

# Influence of Parenting Styles on the Adolescent Students' Academic Achievement in Kenyan Day Secondary Schools

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## Abstract

The present study sought to establish the influence of parenting styles on adolescent academic achievement in day secondary schools in North Rachuonyo Sub-County, Kenya. Baumrind's theory of parenting style informed the study. The Concurrent Triangulation Design was used. The target population comprised 2409 day secondary students registered for KCSE in 2015 in 47 schools in Rachuonyo North Sub-County. The sample size comprised 263 secondary school students drawn from Sub-County day secondary schools. Ten Principals were randomly selected for interviews. Baumrind's parenting styles questionnaire and interview schedule were used to collect the data from the students and principals respectively. Validity of the questionnaire was ensured by expertise judgement from university lecturers while reliability was determined by internal consistency and reliability coefficient of 0.718 was reported. Quantitative data was analysed using Regression analysis while qualitative data was analysed using Thematic Analysis. The study found that parenting styles statistically significantly predict academic performance of the adolescents,  $F(4, 242) = 43.529, p < .05, R^2 = .630$ . The findings also suggest that independent variables (Authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, neglectful parenting style) explain (63.0%) of the variability of the dependent variable, (adolescents' academic performance). The study recommended that teacher counsellors should identify at risk students from the parents susceptible of negative influence and offer appropriate therapy.

**Key words:** *Influence, Parenting Styles, Adolescent Students, Academic Achievement, Kenyan, Day, Secondary Schools*

## 1.0: Introduction

Education has over the years been regarded as key to entire individual's development (Ali, McWhirter & Chronister, 2005). Throughout one's life, it is education that remains central to shaping the goals and ideals of an individual; pace of coping with daily challenges and integral development. Society's development is also determined by the standards of education that people undergo. Hence aspects that determine an individual's academic achievement remain vital to any member of the society that values development. Though academic achievement is vital at every stage of personal growth it is regarded as crucial at adolescent stage; as this stage determines one's success or failure in life in what is described as identity crisis (Boon, 2007).

There are a number of factors that determines an individual's academic achievement especially at a tender age. At the very basic are the parents since they are the core unit of the society and the ones directly linked to an individual from the time of his/her basic development to maturity (Kang & Moore, 2011). The key determinants of young ones academic achievement are central to personal development. Worldwide, academic achievement has been associated largely with progressive communities (Hoang, 2007). Students who have higher academic achievement are at an advantage in terms of positive outcomes such as joy, pride, happiness and success in their endeavors (Elliot & Dweck, 2005). Similarly, having higher academic achievement has been associated with positive characteristics, including self-esteem, self-efficacy, and motivation (Elliot and Dweck, 2005). Conversely, lower academic achievement is linked to low levels of particular achievement goals (Boon, 2007).

Academic success in terms of higher achievement has long been thought to be the path to a stable livelihood and a successful future (Boon, 2007). Academic success relates to having high academic achievement in childhood (Kang, & Moore 2011). Although there are likely many factors that influence academic success such as peer relationships, school environments, parenting styles may be especially an important influence on academic success. Moreover, in different cultures for example different countries and environments, there may be some diversity in children's academic achievement because of parenting style differences between countries (Kang & Moore, 2011). Thus, parenting styles in different cultures may differentially impact children's academic achievement (Nyarko, 2011).

The study was guided by Baumrind's Theory (1967) on Parental Styles. Baumrind's conceptualization of parenting style has produced remarkably consistent picture of the type of parenting style conducive to the successful child's integral development (Baumrind, 1967). According to the theory, there are four main parental styles: authoritarian, authoritative, neglectful and permissive (Ibukunolu, 2013). These four parenting styles

could affect adolescence in their academic achievement. Authoritarian parenting is a restrictive punitive style in which parents exhort the child to follow their directions and respect their work and efforts, place firm limits and controls on the child and allows little verbal exchange (Santrock, 2008).

Lots of literature exist among the phenomenon under investigation. However, there are several gaps in the reviewed literature which the present study filled. Rogers, Theule, Ryan, Adams, and Keaing (2009) in Canada found out that parents who adopt strong authoritarian parenting styles contribute to students' lower academic performance. Mohammed, Koorosh and Hamid (2011) demonstrated that authoritarian parenting style was negatively associated with children's academic achievement in Iranian families. The study found out that paternal authoritarian parenting styles showed no significant association with children's academic achievement. Hong (2012) concluded that both parental practices and parenting styles influence children's school achievement. Cherry (2013) in South Africa indicated that the results of the regression model for academic performance were significant,  $F(12, 10361) = 148.14, p < .001$ . Verenikina, Vialle and Lysaght (2011) revealed that this parenting style had influence on academic performance ( $r = .76, p < .05$ ). Efobil and Nwokolo (2011) showed that authoritative parenting style is more common among parents than other methods of parenting. Fakeye (2014) revealed that there was no significant difference in the reading achievement of pupils from different parenting styles ( $F = 2.22; p > 0.05$ ). In Ghana, Nyarko, (2011) found out that parenting styles influenced students' academic achievement. Tilahun (2012) showed that students who perceived their parents as permissive had significantly lower academic achievement ( $r = -.06, p < .000$ ). Okoro (2013), in Nigeria revealed a negative significant relationship of ( $r = -0.37, p < 0.05$ ). This meant that uninvolved parenting negatively affected children's academic performance.

Maphoso and Dikeledi (2014) outlined that academic achievement is a factor of many variables. Academic achievement is thus associated with elitist lifestyle as well as elevated livelihood in the society. The experience across culture is however variable depending on the socialization background of a given region. On the other hand, in Kenya, academic achievement remains largely associated with those well to do families that can afford fees payable in descent schools and colleges (Ashiona and Mwoma, 2013). The family has the greatest socializing influence on children (Ngwiri, 2008). This is because through words and deeds of parents, children's personality is shaped and their ways of doing things become habitual. In addition, it is the prime responsibility of the parents to socialize their children in order to conform to societal standards and be able to function successfully in the community. Consequently, parents shepherd their children from dependent infants into competent and independent individuals who interact effectively in their environment.

Data available indicates that the students' performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) has been consistently low in Rachuonyo Sub-County as indicated in the examination results for the period between 2011 and 2014. This implies that most students are likely to miss entry into public universities whose minimum entry grade is C+. That was below the average or minimum university entry at grade C+, an indication that performance of students in KCSE nationally in Rachuonyo North Sub County was still low. Studies such as (Rivers, 2006; Seth and Ghomode, 2013; Jaluo, 2013; and Ashiono and Mwoma, 2013) explored factors contributing to academic excellence of students at tender to adolescent age. Some studies have explored the Freudian Psychosexual psychology in a bid to explain the disparity while others adopted the psycho-social approach. However, scanty literature was available on the influence of parenting styles on academic achievement in Secondary Schools in Rachuonyo North Sub County.

### **Purpose of the study**

The purpose of the study was to establish the influence of parenting styles on the adolescent students' academic achievement in day secondary schools within Rachuonyo North Sub-County, Kenya.

## **2.0: Research methodology**

### **2.1: Research Design**

Mixed method approach was adopted for the study. Concurrent Triangulation Design was adopted. The purpose of this design was to obtain different but complementary data on the same topic to best understand the research problem (Creswell, 2013). The intent in using this design was to bring together the differing strengths and non-overlapping weaknesses of quantitative methods with those of qualitative methods. This design and its underlying purpose of converging different methods have been discussed extensively in the literature (Creswell, 2013). This design is used when a researcher wants to directly compare and contrast quantitative statistical results with qualitative findings or to validate or expand quantitative.

## 2.2 Population of the Study

The study targeted a population of 2409 students in the 47 day secondary schools in Rachuonyo North Sub County. All the 2409 day secondary school students were from four candidates for the 2015 Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education of the Kenya National Examination Council. Similarly, the study targeted 47 Principals. The Sub-County statistics indicate that there were 47 sub-county day secondary schools.

## 2.3 Sample Size and Sampling Procedures

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2008), simple random sampling gives an equal opportunity for every person an equal chance of being selected and that was why it suited the present study. Thus, an estimated sample size of 263 (11%) students was drawn from the target population of 2409. The sample size was considered appropriate as recommended by Gay (2006) that a sample size should be 10-30% of population, therefore, fourteen schools (30%) were randomly sampled for the study. In addition, ten Principals (21%) were also randomly sampled for interviews.

Sampling procedure was carried out as per the guidelines provided by Oso and Onen (2009). Of the 47 secondary schools in the Sub County, fourteen randomly sampled schools (30%) were part of the study (Gay, 2006). The students were also sampled using simple random sample technique in various schools. In addition, the ten Principals were randomly sampled out of 47 Principals in day secondary schools.

## 2.4: Research Instruments

Both questionnaires and interview schedules were used to collect data. Questionnaire was used because it enabled data to be gathered within a short span of time (Creswel, 2013). Structured/closed-ended questions were outlined in the questionnaire. The questionnaire had a response format in 5 point likert scale where participants had five options to choose from. The questionnaires were given to 263 form four students in their respective schools. The questionnaires were distributed to the students in their classes. The response format comprised a five point likert scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Strongly Disagree and Disagree. Questionnaires on parenting styles were used. Information was sought from the participants from their 2014 county mock examination grade. The County mock grade was considered as the measure of academic achievement because the scores had already been standardized.

Interviews were conducted to collect information that cannot directly be observed or are difficult to put down in writing and capture the meanings beyond the written words as described by Oso and Onen (2009). Semi-structured interviews in which a set questions were asked to many interviewees, but interviewees were given room for flexibility to allow new information to arise. In interviewing, notebook and tape recorder to allow better capturing of all the needed information were used. Interviewing was administered to ten Principals. The reason for this was to ensure inclusion of all categories of people in the study, at the same time to gain further insight from the respondents in areas that cannot be captured by questionnaires and observation methods. Ten Principals were randomly selected for interview. The interview took place at the Principals' offices and each interview lasted for thirty minutes.

## 2.5: Validity and reliability of Questionnaires

Validity was achieved by use of expert judgment by lecturers in the Department of Psychology from the Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology who ascertained whether they measured what they were supposed to measure. In addition, the questionnaires were made simple and clear, items arranged in the study instruments from simple to complex. The items that were seen not to adequately generate the required information were dropped and other items suggested that were appropriate in generating information as supported by McMillan and Schumacher (2010).

Reliability was estimated using internal consistency approach. Internal consistency estimate of reliability where, "individuals [cases or questions] were administered were thus used. The instrument was administered once to the same group of participants, then divided into two halves. The results of the two halves were compared and correlated to measure the instrument's stability and consistency using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient. The split half method involves dividing a single survey measuring instrument into two parts and then correlating responses (scores) from one half with responses from the other half (Donna, 2005). In this research, the test items were divided into two halves with each half matched in terms of items or item difficulty and content. The test was marked separately. The marks obtained in each half was correlated highly with the other (a correlation coefficient of 0.718).

## 2.6: Data collection procedures

Permission to carry out the study was first obtained from the Board of Post Graduate studies of Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology (JOUST). Thereafter, a permit was obtained from National Council of Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). The researcher then sought permission from the Sub-County Director of Education, and then Principals of various Secondary Schools were approached for permission in order to undertake the study in the respective schools. The study commenced after getting permission from the relevant authorities. The respondents were contacted through phone call and their consent sought for the appointment. The interview schedule and questionnaires were arranged and the time line for meeting respondents drawn and observed. On arrival at the respective schools, the questionnaires were issued to the selected form four students who filled them at an average time of thirty minutes.

## 2.7: Data analysis

The information from parenting styles questionnaires was analyzed to establish the various parenting styles that the students experienced at home. The questionnaire was on a 5 point likert scale response: SA (Strongly Agree), A (Agree), N (Neutral), D (Disagree), SD (Strongly Disagree). The responses were completed depending on how the students responded to the questionnaires.

The academic achievement was measured using the Rachuonyo North Sub County Mock results, and the grades for the selected students reported. The scores were then obtained from parenting styles were correlated with the mock grade to obtain a correlation coefficient which indicated the influence of parenting style on academic achievement. In quantitative data analysis, the researcher used epi-data and SPSS Microsoft. Epi-data software was used to enter data information and SPSS to do the analysis (Kothari, 2014). Data was analyzed using regression analysis.

Qualitative data from the ten (10) selected school principals were analysed using thematic approach. Thematic approach, interviews and coding were utilized in the assessment of the qualitative data. Qualitative data was reported in verbatim, transcribed and coded according to various themes, categories and sub categories as per objectives as they emerged during the study (Raburu, 2011). Creswell (2013) explains that qualitative data was used because it reinforces the quantitative data on the opinions of the participants.

## 3.0: Results and Discussions

A multiple regression analysis was conducted for the various parenting style and adolescents' academic performance. The results of the regression analysis are shown in the subsequent Tables.

**Table 1: Regression Analysis Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.794 <sup>a</sup>	.630	.630	.759

a. Predictors: (Constant), Authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, neglectful;

According to the analysis, these variables statistically significantly predict academic performance of the adolescents,  $F(4, 242) = 43.529, p < .05, R^2 = .630$ .

The findings in Table 1 also suggest that independent variables (Authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, neglectful parenting style) explain (63.0%) of the variability of the dependent variable, (adolescents' academic performance). Therefore, the remaining (37%) could be accounted for by other variables not entered in the present study. Analysis also reveals that all four variables added statistically significance to the prediction,  $p < .05$ .

**Table 2: ANOVA<sup>b</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	57.781	8	12.561	55.429	.000 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	19.656	34	.694		
	Total	77.437	42			

*Researcher's Data, 2015*

a. Predictors: (Constant), Authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, neglectful

b. Dependent Variable: Adolescents academic performance

The ANOVA results from Table 2 shows a significant variance ( $p=0.000$ ) in means for the four predictors (Authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, neglectful) since our alpha value was  $p < 0.05$ . This implies that the

means differ more than would be expected by chance alone. It can be concluded that influence of the four predictors on adolescents' academic performance varies.

**Table 3: Multiple regression analysis for Adolescents Academic Performance**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1 (Constant)	1.070	1.135		.942	.033	1.271	4.580
Authoritative	.742	.164	.323	4.083	.017	.271	.494
Authoritarian	-.612	.159	-.753	-1.805	.011	-.240	.413
Permissive	-.484	.177	-.614	-1.173	.026	-.362	.413
Neglectful	-.772	.189	-.456	-1.564	.031	-.488	.565

a. Dependent Variable: Adolescents Academic Performance

From the significance column in Table 3, it can be concluded that all the predictor variables (Authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, neglectful) are significant since they are less than the common alpha of 0.05 ( $P < 0.05$ ). This finding agrees with Rogers, Theule, Ryan, Adams, and Keaing (2009) in Canada who found out that parents who adopt strong authoritarian parenting styles contribute to students' lower academic performance. Mohammed, Koorosh and Hamid (2011) demonstrated that authoritarian parenting style was negatively associated with children's academic achievement in Iranian families. Hong (2012) concluded that both parental practices and parenting styles influence children's school achievement. Cherry (2013) in South Africa indicated that the results of the regression model for academic performance were significant,  $F(12, 10361) = 148.14, p < .001$ . Verenikina, Vialle and Lysaght (2011) revealed that this parenting style had influence on academic performance ( $r = .76, p < .05$ ).

The qualitative results from school principals indicated that authoritative parents were responsive for their children including their academic welfare. For instance, when probed on this, one of the principals said:

*Authoritative parents appear responsible and reliable. They are very much concerned with their children's academic performance, they visit the school to check on their children and encourage their children to perform well through various contributions such as prompt payment of school fees, buying of learning materials and encouraging their children to work hard in class* [Principal, 3]

These sentiments were also supported by Principal 6 during the interview who also said that:

*Authoritative parents are always kind, respectful, responsiveness and have high affection towards their children, hence are always there for their academic needs, and this makes their children to perform well not only in academics but also in their social life* [Principal, 6]

From sentiments of Principal 3 and Principal 6, it can be inferred that authoritative parents are very supportive and understanding to their children and such parents have high responsiveness to their children's welfare. This is also supported by Woolfolk, (2011) which observed that authoritative parents respect their children, understand them, monitor their welfare and have warm and intimate times together with their children. In contrast, Kristy (2009) reported that parenting styles were not clear predictors of pupils' achievements in reading.

The study also found that authoritative parents were dependable among their children and this could encourage their children to work hard in academics and also develop socially. These sentiments were also confirmed by principals during the interview and one Principal noted that:

*Parenting championing authoritative parenting style is responsible and reliable to their children. As such, their children find it easy to approach them on matters to do with their social growth and development. This can also translate to cognitive development of the child and hence encouraged their academic development* [Principal, 4]



From the findings reported by Principal 4, the authoritative parents are approachable among their children and this encourages understanding between parents and their children and hence promotes academic performance of a child. The finding is similar to Ghormode (2013) which found that students of authoritative parents have such values as a stronger work orientation, greater engagement in classroom activities, higher educational aspirations, more positive feelings about school, greater time spent on homework, more positive academic self-conceptions, and lower levels of school misconduct, such as cheating or copying. In contrast Merha (2013) argues that parenting styles are not clear predictors of students' academic performance.

During the interview, it emerged that students from authoritarian parents performed poorly in class. For instance, one Principal expressed:

*I have consistently called some parents to the school to discuss their children's academic performance. When they come, they do not listen to me, the teachers and their children, instead, they dictate terms. As a result, their children continue to perform poorly (Principal, 8).*

A similar view was expressed by Principal 5:

*A number of parents do not respect teachers' views and their children's views and only consider what they say as right. Some parents attribute this to their old age level, hence, are experienced to dictate what they want to be done. This affects their children's academic performance, (Principal, 5).*

This shows that authoritarian parenting style had a negative influence on academic performance of the adolescents. The relationship between authoritarian parenting style and academic performance was also shown using Bivariate Pearson correlation. This is in agreement with Verenikina, Vialle and Lysight (2011) that authoritative parenting style undermined the process of learning. This is supported by Ashiona and Mwoma (2013) that authoritarian parenting style was negatively correlated to children performance.

During the interviews with the school principals, two of the themes that arose on the influence of authoritative parenting on academic achievement, were cruelty of the parents and strictness of the parents. From the interview with the school principals, it was established that authoritarian parenting style was associated with cruelty. This characteristic was found to be unhelpful to the academic development of the child. For instance, one of the Principals reported that:

*Cruel parents shun their children from approaching them with any issues related to their social and academic life. Such students therefore cannot compete favorably with other students with parents who encourage freedom, expression of feelings, and mutual understanding. For example, a child may be having an issue that if not solved in time may interfere with his/her concentration but given the unapproachable nature of their parents, this child may not approach the parent with the issue and the end result is always failure [Principal, 8]*

Report from Principal 8 shows that cruel parents as characteristics of authoritarian parenting style are detrimental to a child's social and academic performance. This finding is supported by Verenikina, Vialle & Lysight, (2011) study which found that high level of parental pressure incorporated within the authoritarian style can often reduce children's intrinsic motivation, causing them to be reliant on extrinsic sources, thus undermining the process of learning. Similarly, Rogers *et al.*, (2009) agreed that authoritarian parenting style often trigger poor communication skills, an essential component predictor of future success.

From the above findings, it can be comprehended that permissive parents were tolerant and allowed their children's impulses to prevail and employed little use of punishment as corrective measures and made few demands on their children.

*'Some parents often support their children whenever they are involved in cases of indiscipline. They disagree with teachers for disliking their children and accuse the school of being too strict' [Principal,10].*

A similar view was expressed by Principal 6:

*I confiscated one of the modern mobile phones from a student in the classroom when a group of students were using it. However, this angered the parent who did not see the reason why it was taken. He demanded it back. Her child continued to perform poorly [Principal, 6].*

Therefore, permissive parents supported their children or sided with them even if they were on the wrong. This is supported by Verenikina, Vialle, and Lysaght (2011) that permissive parent has very casual and easy going approach towards their children and lean towards them.

It was found that permissive parents were more lenient when it comes to taking care of their children. This hands-off kind of parenting could ultimately harm the academic progress of the child. For instance, in one of the interviews with the principals, one of them had to say that:

*Permissive parents give their children unguided freedom, which encourage their children to fall in the trap of the wrong company. Therefore, a child can become uncontrolled, indiscipline, and unruly and all these are detrimental to the academic success of the child [Principal, 2].*

In a similar view, one of the principals when asked to comment on the permissive parenting style and academic performance of the child also offered that;

*Children of permissive parents perform poorly in class because they are never disciplined by their parents, their parents ignore their bad behavior and generally they get spoilt in the process of their upbringing. Such a child can never perform well in academic activity [Principal, 7].*

A report from Principal 9 on influence of permissive parenting style on Academic performance stated that;

*Permissive parents give us hard time when it comes to management of students' indiscipline by defending their children. Most of these cases of indiscipline are from students in permissive parenting style environment and that these students perform poorly [Principal, 9].*

From the above excerpts of Principal, 6 and Principal, 9, it can therefore be deduced that permissive parenting style does not favor academic performance of the child, because the child lack proper parental care. This is similar to Kambo (2006) that found out that students from permissive parenting had significantly lower academic achievement as compared to their counterparts who perceived their parents as authoritative or authoritarians.

#### **4.0: Conclusion**

Authoritative parents were very accommodating, responsive to their children's feelings, encouraged their children to speak freely their mind, explain to their children their expectation, complimented their children, respected their children opinion and were concerned about their welfare. Authoritarian parents explode, spank, yell and were strict with their children, and could also use threats as a form of punishment. These parents could also criticize openly the behaviour of their children and could struggle to change how their children felt about things. It can therefore be concluded that permissive parents found it difficult to discipline their children, spoilt their children and ignore their bad behaviour. This parenting style has a bad influence on the child's academic performance and the more permissive a parent was, the less likely their children was to perform well in class. That neglectful parents were not concerned about their children's welfare either in class or social development and this could harm their children's academic performance.

#### **5.0: Recommendations**

From the study findings, it is recommended that, the Ministry of Education should organize guidance and counseling programs in the communities to sensitize, educate and empower parents on various parenting issues. For example, teach parents to set limits and control for their children while still maintaining a warm and supportive relationship; neglectful parents becoming more engaged in the lives of their children, permissive parents setting more rules for their children and authoritarian parents becoming more flexible with their children. The Teachers' Service Commission (TSC) should also train teachers on ways of handling children from various parenting styles for good academic performance for all. This is because the study reported that parenting styles influence academic performance. Teacher Counselors should seek ways of strengthening their relationship with the children, and with the parents in order to gain a better understanding of their parenting styles and then handle each child according to the parenting style applied. This would help them understand the various adjustment problems of individual students and then help the students to perform well in academics. Parents should embrace the authoritative parenting styles which will enhance proper communication between them and their children. They should also visit the schools and make enquiries about the academic performance of their children. This would help reduce cases of school dropouts and increase the academic performance of the students.

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