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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### FAMILY CONFLICTS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING OF CHILDREN A CASE OF KAYONZA DISTRICT IN RWANDA

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#### Abstract

The present study was carried out to examine the impacts of family conflict on the psychological well-being of children in Kayonza district, Eastern Province of Rwanda. It was based on three specific objectives: firstly, it assesses the experience of family conflict among children, secondly analyzes the impact of family conflict on psychological well-being of children and thirdly, establishes the relationship between family conflict and psychological well-being of children in Kayonza district of Rwanda. The research sought to provide valuable knowledge that could guide policymaking and interventions geared toward enhancing the well-being of children experiencing familial conflicts. The study employed a mixed of quantitative and qualitative research design. The target population comprised 750 participants from 258 families in Kayonza district from Mukarange sector. A sample of families who participated in the study were purposively selected and the sample size was calculated from the target population using Slovin's formula. Contrary, children were randomly sampled from two secondary schools in Mukarange sector in Kayonza District. A five-point Likert scale questionnaire ranked from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1) and the interview guide were used as the data collection instruments. The result findings indicated Pearson Correlation of .704\*\* tested at a significant level of 0.01. This implies that Family conflicts affect psychological wellbeing of children. There is a need to develop and find programs that offer early intervention and support for families experiencing conflicts. These programs can provide counseling, mediation, and education on conflict resolution to help mitigate the negative effects on children.

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#### Introduction:-

The family operates as an institution and encounters complex and difficult moments that instantly serve as the root cause of conflicts among its constituents/family members. The occurrence probability of troublesome situations or conflicts in the family could arise between spouses/parents or between children and parents. The lack of mutual understanding and conflict management ability among family components are the main source of conflicts and this

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has a direct impact on children be it intellectual, psychological and developmental perspective. Gender-based violence was reported by MIGEPROF (2021) during an International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women held in Kigali. The report said that one of three women in the World experienced sexual abuse.

The same report stated that in Rwanda, women are affected most in terms of gender violence, findings of Rwanda's Demographic and Health Survey published by National Institute of Statistics (2019/20) showed that 37 % of women aged between 15-49 encountered either physical psychological or sexual violences while for men only 30 % reported such violences.

For married couples, this violence created conflicts among family members, which in turn affect wellbeing of children in families. This is supported by the previous report demographic and health survey (DHS, 2015) which indicated that the major result of family conflict is divorce among married couples, which in turn affect child welfare negatively, for instance, the same report indicated that divorce cases reached 34.5 percent and 32.9 percent for women and men respectively. The study further revealed that unforeseen rise was observed in 2018 where divorce cases increased from 1,311 cases compared to 69 cases registered in 2017 (Tumusiime, 2020). There exist other studies emphasizing the detrimental impacts of family conflict to Rwandan society, not only divorce occurrence but also other family member threatening acts take place in family infiltrated by conflicts (Betancourt et al., 2017). The outcome of these effects on children is the drugs abuse, street life, prostitution, and crimes of all kinds (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, MINICOFIN, 2014).

As mentioned by previous researchers, the occurrence of family conflicts among family members has been increasing and causing troubles within Rwandan families (Nsabimana & Rutsibuka, 2022). This not only impacts the parents physically and emotionally but also has a significant effect on the mental well-being of their offspring. These circumstances served as the impetus for the researcher to examine the correlation between family conflicts and the psychological health of children in Rwanda, particularly in the Kayonza district.

### **Literature Review:-**

Globally, potentially detrimental factors in connection to alcohol and drug addiction have been revealed among adolescents (Sirin et al., 2022). A research investigation was conducted to examine the source of marital disputes in cross-border remarriages among Mainland Chinese women in Hong Kong who had relocated with their children from previous marriages, as well as those who had married only once (To & Lau, 2019). The findings demonstrated that family pieces might share specific wellsprings of contentions, and every sort of remarriage is inclined to specific wellsprings of struggles, and additionally, early marriage and stepparent-stepchild clashes are frequently entrapped with disagreements regarding different issues.

In sub-Saharan Africa, mismanagement of properties and a limited number of incomes generating activities among family members were identified by previous studies as sources of long-lasting disputes (Yaya et al., 2018). In Kenya, findings from a survey literature regarding family Operation and Mental Healthiness Variations succeeding a family follow up and Intermediation (Puffer et al., 2020) showed that families who got a family treatment mediation from lay suppliers in Kenya revealed upgrades in family working and emotional well-being. Explicit family developments included defeat in conflict incidence, misconduct, gender-based violence as well as alcohol-abuse related issues.

In Tanzania, Mental health problems has been a concern of researchers, and in an investigation done previously (Nkuba et al., 2018) revealed that they are linked to child violence and mistreatment countrywide. The same study asserted that 41 % students detailed a raised degree of psychological wellness issues (close to home issues 40 %, peer issues 63 %, direct issues 45 %, hyperactivity 17 %) in the beyond a half year. Concordantly, 31% of guardians revealed noticing a raised degree of psychological well-being issues in their youngsters (profound issues 37 %, peer issues 54 %, direct issues 35 %, and hyperactivity 17 %). After controlling for other gamble factors, we found a huge relationship between actual brutality by guardians and young adult's emotional well-being issues detailed by understudies ( $\beta = 0.15$ ) and their folks ( $\beta = 0.33$ ).

In Rwanda, the objective of the Government is to strengthen unity among its citizen, lessen destitution, and further develop the prosperity of its population. Inter-family misunderstanding disrupts the functioning of a family as an institution with a predetermined order. Therefore, any conflict arising between husband and wife, child and parent and some rare cases among extended families poses a hindrance to the wellbeing of the entire family with potential consequences on psychological well-being of young children and adolescents.

The family has been considered for decades the place where individuals develop and grow. The study conducted by Willems et al. (2018) indicated that not all families offer a desirable living environment that facilitate individuals to grow holistically. A study by Rosen et al. (2021) demonstrated that mental health problems and unexpected behaviors are often observed among children from families with routine lack of mutual understanding and complementarity. They further revealed that developed emotional and behavioral responses affect the way children cope with the surrounding community (Nuttman- Schwartz, 2019).

Preadolescence frames some portion of the formative stage alluded to as center adolescence. Reeve and Bell (2022) preadolescence indicate the start of massive changes inside the family, particularly as far as adapting to the behavior, thoughtful, and actual changes, for example, character changes, peer impacts, testing limits and becoming disobedient, shaping character, substantial changes, pubescence and attempting to be less subject to guardians (Reitan & Stenberg, 2019). The family struggle might increase children's responses to testing encounters, as they might feel overpowered by the profound, physical, and social changes happening during this period (Fisher, 2022).

Family members can develop misunderstandings that may lead to intra-family members' conflict (Bhusal, 2021). Previous studies have correlated the nature of family environment to the wellbeing of family components (Pan et al., 2021). Within a conflicted family, psychological distress arises from various factors including but not limited to socioeconomic issues (Anderson et al., 2022), gender-based violence (Thulin et al., 2022), forced sexual intercourse (Islam, 2022), sexual infidelity (Atapour et al., 2021) among others.

### **Family conflict and psychological well-being**

An increasing number of studies have found that daily uncertainties related to work-to-family conflict (WTFC) possess detrimental impact among individuals living together and there is a need of determination towards better future generations (Mustillo et al., 2021). Previous research outputs indicated that family conflict affects productivity in the work environment and exerts negative impact on psychological well-being (Rafique et al., 2018). In a study carried out in Turkey, the scientist revealed that respondents demonstrated generally low degrees of work-to-family conflict (WFC).

Levels of work impeding family and family frustrating work were fundamentally and evidently connected. Various leveled setback investigations, controlling for both individual segment and work circumstance attributes, showed that WFC for the most part anticipated both work and mental wellbeing results, work impeding family being a reliably more grounded indicator of these than was family slowing down work (Hess & Pollmann-Schult, 2020). According to Prime et al. (2020) child health care and well-being of other members in the family may suffer from consequences linked to arising family conflict. Regarding the results from the recently released article by Hess and (Hess & Pollmann-Schult, 2020), the study demonstrated that children whose mothers encounter elevated levels of work-family conflict (WFC) tend to exhibit increased instances of emotional issues, behavioral problems, and hyperactivity. Furthermore, the findings suggest that this connection was influenced by the parenting behavior of mothers.

A cross-sectional research project was carried out in Kenya to investigate the connection between perceived social support (PSS) and the mental well-being of children orphaned by AIDS. Additionally, the study aimed to pinpoint socio-demographic variables linked to PSS (Wanjiru et al., 2022; Yousuf, Musa, Isa, & Arifin, 2020), the results showed that there was a positive relationship of PSS and psychological well-being following the loss of parents due to HIV/AIDS, and relatives as well as persons with a caring heart may support orphans of such loss thereby improving their psychological well-being.

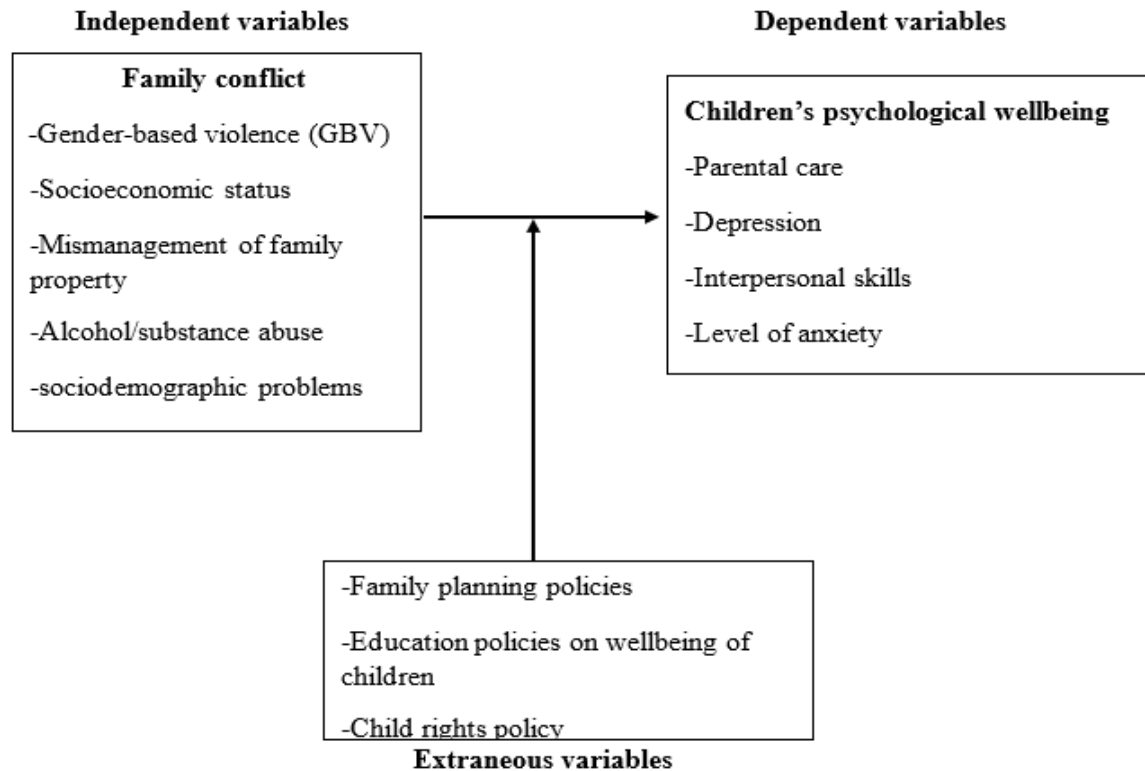
In Rwanda, community-based socio-therapy has been emphasized as the way of helping post- genocide generation (Biracyaza & Habimana, 2020); and other interventions have been put in place, for instance mental health and psycho-social supports plays an important role in healing wounds for children born during genocidal rape (Denov & Piolanti, 2019). Other investigations (Abbott & Sapsford, 2021; Niyonzima & Bhuju, 2021) indicated that addressing problems experienced by street children, alcohol addiction and gender-based violence (GBV) has been a serious concern by the government of Rwanda and measures leading to promising outcomes have been put in place across the country.

### Family conflict and children educational achievement

Family conflict has been interconnected with high level of academic stress of children during the schooling period as Branje & Morris (2021) have asserted it, the study showed that children from families with misunderstanding could not get much attention from their parents that in turn contribute to poor academic achievement, and those from families without inter-parental conflicts perform better. It is worth noting that being irresponsible for parents greatly disrupts the academic environment of the children. Parental pressure could be a factor linked to a child's academic stress that may lead to discomfort during the learning process.

Several factors have been indicated by previous researchers and have been inevitably regarded as determinants of children academic performance, for instance, living in a divorced family (Obrenovic et al., 2020), conflict of interest such as work-family conflict (Ndayambaje et al., 2020), and inter- parental fighting which imparts negative behaviors into children, parents being addicted to alcohol, infidelity between married couples all of these lead to disturbance of children learning abilities.

This study builds on conflict transformation theory in which conflict transformation differs from conflict management and resolution mechanisms in many ways. Theorists hold the view that conflicts are inextinguishable outcome of misunderstanding and differences in cultural values and individual's interest within the social setting. Conflict transformation theories set themselves apart from the previously mentioned ones by centering on the alteration of elements that reach far beyond the specific location of a conflict, including relationships, interests, discourses, and more. This implies a more inclusive and far-reaching strategy.



**Figure 1:-** Conceptual framework indicating variables of the study.

Researchers often operate or measure independent and dependent variables in their investigation to test cause-and-effect relationships. The proposed research comprised three types of variables namely independent (family conflict), dependent (Children's psychological wellbeing) and extraneous variables as portrayed in Figure 2.

Indicators under the independent variable include Gender-based violence (GBV), socioeconomic status, alcohol abuse, sexual and mismanagement of family property. These identified indicators are assumed to influence the indicators under the dependent variable that are parental care, depression, interpersonal skills, and level of anxiety. Indicators under extraneous variable encompass family planning policies, education policies on wellbeing of

children, and child rights policy. The researcher wants to investigate the extent to which indicators under independent variable would exert influence on those considered as being dependent with the personal hypothetical view that families experiencing the mentioned issues (independent variables) hardly satisfy family members' psychological needs and the most vulnerable members are children. Therefore, this research was conducted in the arena of family conflict and psychological wellbeing of children.

The following specific objectives were considered in this study:

1. To assess the experience of family conflict among children in Kayonza district of Rwanda
2. To analyze the psychological well-being of children in Kayonza district of Rwanda
3. To establish the relationship between family conflict and psychological wellbeing of children in Kayonza district of Rwanda

While three research questions were considered to guide the study.

1. What is the experience of family conflict among children in Kayonza district of Rwanda?
2. What are the impacts of family conflict on psychological well-being of children in Kayonza district of Rwanda?
3. What is the relationship between family conflict and psychological wellbeing of children in Kayonza district of Rwanda?

## **Methodology:-**

### **Research design**

This study used mixed research design which provides the insight of both exploration and explanation, specifically the survey research design comprising both quantitative and qualitative survey designs was used. According to Godfrey and Feng (2017), survey research design is defined as the means of collecting data, commonly through self-report using questionnaires and or interview guide. This research approach, in turn, enables researchers to enhance their comprehension of various populations or demographic groups, pinpoint any issues or concerns expressed by participants, and potentially pave the way for the discovery or creation of solutions rooted in the identified issues (Cohen et al., 2017). The researcher used three types of questionnaires containing items that were attempted to collect data toward answering the research questions. The interview guide was also designed to gather in-depth information related to the problem under investigation.

### **Population and sample size**

This research mainly focused on families in Kayonza district, particularly in Mukarange sector. The criteria included in the desired population in this study include the following: Being in married couple (husband and wife), being widowed, being divorced, being a child in the family as well as being orphan and or a child coming from poor families. The study targeted 258 families from which parents and children were given a questionnaire, and a part of them interviewed as well. The researcher targeted only one sector to avoid surface investigation that may result in unreliable findings.

The advanced formula of Slovin's offers the practical determination of the sample size termed (n) by the means of known target population (N) with the margin of error written by the letter (e).

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2} \text{ Slovin's Formula Equation 1, } n: \text{ Sample size, } N: \text{ target population, and } e: \text{ margin of error} = .05$$

$$n = \frac{750}{1 + 750 (0.05)^2} = 260.86 \approx 261$$

### **Data collection instruments**

Separate three questionnaires and an interview guide were used to collect data. First, an interview guide that comprises 20 questions in relation with children's experience of family conflict to address the first research question was used. Second, the questionnaire, which contains twelve (12) items seeking to address the second research question about the impact of family conflict on psychological wellbeing of children, was used. To answer the third research question, Pearson's product moment correlations (PPMCs) was computed using variables to establish the relationship between family conflicts and psychological wellbeing of children in Kayonza district in the Eastern province of Rwanda. The interview guide was conducted face-to-face while questionnaires were filled manually and online depending on the preference of respondents. Responses to questionnaire items were rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree with the highest score indicating strongest agreement while responses from the interview guide were recorded as field notes.

### Data analysis

SPSS version 21.0 and Ms. Excel was used to perform statistical analysis, and findings were presented using Tables. Percentages, frequencies, mean and standard deviation were used to analyze and interpret findings of the study.

### Reliability and Validity

A piloting survey was conducted considering a small portion of the target population in different time point to assess the consistency of the tools being used. This piloting was done in Mukarange sector in Kayonza district while to maintain the validity of the instrument, targeted participants completed the survey independently without devoid of external pressing forces, and or influences that may lead to researcher's satisfaction. Expert validation of the research instruments was considered to strengthen the relatedness of the instrument and the data to be collected.

### Results and Discussion:-

**Table 1:-** Demographic characteristics of participants.

Characteristic	Number(%)	Characteristic	Number %
<b>Students' Gender</b> Male Female	34(56) 27(44)	<b>Agecategory</b> 9-12years 13-16years Above16years	17(28) 40(66) 4 (6)
<b>Total</b>	<b>61(100)</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>61(100)</b>
<b>Studentsbyschool</b> GSMukarangeGSKay onza	32(52.5) 29(47.5)	<b>Studylevel</b> Ordinarylevel Advancedlevel	23(38) 38(62)
<b>Total</b>	<b>61(100)</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>61(100)</b>
<b>Parentsbygender</b> Male Female	83(41) 117(59)	<b>Education level</b> UniversitySecondaryPri mary Illiterate	6 (3) 144(72) 47(23.5) 3(1.5)
<b>Total</b>	<b>200(100)</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>200(100)</b>
<b>Agecategory</b> 35-40years 41-46years 47-52years Above52years	26(13) 105(52.5) 66(33) 3(1.5)	<b>Monthlyincome</b> 50,000-100,000Rwfs 100,000-150,000Rwfs 150,000-200,000Rwfs Above200,000Rwfs	6 (3) 49(24.5) 138(69) 7(3.5)
<b>Total</b>	<b>200(100)</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>200(100)</b>

According to Table 4.1 twenty-seven girls, 27 (44 %) and thirty-four, 34 (56 %) boys participated in the study to ensure each category of students is represented in terms of gender. The majority participants were in the age category of 13-16 years, 40 (66 %) followed by the category of 9-12 years, 17 (28 %), and finally those belonging in the category above 16 years, 4 (6 %).

It is indicated that 32 students corresponding to 52.5 % were from G S Mukarange while 29 students equivalent to 47.5 % were from G S Kayonza. The findings specify that 23 (38 %) students were studying at the ordinary level while 38 (62 %) were studying in advanced level of secondary school. It further reveals that 83 (41 %) and 117 (59 %) male and female parents participated in the study respectively. Figure 4.5 reveals that 144 (72 %) possess secondary education, 47 (23.5 %) completed primary education, 6 (3 %) completed university education while 3 (1.5 %) are illiterate. Participated parents were categorized into their ages. Referring to Table 4.1, 26 (13 %) belong into the category of 35-40 years, 105 (52.5 %) fall into the category of 41-46 years, 66 (33 %) are in the category of 47-52 years, and finally 3 (1.5 %) were aged above 52 years. It finally depicts that 138 (69 %) earnings ranges from 150,000 to 200,000 Rwfs, 49 (24.5 %) earn from 100,000 to 150,000 Rwfs, 7 (3.5 %) earn above 200,000 Rwfs while 6 (3 %) earn from 50,000 to 100,000 Rwfs as a monthly family income.

**Table 2:-** Experiences of family conflict among children in Kayonza district of Rwanda.

Questionitems	D		N		A		SA		M	S.D
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
Haveyoueverseenyourparentsarguingordisagreeing?	35	17.5	9	4.5	151	75.5	5	2.5	3.63	.79
Areyourparentsaware that you know thatthey argue or disagree onfamilyissues?	52	26	1	.5	147	73.5	0	0	3.47	.87
Do your parentsdisagreeinyourpresence?	129	64.5	71	35.0	0	0	0	0	2.71	.95
Do you often see yourparentsarguingaboutfamilyissues?	26	13.0	1	.5	163	81.5	10	5.0	3.78	.72
Do your parents keepcomplainingabouteachotheraroundthe house?	97	48.5	0	0	103	51.5			3.08	.99
Do your parents comeupwithsolutionafteradispute?	12	6.0	10	5.0	145	72.5	33	16.5	3.03	1.0
Doyourparentsrestorefriendshipafterarguing or disagreeing onfamilyconflict?	12	6.0	0	0	138	69.0	50	25.0	3.99	.67
Do your parents argueaboutyourworkatschool?	35	17.5	0	0	165	82.5			4.13	.68
Doyougetscaredwhenyourparentsargue?	95	47.5	0	0	105	52.5	0	0	3.65	.76
Doyougetafraidthatsomethingbadcould		54	27.0	5	2.5	137	68.5		3.32	.94

Children often become aware that their families are in conflict through various observable signs loud and heated Arguments, passive-aggressive behavior, Changes in Parental Behavior, intense physical altercations, Changes in Parent-Child Interactions. However, the ability of children to understand and interpret family conflict depends on their developmental stage and cognitive maturity. Older children and teenagers may have a more complex knowledge of the issues involved, but younger children may simply be able to sense the emotional impact and lack a comprehensive understanding of conflict dynamics. Table 4.3 indicated that 151 (75.5%) of children (students) agreed, 5 (2.5%) strongly disagreed and 35(17.5%) disagreed that they had ever seen their parents arguing or in conflict. 147 (73.5 %) students agreed whereas 52 (26 %) disagreed that their parents understand they know that there are conflicts among them.

It was observed that the family conflicts affect quickly and irreversibly children's emotional stability, self-esteem and negative feelings (Man et al., 2017). Moreover, more Parents/ families who manage and resolve solely conflicts among themselves can significantly impact the overall harmony and psychological wellbeing of children. This study revealed that 129 (64.5 %) of children disagreed that their parents engage in disagreements in presence of children, in contrast they show conflict in absence of the children. 167 (81.5 %) of children (students) agreed while 26 (13 %) disagree that they often see their parents arguing about family issues. Family issues occur when there is a lot of tension or disagreement inside the family or about family members, to the point that it interferes with your daily life (Dodanwala & Shrestha, 2021). 97 (48.5 %) of children (students) disagreed that their parents keep complaining about each other around the house when their present while 103 (51.3 %) agreed. However, 145 (72.5 %) of students (children) agreed, 33 (16.5 %) strongly agreed while 12 (6 %) disagreed that their parents come up with solution after a dispute.12 (6 %) students disagreed, 138 (69 %) agreed and 50 (25 %) strongly agreed that their parents restore friendship after arguing or disagreeing on family conflict. This agrees with (Van et al., 2019) who observed that many families, it is common for parents to work through disagreements and conflicts to restore their friendship and maintain a healthy family dynamic. Successful conflict resolution often involves effective communication, compromise, empathy, and a willingness to forgive and move forward. Every family is unique, so the way parents handle conflicts and whether they can restore their friendship can vary widely from one family to another.

35 (17.5 %) of students disagreed that their parents argue about their work at school while 165 (82.5 %). Parents conflicts related to their children education have a common origin to one parent who dislike fulfilling his duties related to children (students) education, like schools' fees and materials (Timmons et al., 2017). 95 (47.5 %) of students disagreed that they get scared when their parents argue while 105 (52.5 %) agreed. The children who mostly experience conflict among their parents affect their psychological short term and long-term cognitive development. Children experiencing family conflict may find it challenging to concentrate on their studies and may experience a decline in academic performance. The stress and emotional turmoil from conflict can make it difficult for them to focus on their schoolwork (Härkönen et al., 2017). 54 (27 %) disagreed while 137 (68.5 %) strongly agreed that were afraid that something bad could happen out of arguing or disagreeing of their parents.

Consequently, a prolonged exposure to family conflict can have physical health consequences for children. Stress-related health problems such as headaches, stomachaches, and sleep disturbances may occur. 74 (37 %) disagreed while 126 (63 %) agreed that they had worries that about their parents may get divorced due to arguing or disagreeing. Divorce is a complex and emotionally challenging process that can have significant impacts on all family members involved.

**Table 3:-** Impact of family conflict on psychological well-being of children in Kayonza district of Rwanda.

Items	D		N		A		SA		M	S.D
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
Children feel depressed due to family conflict	0	0	0	0	13	21.3	48	78.7	4.78	.41
Children lack parental care	0	0	1	1.6	13	21.3	47	77.0	4.75	.47
Children experience a high level of anxiety	3	4.9	0	0	20	32.8	38	62.3	4.51	.74
Poor sleep of children occurs due to family conflict	6	9.8	0	0	24	39.3	31	50.8	4.31	.90
Children develop aggressive behavior	5	8.2	4	6.6	22	36.1	30	49.2	4.26	.91
Children prefer street life instead of staying in a conflicted family	7	11.5	0	0	24	39.3	30	49.2	4.26	.94
Children may blame themselves for conflict	8	13.1	1	1.6	26	42.6	26	42.6	4.14	.98
Children feel emotionally insecure	23	37.7	2	3.3	13	21.3	23	37.7	3.59	1.33
Children from high-conflict homes are more likely to have poor interpersonal skills	13	21.3	0	0	26	42.6	22	36.1	3.93	1.10
Children from families with conflict have low level of problem-solving abilities and social competence	12	19.7	0	0	13	21.3	36	59.0	4.19	1.16

In this study as depicted in table 4.3, 48 (78.7 %) of parents strongly agreed while 13 (21.3 %) agreed that Children feel depressed due to family conflict. Family conflict can have a significant impact on children's mental and emotional well-being, and it can indeed lead to feelings of depression and other psychological issues (Hwang & Yu, 2021). Similarly, an unending family conflict creates a stressful environment for children. They may constantly feel on edge, worried about when the next argument will happen or how it will escalate. This chronic stress can contribute to the development of anxiety and depressive symptoms. Moreover, 47 (77.0 %) parents strongly agreed whereas 13 (21.3 %) agreed that due to family conflict Children lack parental care. Researcher observed that when family members, particularly parents involved in constant conflicts, compromise their ability to provide emotional support, physical care, and nurturing environment for their children and potentially affect overall well-being of children (Lloyd, 2018). 38 (62.3 %) of parents who participated in this study strongly agreed that Children experience a high level of anxiety when experience a long-term family conflict while 20 (32.8 %) agreed and 3 (4.9 %) disagreed. This is in line with (Hwang & Yu, 2021) who depicted that the Persistent exposure to family conflict during childhood can have long-term effects on a child's mental health. It can contribute to the development of generalized anxiety disorder or other anxiety-related conditions. In this study 31 (50.8 %) of parents strongly agreed, 24 (39.3 %) agreed while 6 (9.8 %) disagreed that Poor sleep of children occurs due to family conflict. Children exposed to frequent family conflict often experience high levels of emotional distress. They may feel anxious, fearful, or stressed, not knowing when the next conflict will occur. This ongoing emotional turmoil can lead to mood disorders such as depression and anxiety that result in the poor sleep.

Furthermore, 30 (49.2 %) of parent strongly agreed, 22 (36.1 %) agreed and 5 (8.2 %) disagreed that Children develop aggressive behavior. Family conflict can have a profound impact on a child's emotional and behavioral



development, and aggression is one way in which children may respond to or cope with the stress, tension, and emotional turmoil caused by such conflicts. 30 (49.2 %) of parents strongly agreed, 24 (39.3 %) agreed and 7 (11.5 %) disagreed that Children prefer street life instead of staying in a conflicted family. Children exposed to ongoing family conflict or abusive situations may see leaving home to escape from physical or emotional harm. However, 26 (42.6 %) of parents strongly agreed and agreed that Children may blame themselves among others due to family conflict. Constant exposure to conflict within the family can erode a child's self-esteem. They may blame themselves for the conflicts or feel unimportant and unwanted. This can result in low self-worth and self-doubt. 23 (37.7 %) of parents strongly agreed, 13 (21.3 %) agreed while 23 (37.7 %) disagreed that Children feel emotionally insecure because of family conflict. Family conflict can take various forms, including arguments between parents, divorce or separation, disagreements between siblings, and other tensions within the household. Those arguments in the family with conflict can disrupt the stability and routine that children rely on for a sense of security (Davies et al., 2017). When family life is marked by ongoing conflict, children may feel like they are living in an unpredictable and chaotic environment. 22 (36.1 %) strongly agreed, 26 (42.6 %) agreed while 13 (21.3 %) disagreed that Children from high-conflict homes are more likely to have poor interpersonal skills.

**Table 4:-** Synopsis of the effect of family conflict on child's psychological wellbeing based on the findings from the questionnaire administered.

Indicators	N	Measurement			
		High	Moderate	Low	None
Lowparentalcare	61	47(77.0%)	13(21.3%)	-	-
Depression	61	48(78.7%)	13(21.3%)	-	-
Interpersonalskills	61	22(36.1%)	26(42.6%)	-	13(21.3%)
Levelof anxiety	61	38(62.3%)	20(32.8%)	-	3(4.9%)

This synopsis is made with reference to research instrument's items with reflection to indicators, which include low parental care, depression, interpersonal skills, and the level of anxiety. The findings show that 77.0 % of the participants reported a high level of experiencing the effect of family conflict due to low parental care while 21.3 % reported moderate effect. While 78.7 % of participants confirmed high experience of depression due to family conflict, 21.3 % experienced a moderate effect. The effect of family conflict was high on interpersonal skills (36.1 %) and moderate (42.6 %) respectively. It has been also revealed that 62.3 % of the participants experienced a high level of anxiety while 32.8 % were moderately affected.

Indicators such as low parental care, depression, interpersonal skills, and the level of anxiety have been investigated in previous studies (Kidd et al., 2022). For instance, the fact that more participants in this study reported that they experienced low parental care is substantiated by existing literature showing that parents are being distracted by complicated living conditions hence the lack of sufficient time to care for family members especially, children in the family (Umberson & Thomeer, 2020). It is evident that the context of the findings of this study is supported by recent exploration concerning family wellbeing, financial constraints, and low interpersonal skills lead to severe consequences which in turn affect family wellness and living satisfaction (Iramani & Lutfi, 2021). The findings of this study are supported by Van et al. (2020) who revealed that family conflict results in ineffective parental care. Similarly, the family conflict was associated with depression and anxiety among family members, especially children (Jones et al., 2021).

**Table 5:-** Relationship between family conflict and psychological wellbeing of children.

Variables		Familyconflicts	Psychologicalwellbeingofchildren
Familyconflicts	PearsonCorrelation	1	.704**
	Sig.(2-tailed)		.000
	N	61	61
Psychologicalwellbeingofchi	PearsonCorrela	.704**	1

<b>ldren</b>	tion		
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	
	N	61	6
			1
**.Correlationis significantat the0.01 level(2-tailed).			

To address the third objective, which was to establish the relationship between family conflict and psychological wellbeing of children in Kayonza district of Rwanda, Karl Pearson coefficient correlation ( $r$ ) was used. As indicated in Table 4.5, Pearson correlation between family conflict and psychological wellbeing of children is .704. For the relationship to be significant, the interpretation relies on the P-value, if it is less than .05, it is considered significant. The correlation in this study is high positive correlation and significant with a P-value equal to 0.01 and confirms that family conflicts are a predictor of psychological wellbeing of children.

While investigating the relationship between family conflicts and psychological wellbeing of children, factors affecting parental relationship have been reviewed in the literature (Raturi & Cebotari, 2023). The findings of this research project are supported by existing evidence indicating that families experiencing family conflicts fail to provide conducive environment for their children (Murran & Brady, 2023). Similarly, a study conducted by Kong et al. (2021) showed that family conflict inevitably affects wellbeing of children within the family thus finding ways to reduce the occurrence of conflicts should be a preoccupation of researchers in this regard.

### Conclusion:-

In line with the first specific objective, children's experiences of family conflicts exist in the families served as participants in this study. The findings reveal that family conflicts can be encountered in various forms such arguments between parents, divorce or separation, sibling rivalry, and more. In this regard, 151 participants corresponding to 75.5 % emphasized that they have seen their parents experiencing conflict discussions.

When assessing the impact of family conflicts on psychological wellbeing of children, 78.7 % of parents attested that family conflict led children to emotional distress, behavioral issues, relationship problems, low self-esteem, and even long-term consequences.

Besides, findings of this study regarding the third objective concerning the relationship between family conflict and psychological wellbeing of children, particularly in the context of Kayonza District in Rwanda yielded a Pearson Correlation of .704\*\* indicating a strong positive correlation between family conflict and psychological wellbeing of children. This correlation signify that Children in Kayonza District were exposed to family conflict. Those children were at risk of experiencing heightened stress, anxiety, and depression. This can adversely affect their overall psychological wellbeing. Moreover, 36 (59.0 %) of parents strongly agreed, 13 (21.3 %) agreed that conflict within the family can disrupt a child's ability to concentrate and perform well in school, potentially leading to academic difficulties. However, promoting open communication, providing access to mental health support and counseling services, and strengthening support networks are crucial steps in mitigating the negative impact of family conflict on children's psychological wellbeing in Kayonza District, eastern province of Rwanda.

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