Parental acceptance-rejection is a dimension of parenting that describes the amount of responsiveness and affection that a parent displays toward a child. Parents classified as accepting and responsive often smile at, praise and encourage their children expressing a great deal of warmth but they are also critical when the child misbehaves. During adolescent, self esteem on average declines and parental acceptance or rejection influences how adolescents evaluate their self worth. Previous studies indicate that adolescents who perceive their parents as warm and supportive maintain high self esteem throughout the transition. However, there is paucity of research on perceived parental acceptance and how it affects self esteem in Kenya. The purpose of this study was to establish the relationship between parental acceptance-rejection and self esteem among adolescents in Kikuyu District, Kiambu County. The objectives of the study included establishing the levels of self- esteem, levels of perceived parental acceptance, establish gender differences in self esteem, establish the relationship between perceived parental acceptance and self esteem and also establish whether there are differences in perceived paternal acceptance and perceived maternal acceptance among adolescents in Kikuyu district. The study employed correlational survey design and the study was conducted in secondary schools in the newly created Kikuyu District of Kiambu County. Stratified random sampling was used to select schools and also to select students in each school and simple random sampling was used to select individual students. Questionnaires were used to collect data. Test retest method was used to ascertain reliability of the instruments. Convergent validity for self esteem test was established by correlating Rosenberg’s self esteem test with Sorensen self esteem test while convergent validity for PARQ-child measuring parental acceptance-rejection was established by correlating it with affection subscale of Schaefer’s Child’s Report of Parent Behavior Inventory (CRPBI) . When all data was collected, it was subjected to correlational and inferential statistics. Calculation of; means, frequency, percentages, graphs was done and t test analysis was conducted to identify the differences between males and females on self esteem. Correlation was done to find the relationship between parental acceptance and self esteem. Data analysis was done using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Scientist). In
the findings, adolescent self esteem was found to be high with a mean of 19.83. Parental acceptance was also found to be higher than rejection with a mean score of 119. Females had a slightly higher score in perceived parental acceptance than males. The study also established the existence of a moderate positive relationship between perceived parental acceptance-rejection and self esteem. The findings of this study will benefit parents and those who are preparing to become parents to understand how parental attitudes can positively or negatively affect the adolescent child and influence their self esteem. The findings of the study will also help institutions dealing with adolescents to enlighten the parental figures on the acceptance needs of adolescents and how the needs affect their self esteem.