

# The Influence of Parenting Styles on Learners' Involvement in Behaviour Disorders in Nairobi County, Kenya

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**Abstract:** *There is abundant evidence to support the correlation between parenting styles and children's behaviour disorders. However, the relationship between parenting styles and learners' involvement in behaviour problems has received little attention and research interest in Kenya. The main purpose of this study was to establish the influence of parenting styles on learners' involvement in behaviour disorders in Nairobi County, Kenya. Findings of the study revealed that learners of authoritative parents have low involvement in behaviour disorders as compared to learners of authoritarian, permissive and neglectful parents. It is recommended that parents should strive to understand their children, know their friends, engage them with constructive activities and seek better ways of controlling what they access through media. Further, parents should purpose and dedicate quality time with their children, dialogue with them, listen to their concerns and address them effectively.*

**Keywords:** Parenting Styles, Learners, Behaviour Disorders

## 1. Introduction

Parenting involves providing physical care, support, love and guidance for healthy development of a child. This involves creating a nurturing environment of attention, encouragement and love for the child. All these should be provided with the aim of helping each child develop to his/her fullest capacity in order to succeed in life (Hamner & Turner 2001; Muturi, 2011).

Parenting styles are emotional climate in which parents raise their children. Baumrind (1966) has been credited for defining three specific parenting styles and their consequences on children's behaviour. These are (a) authoritative, (b) authoritarian, and (c) permissive parenting styles. The styles are based on levels of demandingness and responsiveness of parents. Maccoby and Martin, (1983) also added one other parenting style referred to as uninvolved or neglectful.

In traditional African society, children belonged to the community and were well taken care of by their parents, grandparents and extended family members. Everyone ensured that children were disciplined, well behaved and played their roles (Berk, 2003). Munroe and Burrows (2007) and Santrock (2002) note that today's children are exposed to so much and are easily influenced by what is happening around them. They further reported that there is increase in the rate of parental separation and divorce which means that children might not be receiving appropriate parenting from both parents. Some parents spend more time on their jobs and less time with their children. When children are left unsupervised for long periods of time coupled with influence from exposure to different types of media, they acquire behaviour disorders which may affect their academic achievement (Kinai, 2002).

In Kenya today, family value systems have considerably changed. There is overemphasis on nuclear family as opposed to the traditional extended family. Changes in socio-economic conditions and customs have affected child

rearing. Employed and working parents often move from rural to urban centres with their children and therefore, members of the extended family no longer play their role in shaping children's behaviour. In some cases, young persons opt for single parenting by choice or because of careers. While others opt for divorce or separation (Berk, 2003; Santrock, 2001).

Parenting styles can be both positive and negative in their tone, both of which affect learners' behaviour. For instance, parenting styles where children are left unsupervised for long periods of time coupled with influence from exposure to different types of media may lead children to engaging in behaviour disorders (Kinai, 2002). Behaviour disorders are exhibited by learners of different ages and educational levels and they interfere with a child's learning, development and also negatively affect those around the learner's environment. They may include aggression, drug and substance abuse and conduct disorders, among others.

## 2. Statement of the Problem

Despite the abundance of pamphlets, magazines, parenting books and self-help parent groups in Kenya, and more so in Nairobi, there is still reported increase in learners' involvement in behaviour disorders. These behaviour disorders negatively influence learners' overall development. The modern world has seen changes in family trends, structures and systems. This has drastically shifted parenting and general upbringing of children resulting in learners' behaviour disorders. In most cases in Nairobi for example, both parents work outside their homes and hence many families find it more difficult to stay connected with their children's behaviour and education (Wang'eri, 2007).

Research studies indicate that parenting style influences children's behaviour. For instance, Kinai (2002) carried out a study on the Relationship between Parental Behaviour towards Adolescents and their manifest Aggression in Nairobi secondary schools. The study results revealed that

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the way parents interact with their children has tremendous and sometimes lasting effects on children's behaviour.

Wang'eri, (2007) conducted a study on The Conflict between traditional Parenting Behaviours as Perceived by Students in Some Selected Secondary Schools in Nairobi. The results of this study indicated that facilities and resources of parenting have shifted from what they were in the past, parental grip on children appears to be slipping away as indicated by heavy presence of electronic devices in the families and the parenting role of educating their children has been taken over by the school system. This research therefore, sought to establish the influence of parenting styles on learners' involvement in behaviour disorders in Nairobi County, Kenya.

### 3. Literature Review

#### The Influence of Parenting Styles on Learners' Involvement in Behaviour Disorders

Relevant literature reviewed shows sufficient evidence to support the correlation between parenting styles and children's behavioural disorders.

#### 3.1 Parenting Styles and Behaviour disorders

Research studies reveal a correlation between parenting styles and behaviour disorders such as: delinquency, violence, sexual activity, anti-social behaviour, alcohol and substance abuse and depression anxiety (Sarac, 2001). For instance, a study conducted by Alzadeh, Talib, Abdullah, and Mansor (2011) to determine the relationship between maternal parenting styles and children's behaviour problems in Tehran, Iran indicated that there is a significant correlation between a mother's parenting style and children's behavioural disorders.

Baumrind (1966) defined three parenting styles and their consequences for children in relation to behaviour and academic achievement. These are; the authoritative, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles. Maccoby and Martin (1983) also added one parenting style referred to as uninvolved or neglectful.

##### a) Authoritative Parenting Style

Authoritative parenting style is high in both demandingness and responsiveness. This parenting approach is aimed at putting boundaries on acceptable behaviour within a warm accepting environment (Baumrind, 1991; Lauer & Lauer, 2000). Authoritative parents monitor their children and impart clear standards for conduct by being assertive, but not intrusive and restrictive. Their disciplinary methods are supportive, rather than punitive. Authoritative parents want their children to be assertive, socially responsible and self-regulated as well as cooperative (Baumrind, 1991).

Sarac (2001) is of the view that authoritative parents are warm and nurturing. They create a loving home environment and provide a high degree of emotional support to their children. They are also firm, consistent and fair. They establish and enforce behaviour standards and discipline through rational and issue oriented strategies in order to promote their children's autonomy while ensuring

conformity to group standards. Their listening-demanding ratio is seen to be roughly equal. They give their children alternatives, encourage them to decide and accept responsibility for their actions and decisions. This style of parenting results in children who are lively, happy, capable and successful. They are independent, socially responsible, self-controlled and self-reliant (Berk, 2003; Santrok, 2001).

Authoritative parents establish clear rules and reasonable guidelines for their children. They are supportive, warm and communicate well, respect children's independence, are clear, explicit about position and give freedom of expression and choices. They direct children's activities in a rational manner and value discipline and uniqueness (Berk, 2003; Moss, 2009; Santrok, 2001, 2002). Authoritative parenting style is seen to be more flexible. Parents give their children considerable freedom, but they are also careful to provide reasons for the restrictions they impose and will ensure that children follow the laid down guidelines (Nyarko, 2011).

Authoritative parenting is associated with both instrumental and social competence and lower levels of behaviour disorders in both boys and girls at all developmental stages (Darling, 1999). Authoritative parents are believed to bring up well-adjusted children who are less likely to use or abuse alcohol, and less likely to be involved in delinquency and violence (Sarac, 2001).

Authoritative parenting style has been found to be an essential factor in children's lives in comparison with other parenting styles. Several researches have shown that authoritative parenting is associated with a less tendency of disruptive behaviours (Nyarko, 2011). Alizadeh et al. (2011) are also of the same view citing that authoritative upbringing is associated with positive outcomes and less of children's behavioural disorders.

##### b) Authoritarian Parenting Style

Authoritarian parenting style is high in demandingness and low in responsiveness. Authoritarian parents are highly demanding and directive, but not responsive. They are obedience and status-oriented and expect children to obey their orders without explanation (Baumrind, 1991). These parents provide well-ordered and structured environments with clearly stated rules (Darling, 1999). Authoritarian parents place firm limits and controls on their children and allow little verbal exchange between them and their children. Parents give orders and expect their children to conform perfectly to strict military-style rules without explanation. Failure to do so, results in immediate punishment and forceful measures (Berk, 2003; Lauer & Lauer, 2000; Santrock, 2001, 2002). These parents show little affection and seem aloof from their children (Sarac, 2001).

Authoritarian style of parenting leads to children who are obedient and proficient, but they rank lower in happiness, social competence and self-esteem. They are withdrawn, discontented, rebellious, distrustful of others and react poorly to frustrations whereby girls may give up in life and boys may become hostile (Baumrind 1966, 1967, 1991). Children of authoritarian parents also tend to perform moderately well in school and do not get involved in

problematic behaviour, but they have poorer social skills and higher levels of depression (Darling, 1999). However, this parenting style has been found to highly correlate with delinquent behaviour (Alizadeh et al., 2011).

### **c) Permissive or Indulgent Parenting Style**

Permissive or indulgent parenting style is low in demandingness and high in responsiveness (Baumrind 1966, 1967, 1991). They are non-traditional and lenient, do not require mature behaviour, allow considerable self-regulation and avoid confrontations with their children (Darling, 1999). Permissive parents are known to be highly involved with their children, warm and accepting, make few demands for household responsibility, responsible behaviour and do not expect compliance with stringent rules or high standards of behaviour (Moss, 2009; Santrock, 2001, 2002). According to Sarac (2001), these parents take orders and instructions from their children, they are passive, bestow children with power, have low expectations, use minimal discipline and do not feel responsible for how their children turn out.

This type of parenting often results in children who rank low in happiness, have better self-esteem, lack self-reliance, self-control and self-regulation. The children are often impulsive, disobedient and rebellious (Berk, 2003; Moss, 2009; Santrock, 2001, 2002). These children have exploitative tendencies, may engage in anti-social behaviours, and are more likely to experience problems with authority (Berk, 2003). They are also most likely to be involved in violence. Research links permissive parenting with delinquency, substance abuse and sexual activity (Sarac, 2001; Alizadeh et al., 2011). However, Darling (1999) is of the same view that children of permissive parents are more likely to be involved in behaviour disorders, but argues that they have higher self-esteem, better social skills and lower levels of depression. Mugo cited in Kinai (2002) claim that poor parenting has contributed to adolescent aggression in schools. Some parents are permissive and exercise little control over their children. Such children acquire undesirable behaviours such as disobedience and violence.

### **d) Uninvolved or Neglectful Parenting style**

Uninvolved or neglectful parenting style is characterized by low demandingness, low responsiveness and little communication (Baumrind, 1966, 1967, 1991). In extreme cases, this parenting style might encompass both rejecting-neglecting and neglectful parents, although most parents of this type fall within the normal range (Baumrind, 1991). This style of parenting barely exceeds the minimum effort required to feed and clothe a child (Berk, 2003).

While such parents fulfil their children's basic needs, they are generally detached from the children's lives and expect limited compliance with rules and directives (Moss, 2009). Neglectful parents do not require mature behaviour and are very lenient to their children. They reject or neglect their children's needs and concerns thereby putting a child at high risk. These parents do not have close relationships with their children and they are rarely affectionate. Children of uninvolved parents are known to perform poorly in all domains (Darling, 1999). They lack self-control, have low self-esteem, are less competent than their peers and they may find themselves searching for love in all the wrong

places. They may show patterns of truancy and delinquency (Santrock, 2005).

A study conducted by Kinai (2002) indicated that parents who were unloving and neglectful brought up children who were most aggressive. These children seem to lack direction in everyday life since their parents do not provide the necessary attention for their needs. They are also likely to engage in socially unacceptable behaviour as they attempt to seek for attention which they do not get from their parents (Hong, 2012).

## **3.2 Parenting Practices and their Influence on Learners' Behaviour**

Parenting behaviours characterized by lack of parental control, lack of homework supervision, lack of consistence in discipline, lack of adequate quality time with children and lack of collaboration with teachers negatively influence children's behaviour as well.

### **a) Parental Control and Monitoring**

Monitoring and supervision involves parents knowing their child's whereabouts and the activities they are involved as well as the friends they associate with. It also includes the physical whereabouts of children and their emotional wellbeing (Stattin & Kerr, 2000; Stace & Roker, 2005). Parents are supposed to monitor their children's social life, friendships, school, use of media, technology and health. However, controlling parents actively survey their children's behaviours and limit their children's expression by imposing many demands on them. On the other hand, un-controlling parents are much less restrictive and allow their children freedom to pursue their interests, make own decisions and choose own friends (Shaffer, 2010).

Steinberg, Fletcher and Darling (1994) conducted a study to examine the joint influences of parental monitoring and peer influences on adolescent substance use over time. The results of their study indicated that parental monitoring was negatively associated with substance use. They therefore concluded that parental monitoring is an effective tool both in the prevention of drug use and the amelioration of drug use. Steinberg et al. (1994) argue that parents knowing where their children are and what they are doing can insulate children from a wide array of behaviour disorders.

Duffy (2005) concedes that parenting is becoming a lost art as many parents have become lenient. There is tolerance to diversity and parents find themselves losing control over the situation as one cannot spank their child while those who are strict with their children are scorned. Mwololo (2010) notes that school holidays come with endless free time that can be easily abused, especially if there is no one to monitor what the children do. When children are left on their own they are at liberty to do whatever they want and it is easy to get sucked into bad behaviours such as experimenting with sex at an early age.

Parental monitoring of after school activities is related to school achievement (Spera, 2005). Stace and Roker (2005) observe that when parents fail to monitor their children closely and supervise them, children are likely to engage in

risk-taking behaviour which affects their academic achievement. A study carried out by Rudatsikira, Ogwella and Muula (2007) to estimate the prevalence and associated factors of sexual intercourse among school adolescents in coast province, Kenya concluded that lack of parental supervision was associated with 30% risk for having engaged in sexual intercourse.

However, Berk (2003) is of the view that there is a challenge of how to keep track of children when they are out of the house or when they are at home and parents are not there to see what is going on. Stace and Roker (2005) also note that factors such as neighbourhood, age, gender and personality of the child influence the arrangements for monitoring and supervision of children. Furthermore, parents monitor their sons and daughters differently.

Parents must guide and monitor from a distance and effectively communicate expectations well to their children. Children should be asked to inform parents of their whereabouts, activities, and problems so that parents can intervene when necessary (Berk, 2003). Parents should also establish good relationships with their children, monitor their movements, activities and choice of friends, give guidance and correct anti-social behaviours which emerge (Kinai, 2002).

Research shows that parents who exercise close monitoring and supervision are less likely to have children who engage in risk-taking behaviours (Stace & Roker, 2005). When parents are high in behavioural control and are effective monitors of their children's behaviour, children are less likely to engage in behaviour disorders including both substance abuse and delinquency (Fletcher, Steinber, & Williams-Wheeler, 2004).

#### **b) Homework Supervision**

Children are given homework from school for the purpose of practicing the newly learnt skills and to enhance mastery of the same. Parents should check children's school bags and diaries every day to ensure that children do not leave homework undone (Sumari, Hussin, & Siraj, 2010). Parenting is getting tougher in today's society and sometimes parents have less time to help children with homework (Duffy, 2005). However, some parents get tempted to rescue their children when they see them struggling to complete a task. Some even do their children's homework. This could only lead to a habit of dependency (Munyua, 2011).

Parents need to teach children how to balance work, play and their other obligations – invaluable skills that will stand them in good stead for the rest of their lives. Parents should set a good example to their children in terms of ethics, being involved with the children's scheduling and being proactive in assisting them to fulfil their obligations. Parents must provide children with a proper study area that is well lit, with a proper study desk, table and all the materials needed for study. They should also make sure that homework is done as soon as children get home (Wanjala, 2011). Studies with adolescents have revealed that parental assistance with homework is positively related to the amount of time children spend on their homework (Spera, 2005).

#### **c) Consistency in Discipline**

Consistency means parents dealing with the mild misbehaviours and not letting them grow severe. Discipline is all part of growing up and it is important for children that they are taught the difference between right and wrong. However, parents commonly struggle to find the appropriate approach to disciplining their children (Ngwiri, 2008). Parents should follow through and allow children to experience the applicable consequence when they misbehave. Children need parents who adopt a patient yet varied approach to discipline so that they learn to be sociable, stay safe and gradually take responsibility for their behaviour without having their spirit quashed (Grose, 2011).

Many parents do not have clear parenting goals. Consequently, many spouses never read from the same script on discipline or homework hassles and because of lack of direction, they tend to compromise natural and good parenting values with small concessions (Muturi, 2011). Parents want their children to be happy, healthy, successful, and safe. The challenge that most parents find is how to go about this. The secret lies in nurturing a child's self-discipline and helping him/her to develop self-esteem. This takes deliberate effort, consistency and patience (Munyua, 2011).

Several studies show that when parents are firm but patient, children tend to comply with their requests. In contrast, parents who discipline with harshness and impatience, have children who refuse and rebel (Berk, 2003). Some parents have been accused of abdicating their roles to instil discipline in their children to teachers, hence the unruly behaviour witnessed among students. Parents should not fear reprimanding their children from an early age. Laxity in parental disciplinary or guidance efforts often leads to delinquent behaviours in their children. Parents should set limits and be consistent with discipline because discipline is necessary in every household (Muturi, 2011). Negative parenting style characterized by harsh, inconsistent discipline has been associated with child antisocial behaviour. Parents who are inconsistent in their approach towards their child can unintentionally promote negative behaviour (Scott, et al., 2010).

#### **d) Spending Quality Time with Children**

Interaction between parents and their children is positively related to the later outcomes like competency at the place of work and success in life. The amount of time that parents spend with their children and the activities they do together are considered to influence children's self-control (Ngwiri, 2008; Sasse, 2004).

Parents of today live at a pace that is unrivalled in the history of the human race. Parents have so much to do, but there is very little time available for them to do it. Some parents have two jobs, others work late or are involved in activities that prevent them from being available for their children. In the current economy, parents spend more time at work and on the road than they do at home. The amount of time that parents spend with their children has been shown to influence academic achievement and mental health. Inadequate family time can make children have difficulties

in concentrating in school leading to low academic performance (Berk, 2003).

Dual-career parents, especially career mothers, have little time with their children, as opposed to the traditional mothers who spent a lot of time with their children. Research indicates that many parents have gone back to school in the advent of advancing in their careers. Some parents are away from home for long hours hence, they spend less time with their children. In such situations, children are left under the care of inadequately prepared and often overworked house-helpers for long periods of time denying them much needed parental care (Munroe and Burrows, 2007). The situation is worse in urban areas such as Nairobi where the family has very little social support from the extended family or close friendships (Kibera, 1998; Wang'eri, 2007).

#### e) Collaborating with teachers

Parents' role in their children's education can be in the form of presence at school, communicating with teachers or helping with homework (Deslandes, Royer, & Bertr, 1997). However, parents have been accused of abdicating their roles to instil discipline in their children to teachers, hence the unruly behaviours witnessed among students. Parents should attend Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) meetings and demonstrate trust and maintain positive perceptions towards their children. They can do this by making positive statements that indicate trust and confidence in their children's ability to succeed (Sumariet al., 2010).

Outstanding children usually have involved parents who monitor their child's progress daily and communicate well with their children (Wanjala, 2011). Thatiah (2012) is of the view that parental involvement improves a child's outlook in regard to academic performance, sports and social life. It therefore follows that parents, school administrators, teachers and students should embrace dialogue and no grievances should be left unaddressed no matter how trivial (Standard Newspaper, November 13, 2010).

## 4. Methodology

This research study sought to establish the influence of parenting styles on learners' involvement in behaviour disorders in Nairobi County, Kenya. This research study used mixed method involving descriptive and correlational research designs. Quantitative data was collected from learners using questionnaires while qualitative data was collected from parents using interviews. The sample of study was drawn from three randomly selected sub-counties of Nairobi County namely: Dagoretti, Lang'ata and Starehe. Fifteen schools were randomly selected from the three sub-counties. A total of 400 learners from regular public secondary schools and 40 parents were randomly selected for the study. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used to analyse quantitative data. Qualitative data was organized and analysed by themes. Descriptive and inferential statistics was used to summarize and describe the sample.

## 5. Results

This study sought to establish the influence of parenting styles on learners' involvement in behaviour disorders. Two aspects were addressed. First, the study sought to find out parenting styles that parents used and secondly; the relationship between parenting styles and learners' involvement in behaviour disorders. The objective targeted responses from both learners and parents. This was determined through analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data.

### 5.1 Parenting Styles Used by Parents

The respondents were presented with a choice of behaviours that described parenting styles. The behaviours given were indicative of four parenting styles: authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and neglectful/uninvolved.

#### Learners' Responses

Respondents were presented with a choice of behaviours that describe parenting behaviours towards them and were asked to indicate which of them best described their parents. The behaviours given were indicative of parenting styles. They were: strict and loving (referring to authoritative), strict and not loving (referring to authoritarian), lenient and loving (referring to permissive) and they don't care for me at all (referring to neglectful/uninvolved). The findings are presented in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Parenting Styles according to Learners

| Parenting Style       | Frequency  | Percentage |
|-----------------------|------------|------------|
| Authoritative         | 316        | 81.2       |
| Authoritarian         | 12         | 3.1        |
| Permissive            | 54         | 13.9       |
| Neglectful/uninvolved | 7          | 1.8        |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>389</b> | <b>100</b> |

The study results revealed that majority of the learners 316 (81.2%) indicated their parents were authoritative, 54 (13.9%) of the learners indicated that their parents were permissive, 12 (3.1%) of the learners indicated that their parents were authoritarian and 7 (1.8%) of the learners indicated that their parents were neglectful/uninvolved.

The study findings showed that according to the learners, majority of parents used authoritative parenting style. Less than a quarter of parents (13.9%) used permissive parenting style and very few parents (1.8%) were uninvolved/neglectful. The findings revealed that parents who use authoritarian style of parenting were fewer than those who use the permissive style of parenting.

#### Parents' Responses

Respondents were asked to say how they thought their children perceived them as parents; a majority of them said their children perceived them as tough, strict, and loving. Some of them said that their children perceived them as tough, mean and dictatorial while a few said that their children perceived them as soft, good, calm and did not punish.

The study findings showed that a majority of parents thought that their children perceived them as being authoritative, others authoritarian and less than a quarter thought their children perceived them as permissive. Less than a quarter of the parents reported that their children perceived them to be neglectful in some areas especially control of children, consistency in discipline and supervision of homework.

**a) The influence of Parenting Styles on Learners' Involvement in Substance Abuse Related Behaviour Disorders**

To find out the influence of parenting styles on learners' involvement in substance abuse related behaviour problems, data on parenting styles was cross-tabulated with data on learners' involvement in substance abuse related behavior problems. The findings are presented in Table 5.2.

**Table 5.2:** Number of Learners by Involvement in Substance Abuse Related Disorders and Parenting styles

| Parenting Style       | Level of Learners' Involvement in Substance Abuse Related Behaviour Disorders |     |          |      |           | Total |
|-----------------------|---|-----|----------|------|-----------|-------|
|                       | None  | Low | Moderate | High | Very high |       |
| Authoritative         | 262   | 18  | 9        | 17   | 10        | 316   |
| Authoritarian         | 9   | 1   | 0        | 1    | 1         | 12    |
| Permissive            | 45  | 2   | 1        | 4    | 2         | 54    |
| Neglectful/uninvolved | 4   | 1   | 0        | 1    | 1         | 7     |
| Total                 | 320   | 22  | 10       | 23   | 14        | 389   |

The study findings revealed that 262 out of 316 learners of authoritative parents indicated that they had never been involved in substance abuse related behavior problems. Out of 54 learners of permissive parents, 45 indicated that they had no involvement in substance abuse related behavior problems. Further, out of 316 children of authoritative parents, 18 indicated that they had low involvement in substance abuse related behaviour problems, 17 of them indicated that they had high involvement, 10 of them indicated they had very high involvement and 9 of them indicated that they had moderate involvement in substance abuse related behavior problems. Out of a total of 12 learners of authoritative parents, 9 indicated that they had no involvement in substance abuse related behaviour disorders. Out of a total of 7 learners of neglectful parents, 4 indicated that they had no involvement in substance abuse related problem behaviours and out of 54 learners of authoritative parents, 4 indicated that they had a high involvement in substance abuse related behavior disorders. These study findings are supported by previous research study findings (Sarac, 2001) that revealed a correlation between parenting styles and alcohol and substance abuse.

**b) The Influence of Parenting Styles on Learners' Involvement in School Attendance Related Behaviour Disorders**

To find out the influence of parenting styles on school attendance related behaviour disorders, data on parenting styles was cross-tabulated with data on school attendance related behavior disorders.

The findings are presented in Table 5.3.

**Table 5.3:** Number of Learners by involvement in School Attendance Related Behavior disorders and Parenting Style

| Parenting Style       | Learners' Involvement in School Attendance Related Behavior Disorders |     |          |      |           | Total |
|-----------------------|---|-----|----------|------|-----------|-------|
|                       | None  | Low | Moderate | High | Very high |       |
| Authoritative         | 241   | 27  | 18       | 20   | 10        | 316   |
| Authoritarian         | 8   | 1   | 1        | 2    | 0         | 12    |
| Permissive            | 37  | 7   | 2        | 6    | 2         | 54    |
| Neglectful/uninvolved | 2   | 0   | 2        | 2    | 1         | 7     |
| Total                 | 288   | 35  | 23       | 30   | 13        | 389   |

The study findings showed that out of 316 learners of authoritative parents, 241 indicated that they had no involvement in school attendance related behaviour disorders. Out of 54 learners of permissive parents, 37 indicated that they had no involvement in school attendance related behaviour disorders. Out of 316 learners of authoritative parents, 27 indicated that they had low involvement in school attendance related behaviour disorders, 20 indicated high involvement, 18 indicated moderated involvement and 10 indicated very high involvement in school attendance related disorders. Out of 12 learners of authoritarian parents, 8 indicated no involvement in school attendance related behaviour disorders. Further, out of 54 learners of permissive parents, 7 indicated that they had low involvement in school attendance related behaviour disorders while 6 indicated a high involvement in school attendance related behaviour disorders.

**c) The Influence of Parenting Style on Learners' Involvement in Aggression Related Behaviour Disorders**

To find out the influence of parenting styles on aggression related behaviour disorders, data on parenting styles was cross-tabulated with data on aggression related behavior disorders.

The findings are presented in Table 5.4.

**Table 5.4:** Number of Learners by Involvement in Aggression Related Behaviour Disorders and Parenting Styles

| Parenting Style       | Learners' Involvement in Aggression Related Behaviour Disorders |     |          |      |           | Total |
|-----------------------|---|-----|----------|------|-----------|-------|
|                       | None  | Low | Moderate | High | Very high |       |
| Authoritative         | 184   | 52  | 28       | 39   | 12        | 316   |
| Authoritarian         | 6   | 2   | 1        | 2    | 2         | 12    |
| Permissive            | 30  | 9   | 3        | 7    | 4         | 54    |
| Neglectful/uninvolved | 3   | 1   | 1        | 1    | 2         | 7     |
| Total                 | 223   | 64  | 33       | 49   | 20        | 389   |

The study findings revealed that out of 316 learners of authoritative parents, 184 indicated no involvement in aggression related behaviour disorders, 52 indicated low involvement, 39 indicated high involvement. Out of 54 learners of permissive parents, 30 indicated that they had no involvement in aggression related behaviour disorders. Out of 316 authoritative learners, 28 indicated moderate involvement and 12 indicated very high involvement in aggression related behaviour disorders. Out of 54 learners of

permissive parents, 9 indicated low involvement while 7 indicated high involvement in aggression related behaviour disorders. Out of 12 learners of authoritarian parents, 6 indicated that they had no involvement in aggression related behaviour disorders. Further, 4 learners of permissive parents indicated that they had very high involvement in aggression related behaviour disorders. Out of 7 learners of neglectful parents, 3 indicated that they had no involvement in aggression related behaviour problems while 3 learners of permissive parents indicated that they had moderate involvement in aggression related behaviour disorders.

**d) The Influence of Parenting Styles on Teenage Sex Related Behaviour Disorders**

To find out the influence of parenting styles on teen sex related behaviour disorders, data on parenting styles was cross-tabulated with data on teen sex related behavior disorders.

The findings are presented in Table 5.5.

**Table 5.5:** Number of Learners by Involvement in Teenage Sex Related Behaviour Disorders by Parenting Styles

| Parenting Style       | Learners' Involvement in Sex Related Behaviour Disorders |     |          |      |           | Total |
|-----------------------|--|-----|----------|------|-----------|-------|
|                       | None   | Low | Moderate | High | Very high |       |
| Authoritative         | 236  | 23  | 19       | 21   | 17        | 316   |
| Authoritarian         | 8  | 1   | 0        | 1    | 2         | 12    |
| Permissive            | 38   | 1   | 2        | 5    | 8         | 54    |
| Neglectful/uninvolved | 3  | 1   | 0        | 1    | 2         | 7     |
| Total                 | 285  | 26  | 21       | 28   | 29        | 389   |

The study findings revealed that 236 out of 316 learners of authoritative parents and 38 out of 54 learners of permissive parents indicated that they had no involvement in teen sex related behaviour. Out of 316 learners of authoritative parents, 23 learners indicated that they had low involvement, 21 indicated that they had a high involvement, 19 indicated that they had moderate involvement and 17 indicated that they had a very high involvement in teen sex related behaviour. Out of 12 learners of authoritarian parents, 8 indicated that they had no involvement, 8 learners of permissive parents indicate that they had very high involvement and 5 indicated that they had high involvement in teen sex related behaviours. These study findings are supported by previous research study findings (Sarac, 2001) that found a correlation between parenting styles and learners' sexual activity.

The study findings indicated that a majority of children with authoritative parents had no involvement in behaviour disorders and very few children engaged in behaviour disorders. These results are supported by previous research findings that have associated authoritative parenting style to less behaviour disorders (Darling, 1999; Sarac, 2001; Alazadeh et al, 2011 and Nyarko, 2011).

The study results indicated that a majority of children with authoritarian parents did not engage in behaviour disorders. These results are supported by other previous research findings (Darling, 1999). The results are also supported by research results by Alzadeh et al., (2011) who found authoritarian parenting style to be highly correlated with delinquent behaviour. These findings are supported by previous research findings (Darling, 1999; Sarac, 2001; Berk, 2003 and Azadeh et al, 2011) that children of permissive parents are more likely to be involved in problem behaviour.

The study findings indicated that, compared to other parenting styles, there were more children of uninvolved or neglectful parents who engaged in behaviour disorders. These findings are supported by previous research findings (Kinai, 2002; Santrock, 2005 and Hong, 2012) which

indicated that children of uninvolved or neglectful parents engage in behaviour disorders such as delinquency and aggression. Overall, children of neglectful parents rank lowly as compared to children of parents who use other parenting styles.

**6.2 Parenting Practices and their Influence on Learners' involvement in Behaviour Problems**

To test parenting behaviours and their influence on children's behaviour, both parents and children were targeted as respondents. Children responded to the questions on the questionnaire and parents were interviewed on the same. The questions were based on: parental control and monitoring, supervision of homework, consistency in discipline, collaborating with teachers and spending quality time with children. The study findings are presented as follows.

**a) Parental Control and Monitoring**

To find out about parental control and monitoring, respondents were asked to respond to questions on issues related to control and monitoring.

**Parent's Responses**

Parents were asked to indicate whether they demanded to know the whereabouts of their children when they were not in school; whether they monitored their children's activities; whether they bothered to know their children's friends and the parents of their children's friends, and; whether they controlled the use of household gadgets such as: television, radio/music system, computer/internet, play station/video games and mobile phones. They were also asked if they controlled the type of clothes and haircuts/styles their children wore.

All forty parents said that they always tried to find out about their children's whereabouts when they were not in school. Majority of parents said that they always tried to find out the activities their children were involved in when they were not in school with eight of them saying that they called their children to find out what they were doing; eight parents said

they even counterchecked to ascertain what their children were doing and five parents said that they tried as much as possible to find out what activities their children were involved in.

A majority of parents said that they had set the time that their children should be back home when they went out and only five parents said that they had not set time limits as they had given their children freedom to come home any time they wanted. All parents said that they knew their children's friends, though not all of them. They only knew those friends who came home to visit their children. Further, sixteen parents said that they even talked to their children's friends and the same number of parents said that they did not know parents of their children's friends. Eight of the respondents said that they knew some parents of their children's friends and that most of them are their own family friends and sixteen of them said that they knew just a few parents.

More than half of the parents said that they restricted the type of clothes their children wore and hair styles that they could wear while the rest said that their children had the

freedom to choose the type of clothes they wore and hair styles. More than half of the parents said that they controlled how their children used household items such as television, music system and computers. However, they said that sometimes it did not work, especially controlling use of mobile telephones. Less than a quarter of parents said that they wished to control how their children used household items, but they were not able to.

**Learners' Response**

To test parental control, learners were given different parenting behaviours or practices indicative of parental control and were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each of them. The behaviours were related to parents' demand to know where they were when they were not in school, monitoring their activities, knowing their friends, knowing their friends' parents and parental control of use of household gadgets such as television, radio/music system, computer/internet, play station/video games and mobile phones. They were also asked about their parents' control of the type of clothes and haircuts/styles they could wear.

The results are presented in Table 5.6.

**Table 5.6: Parental Control and Monitoring as Reported by Learners**

| Parents Behaviour                 | No answer |     | Never |      | Rarely |      | Neutral |      | Most of the time |      | All the time |      | Total (%)  |            |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|-----|-------|------|--------|------|---------|------|------------------|------|--------------|------|------------|------------|
|                                   | F         | %   | F     | %    | F      | %    | F       | %    | F                | %    | F            | %    | F          | %          |
| Demand to know where children are | 6         | 1.5 | 21    | 5.4  | 38     | 9.8  | 38      | 9.8  | 86               | 22.1 | 200          | 51.4 | <b>389</b> | <b>100</b> |
| Monitor children's activities     | 4         | 1   | 40    | 10.3 | 52     | 13.4 | 74      | 19   | 103              | 26.5 | 116          | 29.8 | <b>389</b> | <b>100</b> |
| Know their children's friends     | 5         | 1.3 | 42    | 10.8 | 67     | 17.2 | 101     | 26   | 82               | 21.1 | 92           | 23.7 | <b>389</b> | <b>100</b> |
| Know children's friends' parents  | 10        | 2.6 | 94    | 24.2 | 89     | 22.9 | 96      | 24.7 | 54               | 13.9 | 46           | 11.8 | <b>389</b> | <b>100</b> |
| Control use of: <i>Television</i> | 7         | 1.8 | 108   | 27.8 | 59     | 15.2 | 76      | 19.5 | 67               | 17.2 | 72           | 18.5 | <b>389</b> | <b>100</b> |
| <i>Radio/music system</i>         | 6         | 1.5 | 124   | 31.9 | 58     | 14.9 | 59      | 15.2 | 75               | 19.3 | 67           | 17.2 | <b>389</b> | <b>100</b> |
| <i>Computer/internet</i>          | 7         | 1.8 | 124   | 31.9 | 57     | 14.7 | 59      | 15.2 | 72               | 18.5 | 70           | 18   | <b>389</b> | <b>100</b> |
| <i>Play station/video games</i>   | 7         | 1.8 | 129   | 33.2 | 52     | 13.4 | 58      | 14.9 | 74               | 19   | 69           | 17.7 | <b>389</b> | <b>100</b> |
| <i>Mobile phone</i>               | 6         | 1.5 | 119   | 30.6 | 55     | 14.1 | 59      | 15.2 | 75               | 19.3 | 75           | 19.3 | <b>389</b> | <b>100</b> |

The study results revealed that 200 (51.4%) of the parents demanded all the time to know where their children were when they were not in school, 129 (33.2%) controlled how their children used the play station and video games, 124 (31.9%) controlled how their children used radio, music system, computer and internet. The results also showed that 119 (30.6%) controlled how their children used mobile phones; 116 (29.8%) monitored their children's activities when they were not in school; 108 (27.8%) controlled how their children used television; 101 (26%) knew their children's friends and 96 (24.7%) knew parents of their children's friends.

The findings indicated that slightly more than half of the children's parents demanded to know where they were all the time when they were not in school and slightly more than a quarter of the parents monitored their children's activities most of the time. Further, the findings indicated that a majority of the parents knew all their children's friends while a majority of them did not know parents of their children's friends. The findings also established that at least more than a quarter of the parents did not control how their children used electronic gadgets such as television, radio, computer/internet, video games and mobile phones.

These results are supported by the views of Munroe and Burrows, (2007) and Mwololo, (2010) that many parents face challenges in monitoring how their children use information and technology gadgets. When parents fail to monitor their children, they are likely to engage in behaviour disorders which may affect their academic achievement (Stace&Roker, 2005). Additionally, the study results from both the parents and children indicated that a majority of parents knew their children's friends. However, parents scored the least in knowledge of their children's friends' parents.

**b) Supervision of Homework**

To find out about supervision of homework, respondents were questioned on issues related to supervision of homework. The questions targeted both parents and learners as respondents.

**Parent's Responses**

To find out about supervision of homework, parents were asked to say how they supervised their children's homework. All parents said that they always reminded their children to do their homework and supervised them whenever they were free or available at home. Further, 8 of the parents said that they supervised homework only during the school holidays. One of the parents said



“I sit with my child when he is doing his homework to give him moral support”. (A mother of a son, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2014)

A majority of the parents also said that they made sure their children completed their homework with 8 of them saying they even counterchecked to ensure that homework had been completed.

**Learners’ Responses**

To find out about supervision of homework, learners were asked to rate their parents’ supervision of their homework in relation to reminding them about it, supervising and making sure they completed it. The findings are presented in Table 5.7.

**Table 5.7: Supervision of homework by Parents as Reported by Learners**

| Parental Behaviours             | None |     | Never |      | Rarely |      | Neutral |      | Most of the time |      | All the time |      | Total (%) |     |
|---------------------------------|------|-----|-------|------|--------|------|---------|------|------------------|------|--------------|------|-----------|-----|
|                                 | F    | %   | F     | %    | F      | %    | F       | %    | F                | %    | F            | %    | F         | %   |
| Remind children about homework  | 5    | 1.3 | 102   | 26.2 | 55     | 14.1 | 44      | 11.3 | 84               | 21.6 | 99           | 25.4 | 389       | 100 |
| Supervise homework              | 5    | 1.3 | 152   | 39.1 | 61     | 15.7 | 78      | 20.1 | 47               | 12.1 | 46           | 11.8 | 389       | 100 |
| Make sure homework is completed | 6    | 1.5 | 113   | 29   | 58     | 14.9 | 66      | 17   | 65               | 16.7 | 81           | 20.8 | 389       | 100 |
| Complete homework for children  | 8    | 2.1 | 330   | 84.8 | 8      | 2.1  | 13      | 3.3  | 9                | 2.3  | 21           | 5.4  | 389       | 100 |
| Demand for academic excellence  | 8    | 3   | 11    | 2.8  | 9      | 2.3  | 21      | 5.4  | 59               | 15.2 | 286          | 73.5 | 389       | 100 |

The findings of the study showed that 330 (84.8%) of the parents never completed homework for their children, 286 (73.5%) demanded for academic excellence from their children all the time, 152 (39.1%) never supervised their children’s homework, 113 (29%) never made sure that their children completed homework and 102 (26.2%) never reminded their children about their homework.

The study findings indicated that a majority of parents never did homework for their children and almost three-quarters of the children indicated that their parents demanded academic excellence from them all the time. The findings also indicated that almost three-quarters of parents demanded academic excellence from their children but, more than a quarter of parents did not supervise or make sure that their children completed their homework and that very few parents did homework for their children. These findings are supported by the observations of Spera, (2005) that children take time to do their homework when they are assisted and supervised. However, Munyua, (2011) that some parents get tempted to do homework for their children. Overall, the study results indicated that parents were more concerned with their children’s academic performance.

**c) Consistency in Discipline**

To establish consistency in discipline, respondents were asked questions on parental reactions towards their children when they made mistakes.

**Parent’s Responses**

To establish consistency in discipline, parents were asked to indicate what steps they took when their children made mistakes. A majority of parents said that they sat down with their children and discussed the consequences of the mistakes. More than half of the parents promised to reward their children if they changed their behaviour. Less than half of the parents said that they punished their children when they made mistakes especially by withdrawing privileges. Less than a quarter of parents said that they did not punish their children although they told them not to repeat the mistake.

**Learners’ Responses**

To establish consistency in discipline, Learners were asked to rate their parents’ reactions when they made mistakes. The findings of the study are presented in Table 5.8.

**Table 5.8: Parental Consistency in Discipline as Reported by Learners**

| Parental Behaviour when children make mistakes | None |     | Never Consistent |      | Rarely Consistent |      | Neutral |      | Consistent |      | Very Consistent |      | Total (%) |     |
|--|------|-----|------------------|------|-------------------|------|---------|------|------------|------|-----------------|------|-----------|-----|
|  | F    | %   | F                | %    | F                 | %    | F       | %    | F          | %    | F               | %    | F         | %   |
| Discuss consequences of mistakes               | 5    | 1.3 | 31               | 8    | 34                | 8.7  | 65      | 16.7 | 104        | 26.7 | 150             | 38.6 | 389       | 100 |
| Ignore children’s mistakes                     | 25   | 6.4 | 213              | 54.8 | 47                | 12.1 | 59      | 15.2 | 21         | 5.4  | 24              | 6.2  | 389       | 100 |
| Withdraw privileges                            | 19   | 4.9 | 112              | 28.8 | 64                | 16.5 | 107     | 27.5 | 43         | 11.1 | 44              | 11.3 | 389       | 100 |
| Punish children                                | 17   | 4.4 | 129              | 33.2 | 81                | 20.8 | 83      | 21.3 | 34         | 8.7  | 45              | 11.6 | 389       | 100 |
| Consistency in ensuring children behave        | 14   | 3.6 | 22               | 5.7  | 15                | 3.9  | 51      | 13.1 | 81         | 20.8 | 206             | 53   | 389       | 100 |

The study established that: 213 (54.8 %) are never consistent in discipline as they ignored children’s mistakes; 206 (53%) were very consistent in ensuring children behaved well; 129 (33.2%) were never consistent in punishing their children; 112 (28.8%) were never consistent in discipline by withdrawing privileges and; 150 (38.6%) were very consistent in discipline by discussing consequences of mistakes.

The findings indicated that more than half of the children indicated that their parents were not consistent, ignored them and did nothing about the mistakes. More than a half indicated that their parents were very consistent in ensuring

that they behaved well; more than a quarter indicated that their parents were not consistent in punishing them, and; more than a quarter indicated that their parents were not consistent in withdrawing privileges such as going out with friends. The findings also indicated that although more than half of the parents were very consistent in ensuring that their children behaved well, a majority of them were not consistent in matters of discipline because they ignored their children’s mistakes. The study also revealed that a majority of parents were not consistent in punishing their children when they made mistakes.

**d) Spending quality time with children**

Parents were asked if they spent quality time with their children. Less than a quarter of them said that they spent time with their children whenever they were available. However, majority of them said that they did not spend quality time with their children because of long working hours and tight work schedules that kept them away from their children most of the time. A quarter of the parents said that in most cases, children stayed in their rooms or watched television or even listened to music while their parents were involved in household chores. This showed that parents gave other issues preference and did not purpose to spend quality time with their children.

These findings are supported by the views of Munroe & Burrows, (2007) that parents are away at work for long hours hence they spend less time with their children. It showed that children spend most of their time on media facilities such as television, radio, computers, internet and mobile phones.

### e) Collaborating with Teachers

**Table 5.9: Parental Collaboration with Teachers as Reported by children**

| Parental Behaviour   | None |     | Never |      | Rarely |      | Neutral |      | Most of the time |      | All the time |      | Total (%) |     |
|--|------|-----|-------|------|--------|------|---------|------|------------------|------|--------------|------|-----------|-----|
|  | F    | %   | F     | %    | F      | %    | F       | %    | F                | %    | F            | %    | F         | %   |
| Going to school to talk with teachers                          | 7    | 1.8 | 61    | 15.7 | 83     | 21.3 | 105     | 27   | 81               | 20.8 | 52           | 13.4 | 389       | 100 |
| Making telephone calls to school to find out about performance | 5    | 1.3 | 124   | 31.9 | 66     | 17   | 89      | 22.9 | 60               | 15.4 | 45           | 11.6 | 389       | 100 |
| Attending school's open days                                   | 3    | 0.8 | 63    | 16.2 | 41     | 10.5 | 40      | 10.3 | 56               | 14.4 | 186          | 47.8 | 389       | 100 |

The study findings on parents' collaboration with teachers showed that 186 (47.8%) of the parents collaborated with teachers all the time by attending schools' open days; 124 (31.9%) never made telephone calls to schools to find out about their children's performance and; 61 (15.7%) never went to school to talk with teachers about their children's performance.

The findings also indicated that a majority of parents attended their children's schools' open days while slightly more than a quarter never made calls to find out about their children's performance. It also indicated that according to children, majority of parents never went to their children's schools to talk with teachers. This showed that although most of the parents were aware of their parental role in their children's education, most of them failed in practice and children were very much aware of the disconnect between home and school.

## 6. Conclusion

Findings from both parents and learners revealed that majority of parents used authoritative parenting style in bringing up their children with a few of them using permissive parenting styles. Very few parents used either authoritarian or neglectful parenting styles.

The findings indicated that parenting styles influenced learners' involvement in behaviour disorders. Majority of learners of authoritative parents have never been involved in behaviour disorders and in general, learners of authoritative parents were less involved in behaviour

To find out about parents' collaboration with teachers, respondents were asked questions on parents' communication with teachers and attendance of school open days.

### Parent's Responses

Parents were asked to say how they collaborate with teachers with regard to children's performance. All parents said they attended all their children's school activities such as open days and parents' days. However, about a quarter of them said that they delegated the duties when they were not available. A majority of parents said that they made visits to their children's schools to discuss their children's academic performance. Half of them said they went to discuss their children's academic progress and behaviour. Less than a quarter of parents said they called their children's teachers to find out how they were doing.

### Learners' Responses

Learners were asked to rate their parents' collaboration with teachers. The findings are presented in Table 5.9.

disorders as compared to those of authoritarian, permissive and uninvolved/neglectful parents. The findings also indicated that compared to other parenting styles, a majority of learners with neglectful parents engaged in behaviour disorders.

It must be noted that while there are so many factors that influence learners' behaviour, family background and more so parenting style, is the most important factor (Tope, 2012). Parents should ensure that their children develop good behaviours as they grow up by emphasizing the importance of hard work, self-discipline and obedience (Chao, 2001).

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