The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of parental behavior on adolescents’ autonomy and conformity as predictors of parent-adolescent conflict in Kenya. The analysis in this study used data collected from 630 adolescents selected from four secondary (high) schools in Kenya. AMOS was used to run a structural equation model to examine how each of the variables (i.e. parental behaviors, autonomy, Conformity and parent-adolescent conflict) relate to one another in the full model. Based on the results, this research study provided some interesting findings and ideas about parent-adolescent conflict. Some of the results in many respects confirm what has been found in previous studies with samples from other societies and countries. It also uniquely sheds light on the nature of parent-adolescent conflict within the Kenyan society as shaped by values, traditions and perception. An interesting but somewhat surprising finding was the few significant direct relationships between parenting behaviors and parent-adolescent conflict.
PARENT-ADOLESCENT CONFLICT IN KENYA: THE EFFECT OF PARENTAL BEHAVIOR ON ADOLESCENT’S AUTONOMY AND CONFORMITY

A Thesis

Submitted to the

Faculty of Miami University

in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science

by

Nathaniel Edem Dotse

Miami University

Oxford, Ohio

2016

Advisor: Dr. Kevin Bush
Reader: Dr. Anthony James
Reader: Dr. Carolyn Slotten

©2016 Nathaniel Edem Dotse
This thesis titled

PARENT-adolescent conflict in Kenya: the effect of parental behavior on adolescent’s autonomy and conformity

by

Nathaniel Edem Dotse

has been approved for publication by

College of Education, Health and Society

and

Department of Family Studies and Social Work

____________________________________________________

Dr. Kevin Bush

____________________________________________________

Dr. Anthony James

____________________________________________________

Dr. Carolyn Slotten
Table of Contents

List of Tables ................................................................................................................................. iii

Dedication ......................................................................................................................................... iv

Chapter 1: Introduction ..................................................................................................................... 1

Chapter 2: Literature Review .......................................................................................................... 3
  Theoretical Framework ..................................................................................................................... 3
  Parental Behavior .......................................................................................................................... 4
  Autonomy ....................................................................................................................................... 6
  Conformity .................................................................................................................................... 7
  Parent – Adolescent Conflict ........................................................................................................ 8
  Research Hypotheses ..................................................................................................................... 9

Chapter 3: Methodology .................................................................................................................. 10
  Procedure .................................................................................................................................... 10
  Sample .......................................................................................................................................... 10
  Instruments ................................................................................................................................... 13
  Data Analysis ............................................................................................................................... 15
  Hypothesized model ...................................................................................................................... 16

Chapter 4: Results ............................................................................................................................ 17

Chapter 5: Discussion ....................................................................................................................... 20
  Effects of parental behaviors on parent-adolescent conflict ......................................................... 20
  Conformity to Parental goals and expectations ........................................................................... 22
  Adolescent Autonomy .................................................................................................................. 22
  Limitations ................................................................................................................................... 23
  Recommendations for Future Studies ......................................................................................... 23
  Conclusion .................................................................................................................................... 24

REFERENCES ............................................................................................................................... 25
Dedication

This work is dedicated to my mother of blessed memory Ms. Mabel Bonsu, my big sister Nancy Dotse and finally the love of my life Miriam Acquah for their prayers and support throughout this academic journey.
Chapter 1: Introduction

Parental behavior and its impact on adolescent outcomes has been the focus of many research studies in developed societies, however this type of research is lacking in Sub-Saharan African societies (Mbito, 2004). The ways that parents handle adolescents striving for autonomy have been consistently linked to both the quality of parent-adolescent relationships and to numerous aspects of adolescent adjustment (Allen, Hauser, Bell, & O’Connor, 1994; Allen, Hauser, Eickholt, Bell, & O’Connor, 1994; Peterson & Bush 2013; Collins, 1990; Steinberg, 1990). Whether autonomy is defined in cognitive terms such as encouraging expression of individual viewpoints or in more behavioral terms such as participating in family decision making, adolescents (at least in western cultures) appear to benefit in numerous ways from an approach to autonomy that allows them to assert a moderate degree of influence within the context of a positive parent-adolescent relationship (Peterson & Bush, 2013). Collectivist cultural patterns have been described by Triandis (2001) as emphasizing interdependence, in-group goals, and behavior consistent with group norms. Kenyan society is one that endorses and wholeheartedly embraces collectivist cultural patterns and as a result, it governs the relationships between parents and adolescents (Mbito, 2004).

Most parent-adolescent relationships occur in the context of family, and a central characteristic of family is their structural organization which is defined by cultural backgrounds, societal values and parental beliefs (Bush & Peterson, 2013). This to some extent brings out the differences in expectations as well as responsibilities between parents and adolescents across cultures. For instance, western societies such as the United States emphasize individualistic values such as autonomy, assertiveness, and independence while collectivist societies such as Kenya emphasize values such as conformity, respect for authority, and interdependence (Triandis, 1995). That is, children from collectivist societies are taught to be interdependent, to share resources and to live within family and community authority systems (Weisner, 2000). Therefore, key specific aspects of parent-adolescent relationships (i.e. autonomy from parent and conformity to parental expectation) and their dynamics are likely to be different in sub-Saharan Africa compared to western societies. Differences in the balance between conformity and autonomy processes are likely to lead to differences in parent-adolescent conflict.
The term parent-adolescent conflict is often associated with images of rebellion, conflict and rudeness with the adolescent fighting their parents and breaking every rule set by their parent to benefit them. Throughout much of the past century, adolescence in Western cultures was supposed to be a developmental stage characterized by declining family influences, and a growing separation from parents (Arnett, 1999). However, in recent decades this view has changed as scholars have produced research indicating a more balanced view of parent-adolescent relationships and of continued connection and influence of parents through adolescence and beyond (Peterson & Bush, 2013; Peterson, Steinmetz & Wilson, 2005). As a result, many scholars have written extensively on parent-adolescent conflict, at least in western societies, with only a few research studies on non-western societies (Barber, 1994; Bush, Peterson, & Chung, 2013; Fuligni, 1998).

The primary purpose of this study was to examine the effect of parental behavior on adolescents’ autonomy and conformity as predictors of parent-adolescent conflict in Kenya. A Kenyan sample was particularly selected for this study because Kenya is one of the largest countries in Sub-Saharan Africa with diverse ethnic representations. Kenya is a country located in the eastern part of Africa bordering the Indian Ocean. It has an estimated total population of over forty million with a growth rate of 2.588% per annum (Central Intelligence Agency, 2010). Life expectancy at birth for females in Kenya is 59.32 years and that of males is 58.33 years (Central Intelligence Agency, 2010). English and Kiswahili are the two official languages spoken in Kenya besides other indigenous languages. There are many different ethnic groups but the Kikuyu are the largest representing 22% of the Kenyan population. Seventy-eight percent of the population are Christians, 10% Muslim, and 12% represents indigenous and other belief groups (Central Intelligence Agency, 2010).
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

*Individualism versus Collectivism*

The theoretical framework guiding this study is based on the concepts of individualism and collectivism. According to Arnett (2004), although all cultures tend to share similar socialization outcomes, they do differ in terms of their basic socialization beliefs, attitudes and norms. He further argued that one of the crucial distinctions is whether or not the values of a particular society emphasize obedience and conformity to group norms and behaviors or independence, assertiveness and autonomy. This difference in beliefs and values relates to the concepts of individualism and collectivism which Greenfield (2000) termed as the “deep structure” of cultural difference and Triandis (1995), described as the most significant cultural distinction.

In analyzing individualism and collectivism concepts related to describing differences in cultural orientations and values, scholars importantly reminds us that the two concepts are not exclusively independent from each other (e.g., Arnett, 2004; Bush, 2000; Peterson et al., 2005; Peterson & Bush, 2013). That is, not all people in individualistic societies exhibit only the characteristics emphasized by that society, nor does everyone in collectivistic societies strictly adhere to its characteristics as their way of life. With the increasing global nature of today’s modern world, it’s likely that individuals in both traditionally collectivist and traditionally individualist societies are influenced and thus adhere to both social orientations (collectivism and individualism), just to varying extents (e.g., Bush, 2000).

People from collectivist cultures, such as those of Asia, Africa and South America are generally socialized to be interdependent within their in-group. Triandis (1989) defines an in-group as “a group whose norms, goals and values shape the behavior of its members” (p.53) or as a group of individuals with whom a person feels “similar” because of a common fate (Triandis, 1994). This can be in the form of family, tribe, similar language or a nation. To those in collectivist societies, relationships are their utmost concern. For example, Ohbuchi,
Fukushima, and Tedeschi (1999) showed that collectivists in a conflict situation are basically concerned with maintaining their relationship with others. As a result they prefer a method of conflict resolution that does not destroy relationships, such as, mediation (Leung, 1997).

Individualistic societies on the other hand, emphasize autonomy, assertiveness and independence from their in-groups as the core value of their socialization process. They give priority to their personal goals over the goals of their in-groups and behave primarily on the basis of their attitude rather than the norms of their in-group (Triandis, 2001). Individuals from western societies such as United States of America, Western and Northern Europe, Australia, and Canada are generally considered as coming from individualistic cultures, with the US being considered as the most individualistic society (Suh, Diener, Oishi & Triandis, 1998).

Much is not known about the extent to which parents in collectivist cultures like Sub-Saharan Africa and with specific reference to Kenya, emphasize fundamental collectivist values in their adolescent’s socialization process and how this affects the parent-adolescent relationship with regard to conflict. Notwithstanding this, it is expected that parents who emphasize fundamental collectivist values in their children’s socialization process are likely to experience decreased parent-adolescent conflict. This is because, collectivist societies like Kenya are primarily hierarchical in structure with social interactions often defined by age or gender (Mbito, 2004). Adolescents are less likely to be asked for their opinion or allowed to exhibit any traits of independence or autonomy but rather are expected to conform to their in-group norms and values (Mbito, 2004). The form of self-expression that adolescents from individualistic societies (e.g. North America, West and North Europe) commonly exhibit towards adults could be interpreted as lacking proper respect in a collectivistic society like Kenya.

**Parental Behavior**

As adolescents grow up, they are greatly influenced by certain important agents of socialization in their in-group such as parents, peers, elders of their community, teachers and extended family (Bush & Peterson, 2008). For many, the family remains the single most important agent of socialization for which they receive a sense of belonging, values and security, which can foster both positive and negative outcomes. Therefore parents remain a significant
source of influence in the lives of their teens through the roles they play (Dmitrieva, Chen, Greenberger, & Gil-Rivas, 2004; Peterson & Bush, 2013).

There are two common approaches for studying and classifying parental behavior (i.e., dimensional approach and typological approach) (Barber, 1997; Peterson & Bush, 2013). The dimensional approach emphasizes certain distinct parental behaviors such as autonomy granting, punitiveness, support and monitoring while the typological approach tends to focus on a collection of complex parenting behaviors conceptualized as styles (Barber, 1997; Darling & Steinberg, 1993).

The typological approach aggregates several main dimensions of parental behaviors into patterns which were conceptualized by Baumrind (1991) as authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting. Scholars have posited that these three styles of parenting to be based on certain dimensions of demandingness, responsiveness, and communication (Arnett, 2004; Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Parental demandingness is the extent to which parents establish rules and expectations for behavior and require their children to comply with them; while parental responsiveness is the extent to which parents express love, warmth, and concern for their children. Parental communication on the other hand usually takes the form of parents’ use of reasoning and rational persuasion to influence their children (Arnett, 2004).

Specific dimensions of parental behavior, such as monitoring, autonomy granting, support, and punitiveness, and how they impact adolescent outcomes has been the focus of considerable research in the field of Family Science and related disciplines such as Psychology, Education and Sociology within Western societies (Barber, 1997; Bean, Bush, Mckenry & Wilson, 2003; Maccoby & Martin, 1983). For instance, Bean and his colleagues (2003) in their study of a sample of African American and European American adolescents found that the use of supportive behaviors by African American mothers towards their adolescent children resulted in the attainment of a higher self-esteem and lower parent-adolescent conflict.

Parental behaviors very much influence adolescent’s conformity and autonomy which ultimately predict conflict between parents and their adolescents. Conformity to parents’ expectations represents the influence of collectivism in parent-adolescent relationships, while autonomy from parents constitutes the influence of individualism (Bush, 2000). Studies within
diverse groups have found that parents through the use of parenting behaviors influence the development of their adolescents (Peterson & Bush, 2013; Steinberg et al, 1992). During the socialization process, parents facilitate the internalization of conformity to parent’s expectations and autonomy from parents (Peterson, Bush, & Supple, 1999). More specifically, parental behaviors that provide support and warmth (i.e. parental support) has been found to predict high levels of autonomy and conformity among adolescents as compared to parental behaviors that are coercive and strict (i.e. parental punitiveness).

For instance, parents from western societies who are known for emphasizing individualistic values as compared to collectivistic values may contribute to lower conflict when they encourage their adolescents to be more assertive and autonomous through the use of certain parental behavior such as positive parental induction and parental support. In contrast, parents from non-western societies like Kenya who are known for their collectivistic values will likely place emphasis on developing and maintaining close family bonds, conformity to parental expectations and less personal autonomy, all of which is likely to lower the rate of conflict (Arnett, 1999; Phinney & Ong, 2002). Adolescents from these collectivistic cultures or societies may be less likely to seek personal autonomy and challenge parental authority due to societal values that are reinforced in their belief system as part of their socialization process.

**Autonomy**

Adolescence is the developmental period when the young want to gain control over his or her behavior and develop his or her own personality and identity (Dowdy & Kliwer, 1998). According to Kagictibasi (2005), during adolescence, youth attempt to negotiate a separation of themselves from the family and at the same time maintain a healthy interdependence with them. As the young age and mature, the adolescent expects that their parents will begin to give them increased autonomy and control over their personal behavior and day-to-day activities. Parents are often slow to give their adolescents such control and often continue to make decisions for them such as choice of friends, leisure time activities, money management, the use of time and the selection of clothes (Steinberg, 1991). The discrepancy between how quickly adolescents want to gain autonomy and how quickly their parents are willing to grant them autonomy can cause conflict (Dowdy & Kliwer, 1998).
According to Steinberg (1999), during the adolescence period, the young have a great desire to attain autonomy from their parents and establish independence. Adolescents report more conflicts than what parents typically do over every single issue and choice, thereby demonstrating their strong desire for autonomy and independence (Smetana & Gaines, 1999). One purpose of the current study is to examine whether autonomy is being influenced by parental behaviors in Kenya and the effect that autonomy has on parent-adolescent conflict. Although Kenya is considered to be a collectivistic society where emphasis is placed on conformity as a way of socializing their young, with the spread of Western values it is expected that autonomy might be a growing expectation and influence in collectivistic cultures.

**Conformity**

Adolescents’ adherences to parental expectations and societal norms, or values are dominant characteristics in collectivistic societies like Kenya (Mbito, 2004). The two main dimensions of conformity identified are internalized conformity and external compliance of the adolescent (Peterson, Rollins & Thomas, 1985). Internalized conformity is the personal commitment of the adolescent to make choices and behave in a manner consistent with societal norms and expectations whereas the external compliance of the adolescents deals with the aspect of conformity where the adolescent complies with parental and societal expectations in order to receive rewards and avoid punishments but does not necessarily internalize societal norms and values (Peterson et al, 1985). Both forms of conformity can exist in a parent-adolescent relationship (Steinberg, 2001).

Researchers commonly assert that a moderate degree of adolescent conformity to parental expectations is necessary in families irrespective of societal orientation (i.e. collectivistic or individualistic societies) in order for effective and healthy parent-adolescent relationships to occur (Bush, 2000; Peterson & Bush, 2013; Youniss & Smollar, 1985). In most collectivistic cultures like Kenya, adolescents demonstrate greater conformity to parental and societal expectations compared to adolescents in more individualistic cultures like the US (Roer-Strier & Rivlis, 1998). Adolescents in collectivistic societies are expected to give priority to their in-group goals instead of their personal goals and are socialized to be interdependent within their in-group (Triandis, 2001). Conformity to parental and societal goals and expectations generally
lead to decreased parent-adolescent conflict especially in collectivistic societies (Greenfield, 2000).

**Parent – Adolescent Conflict**

Adolescence is often thought of as a period during which the quality of parent-child interactions can be relatively stressed and conflictual but nevertheless successful for most teens (Eisenberg, 2008). According to Steinberg (2001), conflict between parents and their children during adolescence is common in families across the globe. Adolescence brings with it the desire of becoming increasingly autonomous and independent from one’s parent. Adolescents begin to question rules, viewpoints and traditions that appear to be imposed rather than negotiated (Smetana, 1989). Even though they wish and desire to be treated as adults, they still want to be connected to their parents.

The degree of autonomy that the adolescent may wish to pursue, and the degree of autonomy that the parents allow him or her to achieve varies across cultures (Fuligni, Tseng, & Lam, 1999). These varying expectations in relation to autonomy seeking could be a source of higher levels of parent-adolescent conflict in a collectivistic society like Kenya which emphasizes values such as respect for authority, conformity and interdependence, compared to an individualistic society like the US which emphasizes values such as assertiveness, autonomy and independence in their socialization process (Kuhlberg & Zayas, 2010).

Parent-adolescent conflict varies across cultures. Although a few studies have examined parent-adolescent conflict within non-western societies, most have focused on a single country (See Bush et al., 2013 for exception). The small body of literature that does exist has not examined the simultaneous influence of parenting behaviors, adolescent autonomy, and adolescent conformity as predictors of parent-adolescent conflict (Peterson et al, 2005).

A growing body of empirical evidence posits that parent-adolescent conflict is likely to be less prevalent in cultures and ethnic groups that emphasize extensive economic interdependence, conformity, parental authority and collectivism (Triandis, 2001). It stands to reason that cultures may differ in specific aspects of parent-adolescent relationships which will influence or serve as a predictor for parent-adolescent conflict (Arnett, 1999; Phinney & Ong, 2002).
According to Yau and Smetana (1996), parent-adolescent conflict in a more collectivistic society could be muted or expressed differently than in more individualistic societies. This is because most collectivist societies prioritize the welfare and goals of their in-groups over the goals of their members. As a result they are expected to behave in consonance with the norms and values of their respective in-groups.

**Research Hypotheses**

1. When the adolescent perceives the parent to have coercive parental behavior (i.e. parental punitiveness), there will be an increase in the frequency of parent-adolescent conflict.

2. When adolescents perceive their parents to be exhibiting positive parental behaviors (i.e. parental support and positive parental induction), there will be a decrease in the frequency of parent-adolescent conflict.

3. {External compliance} Conformity to parental goals and expectations will lead to decreased parent-adolescent conflict.

4. Adolescent autonomy from parent will lead to an increase in the frequency of parent-adolescent conflict.

5. Parental behaviors such as parental punitiveness will increase adolescent’s conformity to parental goals and expectations but decrease adolescent’s autonomy.

6. Parental behaviors such as parental support and positive parental induction will increase adolescent's conformity to parental goals and expectations and increase adolescent's autonomy.
Chapter 3: Methodology

The study made use of a self-reported extant data set from a group of 630 Kenyan adolescents to examine the research questions of the study. The group was selected from four secondary schools in Kenya, eastern Africa.

Procedure

The Kenyan data was first collected as part of a larger study concerned with family influences on adolescent’s social competence (Bush, 2000; Bush, Peterson, Cobas, & Supple, 2002; Peterson et al., 1999). The survey asked Kenyan adolescents to report their perceptions of their parents’ parenting behaviors separately (i.e. fathers’ and mothers’) on a number of domains and other characteristics such as parental autonomy granting and conformity to parental expectations. Demographic information such as age, gender, ethnicity, religious affiliation, household composition, parental occupational status and parental educational background were also assessed in the questionnaire. Research assistants and teachers who had been trained in accordance with a standardized protocol administered the survey to participating students in their classrooms.

Sample

The study will be a secondary data analysis of self-reported data acquired from a group of Kenyan adolescents. The sample consisted of 630 adolescents selected from four secondary schools in Kenya, Africa who ranged in age from 15-20 years old ($M=16.3$, $SD=1.5$). The sample consisted of 405 females (64.3%) and 225 males (35.7%). In regards to religion, 233 of the respondents reported being Catholic and 362 reported to be Protestant which represented 37.0% and 57.5% of the sample respectively. A total of 94.8% of the sample identified themselves as Black Kenyans, 1.6% as White Kenyans, 2.4% as Asian Kenyans and 1.3% identified as Europeans or others who were not citizens of Kenya. The level of education completed for mothers and fathers was similar, with the mothers on average completing high school and some
college education and fathers on average completing high school and some college and post graduate education.
Table 3.1 Below shows the demographic information of the sample.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>64.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestants</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>57.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholics</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Kenyans</td>
<td>597</td>
<td>94.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Kenyans</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Kenyans</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Instruments**

The survey consisted of items that assessed the relationship between Kenyan adolescents and their parents. Adolescents were asked to report their perceptions of their fathers’ and mothers' parenting behaviors separately (i.e. parental support, positive parental induction and parental punitiveness) and other characteristics such as parental autonomy granting and adolescents conformity to parental expectations. The research participants responded to each survey question in terms of a four-point Likert scale that ranged from Strongly Agree (4 points) to Strongly Disagree (1 point). Instruments used to measure the variables of interest for this study were as followed:

*Parental support* – The extent to which adolescents perceived parents as communicating feelings of affection, warmth and a sense of being valued was assessed with the parental support subscale. This subscale consists of 4 items from the Parent Behavior Measure (Peterson, Rollins & Thomas, 1985), and proved to be reliable in the current sample, with Cronbach's alphas of .71 for reports of mothers and .87 for reports of fathers.

*Positive parental induction* – Teen’s perceptions of the degree to which mothers and fathers are perceived as explaining to adolescents how their behavior affects other people was assessed with the Positive Parental Reasoning subscale. This subscale consists of 5 items from the Parent Behavior Measure (Peterson, Rollins & Thomas, 1985), and proved to be reliable in the current sample, with Cronbach's alphas of .85 for reports of mothers and .87 for reports of fathers.

*Parental punitiveness* – The 10 item parental punitive subscale scale from the Parent Behavior Measure (Peterson, Rollins & Thomas, 1985) was used to assess teen’s perceptions of the extent to which mothers and fathers use controlling behaviors that are characterized as harsh, strict and arbitrary practices. Chronbach's alphas for this sample was .72 for reports of mothers and .88 for reports of fathers.

*Parental autonomy granting* – The extent to which parents allow their adolescents to freely make their own decisions and choices in life was measured by a 10 item subscale (Peterson et al., 1985; Peterson et al, 1999) based on previous research (e.g. Sessa & Steinberg, 1991). Chronbach's alphas for this sample was .67 for reports of mothers and .75 for reports of fathers.
Conformity to parental expectations – Conformity to parental expectations by adolescents was measured by a 9 item subscale (Peterson et al., 1999) based on previous research (Peterson, Rollins & Thomas, 1985). Chronbach's alphas for this sample was .86 for reports of mothers and .88 for reports of fathers.

Parent-Adolescent Conflict – Two items from previous research (Bush, Peterson & Chung, 2013) were used to assess (1) frequency and (2) intensity of parent-adolescent conflict, although only the item assessing frequency of conflict is used in the present study. The item used to assess the adolescents’ perceptions of the frequency of conflict with their mothers and fathers was worded: “How often do you argue with your parents? Responses to this item were presented on a six point scale that was scored 1-6. For example, scores of “1” on the item measuring the frequency of conflict corresponded with the response, “My parents and I rarely or never have serious arguments or fights.” Scores of “6” on this item corresponded with the response, “My parents and I have serious arguments or fights several times a day.
Data Analysis

To examined the proposed hypotheses, AMOS was used to run a structural equation model to examine how each of the variables (i.e. parental behaviors, autonomy, Conformity and parent-adolescent conflict) relate to one another in the full model.
Hypothesized model
Chapter 4: Results

The primary purpose of the current study was to examine the effect of parental behavior on adolescents' autonomy and conformity as predictors of parent-adolescent conflict in Kenya. The current study specifically investigated three dimensions of parental behavior (parental punitiveness, parental support and positive parental induction), adolescent conformity and autonomy. Six hypotheses were examined for each parental model. The hypothesized model was analyzed through Amos structural equation modeling using the full information maximum likelihood method for parameter estimates. For adolescent’s perceptions of fathers, the model yielded a good overall fit with a non-significant $\chi^2 (1.464, \text{df} = 1, p = .226)$. For adolescent’s perceptions of mothers, the model yielded a good overall fit with a non-significant $\chi^2 (.612, \text{df} = 1, p = .434)$.

**Hypothesis 1:** When the adolescent perceives the parent to have coercive parental behavior (i.e. parental punitiveness), there will be an increase in the frequency of parent-adolescent conflict.

There was a statistically significant relationship when adolescents perceived their mothers as having coercive parental behavior (i.e. parental punitiveness), however there was no significant relationship between paternal punitive parenting and parent-adolescent conflict ($\beta=0.27$, $p=.483$). That is, perception of the adolescent that their mothers had coercive parental behavior served to increase parent-adolescent conflict ($\beta=0.8$, $p<.01$). Thus, the first hypothesis was supported only for the adolescent-mother dyad.

**Hypothesis 2.** When adolescents perceive their parents to be exhibiting positive parental behaviors (i.e. parental support and positive parental induction), there will be a decrease in the frequency of parent-adolescent conflict.

There was a statistically significant positive relationship between positive parental induction from fathers’ and parent-adolescent conflict ($\beta=0.648$, $p<.02$), however there was no significant relationship between parental support from fathers and parent-adolescent conflict ($\beta=-1.11$, $p=.11$).
p=.094). That is, teen’s perceptions of father’s use of positive induction was significantly related to an increase in parent-adolescent conflict (b= .648, p<.02); indicating that the more fathers use reasoning and explanation with teens, the higher the level of parent-adolescent conflict. There were no statistically significant relationships between positive parental induction from mothers and parent-adolescent conflict (p<.451) or parental support from mothers and parent-adolescent conflict (p<.326).

**Hypothesis 3. Conformity to parental goals (i.e., external compliance) and expectations will lead to a decrease in the frequency of parent-adolescent conflict.**

There was a statistically significant relationship between conformity to parental goals and expectations and parent-adolescent conflict in both adolescent-mother and adolescent-father dyads. That is, conformity to paternal (β= -.084, p<.001) as well as maternal (β= -.077, p<.001) goals and expectations led to a decrease in the frequency of parent-adolescent conflict. Thus, this hypothesis was fully supported in both dyads.

4. **Adolescent autonomy from parent will lead to an increase in the frequency of parent-adolescent conflict.**

Examination of the results for the adolescent-father dyad indicated a significant relationship for adolescents and their fathers at a p < .05 level. That is, adolescent autonomy from fathers led to an increase in the frequency of parent-adolescent conflict (β= .038, p<.007). However, there was no significant relationship between parent-adolescent conflict and adolescent autonomy from mothers (β= .006, p=.773). Thus, this hypothesis was only supported for the adolescent-father dyad.

5. **Parental behaviors such as parental punitiveness will increase adolescent's conformity to parental goals and expectations but decrease adolescent's autonomy.**

In the adolescent-mother dyad, there was no significant relationship between parental punitiveness from mothers and adolescent conformity to parental goals and expectations (β=-.067, p=.452) nor between parental punitiveness from mothers and autonomy (β=-.051, p=.723). Similarly, in the adolescent-father dyad there were no significant relationships between parental
punitiveness from fathers and adolescent autonomy ($\beta = -.204$, $p = .263$) or conformity ($\beta = .112$, $p = .852$). Thus the hypothesis was not supported.

6. Parental behaviors such as parental support and positive parental induction will increase adolescent's conformity to parental goals and expectations and increase adolescent's autonomy. In the adolescent-mother dyad, there was no significant relationship between parental support and adolescents conformity to parental goals and expectations and adolescent autonomy ($\beta = .154$, $p = .118$) and ($\beta = -.047$, $p = .352$) respectively. There was also no significant relationship between positive parental induction from mothers and adolescents conformity to parental goals and expectations and adolescent autonomy ($\beta = -.102$, $p = .169$) and ($\beta = -.110$, $p = .554$) respectively. However, in the adolescent-father dyad there was a significant relationship between positive parental induction from fathers and adolescent conformity to parental goals ($\beta = -.115$, $p < 0.01$). But there were no significant relationship between positive parental induction from fathers and adolescent conformity to parental goals and expectation ($\beta = -.100$, $p = .209$). That is, teen’s perceptions of father’s use of positive induction was significantly related to a decrease in adolescent's conformity to parental goals and expectations. Indicating that, the more fathers use reasoning and explanation with teens, the lower the level of conformity to parental goals and expectation. There were also no significant relationship between parental support from fathers' and adolescent conformity to parental goals and expectations ($\beta = -.256$, $p = .122$). But there was a significant relationship between parental support from fathers and adolescent autonomy ($\beta = -.052$, $p = .029$). Thus the hypothesis was not fully supported
Chapter 5: Discussion

Based on the results, this research study has provided some interesting findings and ideas about parent-adolescent conflict. Some of the results in many respects confirm what has been found in previous studies with samples from other societies and countries. It also uniquely sheds light on the nature of parent-adolescent conflict within the Kenyan society as shaped by values, traditions and perception. An interesting but somewhat surprising finding was the few significant direct relationships between parenting behaviors and parent-adolescent conflict.

Effects of parental behaviors on parent-adolescent conflict

Considering the fact that parents remain significant sources of influence in the lives of their children through the many important roles they play (Dmitrieva, Chen, Greenberger, & Gil-Rivas, 2004), positive parental behaviors were hypothesized to predict a decrease in the frequency of parent-adolescent conflict in Kenya. Results indicated that both positive parental induction and parental support behaviors by mothers were not significant direct predictors of frequency of parent-adolescent conflict in Kenya. Similarly, parental support from fathers was also not a direct predictor of conflict. On the other hand, there was a statistically significant relationship between positive parental induction from fathers and the frequency of parent-adolescent conflict, but in the opposite direction. That is, the more fathers used positive inductive behaviors, teens perceived higher parent-adolescent conflict. What this result means is that there is no impact on the frequency of parent-adolescent conflict when mothers’ are perceived by their adolescents as communicating feelings of warmth, affection and a sense of being valued as well as explaining to their adolescents how their behaviors affect other people. This is because in most collectivistic societies especially Kenya, there is the general expectation from mothers’ to communicate feeling of warmth, affection and a sense of being valued as well as explaining to their adolescents how their behaviors affect other people (Mbito, 2004). So as far as the adolescent is concerned their mothers is exhibiting parental behaviors consistent with the general expectation of the society, and thus from this perspective, it might be less likely to influence conflict.
Interestingly, when fathers are perceived as explaining to their adolescents how their behaviors affect others, there is an increase in the frequency of parent-adolescent conflict; which is contrary to what was hypothesized. One possible explanation for this might be found through focusing on parental expectations within the culture. The expectations from fathers’ especially in Kenya and other collectivistic societies is not to be exhibiting positive parental induction towards adolescents (Arnette, 1999). The idea of fathers’ reasoning and explaining to adolescent how their behavior affect others is foreign to the Kenya’s culture and traditions. A father is the final authority in the home and his decisions and words are also final and not subject to reasoning or explanations. Thus, following this view, the introduction of reasoning and explanations by a father would increase conflict as the adolescent may then feel he or she has an opportunity to re-negotiate their rights and values which the fathers’ prohibit.

Parental punitiveness was the only parental behavior that served as a direct significant predictor of parent-adolescent conflict (only in maternal dyads). This result is consistent with previous studies in western societies where parental punitiveness has been found not to be a positive parenting behavior that fosters the development of adolescent social competences (Steinberg, 1999). In Kenya for example, mothers are expected to exhibit positive parental behaviors (i.e. parental support and positive parental induction) which always foster the development of adolescents’ social competences and decrease conflict. The idea of mothers’ exhibiting coercive parental behavior (i.e. parental punitiveness) is foreign to Kenyan culture and traditions and thus are likely increase conflict when adolescents perceive mothers to be exhibiting coercive parental behaviors (Mbito, 2004). Fathers’ on the other hand are the known disciplinarians in collectivistic societies especially Kenya; thus from this view there would be no impact on parent-adolescent conflict when fathers’ are perceived by their adolescents’ as exhibiting coercive parental behaviors, as they are expected to discipline their children and not be questioned (Mbito, 2004).
**Conformity to Parental goals and expectations**

Conformity to parental goals and expectations significantly decreased the frequency of parent-adolescent conflict in both mother and father dyad. Collectivistic cultures place great emphasis on adolescent conformity (Triandis, 2001), with which Kenya is no exception. The adolescent is expected to develop as an individual that fits harmoniously within the in-group (Peterson, 2005). It is expected that when the adolescent conforms to parental goals and expectations, there will be less conflict.

**Adolescent Autonomy**

Adolescence is a time when the adolescents' desires to gain autonomy from their parents (Steinberg, 1999). Adolescents begin to distance themselves from others and make decisions for themselves (Kagitcibasi, 2005). Previous research has shown that the supportive nature of collectivistic cultures, specifically the close-knit nature of collectivistic families, fosters healthy adolescent autonomy (Peterson et al., 1999). While the Kenyan family may not provide much autonomy in the sense of separation from parents, research has shown that the more connected and supported family aids in fostering adolescent autonomy (Peterson et al., 1999). The current study explored this variable as a function of collectivistic culture and hypothesized that autonomy from parents' would increase parent-adolescent conflict. The results for the study support the hypothesis, indicating an increase in the frequency of parent-adolescent conflict when fathers allowed their adolescents' to make their own decisions and engage in activities without parental intrusion. This is because in most collectivistic societies especially Kenya, autonomy from fathers’ by adolescents is frowned upon. The idea of adolescents distancing themselves from their fathers’ and making their own decisions is not an acceptable norm or tradition in that society (Kagitcibasi, 2005). Rather, adolescents’ are supposed to listen, obey and conform to the expectations and goals of their fathers; thus autonomy from fathers’ significantly increased conflict. On the other hand, autonomy from mothers’ did not significantly predict conflict. This is because autonomy from mothers is an acceptable practice in the Kenyan society (Mbito, 2004). Mothers’ in that society tend to give more autonomy to adolescents than fathers’.
Limitations

There were several limitations with this study which should be noted and rectified in future studies.

Firstly, a convenience sampling size of 630 Kenyan adolescents drawn from only 4 secondary schools in Nairobi is very limited in terms of geographic area representation. Making generalizations with this sample, as representing the views of all adolescents in Kenya and even as that of all adolescents in an ethnically diverse society such as Sub-Saharan Africa is quite problematic.

Secondly, because the items in the different scales measured the adolescent’s perceptions of their parents parenting behaviors, one cannot rule out the element of bias in their responses to the survey questions.

A final limitation of this study was that, the instruments used in collecting the data were originally developed for use with American and European samples. Although some changes were made to suit the Kenyan sample, there are still certain doubts as to their total validity considering the fact that, significant differences exist between western societies and Sub-Saharan African societies.

Recommendations for Future Studies

This present study focused solely on three parental behaviors (parental support, positive parental induction and punitiveness) and their impact on adolescents’ autonomy and conformity. Other future studies could include more diverse conceptualizations of parental behaviors that capture parenting and parent-adolescent relationship variables in Kenya or at least collectivistic cultures in general.

Based on the findings of this current study, it is recommended that future studies should directly examine the theoretical distinctions between individualism and collectivism believed to exist within Sub-Saharan African societies and western societies.

Finally, researchers’ studying the area of parental behaviors and its effect on parent-adolescent conflicts should broaden their scope to include the other 5 Islamic nations (Magrebian
countries) that forms part of Africa and not just Sub-Saharan Africa alone in future studies. A study comparing these two geographic areas in Africa in terms of parenting will be interesting considering the unique cultural differences between the two geographic areas.

**Conclusion**

The results of this current study have highlighted some of the similarities and the unique differences between other previous studies done with samples in western societies. For instance, parental punitiveness was found in this current study as a significant positive predictor of parent-adolescent conflict in Kenyan just as previous studies with samples from western societies (Herman, 1997). Whereas parental autonomy granting behaviors results in decrease in the frequency of parent-adolescents conflict within western societies (Vazsonyi & Pickering, 2003), the present study found autonomy granting by fathers to increase the frequency of parent-adolescent conflict in Kenya.

In conclusion, although parent-adolescent conflicts takes place among families across the world, it’s also shaped in very significant ways by each society’s culture and traditions.
REFERENCES


