THE ROLE OF FAMILY CONSTELLATIONS ON DEVELOPMENT OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AMONG REGULAR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN NAKURU COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to assess the influence of Family constellations on psychosocial adjustments of regular third year undergraduate Students in Nakuru County, Kenya. The specific objective was to determine the influence of family constellations on emotional intelligence of regular undergraduate third year Students in Nakuru County, Kenya. The study used a mixed-method research approach and adopted a cross-sectional survey research design. The target population was 2862 third year regular undergraduate students from five selected universities. A random sample of 307 students forming a 90.6 percent response rate participated in the study. Stratified random sampling was used to distribute the sample in the five selected universities. Primary data was collected using semi-structured questionnaire and interview schedule, while secondary data was collected from existing documents about the topic under study. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages and means) and inferential statistics (ANOVA and Chi Square tests) with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 26.0 for Windows while qualitative data was analyzed using thematic content analysis. The study findings indicate that majority of the respondents came from dual (nuclear) parent families. There was no statistically significant difference in the emotional intelligence of regular third year undergraduate students from different family structures. The study recommends that there is a need for parents to maintain a unified family structure in order to encourage holistic psychosocial development and adjustment of their children in universities. The output of the study would be a tool for learning and professional development in psychological counselling discipline equipping the mental health service providers, educators, guidance and counselling committees in our learning institutions with the new knowledge of family constellations and psychosocial adjustment among ongoing undergraduate students in the universities.

Key Words: Family constellations, parenthood, psychosocial adjustment

1.1   INTRODUCTION

Family of origins' interactions and experience affect the students' psychosocial and social cultural challenges at the uuniversities (Saleem & Shahid, 2012). Some of the undergraduate students, come from family constellations experiencing parenting and parent –child relationship problems some of which triggered by parental separation, divorce, remarriage, and paternal absence. The problem is aggravated by unemployment (81%), poverty (75%), alcohol and drug abuse (73%), marital discord (62%) poor parenting practices 61 %) and low social – economic household status (59 %) among others in Nakuru County (Kamau, *et al*., 2015). Nakuru county is among the 5 counties in Kenya whose residents have filed divorce or separation cases (75 %) countywide either at High Court or Magistrate court in 2016/17 (Saturday Nation, Feb. 10, 2018: Nakuru Principal counsel's Office). Studies have been undertaken to identify psychosocial problems among university students in Kenya but few if any has been undertaken to assess the influence of family constellations on psychosocial adjustment among the third year undergraduates after the stabilization of their physical and physiological changes that occurred in their bodies during developmental stages. In view of the above, it is crucial to assess the family constellations in Nakuru County, identify challenges or problems that could be affecting different family structures' youth who are in our Universities. Failure to undertake the study and possibly the subsequent implementation of its findings, some of the undergraduates are likely to get fixated and suffer from psychosocial adjustment problems hence affect their performance which could ruin their future careers.

1.2   Conceptualization of Family Constellations, Psychosocial Adjustment and Parenthood

Alfred Adler (1927/1947, 1964) used the term family constellations as a structure to describe each member's niche within the family system. He noted that the family constellations consisted of parents, children and any extended family members. Adler emphasized that birth order in these constellations influence persons' lifestyles choices within the constellations. The child's position in the family can also be defined by how the child addresses family values, what techniques are used to negotiate dynamics within the constellations: how the members of the constellations handle the impact of culture, age and gender differences and how the demands of schools and society are handled within the system. Ansbacher & Ansbacher, (1959) added that birth order for children and each of the siblings, the gender of siblings are all variables of the family constellations. Family constellations occur when the family has determined the critical developmental stages of their offspring (Murdock, 2013). For the purposes of this study, family constellations will be used to refer to both family type as well as family structure.

Psychosocial adjustment is the psychosocial accommodation of a person to life – altering event or transitions, (Anderson, Keith & Novak, 2002). According to Madariaga, Arrbillaga & Zulaika, (2014) psychosocial adjustment or adaptation refers to people's capacity to adapt to the environment, which implies that the individual has sufficient mechanisms to feel good, integrated, respond adequately to the demands of the environment and achieve his or her objectives. Macleod & Smith (2003) postulated that stress, hostility, hopelessness and job control are some of the factors of psychosocial adjustments. In this study psychosocial adjustment will be referred as 'thoughts and behavior process of balancing conflict needs against challenges in the environment; relative degree of harmony between an individual's needs and requirements of the environment.

Parenthood (parenting styles), is a set of strategies used by parents to put their children's behavior under control and is influenced by a couple of factors including social – economic variables, cultural differences, personal characteristics and psychological factors (Vafaeedjad, elyasi, Moasazadeh & Shahihossen, 2019). A systematic review carried out by Vafaeejad, *et al.,* (2019) to examine psychosocial factors affecting parenting styles suggested that children's psychological characteristics such as development and mental disabilities, temperaments, social fearfulness, anxiety and emotional intelligence should be considered in determining the factors contributing style. The parenthood or adults who parent a person have the greatest influence on that person (Bernstein, 2016). Factors related to parents' effectiveness include mental health status, self – efficacy, parenting stress, perfectionism, personality traits, childhood trauma, emotional intelligence, marital satisfaction, parents' attachment style, perceived parenting style and substance abuse (Zahra *et al.*, 2018). Parents or guardians teach their children the value of respect that is common to all cultures (Barret, 2014). Parenting is often assessed focusing on parents' perception of their ability to perform as parents (Waldman-Levi *et al.,* 2015. Tension in a marriage happens to be the most common cause of emotional problems in children (Preetha & Melina, 2015). However, young adult are likely to receive less support due to greater needs across multiple family members in lower income families (Fingerman, *et al.,* 2015). Rahul (2013: 2014) view a family constellation as a group of people related by marriage, birth and consanguine who share a common kitchen and financial resources on regular basis. In relation to this Bansi (2014) outlines five major family constellations which include; nuclear family, single- parent family, extended family, step family/ reconstituted family and grandparents families who in some cultures play an important continuing role in the family life. Each family structure has a unique set of family constellations, which influence members' development, ideas and the ways of behaving as well as how they interact with others. Peoples' family constellations impact on how they see themselves in later life, influence their relationship and how they interact with the world as well as their well- being (Miles, 2015). The major change that influences the development of family constellations is family transitions. A family transition is normative or non –normative. Normative transitions are expected and predictable based on biological, psychological or social norms. Non-normative transitions are statistically more unusual and often unexpected (Corvan & Corvan, 2015). They take place when a parent forms or dissolves a romantic relationship – this can involve marriage, separation, divorce, cohabitation, entrance into, or dissolution of a dating relationship (Kristin *et al.,* 2015). Family transitions are viewed as a threat to children's psychological function (Goodnight *et al.*, 2013). Family transitions impact on children across their lifespan being associated with less income, mobility, an increased risk of dropping out of high school, reduced likelihood of university completion and early family formation (Bloome, 2017; Hampden- Thomson & Galindo, 2015).

Common non –normative transitions include parents' separation/divorce. Several research studies have documented that on average, the lives of children whose parents separated differ from children who lived with both of their parents throughout childhood (Harkened, 2014). Parental separation generally reduces the child's contact frequency and relationship quality with the nonresident parent (usually the father), with grandparents and sometimes the mother (Kalmijn & Dronkers, 2015). However, joint residential custody, good inter parental relations can improve post –separation contact with the father (Kamijn & Dronker, 2015). Children of divorce have poorer interpersonal

skills, tend to start dating early and have the sexual initiation earlier and move out of the parental home at a younger age (Ongaro & Mazzuco, 2009). Wanda (2017) posits that a child's adjustment is rooted upon the psychological health of their parents, the relationship they have with their parents and their environment.

Extended family resources may act in specific ways to compensate for lacking parental resources. They step in when the immediate family is in need or the extended family resources may be more beneficial for children with low parental resources (Deindl & Tieben, 2017). Marriage can provide a framework for sustaining the family unit and having and raising children (Newland, 2015). Breakdown of marriages and cohabitation is costly for individuals and society (Gravningen *et al.,* 2017). When both parents blend love and discipline correctly, the children will be mentally healthy, self-assured, responsible, self-controlled and prepared for their parenting experience, (Newland, 2016). Studies on other variables affecting university students and psychosocial adjustment have been undertaken but the influence of family structures on psychosocial adjustment of the third year students has not attracted researchers' interest in university students' psychosocial adjustment, which the research seeks to address.

1.3   Objective of the Study
This article reports on a research study whose objective was to determine the influence of family constellations on emotional intelligence of regular third year undergraduate students in Nakuru County, Kenya. The reseacher hypothesized that there is no statistically significant difference on emotional intelligence of regular third year undergraduate students from different family structures in Nakuru County.

2.0   LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   Emotional Intelligence
Emotional Intelligence (EI) is the capability of individuals to recognize their own emotions and those of others, discern between different feelings and label them appropriately, use emotional information to guide thinking and behaviour and manage or adjust emotions to adapt to environments or achieve one's goal(s) (Goleman & Andrew, 2008. Goleman (2006) suggested that good relationships nourish us and support our health, while toxic relationships can poison us. He proposed that social intelligence is comprised of social awareness (including empathy, attunement, empathic accuracy and social cognition) and social facility (including synchrony, self-presentation, influence and concern. Goleman (2014) suggests the following component of emotional intelligence. He postulates that without these components, the greatest talent would become useless: The first is the ability to motivate ourselves which allows us to carry out any important task. Secondly, perseverance to achieve our goals without which even those with the highest natural intelligence would abandon their tasks. The third component is impulse control, which prevents undesirable behaviours that may be contrary to one's principles or inappropriate to the occasion. Fourthly is the ability to postpone rewards a trait found in truly mature individuals who can make the necessary effort even though the reward may be delayed. The fifth component is the ability to trust, a basic trait to obtain tranquillity, safety and satisfaction.

In addition to the above is the empathic ability, very useful to achieve optimal relations with others and in the end to reach success. In connection to this is the use of reason in intense emotional moments, essential to avoid the excessive influence of emotions. Lastly is the self-regulation of mood, useful to escape from discouragement, irritability, jealousy, the impulse of revenge, despair and many other moods that adversely affect physical and mental health. There are five domains related to knowing our emotions, that is: managing our emotions; motivating ourselves; recognizing and understanding people's emotions and managing relationships – the emotions of others (Serrat, 2017).

A well-developed emotional intelligence constitutes a significant step toward happiness (McCann, 2014). Emotional intelligence contributes to developing strong and positive relationships with co-workers and performs efficiently in work teams. In addition to the competences outlined above, Goleman (2014) model outlines four main EI constructs namely: self- awareness – the ability to read one's emotions and recognize their impact while using gut feelings to guide decisions and self-management. It involves controlling one's emotions and impulses and adapting to changing circumstances; social-awareness – the ability to sense, understand and react to others emotions while comprehending social networks and relationship management – the ability to inspire, influence and develop others while managing conflict. Emotional intelligence is related to many important life factors. It is a significant predictor of subjective well – being (Andrei *et al.,* 2016) interpersonal relationships with romantic partners (Maloff , *et al.,* 2014), social support (Goldenberg *et al.,* 2006) and health (Mikolujczak *et al.,* 2015) among others. However, E.I. can be improved through trainings and intervention programmes (Mikolajczak & Pena – Sarrionandia, 2015). There is increasing empirical evidence for the presence of psychological problems in young adults, especially during their years at University (Milojvich & Lukowski, 2016). Undergraduate students are moving into and through a major developmental period of transition, and stress is becoming more prevalent among this population (Beiter *et al.,* 2015). Some studies have found that the tendency to experience unpleasant emotions and suffer from low sense of self – efficacy could be stress predictors in college students (Saleh *et al.,* 2017a). Conudo *et al.*, (2016) confirms that people with high level of E.I. show a greater degree of resilience, being the correlation between emotion repair and resilience the most significant (among the different E.I. dimensions).

Bradlerry, (2017) observed that one needs emotional intelligence to succeed. It is 'something' in each of us that is intangible. It affects how we manage behaviour, navigate social complexities and makes personal decisions that achieve positive results. Emotional intelligence is made up of four core skills that pair up under two primary competencies. Personal and social competences (Bradlerry, 2017). Personal competence comprises one's self-awareness and management skills, which focus more on the individual than on your interactions with other people. You can stay aware of your emotions, manage your emotions, and manage your behaviour and tendencies. Self-awareness is the ability to accurately perceive your emotions and stay aware of them as they happen. Self-management is your ability to use awareness of your emotions to stay flexible and positively direct your behaviour. On the other hand is social awareness and relationship management skills: social competence is your ability to understand other people's moods, behaviour and motives to respond effectively and improve the quality of your relationships. Social

awareness is the ability to accurately pick up on emotions in other people and understand what is going on.

Relational management is your ability to awareness of your emotions and the others' emotions to manage interactions successfully (Brodkerry & Greave, 2018). Emotional intelligence tops into a fundamental element of human behaviour that is distinct from our intellect. There is no known connection between intelligent Quotient (IQ) and emotional intelligence. Intelligence is ones ability to learn, and it is the same at age one as it is at age 50 years. E1, on the other hand, is a flexible set of skills that can be acquired and improved with practice. Some people are naturally more emotionally intelligent than others, but can develop high emotional intelligence even if they are not born with it (Goleman, 1993: Bradberry, 2017). Emotional intelligence influences most of everything we do and say each day. Examples of critical skills associated with E.I. are: that it comprises the emotional quotient, decision making, time management, empathy, stress tolerance, anger management, trust, assertiveness, presentation skills, social skills, flexibility, accountability, communication, change tolerance, teamwork and customer service (Bradberry, 2017).

Emotional intelligence has traditionally been measured using ability and self - report instruments but researchers have linked the measure to other factors including work, success, well –being, stress management and decision making just to mention a few (Joseph Newman & O'Boyle, 2016; Petrides, Mikolazak, Mavroveli, Sanchez – Ruiiz, Furnham & Pierez – Ganzalez, 2016). University studies are an ideal environment for empowerment and improvement. Training that is focused on the development of the skills of each university degree is an essential goal of each field of study but despite this, the training is no longer sufficient (Ren, Zhou, Yao, Wang, Yuan, & Xu *et al,* 2016). On their part, Romualdas, Audrone, Saule, and Vilijia, (2018) in their study reported that educational institutions could create opportunities for the development of emotional intelligence inside and outside classes. Their findings further stated that individuals might not be adequately assisted at home or in educational institutions on characteristics of emotional intelligence, that is using own positive emotional experience (optimism) expression of emotion (appraisal), understanding and analysis of emotion (social skills) and utilization of emotion. They recommend that for development of the later characteristics, support have to come both from home and in the educational institutions.

A descriptive study conducted by Ozlu, Avsar, Gokalp, Apay, Altum & Yurttas (2016) to determine and compare the emotional intelligence level of senior students receiving education in different fields at Ataturk university, results indicated that the emotional intelligence was found to be lower in natural sciences and moderate in students of health and social sciences. In reference to the results, the researchers posited that the universities should establish an environment where students could develop their emotional intelligence. To enable these environments to contribute to development of the emotional intelligence, students should be supported to become skillful at recognizing their own emotions, evaluating their emotional reactions in the face of events and managing their emotions throughout their education. Besides this support, universities will contribute to students not only during the university period but also after graduation and in their private life to become happy individuals and display a high job performance.

Gaete, (2015) and Salavera, Usian and Jarie (2017) argue that self-perception, social skills and emotional functioning are fundamental. Adolescence phase is characterized by the development of emotional intelligence (ability to manage or self-regulate emotions) and social competence (ability to interact effectively with others). The adolescents develop advanced reasoning skills that facilitate progressive autonomy, contribute to young people well-being and psychosocial development that protect them from developing psychological problems in the face of stressful life experiences where personal development, adequate social skills and good emotional functioning are fundamental. Leaders competent in empathy take time to understand the perspective of others before offering direction, advice or support (Issah & Zimmerman, 2016). As many research studies taken in the past ported, Mafuzah & Jurifa (2016) study on emotional intelligence and job performance among Malaysian teachers established that the four domains of emotional intelligence (self-awareness, empathy, self-motivation and social skills) have a greater impact on teachers' job performance. These results reinforced Joseph *et al* (2015) and Petrides *et al* (2016) studies suggesting that E.I as measured using ability and self-report instrument is linked to other factors such as work, success, well-being, decision-making and stress management among others.

Issah (2018) postulated that there is an ever-increasing pressure on organizations and institutions to undergo change to survive remain afloat and maintain relevance in the era of globalization. There seems to be an increase in focus on emotional intelligence in leadership in managing the process of change. Emotional intelligence is an important skills set in leading, hence effective leaders have an appreciable level of skill set. It distinguishes leaders who are successful in school and organization, where technical skills are less of a significant factor (Goleman, 2004). For any leader to be successful in reflecting on experiences, interpreting environmental cues relating to followers and developing relationships, emotional intelligent competencies that is- self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, empathy and social skills as conceptualized by (Goleman, 2004; Watkins, Earnhardt, Pittenger, Roberts, Rietsema &Cosman-Ross, 2017) are vital.

Leaders in organization cannot expect others to change if they are not willing to change (Watkins, *et al.,* (2017). Their study observed that for any leader to be successful in reflecting on experiences, environment cues, relating to followers and developing relationships, emotional intelligent competences are necessary. However, Gaubatz and Ensminger (2017) study observed that some members resisting change may be contentions. They are most likely to derail the change attempt based on either the feelings of resentments or the fear that they are not recognized for the value they bring to the department or organization and, until their original negative feelings are addressed, such workers could continue to interfere with the change process. Srivatave (2013) had observed that emotionally intelligent leaders could use their social skills to inspire and persuade such category of followers to adapt to the proposed change and strive to contribute efficiently towards achieving the organizational goals. In some cases, employees fear losing something valuable, emotionally intelligent leaders can manage the emotions by enabling members change their emotional reactions and that of other members to particular course of action.

3.0   METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design using a mixed methods research approach. The study targeted all 2,862 regular third year undergraduate students in both private and public universities in Nakuru County. The focus was on third year students because they were believed to be in their early adulthood developmental stage. Blowgun and Retile (2014: Kwela*, et, al.*,2016) posit that older students in universities use more problem – focused and cognitive – restructuring strategies than younger students hence the choice of third year students who are older and mature. The population of the study was heterogeneous both male and female participants drawn from the four universities and undertaking different academic programmes. This study adopted the formula by Kothari (2004) to determine a sample size (n) from a known population size (N) given by:

$$n = \frac{z^2 p \times q \times N}{e^2 (N-1) + z^2 pq}$$

A multistage sampling procedure was used to distribute and select the sample of 339 from the four selected universities. Proportionate stratified sampling was used to distribute the sample in the four universities. Simple random sampling using random numbers table was then used to select the specific number of students allocated to each selected university. Purposive sampling was also used to select one counsellor from each selected university. The 339 students and 4 counsellors formed the final sample size for this study. However, out of the targeted sample of 339 students, only 307 representing a response rate of 90.6% managed to correctly complete and return the questionnaires. Secondary data included existing relevant literature such as journals, books, articles, internet, bulletins, etc. Primary data was collected using a semi-structured questionnaire and in-depth interviews targeting information on: family constellations and psychosocial adjustment. The questionnaires used a five-point likert scale. The interview targeted information about the general challenges facing the undergraduate students.

Data collected was processed and analyzed to address the study objective. The unit of observation was the individual student selected, while the unit of analysis was also the individual student and family constellations. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was engaged targeting quantitative data the objective. Descriptive statistics in form of frequencies means and percentages were used to summarize and present the overall index score for the variables. ANOVA and Chi Square testes were used to establish the significant differences in the various psychosocial variables across the family constellations of the students. The qualitative data from the interview schedules were analyzed using thematic content analysis.

4.0   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data collected on the study objective was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics with the aid of a computer statistical programme known as Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.0 for windows. The demographic characteristics included name of sampled university, age, gender, and academic programme. Out of the targeted 339 students, 307 correctly completed and returned the questionnaires. The 307 respondents were distributed in the selected four universities in Nakuru County.

The sampled students were drawn from Egerton University, 163 (53.1%) while 84 (27.4%), 24 (7.8%) and 36 (11.7%) were from Mount Kenya, St. Paul's and JKUT universities, respectively. The variation in the number of students drawn from the four universities was based on the students' enrolment in the respective universities. For example, Egerton University is the oldest institution in the area and has the highest student enrolment. The other universities are only campus colleges of the mother universities located outside the study area. The 307 students differed in their gender too. Out of the 307 sampled students, 51.1 percent (157) of them were male, while 48.9 percent (150) were female. In addition to gender, the students varied in their ages. The sampled students had a mean of 22.96 years with a standard of 3.578 and a minimum of 19 years and a maximum of 45 years. The mean age corresponds to the general academic transition in the country where majority of third years students in the university were aged between 20 and 24 years.

Family Constellations of the Respondents

This study sought to examine the influence of family constellations on the psychosocial adjustment of regular undergraduate students in universities in Nakuru County. This was based on the assumption that the type of family constellations that a child is socialized and brought up in is a strong determinant of the ultimate future behaviour and development. Family is the most direct and important environment for individual growth and socialization; the significant developmental tasks of individuals are resolved within the family. Each type of family constellation has its own unique influence on the character and behaviour of the child (Novilla, Barnes, Cruz, Williams & Rogers, 2006)). College students are in the transitional stage from late adolescence to emerging adulthood; although they depart from their families, they still have an emotional tie to their family, and the influence of the family on the individuals has not weakened. The parents–children relationship models constantly play a role on the psychosocial development and adaptation of the college students (Xie & Yang, 2015). Moreover, while the youth leave home, the family members should adjust their models of relationship. On one side, the college students need autonomy and independence to separate with their parents; on the other side, they still need the close emotional bonding with their parents to feel safety when they explore their inner and external world (Li, An & Jia, 2009). Therefore, before examining these relationships, the various family constellations were identified and discussed. In this study, the 307 sampled undergraduate students were asked about the type of family that they were brought up in. Table 4.1 summarizes the results.

Table 1: Type of Family of the Sampled Undergraduate Students

Type	Frequency	Percent
Dual parent (nuclear)	234	76.2
Single parent	58	18.9
Extended	7	2.3
Blended	5	1.6
No parent	3	1.0
Total	**307**	**100.0**

Table 1 indicates that majority (76.2%) of the respondents came from dual (nuclear) parent families with mother, father and siblings. The dominance of dual parent families suggests that the respondents had adequate family support of the parents and siblings to rely on in cases of social,

economic, psychological and other challenges in their lives. To reinforce this argument, 214 out of the 234 respondents from dual respondents (91.5%) reported that their dual parents were staying together while 20 (8.5%) were not. The presence of the two parents also shares family responsibility burden and increases the level of care and discipline of their children. This could be the reasons for the qualification and admission of the respondents to pursue university education. These findings support a study by Anderson, (2014) which reported that children from dual parent families have better, physical, emotional and academic well – being.

In addition, the remaining respondents were from single parent (18.9%), extended (2.3%), blended (1.6%), and no parent (1.0%) families. In such single parent, blended and no parent families, the parent combines work with the household chores and upbringing of children, which leaves little time for him or herself. Students from such families are more likely to have limited provisions and increased disciplinary challenges compared to their counterparts from dual parent families. Adolescents and young adults from such families have been shown to have lower grades and more absenteeism than adolescents and young adults of non-divorced families (Ham, 2004; Tillman, 2007). Additionally, Furstenberg and Teitler (1994) found adolescents of non-intact families were more likely to drop out of school and less likely to attend college than adolescents in intact families. These challenges are more linked to overwhelming burden on the remaining parent or caretaker. Given the magnitude of single parenthood as the second largest family constellation, the study went further to establish the gender of the single parent. The 58 respondents from single parent families were asked about the gender of their parent. The responses indicated that 69.0 percent of the respondents came from female single-parent families while 31.0 percent were from male single-parent families. The gender disparity could be attributed to the general characteristics of the African society whereby a man who has lost his wife, in whichever way, is more encouraged to remarry another wife than their female counterparts. Therefore, there are generally fewer male-headed single parent families than female-headed ones. In other cultures, women are required to take the sole custody of the children in case of family break-up (Mbiti, 1992). The 58 respondents also varied in the cause of single-parenthood of their families as summarized in Table 4.3.

Table 2: Cause of the Single-Parenthood

Cause	Frequency	Percent
Death	33	56.9
Separation	9	15.5
No idea	6	10.3
Divorce	5	8.6
Desertion (abandonment)	3	5.2
Never got married	2	3.4
Total	**58**	**100.0**

Table 2 indicates that the common causes of single parenthood include death, separation, divorce, desertion, never married and no idea. The cause will influence the upbringing and behavior of the respondents based on whether it has negative or positive effect on the functioning of the family and taking care of the children. In connection with the type of family, the study established that the

respondents also differed in their family size. On average, the 307 respondents had a family average of 5.79 children with a standard deviation of 2.117, minimum of 1 and maximum of 15. This generally is the cases of ideal family sizes in the country. The family size influences a number of issues in the family including ability to provide, control and take care of the family.

 Emotional Intelligence of Respondents: This objective was premised on the fact that undergraduate students in the universities are still undergoing intellectual and emotional changes in addition to biological and physical changes. Therefore, healthy family constellations was assumed to greatly influence emotional intelligence of the young persons' to feel secure, well-adjusted and think of themselves accepted in family, society and later in his life. Emotional intelligence is a unitary ability helpful in knowing, feeling, judging emotions in close cooperation with one's thinking process to behave in a proper way, for the ultimate realize of the happiness and welfare of the self in tune with others. It is the ability to identify, express and manage one's own emotions, as well as the emotions of others and meet the demand of daily life stress and challenges. In other words, one must cope with personal and social changes and respond to immediate environment in a realistic way.

In this study, the level of emotional intelligence was assessed on the basis of the following dimensions: self-awareness, empathy, self-motivation, emotional stability, managing relations, integrity, self-development, value orientation, commitment and altruistic behavior. The respondents responded to a series of 24 statements seeking respondent's agreement or disagreement on the various indicators of emotional intelligence. Responses to these statements were measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 (where, 1= strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = undecided, 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree). Some items were reverse scored, that is, 1= strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = neutral, 4 = disagree and 5 = strongly disagree. The higher the score the higher was the level of self-esteem of the students, and vice versa. Table 3 shows the distribution of their responses on the statements.

Table 3: Indicators of Emotional Intelligence among Respondent Students

Tools	Response (%)					Means	Std. Dev
	SD	D	N	A	SA		
I have lots of energy when I feel happy	5.2	6.5	9.8	28.3	50.2	**4.12**	1.149
Although I sometimes feel sad, I usually have a positive outlook	4.2	7.8	9.1	33.2	45.6	**4.08**	1.113
I often notice my feelings in different situations	2.9	5.2	13.7	50.8	27.4	**3.94**	0.939
When I am angry, I try to change my mood	4.9	7.8	15.3	41.7	30.3	**3.85**	1.090
I pay close attention to feelings	9.4	8.5	7.5	37.8	36.8	**3.84**	1.270
I can understand my feelings	3.9	10.4	12.7	44.0	29.0	**3.84**	1.078
Though I feel sad, I try to think of pleasant things	6.2	10.4	11.1	39.4	32.9	**3.82**	1.178
I can always tell how I feel	3.6	6.8	18.9	45.9	24.8	**3.81**	1.001
I pay close attention to how I feel	6.5	9.4	12.1	42.7	29.3	**3.79**	1.156
I usually know my feelings about people	2.9	9.1	18.2	45.6	24.1	**3.79**	1.005
Sometimes I can say what my emotions are	5.2	7.2	14.3	50.2	23.1	**3.79**	1.044
I try to think positive thoughts even though I feel bad	6.2	11.4	12.7	41.0	28.7	**3.75**	1.169
I let my feelings affect my thoughts	33.6	29.0	12.7	17.3	7.5	**3.64**	1.305
I can often define my feelings	4.9	13.4	17.6	41.4	22.8	**3.64**	1.119
If I turn things around too much, complicating them, I try to come myself down	7.5	10.4	14.7	45.9	21.5	**3.64**	1.151
I almost always know how I feel	4.6	14.3	17.3	43.0	20.8	**3.61**	1.104
I have clear feelings	7.2	10.1	22.5	39.4	20.8	**3.57**	1.140
I worry about being in good mood	30.9	27.0	16.6	16.6	8.8	**3.55**	1.316
I think it pays to pay attention to emotions	12.4	12.7	18.9	31.6	24.4	**3.43**	1.318
I think about my mood constantly	17.3	34.5	16.0	25.4	6.6	**3.30**	1.216
I often think my feelings	11.4	22.8	16.6	34.9	14.3	**3.18**	1.257
I usually spend time thinking about my emotions	14.3	22.1	15.6	26.7	21.2	**2.82**	1.372
When I am sad, I think of all the pleasures of life	12.1	20.5	16.6	30.9	19.9	**2.74**	1.315
I usually worry about what I feel	5.2	10.4	12.1	44.3	28.0	**2.21**	1.117

N = 205

Table 3 indicates that the respondents rated 23 out of 24 indicators of emotional intelligence above average. They observed that they are able to identify, express and manage one's own emotions, as well as the emotions of others and meet the demand of daily life stress and challenges. In other words, one can cope with personal and social changes in the universities and respond to immediate environment in a realistic way.

The responses to each constituent indicator of emotional intelligence were scored on a scale of 1, indicating least level of emotional intelligence, to 5, indicating highest level of emotional intelligence. The individual statement scores were summed up to form an emotional intelligence index score for each respondent (reliability coefficient, $\alpha = 0.666$). The index score varied between 24, indicating the least level of emotional intelligence, and 120, indicating the highest level of emotional intelligence. The higher the score, the higher was the level of emotional intelligence, and vice versa. The index score had a mean score of 85.73 and Std dev. of 9.520 was later collapsed into three ordinal categories in order to differentiate between the levels of emotional intelligence among the sampled respondents. This included a score of 24-55 (low emotional intelligence), 56-88 (average emotional intelligence) and 89-120 (high emotional intelligence). Table 4.15 summarizes the levels of emotional intelligence.

Table 4: Levels of Emotional Intelligence among Respondents

Levels of emotional intelligence	Frequency	Percent
Low	4	1.3
Average	190	61.9
High	113	36.8
Total	**307**	**100.0**

Table 4 indicates that 61.9 percent of the respondents recorded average emotional intelligence and 36.8 percent recorded high emotional intelligence in identifying, expressing and managing their own emotions, as well as the emotions of others and meeting the demand of daily life stress and challenges. The average rating could be attributed to the fact that the respondents are still young persons who are growing and thus they are not yet independent in their actions and mannerism.

Emotional Intelligence and Family Constellations of the Respondents
After establishing the level of emotional intelligence among the respondents, the study went further to determine its relationship with the family constellation of the students. The objective was accompanied by null hypothesis three which stated that "There is no statistically significant difference in emotional intelligence of regular undergraduate students from different family structures in Nakuru County".

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test whether this hypothesis was significant or not. ANOVA is used to determine the differences in means (emotional intelligence index score) between one or more samples (types of family constellations) by examining the amount of variance within each of the samples, relative to the amount of variance between the samples. For ANOVA to be used, the test variable, that is, emotional intelligence index score, in this case, is supposed to be an interval/ratio variable (measured in the actual scores), while the grouping variable, that is, family constellations (type of family), is supposed to be a nominal or ordinal variable. Tables 4.16 and 4.17 depict the results of the ANOVA test.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics of Emotional Intelligence across Type of Family

Family constellation	N	Emotional intelligence mean score	Std. Dev.	Std. Error	Minimum	Maximum
Dual parent (nuclear)	234	86.03	9.607	.628	53	112
Extended	7	86.00	6.608	2.498	75	91
Single parent	58	85.66	8.239	1.082	68	107
No parent	3	80.00	13.528	7.810	67	94
Blended	5	75.40	16.395	7.332	48	88
Total	**307**	**85.73**	**9.520**	**.543**	**48**	**112**

Table 5 indicates that although the respondents from dual parent (nuclear) families had a higher emotional intelligence mean score, the values were very close across the other family constellations. These small differences in the mean scores suggest that respondents develop emotional intelligence regardless of the family constellations. In order to find out whether the above differences in the emotional intelligence mean scores among students from various family constellations was significant or not, One-Way ANOVA was used. Table 2 depicts ANOVA comparing students' emotional intelligence mean scores among the various types of family constellations.

However, in order to find out whether the above difference in the emotional intelligence mean scores among students from various family constellations was significant or not, One-Way ANOVA was used. Table 4.17 depicts ANOVA comparing students' emotional intelligence mean scores among the various types of family constellations.

Table 6: ANOVA Comparing Emotional Intelligence across Family Constellations

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	653.922	4	163.481	1.823	.124
Within Groups	27077.094	302	89.659		
Total	**27731.016**	**306**			

Means are not significant at $\alpha = 0.05$ significant level ($p > 0.05$)

Table 6 indicates that the difference in emotional intelligence mean scores across students from different family constellations was statistically significant. Since *p* value (0.124) > 0.05, (F=1.823), the researcher fail to reject the null hypothesis one and conclude that there is no statistically significant difference in the emotional intelligence of regular undergraduate students from different family structures in Nakuru County. These support previous studies, which show that family structure does not affect emotional intelligence. This finding has been consistent with the study of Barbar, Christensen and Barchard (2004). Emotional intelligence and family structure report mixed result. Ozabaci N. (2006), using the youth version of Bar-On EQ-1 report that family size has significant negative effect on emotional intelligence He found that as family size increases emotional intelligence decreases. The research further reports that no significant relation exist between family environments except family environment maintenance.

The above results using One-Way ANOVA were also corroborated by chi-square test using cross tabulation. Chi-square was used to compare the frequency of cases found in one variable in two or more unrelated samples or categories of another variable. It is preferred when dealing with variables that have been categorized, level of emotional intelligence (low, average and high) and family constellations (type of families). In order to calculate the Chi-square statistic, level of emotional intelligence was cross tabulated across type of family constellations. Table 4.18 shows a cross tabulation of emotional intelligence across family constellations.

Table 7: Level of Emotional Intelligence across Family Constellations

					Kind of family			Total
			Single parent	Dual parent	Extended	Blended	No parent	
Level of emotional intelligence	Low	Count	0	3	0	1	0	4
		%	0.0%	1.3%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	1.3%
	Average	Count	39	142	3	4	2	190
		%	67.2%	60.7%	42.9%	80.0%	66.7%	61.9%
	High	Count	19	89	4	0	1	113
		%	32.8%	38.0%	57.1%	0.0%	33.3%	36.8%
	Total		**58**	**234**	**7**	**5**	**3**	**307**

$$\chi^2 = 18.032 \quad df = 8 \quad\quad p = 0.190$$

Table 7 suggests that majority of the respondents from all family constellations recorded average emotional intelligence. This was further supported by the chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 18.032$), since p (0.190) > 0.05 significance level indicating that there was no significant difference in emotional intelligence across family constellations.

In qualitative study, the respondents were asked, '*A healthy emotional intelligence entails self – regulation of mood. To what extent are the students who come for counseling able to self – regulate their emotions?*'
Four respondents (80 %) indicated that most of the students were not able to regulate their emotions with key emotions expressed being frustration and rejection. One respondent indicated that students were able to regulate their emotions moderately. Milojevich and Lukowski (2016) posit that there is increasing empirical evidence for the presence of psychological problems in young adults, especially during their years at the University. At age 19 – 24 years undergraduate students are moving into and through a major developmental period of transition and stress is becoming more prevalent among this population (Beiter *et al.,* 2015). However, in terms of relationship between E.I. and stress, literature confirms that emotionally intelligent people show less perceived stress and the contrary is the case. Urquijo, Extremera and Villa (2016) suggested that E.I. enhances well – being, diminishing the experience of stress. Hence, the counsellors' response to the effect that most students are not able to regulate their emotions could be due to hypo I.E. among the respondents, which the current quantitative study has established. If an individual is aware of his/her own and others' feelings, this would curtail him/her manage behaviours and relationship and fail to predict success in many sectors (Rezvani, Chang, Wewiora, Ashka-nasty, Jordan & Zolin (2016). This is in

agreement with the quantitative study, which established that E.I. depends on an individual student regardless of the family structure one was brought up in.

5.0   SUMMARY OF THE MAJOR RESEARCH FINDINGS

Based on the study objective, hypothesis and data analysis, the following major research findings are: (i) Majority (76.2%) of the respondents came from dual (nuclear) parent families with mother, father and siblings who were staying together. The remaining respondents were from single parent (18.9%), extended (2.3%), blended (1.6%), and no parent (1.0%) families; (ii)Majority (61.9%) of the respondents recorded average emotional intelligence and 36.8 percent recorded high emotional intelligence in identifying, expressing and managing their own emotions, as well as the emotions of others and meeting the demand of daily life stress and challenges. Respondents from all types of family structures had almost similar levels of emotional intelligence mean score. In addition, there was no statistically significant difference in the emotional intelligence of regular undergraduate students from different family structures in Nakuru County. One – Way ANOVA test indicates that the difference in emotional intelligence mean scores across students from different family constellations was statistically significant since p value (0.124) > 0.05, (F=1.823). This was further supported by the chi-square value (χ^2 = 18.032), since p (0.190) > 0.05 significance level.

5.1   CONCLUSIONS:

The study investigated the influence of family constellations on psychosocial adjustments of regular Undergraduate Students in Nakuru County, Kenya. Such an assessment was considered useful in analyzing the influence of various family structures and environment on psychosocial adjustments in universities. The concerned agencies including guidance and counselling office, university administration, parents and individual students could use such information to come up with long-lasting interventions to address maladjustment of students in the universities.

Based on the summary findings, the study concluded that:

(i) Family structure and environment significantly influence the psychosocial adjustment of students in the universities.

(ii) Family is the most direct and important environment for individual growth and socialization.

(iii) The significant developmental tasks of individuals are resolved within the family.

(iv) The emotional intelligence depends on an individual student regardless of the family structures one is brought up in.

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