%	Moderate	%	Low	%	Total	%
High	10	12.82	13	16.66	2	2.56	25	32.05
Medium	10	12.82	15	19.23	7	8.974	32	41.02
Low	4	5.128	12	15.38	5	6.41	21	26.92
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>30.76</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>51.28</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>17.94</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>100</b>

From Table 21, most boys from two parent families were from medium socio-economic status (19.23 %) and had moderate self-esteem, followed by boys from high parental socio-economic status (16.66 %) with moderate self-esteem and the least were from high socio-economic status (2.56 %) with low self-esteem level.

**Table 22****Self-esteem Levels of Girls from Two Parent Families by Socio-economic Status**

Self-esteem levels								
Socio-economic status categories	High	%	Moderate	%	Low	%	Total	%
High	22	18.48	17	14.28	11	9.24	50	42.01
Medium	8	6.72	19	15.96	16	13.44	43	36.13
Low	10	8.40	10	8.40	6	5.04	26	21.84
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>33.61</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>33.61</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>27.73</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>100</b>

It is clear from Table 22, that most girls from two parent families, were from high parental socio-economic status (18.48 %) and had high self-esteem level, followed by the girls from middle parental socio-economic status (15.96 %) with moderate self-esteem level and the least were from low parental socio-economic status (5.04 %) with low self-esteem level. This is an indication that the self-esteem of girls from two parent families was highly influenced by parental socio-economic status.

**Table 23**

**Self-esteem Levels of Boys from Single Parent families by Socio-economic Status**

Socio-economic status categories	Self-esteem Levels							
	High	%	Moderate	%	Low	%	Total	%
High	2	5.88	2	5.88	1	2.94	5	14.70
Medium	4	11.76	4	11.76	0	0	8	23.52
Low	4	11.76	12	35.29	5	14.70	21	61.76
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>29.41</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>52.94</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>17.64</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 23 shows that most boys from single parent families were from low parental socio-economic status (35.29 %) and had moderate self-esteem level. The next category of boys were from low parental socio-economic status (14.70 %) with low self-esteem level and the least was from high parental socio-economic status (2.94 %) with low self-esteem level. It can therefore be deduced that the parental socio-economic status of the single parent has an influence on self-esteem of the boys.



**Table 24****Self-esteem levels of Girls from Single Families by Socio-economic Status**

<b>Socio-economic status categories</b>	<b>Self-esteem</b>							
	<b>High</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
High	2	4.65	7	16.27	2	4.65	11	25.58
Medium	5	11.62	5	11.62	4	9.30	14	32.55
Low	5	11.62	10	23.25	3	6.97	18	41.86
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>29.90</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>51.16</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>20.93</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>

From Table 24, it was clear that most girls from single parent families were from low parental socio-economic status (23.25 %) and had moderate self-esteem level. The least were from High parental socio-economic (4.65 %) with high self-esteem and also the same number with low self-esteem level. To achieve the objective Chi-square was done. Before running the chi-square, t-test was done first for comparison of the means. Table 25 gives the analysis of the results.

**Table 25****Students' Self-esteem by Parental Socio-economic Status**

<b>Parental socio-economic status</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Mean Difference</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Sig</b>
High	91	91.2	4.8	186	12.4	2.0	0.000
Medium	97	86.3					
High	91	91.2	4.5	175	0.70	1.61	0.000
Low	86	95.7					
Medium	97	86.3	9.3	181	1.62	0.95	0.000
Low	86	95.7					

From Table 25 the mean of Self-esteem from the low parental economic status was higher (95.7) than for the other two groups. It was also clear that all the groups of different parental socio-economic status had moderate self-esteem. Having the mean for all the students falling under moderate self-esteem, it was important to divide the students into parental marital status into two groups of two and single parents and compare their means by socio-economic status. Table 26 indicates the mean of students' Self-esteem by two-parent family and socio-economic status.

**Table 26****Student' Self-esteem mean by Two Parent Family and Socio-economic Status**

<b>Parental socio-economic status</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Mean Difference</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Sig</b>
High	75	91.8	6.0	148	0.7	2.6	0.000
Medium	75	85.7					0.000
High	75	91.8	3.4	120	11.4	1.3	0.000
Low	47	88.3					
Medium	75	85.7	2.5	120	11.4	0.95	0.000
Low	47	88.3					

Among the Students from two parental family in Table 26, it is clear that the highest mean of self-esteem fell under the high Socio-economic Status. It was also observed that the students from high Socio-economic status had higher mean ( $\bar{x}=91.8$ ) of Self-esteem than the other two groups. This could mean that the parental socio-economic status has influence of the students' Self-esteem among the students from two parent families. Table 27 presents Student' Self-esteem by parental socio-economic status among students from single parent families.

**Table 27****Students' Self-esteem mean by Single Parent Socio-economic Status**

<b>Parental socio-economic status</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Mean Difference</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Sig</b>
High	16	88.3	0.05	36	0.75	0.69	0.000
Medium	22	88.375					
High	16	88.375	16.2	53	0.66	0.18	0.000
Low	39	104.6					
Medium	22	88.3	16.3	59	0.7	1.04	0.000
Low	39	104.6					

In Table 27, it was observed that the students from low parental socio-economic status had the highest mean among the students from single parent families. This probably points to the fact that the single parent of low socio-economic status could be with the child in many occasions. After analyzing the mean of students' self-esteem, chi-square was run to indicate the relationship between student's self-esteem and parental socio-economic status. Table 28 shows the results of the analysis

**Table 28****Students Self- esteem by Parental Socio-economic Status**

<b>Variable</b>	$\chi^2$	<b>Df</b>	<b>Contingent coeff</b>	<b>Sig</b>
Socio-economic status	0.664	2	0.5	0.000

The  $\chi^2$  value of 0.664 was obtained as presented by the results shown in Table 28. This indicates that there was a marked difference between the actual and expected frequencies falling in each category. Hence, the parental socio-economic status has an influence on the students' self-esteem. This was further confirmed by a strong contingent coefficient of 0.5. Contingent coefficient is normally used in statistics to index the strength or the magnitude of an association or relation between categorical variables. Since the researcher was dealing with two groups of students according to gender, it was important to run a chi-square on boys and girls to find out whether, either of the group could be having their self-esteem influenced by parental socio-economic status more than the other. The results are presented in Table 29.

**Table 29****Students' Self-esteem by their Gender and Parental Socio-economic Status**

<b>Students' gender</b>	$\chi^2$	<b>Df</b>	<b>Contingent coeff</b>	<b>Sig</b>
Boys	2.214	2	0.13	0.000
Girls	2.926	2	0.15	0.000

The results in Table 29 show that the self-esteem of girls has a greater degree of association to their parental socio-economic status since their chi-square value was slightly higher ( $\chi^2=2.926$ ) than that of the boys ( $\chi^2=2.214$ ). Also, the contingent coefficient of 0.15 (girls) was higher than 0.13 (boys). Due to this difference of chi-square values between boys and girls, the researcher ran Chi-Square again for students from single and two parent families. Table 30 indicates the analysis.

**Table 30**

**Students' Self-esteem by Parental Socio-economic Status and Marital Status**

<b>Parental marital status</b>	$\chi^2$	<b>Df</b>	<b>Contingent coeff</b>	<b>Sig</b>
Two parents	7.959	2	0.19	0.000
Single parents	11.091	2	0.35	0.000

Table 30 indicates that the  $\chi^2$  value of students from single parents was higher ( $\chi^2=11.091$ ) than for students from two parents ( $\chi^2 = 7.959$ ). This shows that the students' self-esteem from single parents may be more influenced by parental socio-economic status than the self-esteem of students from two parent family. This was further confirmed by differences in the contingent coefficient where by students from single parent families had higher contingent coefficient (C=0.35) than students from two parent families (C=0.19). This means that the students self-esteem from single parent families have a higher degree of association to the parental socio-economic status than the self-esteem of students from two parent families. Due to these differences indicated in  $\chi^2$  value of the students from single and two parent families, it was important to group these students by gender and parental marital status, and run a chi-

square to find out which group among them could have their self-esteem more influenced by parental socio-economic status than the other. Table 31 indicates the results of the analysis.

**Table 31**

**Students' Self-esteem by their Gender and Parental Marital and Socio-economic Status.**

<b>Parental marital status</b>	<b>Student gender</b>	$\chi^2$	<b>Df</b>	<b>Contingent coeff</b>	<b>Sig</b>
Two parents	Boys	2.385	2	0.17	0.000
	Girls	7.681	2	0.25	0.000
Single parents	Boys	12.765	2	0.52	0.000
	Girls	1.721	2	0.196	0.000

From Table 31, it is observed that the  $\chi^2$  value of boys from single parent families indicate high difference between the actual and expected frequencies falling in each category. Hence the socio-economic status of single parent has influences on their boys' self-esteem. This was also confirmed by a fairly strong contingent coefficient of 0.52 that indicate a substantial degree of association between self -esteem of boys and from single parent socio-economic status.

**4.3.4 Students Self-esteem by Duration of Single Parenthood**

The fourth objective determined whether there was any relationship between students' self -esteem and duration of single parenthood. The hypothesis tested for this objective stated that there was no statistically significant relationship between duration of single parenthood and students' self-esteem. Before running a chi-square, a t-test analysis was done for comparison

of the means. Table 32 gives the detailed information of comparison of the means of the students' self-esteem by duration of single parenthood.

**Table 32**

**Students' Self-esteem mean by Duration of Single Parenthood**

Duration	N	Mean	Mean Difference	Df	SD	t-value	Sig
0-10	21	92.4	9.3	19	13.8	.2219	0.000
11-15	13	83.1		11			
11-15	13	83.1	4.5	11	12.3	2.381	0.000
Over 15	9	78.6		7			
Over 15	9	78.6	13.8	7	10.7	2.463	0.000
0-10	21	92.44		19			

From Table 32, the self-esteem mean of the students who had lived in single parenthood for over 15 years was lower ( $\bar{x}=76.24$ ) than for students who had lived in single parenthood for 11-15 years ( $\bar{x}=81.03$ ) and 0-10 years ( $\bar{x}=88.52$ ). This may imply that those students who had lived in single parenthood longer were more negatively affected as compared to their counterparts who have lived for a shorter period in the category of parenthood. The researcher also categorized the students into girls and boys and compared their means.



The girls who had lived in single parenthood for the period between 0-10 years had a higher mean of self-esteem ( $\bar{x}=92.44$ ) than the girls who had lived in single parenthood in the years between 11 –15 years ( $\bar{x}=83.1$ ). The girls who had also lived in single parenthood for the years between 11-15 had higher mean of self-esteem ( $\bar{x}=83.1$ ) than the girls who had lived in single parenthood for over 15 years ( $\bar{x}=78.6$ ). This implies that the girls are affected by single parenthood duration and the more the years of single parenthood, the lower the self-esteem and vice versa. Table 33 gives the summary of the mean of self-esteem of girls by duration of single parenthood.

**Table 33**

**Girls' Self-esteem by Duration of Single Parenthood.**

<b>Duration</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Sign</b>
0-10	21	92.44	19	13.80	2.958	0.000
11-15	13	83.1	11	12.29	2.935	0.000
Over 15	9	78.6	7	10.70	2.735	0.000

The results in Table 33 confirm that when the means were compared, the less the years that a child lived in single parenthood, the higher the self-esteem and the opposite was also true. The mean of self-esteem for boys was also compared across their categories of durations. Table 34 gives the analyses of the result.

**Table 34****Boys' Self-esteem mean by Duration of Single Parenthood**

<b>Duration</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Sign</b>
0-10	18	84.6	16	11.02	1.59	0.000
11-15	8	79.2	6	13.24	1.36	0.000
Over 15.years	8	74.3	6	13.06	1.48	0.000

Table 34 compares the mean of self-esteem for the boys. The boys who had lived for 0-10 years in single parenthood had their mean higher ( $\bar{x}=84.6$ ) than the mean of self-esteem for boys who had lived in single parenthood for 11-15 years ( $\bar{x}=79.2$ ). The self-esteem mean of the boys who had lived in single parenthood for 11-15 years was higher ( $\bar{x}=79.2$ ) than for the boys who had lived over 15 in single parenthood ( $\bar{x}=74.3$ ). It was also clear that the mean of self-esteem for boys who had lived in single parenthood for 0-10 years was higher ( $\bar{x}=84.6$ ) than for the boys who had lived in single parenthood for over 15 years. The comparison of self-esteem means for boys and girls in the three categories was done. Table 35 shows the results.

**Table 35****Self-esteem for Boys and Girls by Duration of Single parenthood**

<b>Duration</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Sig</b>
			<b>Difference</b>					
0-10	Boys	18	84.6	8.0	16	11.1	1.65	0.000
	Girls	21	92.4		19			
11-15	Boys	8	79.1	3.9	6	4.1	0.24	0.000
	Girls	13	83.0		11			
Over 15	Boys	8	74.2	4.2	6	0.3	0.86	0.000
	Girls	9	78.4		7			

From Table 35, the group that registered greater mean difference had lived 0-10 years in single parenthood. It is therefore clear that the self-esteem of boys and girls was affected differently by single parenthood. The comparison of mean vividly confirms that there is a significant difference between students' self-esteem and the duration of single parenthood. In order to establish whether a relationship exists,  $\chi^2$  test was done and the results are presented in Table 36.

**Table 36****Student's Self-esteem by Duration of Single Parenthood**

Variable	$\chi^2$	Df	Coeff	Significance
Duration of Single parenthood	37.545	18	0.573	P<0.05

The influence of duration of single parenthood on students' self-esteem was investigated by computing Chi-square value with duration of single parenthood as the independent variable and the students' self-esteem as the dependent variable. The analysis in Table 36 shows that there is statistically significant relationship between duration in which a child has lived in a single parenthood and the students' self-esteem. Also, the contingent coefficient of 0.573 shows a substantial degree of association between the students' self-esteem and duration of single parenthood. Therefore, hypothesis four was rejected. This implies that the issue of duration of single parenthood has a direct relationship on students' self-esteem in Gichugu division of Kirinyaga District.

After finding out that there was a relationship between duration of single parenthood and students' self-esteem, the researcher decided to categorize the duration of single parenthood in to; 0-10 years, 11-15 years and over 15 years so as to run a chi-square test and find out at what duration was relationship more strong than the others. Table 37 shows the results of the analysis.

**Table 37****Students' Self-esteem by Years of Single Parenthood**

<b>Duration</b>	<b>N</b>	<b><math>\chi^2</math></b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>Contingent coeff</b>	<b>Sig</b>
0-10 years	21	6.62	2	0.529	P<0.05
11-15 years	13	18.58	2	0.568	P<0.05
Over 15 years	9	19.23	2	0.691	P<0.05

From the findings in Table 37, the students who had lived in single parenthood for over 15 years had higher degree of contingent coefficient (C = 0.691) than the students who had lived in single parenthood for a period between 11-15 years (C = 0.568). The student who had lived in single parenthood for 0-10 years had a lower degree of contingent coefficient (C = 0.529) than the students who had lived in single parenthood for a period of 11-15 years (C = 0.568). These results imply that, the students who had lived in single parenthood for over 15 years were more affected in the relationship than the other two groups since they registered a higher degree of contingent coefficient than the other two groups.

The results are in agreement with many scholars who have given their views on the development of self-esteem and the age of the child. Friedman (1995) contends that the foundation of self-esteem is established in very early stages of child development. This is because before the child can understand the words of praise, he is aware of the admiring twinkle in the parent's eye. This idea is supported by Church of large Fellowship (2002), which noted that foundations of self-esteem are laid early in life when infants develop attachments with the adults who are responsible for them.

When adults readily respond to their cries and smiles, babies learn to feel loved and valued. This implies that early stages of a child are very important for the development of self-esteem. In addition, Solomon, Judith and Carol (1999) in *Wades World* (2005) observed that the infant who had experienced parental separation when they were under 18 months, exhibited alarming levels of emotional insecurity and poor ability to regulate strong emotion which point to low self-esteem when they were adolescents

Moreover, Month (1980) said that self-esteem as an essential aspect of self-hood begins to acquire importance near the end of the second year of life and becomes critical for healthy development in the third year. This, points to Oedipal and Anaclitic phases where parents often provide identification and socialization to the child.

To elaborate further, Krider (2005) also explained that children with parents who are absent frequently or for long periods of time due to divorce, separation or death, display lower levels of self-esteem. Children often view this parental absence as a sort of rejection and in turn question their worth. They may experience anxiety over the years that if the love in the marriage relationship can end, so too could the love in the parent-child relationship.

Krider (2005) continued to explain that in case of divorce, a strong relationship has been found between age of parental separation and the self-esteem of male children. The younger the male child was at the time of divorce, the lower his self-esteem. He further said that, the more developmental years the male children experience disunited parental contact and modelling, the more the development of self-esteem will suffer. In addition, Meyer (1979) said that the effects of the fathers' absence on sex typing depend on the child age at the time

of separation. This points to what was stated earlier in literature review that Oedipus complex and Anaclitic complex are important for sex typing and this improves the self-worth and consequently self-esteem.

#### 4.3.5 Students' Self-esteem by their Gender and Parental Marital Status

The objective five investigated whether there was any gender difference in self-esteem among students from single and two parent families. The hypothesis tested stated that there was no statistically significant gender difference in self-esteem among children from single and those from two parent families. As such, t-test analysis was done. Before the t-test was done there was need to first analyze students' distribution by gender and self-esteem level irrespective of parental marital status. Table 38 and 39 show the students' distribution by gender and self-esteem levels.

Table 38

#### Students' Distribution by Gender and Self-esteem level

Students' gender	Self-esteem Levels						Total	Percent
	High	Percent (%)	Moderate	Percent (%)	Low	Percent (%)		
Male	34	12.4	58	21.2	20	27.3	112	40.9
Female	52	18.98	68	24.8	42	15.3	162	59.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>31.38</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>46.0</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>42.6</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>100</b>

had low self-esteem. It was also clear that 19% of the girls had high self-esteem while 15.3% had low level of self-esteem. Overall assessment showed that 31.4% both boys and girls had high self-esteem while 22.6% had low level of self-esteem. In order to test the hypothesis on gender difference in self-esteem of students of single and two parent families, t-test was run and the results of the analysis are indicated in Tables 39 and 40.

**Table 39**

**Self-esteem by Students Gender and Parental Marital Status.**

Lives with	N	Mean	Mean	Df	SD	t-value	Sig
two parents			Difference				
Boys	78	89.1	0.6355	76	11.88	0.319	0.000
Girls	119	88.4		117			

The results in Table 40 show a slight difference of self-esteem scores in relation to gender. Boys scored slightly higher ( $\bar{x}=89$ ,  $SD= 11.88$ ) than girls ( $\bar{x}=88.4$ ,  $SD=11.88$ ); yet a second examination of the means and a t-test for independent samples ( $t=0.319$ ,  $p>0.05$ ) indicated essentially no significant difference in gender when comparing self-esteem scores of girls and boys living with two biological parents.

These findings confirm what Dallas (1994) in Wades World (2005) found in his study. He observed that one factor that was the most important in helping children become healthy and healthy adult (healthy self-esteem) was the quality of the relationship between their parents. He further said that this was more important than giving kids hugs, providing good discipline or any other aspect of what is traditionally considered good parenting. This probably point out



that the two parent could earn the children (a boy and a girl) specific qualities in life, which made their mean of self-esteem not to have disparities.

**Table 40**

**Self-esteem for Children from Single Parent by Gender.**

Lives with single parent	N	Mean	Mean Difference	Df	SD	t-value	Sig
Boys	34	84.2	2.34	32	21.54	1.036	0.000
Girls	43	86.74		41			

The findings in Table 41 show great difference of self-esteem scores in relation to gender. Boys scored significantly lower ( $\bar{x}=84.2$ ;  $SD=21.54$ ) than the girls ( $\bar{x}=86.74$ ,  $SD= 21.54$ ). However, a second examination of the means and a t-test for independent samples ( $t=1.036$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) indicated significant differences in gender when comparing self-esteem scores.

The gender differences in Table 41 may be explained by mothers' and fathers' different socializing patterns. In a two -parent family, the balance between the mothers and fathers different socializing patterns may be what keeps the self-esteem of both sexes relatively equal. Apparently, the researcher feels that the absent father upsets this balance, which leaves the boy in a family environment in which less is expected from him, and consequently he may not develop the positive feelings of self-esteem. It was also important to compare the means of self-esteem of boys and girls from two and single parent families. Table 42 gives the findings of the analysis.

**Table 41****Mean of Students' Self-esteem for Two and Single Parents**

<b>Gender of students and family type</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Mean Difference</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Sig</b>
Boys from two parents	78	89.1	4.9	76	1.12	1.89	0.000
Boys from single parents	34	84.2		32			
Girls from two parents	119	88.4	1.7	117	14.63	0.62	0.000
Girls from single parents	43	86.74		41			

From Table 42, it is clear that the self-esteem scores for boys from single parents were the lowest among the groups. The mean difference of boys from two and single parents was also high ( $\bar{x}=4.9$ ) and the number of the single parents boys was smaller than that of boys from two parents. It was worth noting that all the groups had moderate mean of self-esteem. The girls from two parents were more than any other group in the categories and their self-esteem mean was higher than the self-esteem of girls from single parent families.

These results are in agreement with studies done by Block and Robins (1993); Kling et al (1999) in Keltikangas et al (2003) indicating that gender of the parent plays an important role

in the development of self-esteem. They further explained that adolescent boys tend to have slightly higher self-esteem than the girls, and that there are qualitative differences in women's and men's self-esteem. The researcher was not suggesting that all students from single parent families are suffering from low self-esteem, just as not all students living with two parents are doing well. These findings refute the research by Guthman and Roble-Pina (2002) who observed that there was no gender difference in self-esteem and there was no significant difference in the self-esteem scores in relation to parental marital status.

These findings corroborate with the research findings of Science Blog (2004) which showed that the boys with married parents had higher overall self-esteem compared with boys with single parents even when family income and family functioning were taken into consideration. In addition, Elegbellye and Okeke (2004) observed that the gender variations of self-esteem, (internal feelings of self-worth) are likely to distinguish the types of influence exerted. Palosaari (1994) also noted that there are gender differences in girls and boys who were from single parent families. He further explained that those children who had experienced parental divorce/separation at Oedipal phase and Anaclitic phase experienced sadness and the internal functioning was poor, which portrayed low self-esteem.

Moreover, Johnson (1999) observed that fathers use their influence to help their daughters develop healthy self-images, emotional health and development. Fathers are also said to add the specifically feminine to the girls' initial expressiveness by rewarding her, by his appreciative attitude, not simply for being "good" but being attractive (Rogers, 1969). This probably contradicts the results in Table 42 because the girls living with the father had the lowest mean among the groups.

As related to the mean of boys living with the father, Rogers (1969) found that a positive relationship with the father relates to self-confidence, assertiveness and skills in the peer group, initiation of friendships, success in influence and non-dependency. In addition Neeman (2000) conducted a study which showed that boys coming from families with a father scored higher in a self-esteem test than did boys from families without fathers.

As for the boys living with the mother, the mean difference between them and the girls was very small (boys= $\bar{x}$  = 84.2, girls= $\bar{x}$  =86.74). Keitikingas et al (2003) conducted a study that indicated that mother's child-rearing attitudes, role satisfaction, and perceptions of child may be less essential for the development of self-esteem in boys than in girls. Again it has been suggested that, lacking a father's influence, boys begin to seek male role models elsewhere. More so the absence of a father seems to lead to low self-esteem because fathers expect more from their sons than mothers do.

In addition, it is not just the self-esteem that is damaged by the absence of a father, but it impacts the psychological, social and emotional development of the boys (Neeman, 2000). This may explain why the boys living with the father scored higher in self-esteem scale ( $\bar{x}$  =89.1) than the boys living with mother ( $\bar{x}$  =84.2). Mothers are said to hold girls accountable (Neeman, 2000). This may explain why the girls living with the mother had higher self-esteem level than the boys living with the mother. However the study carried out by Meloyd (1994) in Keltikangas et al (2003) indicated that single mothers' negative perceptions of the maternal role were not found to be related to their adolescents' self-esteem.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

The present study entailed the students' self-esteem. The chief aim was to determine the relationship between the students' self-esteem and parental marital status among secondary school students. This chapter therefore recounts the summary of the major findings, the conclusions reached and the implications of the findings. Also, some recommendations and areas that require further research are highlighted.

#### 5.2 Summary of the Major Findings

In this chapter, an attempt was made to use the results of the study to corroborate the hypotheses posited with regard to the self-esteem of students and parental marital status. The findings have clarified that parenthood is the "final common pathway" to the development of children self-esteem. In addition; the qualitative findings have also clearly elaborated that parenting not only improves the sense of self worth but also determines the children's dispositions. The total psychological characteristics are developed at childhood and the parents are the primary caretakers thus affecting the self-esteem development.

These findings have generally demonstrated that there is a significant difference in self-esteem level between students from single parents and two parent families. This was evident because the inferential statistics showed that the difference between the mean score of self-esteem obtained from students of both and single parent families on all dependent measures were statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This therefore, is an indication that the two parents are important in the development of children self-esteem. Moreover, this study

showed that there is a relationship between students' self-esteem and single parenthood ( $C = 0.573$ ). Self-esteem of the students seems to be influenced also by parental gender and students' gender. The findings showed that the same sex parent has a greater influence of students' self-esteem than the opposite sex parent. The duration of single parenthood too affects the students' self-esteem. The analysis indicated that the more time of separation the less the students' self-esteem level.

The parental socio-economic status also influences students' self-esteem. The students from parents of high socio-economic status had higher self-esteem than the students from parent of middle and low socio-economic status. Finally, the results of this study are consistent with earlier research findings indicating that parental marital status does play an important role in the development of self-esteem (Guthman & Robles-pina, 2002). Moreover, these findings are compatible with Child Development Institute (1998) assertions that parents, more than anyone else can promote their children's self-esteem.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

Based on the analysis of data presented in chapter four, the following conclusions have been reached.

- (i) The overall self-esteem levels of students from single and two parent families have a difference. The children from two parent families seem to have higher level of self-esteem than students from single parent families. Therefore parents should be encouraged to have a two-parent family where possible and where it is not possible, family support to be offered to the single parent family.

- (ii) Some of the students from single parent families indicated high self-esteem and at the same time, some of the students from two parent families registered low self-esteem. Therefore the parents in two or single families should be equipped with skills necessary in the development of high self-esteem in their children.
- (iii) Students' self-esteem is influenced by parental gender. This implies that since self-esteem is a psychological construct which refers to how the self is viewed and valued, the issue is that the feelings of lack of one parent, whether the mother or the father to a student is so rich, and is usually felt by the individual student.
- (iv) Students' self-esteem is affected by parental socio-economic status. This shows that the students' feelings of worth may not be derived from the feelings and competence of the parent.
- (v) Students' self-esteem is affected by the duration of single parenthood. The developmental stages of the child seem to be affected by the separation or the situation of the single parenthood.
- (vi) The girls living with the father are most affected in self-esteem. They had the lowest level of self-esteem in comparison with the other groups. The boys living with the mother registered a little bit lower than the boys living with the father. This points out that the mother figure is important in the development of high self-esteem in girls thus in this case the mother figure should be provided.
- (vii) The self-esteem of students from single parents who had no formal education, primary and secondary level of education was generally higher than the self-esteem of the student from single parent who had attained college and university levels of education.

It can therefore be generally concluded that parents contribute greatly to the development of self-esteem of their children. The parents are the first people that the child comes into contact with and also in the process of development; the child experiences the feelings of love or hate which significantly contribute to the development of self-worth. In fact, before the child can understand the word of praise, he is aware of the admiring twinkle in the parent's eye (Child Development Institute, 1998). Furthermore, the parent provides the first ground of socialization. In essence, the parent provides the unconditional love and acceptance which are vital for the development of self-esteem. At the same time, the child needs two parents for laying of the super ego and later identification which take place at Oedipal phase and anaclitic phase. Therefore, the two parents are crucial for the development of high self-esteem and more so provide love and warmth to the child.

#### **5.4 Implications**

A close scrutiny of the findings of this study advance several implications. First, it was noted that the students from two parent families have higher self-esteem level than those students from single parent families. This implies that there are specific psychological characteristics that students acquire from the two parents in the process of development. Due to lack of one parent, then the students from single parents lack, and as a result, they question their worth leading to low self-esteem. With this information therefore, counselling services should be provided to the students from single parents in an attempt to raise their self-esteem.

This study indicated that parenting is very essential for the development of self-esteem. The children from single parent registered different self-esteem level by different duration of single parenthood. This implies that at different stages of development, the parent is needed to



fulfil certain psychological needs of the child for the development of high self-esteem. With this information therefore, family support system should be encouraged where the children are brought up by a single parent. Counselling should also be sought as measure of intervention where the family support system was not involved in the up bringing of the children.

Parental socio-economic status has influence on students' self-esteem. This implies that the students derive psychological satisfaction or psychological needs from parental socio-economic status. The parents can therefore make their children know some of their functions or give them hope just to make them feel good and to boost their self-esteem.

In addition, this study has showed that parents can help in improving the children's self-esteem. Parenting therefore can be taught in schools so that when students become parents, they may be in a position to improve their children's self-esteem. The study also showed that self-esteem is influenced by gender. This implies that the different gender have different self-esteem level due to how the society views them. It is therefore important to eliminate cultural aspects or bias that contribute to suppressing some sexes and uphold others.

The study also demonstrated that the duration of single parenthood has a relationship with a child's self-esteem. The students who have lived in single parenthood for many years portrayed a lower level of self-esteem than the students who have lived in single parenthood for lesser years. This implies that childhood is the phase of life cycle, when parents provide experiences that are believed to exert their most significant and silent influence. Childhood is also the stage when human beings are particularly susceptible and responsive to external

experiences. It is therefore important that the students be exposed to the significant others by their parents for better formation of personality.

Notable from this study also is difference in self-esteem level between sexes of children of single parents. It may be that the most common scenes of mother as custodial parent and caregiver severely limits the active role of a paternal model and support that are particularly essential to the development of self-esteem in male children. Male student living with mother is a single parent displayed lower levels of self-esteem than girls. Although these findings may have such implications more studies covering a larger area should also be conducted in order to realize a meaningful conclusion.

### **5.5 Recommendations**

From the findings of this study, it is evident that parents are key factors in the development of self-esteem in their children. This parallels recent studies by Krider, (2002), Palassri, (1994), and Guthman and Robles-Pina (2002). It can therefore be recommended that:-

- (i) The children from two parent families had higher self-esteem level than their counterparts from single parent families, therefore the two parents families should be encouraged to live intact (together) through family counselling and church programmes.
- (ii) Since children from single parent families showed relatively lower self-esteem level, teachers or teacher counsellors should come up with programmes on how to enhance self-esteem of children from such families.
- (iii) The family counsellors should clearly explain to the couples planning to divorce on what effect their divorce would have on their children's self-esteem.

- (iv) The social workers employed by the government should take note of children from single different families and try to associate with them in a positive way in an attempt to provide the role model to those children in order to raise their self-esteem.
- (v) As much as male children need a female caregiver to offer emotional comfort, they also need a role model for guidance and support. Single mothers should therefore identify a responsible man who would be willing to take an active role in the life of their male child. This can be the husband or partner of a friend, or any trusted family member such as a cousin, uncle, or grandfather.
- (vi) During adolescence, a stage when children are often rebellious and fragile, a single parent should maintain authority but with obvious love and concern.
- (vii) This study has found out that not all the children in a single parent family are necessarily doomed to a life of low self-esteem. There are children from single parent families with high self-esteem, which may mean that the single parent has the ability to establish warm, supportive, satisfying and committed relationship with the children.
- (viii) The single parent mothers who have attained university levels should realize that their many responsibilities might make the children to have low self-esteem. They should therefore have time for their children and provide warmth and affection

### **5.6 Suggestions for further Research**

During the course of this study, some issues came into light, which may warrant further research. In effect, the following are the suggested topics for further research.

- i. A longitudinal study addressing relationship between students' self-esteem and parental marital status.
- ii. The influence of parental education on students' self-esteem.

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APPENDIX A  
RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Telegrams: EDUCATION", Nairobi

Fax No.  
Telephone: 318581  
When replying please quote



JOGOO HOUSE  
HARAMBEE AVENUE  
P. O. Box 30040  
NAIROBI  
KENYA

MOEST 13/001/35C 255

2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2005

Margaret Wanjiru Gitumu  
Egerton University  
P.O. BOX 536  
NJORO

Dear Madam

**RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION**

Following your application for authority to conduct research on "Relationship between students self esteem and parental marital status among secondary school students". I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to conduct research in Secondary Schools in Kirinyaga District for a period ending 30<sup>th</sup> July, 2005.

You are advised to report to the District Commissioner, the District Education Officer and the Principals of the respective Secondary Schools you will visit before embarking on your research project.

Upon completion of your research project, you are expected to submit two copies of your research report to this Office.

Yours faithfully

For PERMANENT SECRETARY  
MINISTRY OF  
EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

  
M. O. ONDIEKI

**FOR: PERMANENT SECRETARY**

**APPENDIX B**

**LETTER OF INTRODUCTION**

**MARGARET WANJIRU,  
GITUMU,  
P.O. BOX 304,  
KIANYAGA.**

**THE PRINCIPAL,  
SCHOOLS IN GICHUGU DIVISION,  
P.O. BOX  
KIANYAGA/KERUGOYA.**

Dear Principal,


**RE: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION**

My name is Margaret Wanjiru Gitumu, an M.Ed student at Egerton University. I am currently undertaking a research on relationship between students' self-esteem and parental marital status within Gichugu Division. Due to your position as the principal in the school, I kindly request you to allow me collect some information from the students to enable me complete the study.

I assure you that the information I get from the students shall be treated as confidential and used for academic purposes only.

Thank very much for your cooperation.

Yours faithfully,

  
Margaret Wanjiru Gitumu.

CC

**The District Commissioner  
Kirinyaga District**

**The District Education Officer  
Kirinyaga District**

**The Principals  
Secondary schools  
Kirinyaga District**

## APPENDIX C

### STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

**Dear Respondent,**

I am a Masters student (Guidance and Counselling) at Egerton University. I am currently collecting data to aid me complete my studies. I would like you to assist me by answering the questions below. The questions provided will guide you through the items

#### Section A: Personal Data

**Instructions:** Put a tick on only where appropriate. e.g.

1. Your age: 11 – 13  14 – 16  17 – 19  over 19
2. Sex: Male  Female
3. Indicate the category of your school: Provincial  District
4. When at home I live with both of my biological parents Yes  No   
(if your answer is Yes in question 4 above skip questions 5, 6 and 7)
5. When at home I live with one biological parent Yes  No
6. When at home I live with one biological and one non-biological parent. Yes  No
7. If with one parent, indicate whether it is father or mother. Father  Mother
8. From what age have you been with parent identified in 7 above? \_\_\_\_\_ years.
9. What is the education level of your parent?
  - (i). No schooling
  - (ii). Primary level
  - (iii). Secondary level
  - (iv). College level
  - (v). University
10. What is the occupation of your parent? \_\_\_\_\_

11. Estimate the amount of pocket money that you are usually given per term:

(i) Below Kshs. 100  (ii) Kshs. 100-200  (iii) Kshs 201-300

(iv) Kshs. 301-400  (v) Kshs. 401 and above

### Section B: Self-esteem Scale

#### Instructions:

Read each statement carefully and indicate how it describes the feelings you have about yourself. If you **STRONGLY AGREE** circle (SA), if you **AGREE**, circle (A), if you are **NOT SURE**, circle (N), if you **DISAGREE**, circle (D), if you **STRONGLY DISAGREE**, circle (SD).

- |   |             |
|---|-------------|
| 1. I don't feel anyone else is better than I am.  | SA A N D SD |
| 2. I am free of shame, blame, and guilt.  | SA A N D SD |
| 3. I am a happy, carefree person.   | SA A N D SD |
| 4. I have no need to prove I am as good as or better than others.   | SA A N D SD |
| 5. I do not have a strong need for people to pay attention to me or like what I do.                                   | SA A N D SD |
| 6. Losing does not upset me or make me feel "less than" others.   | SA A N D SD |
| 7. I feel warm and loving toward myself.  | SA A N D SD |
| 8. I do not feel others are better than I am because they can do things better, have more money, or are more popular. | SA A N D SD |

I am at ease with strangers and make friends easily.	<b>SA A N D SD</b>
I speak up for my own ideas, likes, and dislikes.	<b>SA A N D SD</b>
I am not hurt by others' opinions or attitudes.	<b>SA A N D SD</b>
I do not need praise to feel good about myself.	<b>SA A N D SD</b>
I feel good about others' good luck and winning.	<b>SA A N D SD</b>
I do not find fault with my family, friends, or others.	<b>SA A N D SD</b>
I do not feel I must always please others.	<b>SA A N D SD</b>
I am open and honest, and not afraid of letting people see my real self.	<b>SA A N D SD</b>
I am friendly, thoughtful, and generous toward others.	<b>SA A N D SD</b>
I do not blame others for my problems and mistakes.	<b>SA A N D SD</b>
I enjoy being alone with myself.	<b>SA A N D SD</b>
I accept compliments and gifts without feeling uncomfortable or needing to give something in return.	<b>SA A N D SD</b>
I admit my mistakes and defeats without feeling ashamed or "less than."	<b>SA A N D SD</b>
I feel no need to defend what I think, say, or do.	<b>SA A N D SD</b>
I do not need others to agree with me or tell me I'm right.	<b>SA A N D SD</b>

I do not brag about myself, what I have done, or what my family has  
or does. **SA A N D SD**

I do not feel "put down" when criticised by my friends or others. **SA A N D SD**

## APPENDIX D

### PROPORTIONAL SAMPLE OF FORM THREE STUDENTS PER SCHOOL

School	Category	Population	Proportionate sample
Kiamutugu Boys	Provincial	65	$\frac{306}{1382} \times 65 = 14$
Kianyaga Boys	Provincial	162	$\frac{306}{1382} \times 162 = 36$
Kabare Girls	Provincial	161	$\frac{306}{1382} \times 161 = 36$
Ngiriambu Girls	Provincial	138	$\frac{306}{1382} \times 138 = 31$
Mutige Boys	District	41	$\frac{306}{1382} \times 41 = 9$
Karumandi Boys	District	30	$\frac{306}{1382} \times 30 = 7$
St. Gituba Girls	District	26	$\frac{306}{1382} \times 26 = 6$
Mugumo Girls	District	111	$\frac{306}{1382} \times 111 = 25$
Kiamugumo Girls	District	46	$\frac{306}{1382} \times 46 = 10$
Kiburia Girls	District	116	$\frac{306}{1382} \times 116 = 26$
Thumaita East Girls	District	37	$\frac{306}{1382} \times 37 = 8$
Rwambiti Mixed	District	74	$\frac{306}{1382} \times 74 = 16$

Githure Mixed	District	31	$\frac{306}{1382} \times 31 = 7$
Kiamiciri Mixed	District	53	$\frac{306}{1382} \times 53 = 12$
Kianguenyi Mixed	District	47	$\frac{306}{1382} \times 47 = 10$
Gatunguru Mixed	District	33	$\frac{306}{1382} \times 33 = 7$
Karucho Mixed	District	63	$\frac{306}{1382} \times 63 = 14$
Rukenya Mixed	District	20	$\frac{306}{1382} \times 20 = 4$
Gachatha Mixed	District	32	$\frac{306}{1382} \times 32 = 7$
Kabuti Mixed	District	26	$\frac{306}{1382} \times 26 = 6$
Kiamwathi Mixed	District	70	$\frac{306}{1382} \times 70 = 15$
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>1382</b>	<b>306</b>