



INFLUENCE OF RELIGION AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS ON PARENTING STYLES FOR STUDENTS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NAIROBI CITY COUNTY, KENYA

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Abstract:

Parents in any family are faced with the responsibility of impacting good behaviour in their children with every parent having their own style of parenting. The intergenerational transmission of family practices, religious beliefs as well as the socio-economic support of parents for their children plays a significant role in moulding children. This paper is a result of a study conducted to investigate the influence of religion and socio-economic status of parents on their style of parenting to shape the behaviour of students in public secondary schools. The study utilized descriptive research design in collecting data from 60 public secondary schools in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The study targeted head-teachers, student counselors and students. The findings of the study established that parents pay for co-curricular activities at school and school fee on time. Students with more than recommended pocket money were rated as the ones with highest indiscipline. The study provides vital background knowledge to apply in the context of family therapy and to educate parents/guardians about the crucial role that they play consciously or unconsciously in shaping the behaviour of their children. The school arranged for parents/teachers and students' meetings and recommends parents' attendance once called upon.

Keywords: parenting styles, socio-economic status, religion, indiscipline, students, Nairobi City County

1. Introduction

Desirable child behaviour among school going children has been a debatable concern with some scholars arguing that different parents from varying socio-economic and religious backgrounds differ on how to bring up their children (Degotardi, Torr & Cross, 2008; Bornstein & Bradley, 2012). According to Dunst, Hamby, Raab & Bruder

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(2017), it is remarked that based on the socio-economic environment, in countries with high income inequalities authoritative style of parenting is more predominant than permissive.

To enhance quality parent–child interaction, positive parenthood is paramount. Shiron, Edna & Nicolette (2016) in a cross-sectional study of 140 parents among high and low socio-economic groups, argue that there is no correlation between child development and authoritative parenting Shiron et al., (2016). They posit that the religious preferences of children are determined through parental influence. Parents are considered the most influential parties in their children’s early lives that if they raise their children in religious and potential economic backgrounds, then their behaviour is likely to be influenced by the same. This will be more enhanced by the parent – child relationships.

Positive relationships between the child and parents characterises parental support and control, also known as authoritative parenting. Through support and control an emotional climate is established within the family unit. Abar, Carter and Winsler (2009) therefore agree that children will be more willing to accept parental religious values than in permissive parenting since the former enables an atmosphere of mutual compliance and cooperation.

Koutakis (2011) explains that considerable evidence connects an unfavourable home environment and underage alcohol use, chief of which are parents who take alcohol. Koutakis (2011) argues that parents who are distant, hostile, coercive, or authoritarian, would have adolescents with drinking problems. The perception of adolescents about their parents parenting traits influences their alcohol use (Koutakis, 2011). Cleaver, Unell and Aldgate (2011) argue that adolescents are more likely to use alcohol when it is easily accessible or if their parents seem to allow them to use alcohol. Cleaver et al. (2011) add that regardless of the situation, the earlier an adolescent begins to use alcohol, the harder it will be for parents to intervene in the same.

Emery (2011) explains that one of the major functions of the family is to encourage a sense of social competence in offspring where social competence refers to an adolescent’s ability to delay gratification without the absolute denial of sensual pleasure, taking the perspective of another without denying self-realization and obeying reasonable laws while confronting injustice or unreasonableness in a law or statute. Failure to develop a sense of social competence is a major determinant of adolescent alienation. Enoch (2012) concludes that it is basic functioning of the family that lays the foundation for adolescents.

2. Methodology

Carried out in Nairobi County, this study sought to examine the influence of religion and socio-economic status on the parenting style for secondary students in public schools. The study adopted a descriptive research design (Creswell, 2013). According to Gratton and Jone (2010) descriptive designs focus on the current status of occurrences rather than the causes of the current occurrences. The research design therefore enabled

the description of the influence of religion and socio-economic status on the parenting styles adopted to promote student discipline in public secondary schools in Nairobi County.

The target population comprised head-teachers, guidance and counselling teachers and students in 60 public secondary schools in Nairobi City County-Kenya, with an average of one head-teacher, one guidance and counselling officer from each school and 1200 students. This is displayed in Table 1.

Table 1: Target population

Population Category	Target Population
Head-teachers	60
Teacher counsellors	60
Students	1200
Total	1320

A sample size of 132 respondents was then obtained from the target population resulting to only six schools that participated in the study. This included 20 students from each of the six schools under study, one guidance and counselling teacher, and one head-teacher from each of the schools. This was obtained by stratified random sampling as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Sample size

Respondent Category	Total Number of Schools	No of Students Sampled	Sample of Schools
Boys Boarding	07	20	1
Girls Boarding	10	20	1
Boys Day	08	20	1
Girls Day	05	20	1
Mixed Day	24	20	2
Mixed Boarding	06	0	0
Total Schools	60	120	6

Data collection was done using questionnaires after conducting a pilot study in order to ascertain the usability of the tools. The collected data was coded according to similar responses and analysed using Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) to determine the following family processes: parental monitoring, parental discipline methods, and parental demands to the respondent's use of alcohol, drugs, drop-out, disobedience, alcohol, absenteeism and theft. Frequencies, percentages, mean and modes were worked out for descriptive data.

3. Results

This paper is an assessment on the influence of socio-economic status and religion on parenting styles for students in public secondary schools in Nairobi City County. The findings of the study are presented in the following sections.

3.1 Influence of Socio-economic Status on Parenting Styles

As concerns the influence of socio-economic status on the style of parenting, the authors sought to find out the person with whom the students lived and the results are shown in Figure 1. Based on the results, 52 % of students lived with their mother, 33 % of students lived with both their parents, 7 % of the students lived with their father while 8 % of students lived with guardians.

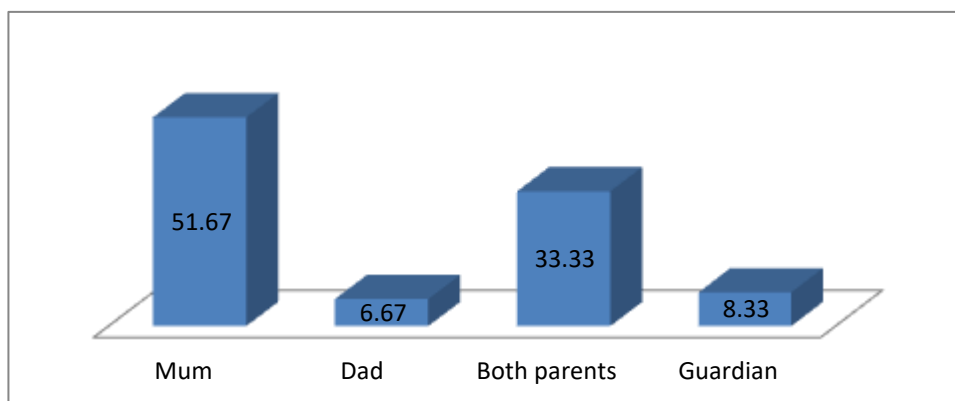


Figure 1: Person with whom the students lived at home

In addition, the study established the promptness with which the school fees for the students had been paid. The decision to pay fees on time or late depends on the availability of the fees explained by the economic status of the parents. The findings as shown in Figure 2 demonstrate the fees payment promptness. How quick parents are in paying the school fees for their children may also be attributed to their styles of parenting.

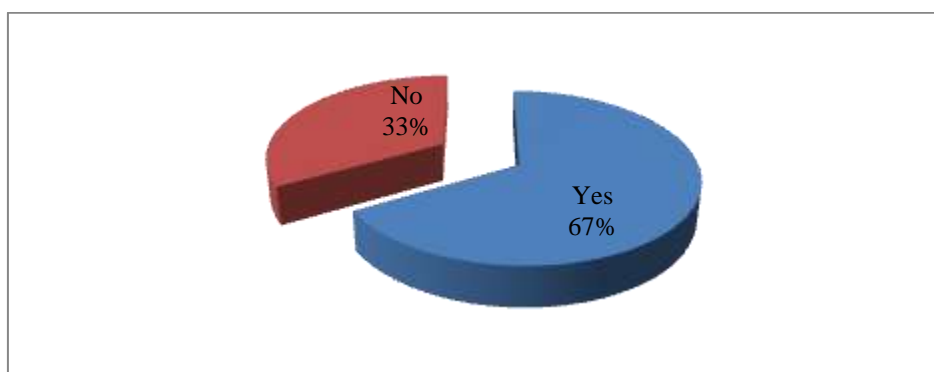


Figure 2: Promptness in fees payment

Figure 2 shows that more than half of the students pay school fees before or on the first day of school. From the findings, 67% of the guidance and counselling teachers indicated that more than half of the students pay school fees before or on the first day of school while 33% of the guidance and counselling indicated that more than half of the students did not pay school fees before or on the first day of School.

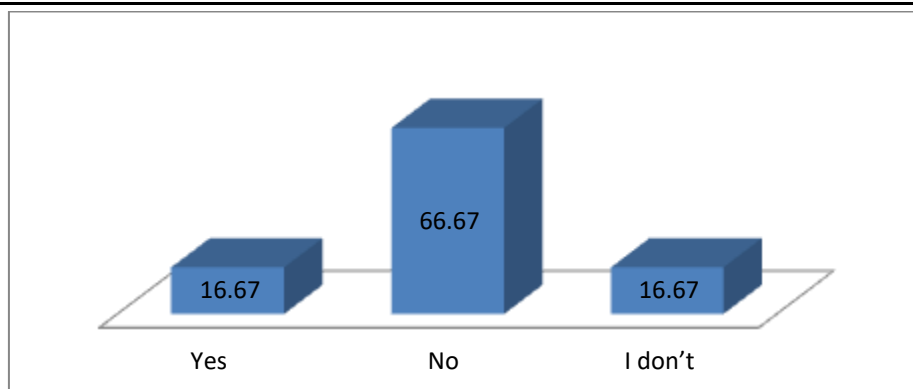


Figure 3: School fees balances owed to the school

As depicted in Figure 3, only a few of the guiding and counselling teachers admitted that the students they counsel had school fees balances. From the findings, 66.67% of the guidance and counselling teachers indicated that more than half of the students they counsel did not have school fees balances while 16.67% of the guidance and counselling teachers indicated that more than half of the students they counsel had school fees balances. Nevertheless, at least 16.67% of the guiding and counselling teachers also indicated that they did not know whether the students had school fees balances or not.

3.2 Rating of indiscipline cases in the schools

Having established the socio-economic background of the students' parents, the authors draw attention to the rate of indiscipline cases in the selected schools. This is to help understand whether given the parents' economic statuses, the students were highly disciplined or indisciplined. The results of the study are as shown in Figure 3.

Table 3: Rating of indiscipline cases

	Mean	Std dev
With less than recommended pocket money	2.49	0.03
With recommended pocket money	1.29	0.79
With more than recommended pocket money	2.73	0.49

Table 3 presents the rating of indiscipline cases within the schools that participated in the study. According to the findings, the head teachers rated students with recommended pocket money as the ones with least indiscipline cases as shown by a mean of 1.29. However, students with less than recommended pocket money were reported to be moderately involved in indiscipline cases depicted by a mean of 2.49. Moreover, students with more than recommended pocket money were said to be the ones with highest indiscipline cases in their respective schools as shown by a mean of 2.73.

3.3 Effects of Religion on Parenting Styles

On the other hand, the authors also sought to establish what influence religion had on the style of parenting for public secondary school going students. In essence, the study examined the students' involvement in weekly Christian union meetings and results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Weekly Christian Union / Young Christians meetings

	Frequency	Percentage
True	5	83.33
False	1	16.67
Total	6	100.00

On whether the schools organized Christian Union / Young Christian meetings at least once a week, the findings showed that 83.33 % of the head teachers indicated that the school had organized Christian Union / Young Christians meetings at least once a week while 16.67% of the head teachers indicated that the school had not organized Christian Union / Young Christian meetings at least once a week.

Table 5: Compulsory organized School Service

Compulsory School Services	Frequency	Percentage
True	5	83
False	1	17
Total	6	100

Table 5 also explains whether the school had organized School Service on a compulsory basis for students' spiritual formation. According to the findings, 83 % of the head teachers indicated that the school had compulsory organized school service for spiritual formation of students while 17 % of the head teachers indicated that the school had no compulsory organized School Service for students' spiritual formation.

In addition, the authors found out whether the schools had organized for religious meetings on a weekly basis and the findings are as shown in Figure 4.

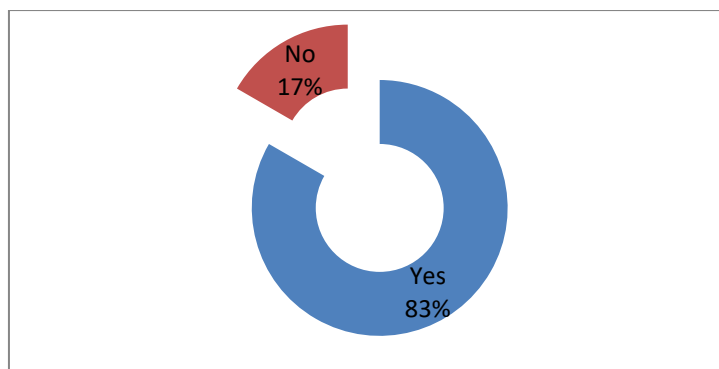


Figure 4: Weekly organised religious meetings

Just like the findings on compulsory organized school service, 83% of the guidance and counselling teachers indicated that the school had weekly organized religious meetings while 17% of the guidance and counselling teachers indicated that the school did not have weekly organized religious meetings.

4. Discussion

The socio-economic status of parents as established in the study is one of the fundamental aspects that gauge the parents' way of bringing up their children. While the students from well-developed statuses formed a multitude of the most indisciplined students in the schools, those students from the low socio-economic backgrounds were reportedly well behaved. This agrees with the findings drawn by Willingham (2012) who found out that behaviour among children is largely influenced by their economic backgrounds. This in turn, explains the style of parenting used by whomever the child lives with. It is not surprising therefore that the socio-economic statuses of the families have been identified among other factors as influencing individual beliefs and practices which are encompassed in the parenting styles (Calzada et al., 2009).

On religious influence, a study that was conducted by Sanne and Vermeer (2013) made a consideration of the influence of religious affiliation on the frequency of physical punishment among children. The study found that religious affiliation as well as socio-economic status or family economic background added a unique variance on how frequent the children would be punished.

5. Conclusion

Parenting styles play a major role in determining the behaviour of children both in school and at home. The types of style used, in this study influenced by the parents' economic status and religion is fundamental to explaining the rate of discipline and indiscipline among secondary school students. This study concludes that students who came from financially stable homes were the most indiscipline. The study found that more than half of the students pay school fees before or on the first day of school depicting good economic status of their parents. However, students with more than the recommended amount of pocket money were rated as the ones with the highest indiscipline cases. Those who had less than recommended pocket money were rated as having moderate indiscipline cases while those with recommended pocket money portrayed least indiscipline cases. Religion was found to have a positive influence on the choice of parenting style which impacted significantly on student behaviour. Notably, most families participated in their respective religious institutions with schools extending the same to organize for religious meetings and services that enabled spiritual formation of the students.

5.1 Recommendations

The study focused only on Nairobi City County–Kenya thus the authors recommend that another study could be carried out in other counties to compare the findings within the various counties. The same study could be replicated in private schools to establish the similarities and differences in the research findings.

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