

Effect of Parenting Approaches on Students' Academic Performance Among Public Day Secondary Schools in Yatta Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya

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Abstract: Education is an element in the stimulation of socioeconomic development as advanced by several government policy documents and various scholars. Education is one of the most important aspects of human resource development. Despite the school administration laying some strategies to improve students' academic performance, it is still low in Yatta sub-county. Therefore, the study sought to establish the effect of parenting approaches on students' academic performance among public day secondary schools in Yatta sub-County. This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The target population for this study included 28 public day secondary schools in Yatta sub-county. This study adopted the use of questionnaires and interview schedules to obtain data from the respondents. Raw data obtained from the respondents were sorted, cleaned and scrutinized for errors such as omissions, exaggerations, and biases. Quantitative data collected was then organized and entered into the computer using SPSS version 25. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation were used to describe the data. The study concluded that it is important for parents to adopt the authoritative parenting style among their adolescent children. This is because as much as authoritative parenting establishes rules and guidelines, and demonstrates power, it is more democratic than authoritarian which is important to build the children's self-esteem and self-discipline which trickles down to good performance. From the study, it was concluded that although neglectful parenting style has been said to lead to poor academic performance, it could lead to a positive influence.

Keywords: Parenting approaches, approaches, Authoritative, Authoritarian, Permissive, Neglectful.

I. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Education is an element in the stimulation of socioeconomic development as advanced by several government policy documents and various scholars (ROK, 2007; World Bank, 2005; Selina 2012). According to Todaro (2004) a country that is unable to invest in education to develop the knowledge and skills of its people and utilize them effectively in national economy will be unable to develop anything else. Hallack (1990) states that education has been identified Worldwide as an important component that determines the character and social economic development of

any nation. Developed countries like USA and Japan have a large pool of highly skilled human resources. This has enabled them to not only exploit local natural resources but also to identify and negotiate for other countries resources. Secondary school education is the fundamental ingredient for creating economic development. In the United States it has been more important than increased capital in accounting for worker productivity and US economic growth (Smith, 2003).

The Government of Kenya is committed to improving academic performance and fulfillment of its goals as articulated in its Education Sector Support Programme (RoK, 2005). The government has on one hand established the Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards (DQAS) to enhance quality deliverance of the curriculum while on the other hand, parents are required to provide relevant infrastructure and facilities. Though secondary schools within Teso South District have same catchment area for students, they record varied results in national examination. Poor supply of these resources leads to low quality attainments as reflected through examinations results. Therefore, this study sought to find out how various selected factor affect student's academic performance in Yatta sub county, Machakos County.

1.1 Statement Of The Problem

Education is one of the most important aspects of human resource development. Failure in the examinations especially at the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) spells doom for the students whose life becomes uncertain and full of despair. Thus, the academic performance of students cannot be over-emphasized. The KCSE performance determines whether the students will proceed to university or to other tertiary institutions. Therefore, a student's life is determined by academic performance in the national examinations. It is for this reason that secondary school administrators are pressurized to improve the grades attained by students. Public pressure on school administrators and teachers to improve academic performance has led to schools coming up with various performance improvement strategies including extra supplementary tuition, reward, punishment systems for well-

performing and poorly performing students and forced grade repetition among others.

Despite the school administration laying some strategies to improve student's academic performance, it is not clear on the role of other factors such as parenting approaches, students' discipline and learning resources on the academic performance of these students. The parental approaches are dependent on the home environment in which a learner is brought up and it can shape the learners' academic endeavors. Other factors such as discipline are dependent on the student and the peer influence while the available learning resources rely on the school administration as well as the financial status of the parents. Therefore, this study seeks to establish the effect of selected factors that affect students' academic performance among secondary schools in Yatta sub-county.

1.2. Objective Of The Study

To establish the effect of parenting approaches on students' academic performance among public day secondary schools in Yatta sub-county.

1.3. Theoretical Framework

Baumrind developed the theory that there were four main types of parenting approaches and those differences in parenting approaches accounted for the way children functioned socially, emotionally and cognitively. Baumrind suggested that there were four dimensions of parent-child interactions: parental control, maturity demands, clarity of communication and nurturance. She pointed out that parental control is related to issues such as enforcing rules; Maturity demand is the parental expectation that children perform up to their potential; Clarity of communication reflects the parents' willingness to communicate with their children, solicit their opinions and use reasoning to obtain the desired behavior and Nurturance is related to parental expressions of warmth and approval, and protection of children's physical and emotional well-being (Baumrind, 2012).

Using these four dimensions, Baumrind identified four parenting approaches: authoritative, authoritarian, permissive-indulgent and permissive-uninvolved. She pointed out that the authoritative style is considered as the ideal parenting style and seems to produce children with high levels of self-reliance and self-esteem, who are socially responsible, independent and achievement oriented. Authoritative parents set clear expectations and have high standards. They monitor their children's behavior, use discipline based on reasoning and encourage their children to make decisions and learn from their mistakes. They are also warm and nurturing, treating their children with kindness, respect and affection. On the other hand, authoritarian parent tends to set rigid rules, demand obedience and use strategies such as the withdrawal of love or approval to force a child to conform. These parents are more likely to use physical punishment or verbal insults to elicit the desired behavior. They lack the warmth of the authoritative parent and may seem aloof to their children. Children with

authoritarian parents may be well-behaved, but they are also likely to be moody and anxious; they tend to be followers rather than leaders. The permissive-indulgent parent is overflowing with parental warmth. This parent may be openly affectionate and loving but sets few or no limits, even when the child's safety may be at risk.

Permissive-indulgent parents make few demands for maturity or performance, and there are often no consequences for misbehavior. Finally, permissive-uninvolved parenting which is also called uninvolved parenting, is characterized by the same lack of limits or demands seen in the permissive-indulgent style. However, the uninvolved parent displays little or no parental warmth. At its extreme, the uninvolved style can be neglectful or involve an outright rejection of the child. Children with uninvolved parents are likely to have low levels of functioning in many areas. They tend to do poorly in school and, particularly as they move into high school, are more likely to exhibit delinquent behavior and to be depressed (Baumrind, 2012).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Academic performance

Academic performance relates to the positive identity structures, which encompass self-esteem, self-efficacy, and motivation (Bandura, 1997). On the other hand, Zimmerman (2001) revealed that academic performance can be defined as self-regulated learning, including excellence in sports, arts, culture, behavior, confidence, and communication skills, and it shows how learners control their emotions, feelings, and actions to academically achieve. Kenya's education arrangement is dominated by examination-oriented training, where passing exams is the only standard for performance since there is no internal structure for monitoring learning achievements (Maiyo, 2009). Orodho (2008) explained that in some regions of Kenya, poor performance in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (K.C.S.E.) has been attributed to factors such as, absenteeism of pupils from school, lack of facilities, lack of teacher motivation, understaffing and lack of role models, though these factors differ depending on the critical region as well as the school.

A report by Kanere (2009) pinpointed that many students who attended schools in camps performed poorly during exams. However, different people had different opinions about the root of this problem. The report showed that most students blamed the teachers with an explanation that teachers did not explain lessons clearly and as a result, students could not understand the material being taught and hence they did not score good marks on exams. Some other students claimed that teachers speak in difficult English that was hard to understand. Consequently, students were unable to grasp lessons and eventually performed poorly.

The same study by Kanere (2009) sought to find out the opinion of the poor performance from the teachers' point of view and found out that, according to teachers the blame was on students

and their parents. Some teachers reported that students were not serious about their education and that they do not respect their teachers including doing their assignments as instructed. Other teachers said that students perform poorly because their parents were not responsible enough. However on their side, parents had different opinion on the cause of poor performance in schools. For example some parents blamed the fact that classes were overcrowded and hence teachers were unable to monitor students individually and therefore teachers could not identify their students' weaknesses and address them specifically. Consequently, according to the parents, there are many teachers who were not qualified for the courses they are assigned to and hence they were unlikely to explain their lessons which leads to students failing their exams since they did not understand lessons in the first place.

2.2. Parenting Approaches

Parenting approaches are beneficial in understanding complex behaviors and attitudes associated with child outcomes (Rodriguez, Donovan & Crowley, 2009). Parenting is parental behaviors that encompass pleasures, privileges, and profits as well as frustrations, fears, and 12 failures. Thus, parents can find an interest and derive considerably and continuing pleasure in their relationships and activities with their children (Dawkins, 2006). There are nine parenting approaches that were suggested by Baumrind (1999). These are authoritative, demanding, traditional, authoritarian, undifferentiated, democratic, permissive, nondirective, and rejecting neglecting. However current researchers have found out that parenting approaches are often adopted by previous generations (Brown & Iyengar, 2008) and are passed down by culture.

Whether parents practice democratic decision-making with their children, which can be defined as engagement in cooperative discussion prior to decision-making, is a criterion that is commonly used to measure parenting style. Authoritative parents tend to engage in discussions with their children before a joint decision is rendered. Authoritarian and permissive parents, however, tend not to engage in discussions. Instead, unilateral decisions are the norm, with authoritarian parents and children of permissive parents making the decisions. However, most families are not completely democratic or undemocratic decision-makers. Thus, this dimension is best measured as a continuum of authoritativeness (Morawska, 2007).

2.2.1 Authoritarian Parenting style and academic performance

In this authoritarian style of parenting, children are expected to follow strict rules established by the parents. Failure to follow such rules usually results in punishment. Authoritarian parents fail to explain the reasoning behind these rules. If asked to explain, the parent might simply reply, "Because I said so." These parents have high demands but are not responsive to their children. In addition, these parents are usually obedience and status oriented, and they always expect their orders to be obeyed without explanation (Karavalis, 2003). Parents in the

restrictive pattern of parenting are identified as authoritarian. Parents in this type of attempt to sharpen, control, and evaluate the behavior and attitude of their children which is usually formulated by a higher secular authority (Baumrind, 1999). These parents are high on demandingness and low on responsiveness. Additionally, children and adolescents with authoritarian parents were reported as having low self-esteem and spontaneity, as well as withdrawal, antisocial, and delinquent behaviors. Parents in this pattern value obedience as a virtue and are punitive and forceful (Baumrind, 1999).

A study conducted by Roberts and Fraleigh (1997) indicated that authoritative parenting positively related to grades; conversely, both authoritarian and permissive parenting negatively related to grades. However, authoritarian parenting is inclined to have a stronger relationship with grades rather than the other two parenting approaches. This is because authoritarian parenting tends to be characterized by power. The findings of a study conducted in Ethiopia documented that an authoritarian parenting style was the most practiced parenting style since socio-political system adhered to authoritarianism in every realm of human endeavors. On the other hand, a likely reason for the findings of the studies in the last two decades which reported that an authoritative parenting style was the most predominantly employed parenting style could be, as noted by numerous researchers (Seleshi, 1998).

2.2.2 Authoritative parenting style and academic performance

Parents with an authoritative parenting style usually establish rules and guidelines that their children are expected to follow. However, this parenting style is more democratic and the parents are more responsive to their children and willing to listen to questions. When children fail to meet expectations, these parents are more nurturing and forgiving rather than punishing. Baumrind (2012) suggests that these parents usually monitor and impart clear standards for their children's conduct; they are assertive, but not intrusive and restrictive. Their disciplinary methods are always supportive, rather than punitive since they want their children to be assertive as well as socially responsible, self-regulated as well as cooperative.

Authoritative parents have high demandingness and high or medium responsiveness (Baumrind, 2012). Moreover, authoritative parents reasonably attempt to direct their children's activities and use more warm control, positivity during communication, feelings-oriented reasoning as well as induction, and more responsiveness to children's questions. Interestingly, adolescents with authoritative parents reported higher grades in school performance than adolescents with neglectful parents, and demonstrated stronger school orientation, school engagement, and bonding with teachers than adolescents with neglectful parents (Steinberg, Eisengart, & Cauffman, 2006). Demanding parents are medium responsive and highly demanding (Baumrind, 1999). However, traditional parents exhibited a different structural role between 17 mothers and fathers. For example, mothers are highly responsive but,

relatively understanding. In contrast, fathers are highly demanding, but quite coercive and non-responsive.

2.3 Permissive parenting style and academic performance

Permissive parents usually have very few demands to make of their children. These parents rarely discipline their children because they have relatively low expectations of maturity and self-control. According to Baumrind (1991), permissive parents are more responsive than they are demanding. They are non-traditional and lenient, they do not require mature behavior, they allow considerable self-regulation, and they avoid confrontation. Permissive parents are generally nurturing and communicative with their children, often taking on the status of a friend more than that of a parent (Grills, 2002).

Parents in the lenient pattern of indulgent parenting are composed of democratic, permissive, and undifferentiated parents. Democratic parents are high responsive and medium demanding while permissive parents are low or medium demanding and highly responsive (Baumrind, 1999). Also, parents of this type highly accept their children and make some demands for the children's behavior. The parents allow their children fundamental self-regulation. Children of undifferentiated parents would be expected to have a greater risk for emotional and behavioral problems. Permissive indulgent parents believe that they are responsible for making sure that their children are happy. Psychologists explained that parents who practice indulgent parenting behaviors, had a rough time as children and therefore have decided that they will do everything they can to make their children happy. As a result, permissive indulgent parents tend to be highly responsive to their children's needs and desires, and display low levels of demandingness. In influence, these parents are extremely supportive, to the extent that the child winds up taking control of the situation. In many ways, this style is the opposite of the authoritarian style. Permissive indulgent parents often believe that, "*Nothing is too good for my child.*" And they will readily go out of their way.

When parents adopt the permissive indulgent style of parenting their children display several predictable outcomes. First, these children are the most at risk of becoming spoiled children. They tend to grow up thinking that they should always get what they desire. Second, these children tend to become highly demanding themselves. They often form the impression that the world owes them something, just because they are so special. Third, these children tend to display impatience with people who don't readily give them everything they want. Fourth, these children tend to display relatively poor social skills. They are less likely than other children to be concerned with the welfare of others, or to sacrifice their own needs. Part of the problem is that they expect their friends' lives to revolve around making them happy.

2.4 Neglectful parenting style and academic performance

Neglectful parenting style is characterized by few demands, low responsiveness and little communication. While these

parents fulfill the child's basic needs, they are generally detached from their child's life. In extreme cases, these parents may even reject or neglect the needs of their children (Baumrind, 1999). Parents in who practice neglectful parenting approaches are exemplified in rejecting-neglecting and non-directive parents. By contrast, non-directive parents are low demanding and medium responsive (Baumrind, 1999) while rejecting-neglecting parents are low relative to both demandingness and responsiveness and are unlikely to take part in their children's activities. Interestingly, Ehnval and Parker (2008) found that female depressed patients who underwent rejected or neglected parenting in their childhood had a higher chance of attempting suicide at least once during their lifetime. In contrast, males who had rejected or neglected experiences in their childhood were not as at risk of suicide attempts.

A study by Kassahun (2010) that the predominance of neglectful parenting style for high school- aged males, since when males enter high school, the parents believe that their sons can manage themselves, and thus they reduce their control as well as their close relationships. Neglectful parenting styles tend to display low levels of demandingness since they ask and expect very little of their children. For instance, they rarely assign their children chores. These parents also display low levels of responsiveness to their children. They tend to be relatively uninvolved in their children's lives. As a result, these parents tend to grant their children a very high degree of freedom to do as they wish. In addition, these parents tend not to be very communicative with their children. The child outcomes associated with the neglectful style of parenting are somewhat predictable. In general, these children tend to display poor social skills.

2.4. Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey design where questionnaires and interviews were employed to obtain data from the sampled respondents. A descriptive survey design attempts to collect data from an identified group of persons, with the objective of determining the status given the specified variables (Mugenda, 2003). This design was adopted since it facilitated the collection of original data necessary to realize the research objectives and it is appropriate in collecting useful data that could be quantified and reported as a representation of the real situation or characteristic in the study population.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1 Parenting Approaches

The independent variables of this study were parenting approaches. This section presents results of findings on authoritative, authoritarian, neglectful and permissive parenting approaches which are the main parenting approaches. Data was collected using a 5-score likert scale for every section. Since data was collected from only students, the researcher first computed a Cronbach's alpha to examine the internal consistency of the students' dimensions. The alpha reliability score was 0.79 which was deemed reliable.

3.1.1 Authoritative Parenting Style

The study wanted to determine the descriptive analysis of the authoritative parenting approaches among the respondents and its influence on academic performance. The researcher collected information from both students and parents. Table 1 shows the findings.

Table 1: Descriptive analysis of authoritative parenting style

Statement	Mean	Std. dev
Parents discussed their reasoning with children	3.54	1.250
Parents always encourage give and take	3.20	1.231
Parents always directed decisions through reasoning	4.17	1.235
I always know what is expected of me	3.46	1.492
Parents give guidance objectively and rationally	3.99	1.260
Parents have clear standards of behavior	3.97	1.244
Parents give direction on behavior and expectation	4.17	0.999
Parents are understanding when I disagree with them	3.29	1.226
When my parents hurt me, we always discussed	3.71	1.200
Parents always take the opinion of children	3.88	1.271

The findings showed that the mean score was 3.74 which is approximately 4 (Agree) and a standard deviation of 1.33 which shows a high uniformity of responses. The findings of the study showed that most of respondents agreed that their parents directed decisions at home through reasoning and discipline. It is also evident that majority of the respondents agreed to have gone through an authoritative parenting style. Results from the cross-tabulation revealed that respondents who agreed to be going through authoritative parenting style revealed that they had performed well in term one and term two examinations.

3.2 Authoritarian parenting approaches

The study wanted to determine the frequency and descriptive analysis of the authoritarian parenting approaches among the respondents.

Table 2: Descriptive analysis of authoritarian parenting style on academic performance

Statement	Mean	Std. dev
Parents felt it was for children’s good to do what they want	3.44	1.542
Parents expected me to do what they wanted without questioning	3.84	1.284
Parents don’t allow children to question their decisions	3.01	1.311
Parents believe that more force should be used by them	3.25	1.374
Parents should teach their children they are the bosses	3.42	1.248
Parents get upset when I disagree	3.44	1.368
Parents let me know what behavior is expected of me	3.71	1.218
Problems can only be solved if parents act with force	3.43	1.242

Parents always told me exactly what they wanted and how	3.64	1.081
Parents always insist that I conform to their expectations	3.32	1.192

The findings of the descriptive analysis showed that the mean score was 3.45 which is approximately 3 (Neither Agree nor Disagree) and a standard deviation of 1.25 which shows a high uniformity of responses. In addition, the coefficient of variation was 36.2 which indicate a high level of homogeneity of responses. The finding of this study indicated that there was a relationship between authoritarian parenting style and academic performance. The findings demonstrated that the majority of the respondents agreed that parents felt that it was for the child’s good to conform to what parents’ thought was right. A cross-tabulation of authoritarian parenting style and academic performance revealed that a small number of the respondents who disagreed to have experienced authoritarian parenting style scored above average in the term one and term two examinations. The findings showed that the authoritarian parenting style is significant in explaining the academic performance of adolescents.

3.3 Permissive Parenting style

The study examined the frequency and descriptive analysis of the permissive type of parenting among both the parents and student respondents. The study also sought to find out the opinion of both parents and students on how they felt about children having their way and being free to make their own decisions. The findings are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Descriptive analysis of Permissive parenting style

Statement	Mean	Std.dev
Parents feel that children should have their way	3.06	1.062
Children should be free to make their own decisions	2.25	1.201
Parents feel that children don’t need to obey rules and regulations	2.32	1.358
Parents rarely gave children expectations and guidelines	2.07	1.323
Parents always do what children want when making decisions	2.10	1.073
Parents don’t restrict children’s activities and decisions	1.75	0.939
Parents allow children to decide most things for themselves	1.84	1.048
Parents are not responsible for directing children’s behavior	1.73	1.013
Parents allow children to form their own point of view on family	1.70	0.933
Parents don’t direct behaviors, activities and desires of children	1.77	1.029

The findings of the descriptive analysis demonstrated that the mean score was 2.06 which is approximately 2 (Disagree) and a standard deviation of 1.09 which shows a high uniformity of responses. The findings showed that a very small number of the respondents who disagreed to experiencing permissive parenting style scored above average in term one and term two examinations. This shows that permissive parenting style is

significant in explaining the academic performance of the student.

3.4 Neglectful parenting style

The study examined the frequency and descriptive analysis of the neglectful type of parenting among both the parents and student respondents as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Descriptive analysis of neglectful parenting style

Statement	Mean	Std.dev
Parents had very few demands and expectations	1.69	0.891
Parents don't care about what is going on in my life	1.78	1.022
There is very minimal communication with my parents	1.69	0.946
Parents rarely assign any duties while at work	1.53	0.901
There is plenty of freedom at home and no rules to abide	1.41	0.892
Parents have no expectations regarding my schoolwork	1.49	0.853
Parents have never checked my school results	1.74	1.140
When children do wrongs parents just shrugs it off	1.57	0.905
Children wish parents are more involved in their life events	2.52	1.250
Parents never attended children's school activities	1.65	1.064

The findings of the descriptive analysis demonstrated that the mean score was 1.71 which is approximately 2 (Disagree) and a standard deviation of 0.99 which shows a high uniformity of responses. The finding of this study signifies that majority of the respondents disagreed to have gone through neglectful parenting style. The cross tabulation between neglectful parenting style and academic performance showed that only very few students who disagreed to have been experiencing neglectful parenting style scored above average in term one and term two exams. These findings showed that a neglectful parenting style is significant in explaining the academic performance of adolescents.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

From this study we can conclude that it is important for parents to adopt the authoritative parenting style among their adolescent children. This is because as much as authoritative parenting establishes rules and guidelines, and demonstrates power, it is more democratic than authoritarian which is important to build the children's self-esteem and self-discipline which trickles down to good performance. From the study, we can also conclude that although neglectful parenting style has been said to lead to poor academic performance, it could lead to a positive influence.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

The results from this research have propositions on parenting approaches. Consequently, from the results of this study, the subsequent recommendations were made.

- i. For the fact that parenting approaches are strong predictors of student's academic performance in schools, it is necessary to create awareness to the parents on the effects of parenting approaches on student's academic performance.
- ii. Based on the findings from this study, parents should adopt better parenting approaches that promote students' academic performance.
- iii. Based on the research findings, it is recommended for parents to use authoritative parenting style and less of authoritarian parenting style in bringing up their children.
- iv. Parents to be discouraged from using permissive parenting style since it makes children to be care free and perform poorly academically.

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