

Influence Of Home Environment Factors On Students' Discipline In Public Secondary Schools In Loima Sub-County, Kenya

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Abstract- This study sought to investigate the influence of home environment factors on students' discipline in public secondary schools in Loima Sub-county, Kenya. The research questions were: to determine the influence of parenting styles, socioeconomic background of students and education level of parents on students' discipline in public secondary schools in Loima Sub – county. The study was guided by Bandura's Social Learning Theory and utilised causal comparative research design. The study sample was students and deputy principals drawn from 6 public secondary schools in Loima Sub – county. Questionnaires, were used to collect data. Reliability was determined using test-retest method. Data was then analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages and presented using a table. The results of the study showed that home environment had a significant influence on students' discipline. Based on the findings, the study recommended that parents should be good role models to their children and support schools in matters of discipline for any meaningful improvement in students' discipline to be realized. Principals and schools' Boards of Management were also encouraged to empower the guidance and counselling departments and students' council members through trainings to assist in offering effective alternative mechanisms for arresting and handling discipline issues.

Index Terms- Home Environment Factors, Students' Discipline

I. INTRODUCTION

Home environment refers to the conditions that prevail in a home setting which influences a child's behaviour. The home environment plays a very important role in one's personal growth. Hoffman, Hutchinson and Reiss (2009) suggest that positive social environment has been linked to enhancing students' behaviour, academic achievement, and motivation. It has positive impact on formation of students' behaviour in developing essential skills like making decisions, love for social justice and equality, sensitivity and shaping their discipline (Arifin, Wahab, Teh & Otman, 2018). Human behaviours are shaped by what they experience in the surrounding environment. Therefore, bad and problematic behaviours result from a negative social environment (Ngari,

2014). Hence, the environment is a contributing factor to students' delinquency such as loitering, playing truant, bullying and skipping lessons (Arifin, Wahab, Teh & Otman, 2018). They further note that the students' emotions and minds will easily change according to the environment.

The home environment plays a key role in an individual's initial stages of life. It is the primary agent of socialization and the first "educator" (Perrino, 2011). This is because a child will see the world and life from the perspectives of those that are around him or her (Ngari, 2014). Thus, the most important component of the home environment for students is the family (Azizi Yahaya, 2009). A child will therefore behave in a way that conforms to the norms of the society in which he/she is part of as a way of gaining a sense of belonging.

Wencan, Emiko, Kumi, Etuko, Taeko, and Bailiang (2016) conducted a study in Japan to investigate the influence of home-rearing environment on children's behavioral problems. The study was designed as a 3-year longitudinal study with secondary data. A total of 99 caregivers with preschool aged children were required to complete two self-reported questionnaires: the Index of Child Care Environment and Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire. It demonstrated that a positive home-rearing environment had a positive influence on children's behavioral problem 3 years' later. The study suggested that behavioural problems in children's later development may be reduced by providing a positive home rearing environment.

Adeboyele and Oyeleye (2016) conducted a study to investigate the home environment and adolescents' sexuality and reproductive behaviour in Ondo Town, Nigeria. Their study examined differences in the sexuality and reproductive behavior of adolescents, and intracity variations in such behavior. The study analysed connections between, socio-economic conditions of families, physical home environment and, sexuality and reproductive behavior of adolescents. The study administered a total of 580 questionnaires to adolescents from high, medium and low residential densities to elicit information on sexuality and reproductive.

School discipline entails all the strategies that can be used to coordinate, regulate and organize individuals and their activities in the school to encourage responsible behaviour and to provide

all students with a satisfying school experience as well as to discourage misconduct. (Ahmad, 2011). Discipline is also regarded as the training especially of the mind and character aimed at producing self-control, ordered behaviour and skilfulness (Wango, 2010). Further, discipline is not only the degree of order and structure in the school (Mukuria, 2002), but also the extent to which the school community views the learner’s behaviour as the appropriate socially accepted conduct (Oplatka & Atias, 2007). Usman (2016) posits that, if discipline is a conscious effort made by an individual to comply with societal rules and regulations, indiscipline is a deliberate calculation made by an individual, persons to disrespect societal rules and regulations. The issue of learners’ misbehaviour in the school environment has evoked concerns among key stakeholders in education provision worldwide (Mwaniki, Kiumi & Ngunjiri, 2018).

In the United States of America, as the level of students’ indiscipline kept growing, state-wide suspension rates in Michigan became high (American Institute for Research, 2017). It further noted that, as a result, the Michigan Department of Education formed the Michigan School Task Force in 2013, to develop a model policy for reducing suspensions and expulsions using alternative discipline strategies.

The greatest challenge facing South African education has been lack of discipline and safety in schools (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010). They further established that school disciplinary problems in South Africa ranged from late coming to drugs and substance abuse. According to Maphosa and Mammen (2011), students were noted for disrespecting authorities, going to school late, fighting among themselves, refusing to do homework and dressing indecently. Some of the students went to the extent of vandalizing school property and assaulting teachers for taking disciplinary action against them or a colleague. Pre – marital sex, armed robbery, drug abuse, drunkenness and smoking of marijuana popularly known as “wee” in Ghana were reported to be prevalent among basic schools in the country (Director – General, Asare, & Twene, 2003).

Research conducted in the United States of America found consistent links between parenting and child behavioural adjustment. For instance, a mother’s parenting behaviours; including the extent to which she displayed affection toward and exerted behavioural and psychological control over her child were linked to later child internalizing and externalizing behaviours (Aunola & Nurmi, 2005). Externalizing, or disruptive, behaviour problems commonly include attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder and conduct problems (Akhter, Hanif, Tariq, & Atta, 2011). These are just a few common behavioural problems that are, in part, shaped by particular styles of parenting. It is widely believed that the delinquent behaviour in most of the juveniles is the result of parent characteristics. Poduthase (2012) argued that adolescents could be led towards delinquent behaviour when they were exposed to lack of intimacy, lack of guidance, lack of parental involvement, lack of parental attachment, anger and blaming. In other words, lack of parental involvement and interaction results in increased risk of violence, primarily in male juveniles (Upitis, Abrami, Brook, & King, 2017).

Behaviour research conducted in Ireland showed that children from impoverished homes developed psychiatric disturbances and maladaptive social functioning at a greater rate than their affluent counterparts did (McCoy, Firck, Loney, & Ellis, 1999). Children

raised in poverty are much less likely to have these crucial needs met than their more affluent peers are and, as a result, are subject to some grave consequences. Deficits in these areas inhibit the production of new brain cells, alter the path of maturation, and rework the healthy neural circuitry in children's brains, thereby undermining emotional and social development and predisposing them to emotional dysfunction (Gunnar, Frenn, Wewerka, & Van Ryzin, 2009; Miller, Seifer, Stroud, Sheinkopf, & Dickstein, 2007).

DeBaryshe, Patterson, and Capaldi (1993) argued that parental education was directly related to styles of parenting and not student's academic performance. In their study, parents with lower educational attainment used coercive strategies for discipline which, in turn, predisposed their children to antisocial and abnormal behaviours. Further, Parveen (2007) found that a parents’ level of education did not significantly affect a child’s emotional stability.

Kenya has also experienced its fair share of indiscipline cases in form of arson, truancy, sexual assault, rape, theft, lateness, bullying, sneaking out of school, fighting, absenteeism, vandalism and drug abuse among others (Waithaka, 2017). In 2016, 126 schools had experienced students’ unrest of different magnitudes in a span of seven months (MOE, 2016). However, the students’ indiscipline went a notch higher in 2017. On 19th July 2017 five female teachers were beaten by pupils at Kirimon Primary School in Samburu County (MOE, 2017). In less than three months after this incident, the students of Lokichoggio Mixed Secondary School in Turkana County experienced the worst horror of their lifetime on 13th October, 2017 when a student who had been suspended sneaked back into the school with his accomplices, killed the school watchman and shot dead five students in the dormitories with 18 sustaining bullet wounds. A number of female students were also raped in this unfortunate case (MOE, 2017). This was preceded by another incident in which two students of Turkwel Boys Secondary School had sneaked into their school laboratory and drank ethanol. One student lost his life while the other lost sight (MOE, 2014). As indiscipline cases persist, it is therefore critical to analyse acts of students’ indiscipline, their root causes, with regard to home environment, in a bid to formulate mitigation strategies.

II. RESULTS

Table1: Frequency Distribution of Students’ Home Environment Factors

Variable	Category	f	%
Parenting style	Authoritative	218	82.58%
	Authoritarian	46	17.42%
	Total	264	100%
Students’ Socioeconomic Background	Poor	212	80.30%
	Middle Class	48	18.18%
	Rich	4	1.52%
	Total	264	100%
Parents’ Level of Education	Degree	12	4.54%
	Diploma	18	6.82%
	Certificate	23	8.71%
	Form Four	28	10.61%

Standard Eight	82	31.06%
None	101	38.26%
Total	264	100%

Information displayed in 1 show that 218 (82.58%) of the respondents who took part in the study had authoritative parents. In most African communities, parents instill discipline and a sense of responsibility to their children at an early age as children spent most of their time with parents and grandparents. This provided parents sufficient opportunity to guide and mentor their children. The finding is in concurrence with Ayiro, Mbagaya and Othuon (2019) who observed that authoritative parenting was the most commonly used form of parenting style in Kenya.

With regard to the occupation of the parents, Table 1 show that 212 (80.30 %) of the students came from poor families. This can be attributed to lack of higher education, which renders most parents unable to secure meaningful employment opportunities. Loima being an arid region is prone to prolonged droughts. This hinders the local community from diversifying their livelihoods through farming. The poverty level is even made worse by livestock raiding among the neighbouring communities which distract people from pursuing stable income opportunities. The finding agrees with the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics Report on Exploring Kenya's Inequality (2013) which reported that more than 79% of Turkana County's population was living in poverty. The information displayed in Table 1 further show that only 4 (1.52%) of the students were from rich families. These students belonged to families whose parents/guardians were involved in meaningful sources of income perhaps like an attractive formal employment or business. These parents/guardians were living closer to the urban areas where one could easily access education leading to alternative livelihood diversification such as securing a job or running a successful business free from raids.

According to the information presented in Table1, Parents with no formal education at all formed the larger category 101 (38.26 %). This means that illiteracy levels were very high among the parents. Since Loima is a pastoralist community, the cultural practice of marrying girls at an early age for wealth hinders their access to basic education as envisaged in the Basic Education Act No. 14 of the Kenyan Parliament. Livestock raiding as a way of obtaining wealth among the males also has a negative effect on their chances of accessing basic education. The high illiteracy levels could also be as a result of lack of established secondary schools; noting that seven out of the existing eight public secondary schools in Loima sub-county were established after the year 2009. Information in Table illustrates a direct variation between illiteracy and poverty levels. The parents without any post-secondary training and below were 211 (79.92%) while the poor parents were 212 (80.30%). This may be due to the fact that a well-paying employment opportunity requires specialization skills attained through post-secondary training. The finding is in line with the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2013) which observed that lack of access to essential services like education leads to continued poverty and vulnerability.

III. CONCLUSION

On the basis of the findings of the study, the researcher made the following conclusions;

The discipline of students was greatly influenced by the home environment, more so the parenting styles. Hence, parents played an important role in students' discipline and that discipline in schools would only improve when parents supported the school administration.

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