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Effect of Authoritarian Parenting Leadership Style on Academic Performance of Students in Selected Secondary Schools in Mandera North Sub County in Mandera County, Kenya

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Abstract:

In the global context, education is regarded as a tool for success since learning creates a lasting impact on one's life. In Kenya, education is regarded as a foundation stone to success as society seeks to minimize poverty. Parental involvement is undeniably a key factor in the educational learning process. The main aim of the study was to assess the effect of authoritative parenting leadership styles on the academic performance of students in selected secondary schools in Mandera North Sub County in Mandera County. The study was conducted in selected public secondary schools in Mandera North Sub County, which has a population of 2239 students. A total of 328 respondents were computed using Krejcie & Morgan (1970). The study employed a descriptive research design. Quantitative data were collected from students, parents, and teachers using questionnaires, and interviews were conducted among school principals to collect qualitative data. Statistical Package for Social Sciences was used to analyze the quantitative data, while content analysis was used to analyze the qualitative information gathered using open-ended questions, where findings were reported in a narrative form under each theme. Independent sample tests were conducted to find the association between the variables. The study concluded that authoritarian parenting Leadership styles had a positive association with academic performance with p values <0.05 , which was also replicated by higher GPA scores for students whose parents adopted authoritarian parenting Leadership Style. The study recommends that authoritarian parents need to be educated on the significance of actively participating in school-related activities. Educational initiatives should be developed for both parents and teachers to emphasize the importance of positive parental involvement. The findings of this study provide appropriate recommendations for policy formulation and an avenue from which other studies may be referenced.

Keywords: Parenting leadership style, authoritarian parenting, academic performance, gross point aggregate, authoritative parenting

1. Introduction

Globally, governments invest heavily in education to eliminate poverty and facilitate educational development. Most governments hold that sustainable development is only attainable if the government provides basic education for all. To achieve this, the Kenyan government introduced FPE in 2003, which was followed by the introduction of FDSE in 2008 with the aim of retaining students in schools (MOEST, 2014). The main aim of the government was to address illiteracy, completion rates and low quality of education.

Parental involvement is undeniably a vital element in the educational learning process. Globally, strategies such as school-based management (SBM) have been introduced to induce a collaborative effort among teachers, parents, and other stakeholders to raise the quality of education (Ndiku, 2015). In the USA, parental involvement exists both in school and at home (Echuane et al., 2015). The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 acknowledges parent's involvement in improving the quality of education among children (Act, N. C. L. B. 2002). Another study conducted in Norway revealed that parents who were involved in students' homework significantly scored higher than those who were not involved in students' homework (Huang & Liang, 2016). These studies conclude that parental involvement can affect academic performance.

In Africa, policies that support parents' involvement have been rolled out in countries such as South Africa, Burundi, and Uganda. In South Africa, for instance, the School Act of 1996 required all public schools to elect a school governing body consisting of parents, head teachers, non-teaching staff, teachers and students (Act, S. A. S. (1996). In Uganda, on the other hand, a Universal Primary Education Policy 1997 outlines parents' role at home and school for children's learning. A study carried out in Namibia indicated that parent mentoring, emotional support and parent-child

communication improve the academic performance of children in school (Amponsah et al., 2018). The study was conducted on mathematics and English subjects; hence, it may not be used to represent all subjects in the curriculum. This necessitates a study covering all the subjects in the curriculum.

In Kenya, different governments have acknowledged the need to improve the quality of learning through engaging parents. In 2013, the government enacted the Basic Education Act, proposing compulsory free basic education to all children. Parents have a determinant role in children's development, determining the final output of who the child actually becomes. This is depicted through the parenting leadership style used by the parent. The parenting leadership style adopted has a relationship to the child's academic performance. Authoritative parents try to understand their children and teach- them- how to understand -their feelings.

Available literature suggests that parent engagement leads to higher academic performance, positive social outputs and higher completion rates (Jensen &Minke, 2017). Despite the positive results gained from parental involvement, there have been rising concerns regarding the extent to which parents can get involved. Some of the parents may exert too much control over the parents, thereby hampering the child's ability to tackle challenges and address problems. A study among college students revealed that students with overly engaged parents failed to develop appropriate peer connections and lacked autonomy (Van Ingen et al., 2015).

Another study conducted in Ethiopia found a statistically significant relationship between authoritative parenting leadership style and academic performance (Mihret et al., 2019). The findings are consistent with those of a study conducted in Rachuonyo North Sub County, which found that parenting leadership styles – authoritarian, authoritative and permissive - statistically predicted the academic performance of students with $R^2 = 0.63$ (Odongo et al., 2016). This implies that the parenting leadership styles manipulated academic performance to an extent of 63%. 37% manipulation, on the other hand, could be a result of other variables not accounted for in the study.

Another study conducted in Makandara Sub County revealed that all parenting leadership styles had a positive effect on the girls' academic performance. The study found that students from authoritative parents may not acquire intellectual abilities but may excellently perform in other areas that interest them, which was attributed to the warmth and social support from their parents (Kiama, 2019). The study noted that children from authoritarian and permissive parents may not be positively placed for academic performance, but their outlook and life objectives may lead them to success. Additionally, it is not only their parents who act as role models; other members of society can also be role models (Kiama, 2019). Their excellence, as a result, can influence better academic performance among the students.

The majority of the studies conducted in Mandera North have focused on student-related causes such as indiscipline, teenage pregnancies and external factors such as community conflicts with regard to the academic performance of high school students. Less has been done to assess the role parents play in determining the academic performance of their children (Echaune et al., 2015). Mandera County is mainly inhabited by the Somali community. Different studies postulate that Somali families, in most cases, use an authoritarian parenting leadership style where the parents make decisions for the children, who are expected to comply and obey (Osman et al., 2020). Such parents raise concerns about discipline methods whereby they seek effective strategies in managing their children's behaviour. This resonates with the fact that the adopted interventions ought to be congruent with the community's culture and the family-held background. This type of parenting leadership style adopts a dictatorial nature in that it incorporates the highest degree of regulation of children with low degrees of warmth.

Caregivers and parents who take this type of style always require strong compliance from their children and prefer the use of punitive discipline as a response to any form of rebellion. Additionally, they also set strict rules meant to monitor their children's time both during the day and night. With such expectations set in place, authoritative leadership puts more pressure on children than any other parenting leadership style because it prevents parents and children from having any kind of productive conversation. Additionally, if the parents and the school authority are involved in the learner's academic activities, children are filled with anxiety and stress. As a result, the intense level of parental pressure often lowers learners' intrinsic motivation, leaving them to rely on extrinsic sources, which undermines the learning process (Khan & Mehmood, 2018). Previous studies have concluded that this type of behaviour results in poor communication between the children and the school management, which is an essential ingredient predictor of future success and effective school management (Leithwood et al., 2020).

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Globally governments invest heavily on education to eliminate poverty and facilitate educational development. Despite this huge investment in education, performance in secondary schools in Mandera County and Mandera North, to be precise, is very poor. Mandera County continues to record low KCSE performance with a Mean score of 3.21, 3.31 and 2.78 in 2019, 2018 and 2017, respectively, which is an average of D (MOEST, 2020). The KCSE average chronological mean scores for the last three years rank the sub-counties as follows: Banisa (3.8), Mandera West (3.6), Lafey (3.2), Mandera Central (3.2), Mandera North (2.8), and Mandera East (2.5). This implies that performance in Mandera North is dismal in comparison to the other sub-counties in the County. Some of the factors contributing to low academic achievement are insecurity, poverty, poor institutional leadership and parenting leadership styles, which are entwined with the cultural beliefs of the Somali community.

Despite the low academic performance, parents cling to their cultural beliefs when raising their children. Therefore, the parenting leadership style adopted may result from culturally deemed acceptable beliefs in a society where the elders are perceived to be superior. In this case, at all times, the parents act in the best interests of the child in that they raise concerns on discipline methods whereby they seek effective strategies in managing their children's behaviour. This

resonates with the fact that the adopted interventions ought to be congruent with the community's culture and the family-held background, thereby affecting the academic performance in their actions. As a result, students end up doing what is deemed right by their parents; they do it for their parents (Makendano & Mahlangu, 2021). This study thus sought to assess the effect of authoritarian parenting leadership style on the academic performance of students in selected secondary schools in Mandera North Sub County in Mandera County.

1.2. Research Objective

The main objective of the study was to assess the effect of authoritarian parenting leadership style on the academic performance of students in selected secondary schools in Mandera North Sub County in Mandera County.

2. Research Methodology

2.1. Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive research design. Descriptive research design was used in this study because it is a method of research which concerns itself with the present phenomena in terms of conditions, practices beliefs, processes, relationships or trends.

2.2. Target Population

The study population was 9 schools in Mandera North Sub County, with a population of 2239 students who were considered for the study.

2.3. Sample Size Determination

Sampling is choosing units from a group of interests where results can be generalized back to the group they were selected from (Kalton, 2020). The researcher used purposive sampling to select two students due to the distinguished characteristics of the group (Etikan et al., 2016). Purposive sampling was also used to select principals from the best 2 performing schools in the sub-county. From the two best-performing schools, the researcher selected two from two classes, and then from each, the researcher selected the top five students and the bottom five students from the end-of-term examinations class list. To eliminate bias, the researcher employed simple random sampling while obtaining the sample of the students. Due to the population size of the students, Krejcie & Morgan (1970) Formula was employed to determine the sample size:

$$S = X^2 N p (1 - p) \div d^2 (N - 1) + X^2 p (1 - p)$$

Where:

S = sample size needed,

X² = I degree of freedom at desired confidence interval (0.05 = 1.96 x 1.96 = 3.841),

N = population size,

P = Proportion of the population (assumed to be 0.5),

d = Accuracy degree expressed as a proportion

$$S = \frac{1.96^2 \times 2239 \times 0.5 (1 - 0.5)}{0.05^2 (2239 - 1) + 1.96^2 \times 0.5 (1 - 0.5)}$$

$$S = \frac{2150}{6.5554} = 327.97$$

$$S \approx 328 \text{ respondents}$$

The sample size of the students was 328 respondents.

2.4. Data Collection Instruments

Structured questionnaires were used to collect primary data.

2.5. Data Analysis Procedures

Data collected from the questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS version 26 through descriptive statistics comprising frequencies and percentages. Independent sample tests were also conducted to find the association between the variables.

3. Results

3.1. Response Rate

A total of 328 questionnaires were administered to the respondents, and a total of 217 questionnaires were duly filled out and met the intended criteria of the study participants, which translates to a response rate of 66%. Fincham (2008) considers a response rate exceeding 60.0% as appropriate for questionnaires, while Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) a 50.0% response rate is adequate, a 60-69.9% response rate is good, while a response rate of 70.0% and above is very good.

3.2. Demographic Profile

3.2.1. Gender of the Respondents

Category		Frequency	Percent
Students	Male	117	53.90%
	Female	100	46.10%
	Total	217	100.00%

Table 1: Gender of the Respondents

Source: Research Data (2024)

The majority of the students interviewed were males (n=217, 53.9%), with female students accounting for 46.10%.

3.3. Parenting Leadership Style

Parenting Style	Students	
	Frequency	%
Authoritarian Style	79	36.40%
Authoritative Style	72	33.20%
Permissive Style	66	30.40%
Total	217	100.00%

Table 2: The Type of Adopted Parenting Leadership Style

Source: Research Data (2024)

The study sought to assess the type of parenting leadership style adopted by the parents. The study found that the majority of the students indicated that their parents adopted an authoritarian parenting style (n=217, 36.40%). This parenting style was closely followed by the authoritative parenting style (33.20%), with the least permissive parenting style (30.40%).

3.4. GPA Aggregate

Mean Grade	Students		
	F	%	\bar{X}
E	59	27.20%	
D-	72	33.20%	
D	25	11.50%	
D+	20	9.20%	
C-	11	5.10%	2.82
C	17	7.80%	
C+	9	4.10%	
B-	2	.90%	
B	2	.90%	
Total	217	100.00%	

Table 3: GPA Aggregate

Source: Research Data (2024)

The study sought to assess the Grade Point Aggregate for the students where majority of the students scored a mean grade of D- (33.20%), this was followed by a mean of E (27.20%) with 11.50% attaining a mean of D plain, while 9.20% attained a mean grade of D+, 5.10% attained C-, 7.80% attained C plain with 4.10% attaining C+ mean grade while 0.90% B- and B grades respectively. This translates to an average mean grade of 2.82, which is an average of D.

3.5. Effect of Authoritarian Parenting Leadership Style

3.5.1. Setting Rules and Standards in Classroom/Home

Set Rules and Standards in the Classroom/Home					
		Frequency	Percent	\bar{X}	Std. Deviation
Students	Yes	138	63.6	1.36	0.48
	No	79	36.4		
	Total	217	100.0		

Table 4: Setting Rules and Standards in Classroom/Home

Source: Research Data (2024)

When asked if the parents set rules and standards at home, most of the students consented that their parents and teachers set rules and standards while in the classroom and at home, with a mean of 1.36 and a standard deviation of 0.48. The low standard deviation (0.48) suggests a relatively consistent performance among students who attend classes.

3.5.2. Align Rules to Cultural Beliefs

Align Rules to the Learner’s Cultural Beliefs					
		Frequency	Percent	\bar{X}	Std. Deviation
Students	Yes	103	47.5	1.53	0.50
	No	114	52.5		
	Total	217	100.0		

Table 5: Align Rules to Cultural Beliefs

Source: Research Data (2024)

In reference to the strict cultural beliefs among the Somali community, the study sought to assess if the parents did align the rules with the cultural beliefs. The majority of the students indicated that the rules were aligned with their cultural beliefs, with a mean of 1.53 and a standard deviation of 0.5. The majority of the parents consented to align the rules to the cultural beliefs with a mean of 1.34 and a standard deviation of 0.5.

3.5.3. Likert Responses of the Effect of Authoritarian PLS

Using a table containing an array of statements, the researcher sought to find the effect of authoritarian PLS, as per students' perception, on students' academic performance.

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree	Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree		
	F	%		F	%	F	%	F	%	
Parents/guardians set high standards, rules and expectations that we are supposed to follow while at home	31	14.29%	57	26.27%	52	23.96%	46	21.20%	31	14.29%
I must obey my parents/guardians since they give instructions on how I am supposed to behave	23	10.60%	39	17.97%	46	21.20%	61	28.11%	48	22.12%
My parents/guardians use force if I do not tackle the tasks given as instructed, where I end up being punished	43	19.82%	70	32.26%	42	19.35%	41	18.89%	21	9.68%
When my parents/guardians give a verdict on an issue, I am not supposed to question their decisions since I always land in trouble	40	18.43%	46	21.20%	59	27.19%	45	20.74%	27	12.44%

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree	Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree		
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
My parents/guardians check my class assignments on a daily basis	45	20.74%	72	33.18%	48	22.12%	26	11.98%	26	11.98%
I do my assignments with my parents/guardians, and I fear making errors a lot because of the implications	45	20.74%	52	23.96%	44	20.28%	35	16.13%	41	18.89%
My parents/guardians do not allow me to engage in the upcoming e-learning sessions since they believe I will engage in other activities	21	9.68%	46	21.20%	56	25.81%	62	28.57%	32	14.75%

Table 6: Likert Responses of the Effect of Authoritarian PLS
Source: Research Data (2024)

The study sought to assess the effect of the authoritarian Parenting Leadership style; the study found that the majority of the students disagreed that their parent/guardian set high standards, rules and expectations that they were supposed to follow while at home (40.56%). Results showed that students believed that they had to obey their parent/guardian since they gave instructions on how they were supposed to behave (50.23%). The students also indicated that their parents/guardians did not use force if the students did not tackle given tasks as instructed and were not punished in the end (51.08%). Most of the students disagreed that when their parent/guardian gave them a verdict on an issue, they were not supposed to question their decisions since they always landed in trouble (39.63%) with regard to checking the class assignments. Most of the students disagreed that their parents checked the assignments on a daily basis (53.92%). In addition, most of the students indicated that they did not do their assignments with their parents/guardians and feared making errors due to the fear of implications arising from the errors (44.70%). When asked whether their parents/guardians allowed them to engage in upcoming e-learning sessions, the majority of the respondents agreed that their parents did not allow them to engage in e-learning sessions since they believed that the students would engage in other activities (43.32%).

3.6. Overall Adoption of Authoritarian Parenting Leadership Style

Through the transformation of the Likert scale responses to the authoritarian style, the overall adoption of authoritarian PLS was determined. The responses were aggregated using the mean and then recoded into whether the parents adopted authoritarian PLS or not.

Adoption of parenting style	Frequency		Percent	
	Does Not Adopt Authoritarian	186	85.70%	
Adopt Authoritarian	31	14.30%		
Total	217	100.00%		

Table 7: Overall Adoption of Authoritarian Parenting Leadership Style
Source: Research Data (2024)

From the results, 14.3% (31) of the students opined that their parents adopted authoritarian PLS. The effect of authoritarian PLS on performance was determined using an independent sample t-test. This helped examine whether there were differences in exam performance between students whose parents adopted authoritarian PLS and those who did not. The descriptive statistics for the t-test are as shown below.

3.7. Mean Exam Score for Authoritarian and Non-Authoritarian Parenting Leadership Style

Group Statistics					
	Authoritarian Style	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
mean grade for the previous one year	Authoritarian	31	2.9587	1.82751	.32823
	No Authoritarian	186	2.8172	1.92253	.14097

Table 8: Mean Exam Score for Authoritarian and Non-Authoritarian Parenting Leadership Style

Source: Research Data (2024)

The results showed that students who indicated that their parents adopted an authoritarian parenting style had a mean GPA of 2.9587 (std dev = 1.82751), while the students whose parents did not adopt an authoritarian parenting leadership style had a mean score of 2.8172 (Std. dev = 1.92253); the students whose parents adopted authoritarian PLS had a higher score than those whose parents did not adopt authoritarian PLS.

3.8. Independent Sample Test for Authoritarian and Non-Authoritarian PLS

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
mean grade for the previous one year	Equal variances assumed	.335	.563	1.988	215	.048	.02151	.37045	-.70867	.75168
	Equal variances not assumed			1.993	41.857	.043	.02151	.35722	-.69947	.74248

Table 9: Independent Sample Test for Authoritarian and Non-Authoritarian PLS

Source: Research Data (2024)

The results of independent sample t-test analyses, the results show that there is a statistically significant difference in the mean GPA score for the students whose parents adopted an authoritarian parenting leadership style (p -value=0.048<0.05). In reference to the mean scores, students under the authoritarian parenting leadership style had a significantly higher GPA score than those who did not adopt the authoritarian parenting leadership style.

During the interview, the principals noted that students from authoritarian parents did perform better than parents from other parenting styles; authoritarian parenting was associated with the strictness of the parents. For instance, one of the principals mentioned that they regularly summoned certain parents to school to address their children's academic performance. However, upon their arrival, they do not listen to me, neither the teachers nor the children. Instead, they impose their own conditions. Consequently, their children persist in displaying inadequate academic results (Principal 4).

A similar opinion was expressed by Principal 4:

Some parents disregard the opinions of both teachers and their own children, insisting that only their perspectives are correct. They justify this behavior by citing their age and experience, believing they have the authority to dictate instructions. This attitude has a detrimental impact on their children's academic achievements (Principal 4).

Another principal also said:

In school, I have persistently summoned some parents to deliberate on learners' issues with their academic performance. As soon as they report, they fail to listen in, and we fail to agree since they always emphasize their terms. The outcome of such sessions is the poor performance of their children (Principal 2).

From the interview with the principals, it was established that the authoritarian parent style was associated with extreme cruelty. The principals indicated that this characteristic was not helpful to the academic development of the students. One of the principals mentioned:

Harsh parents discourage their children from discussing their social and academic concerns with them. Consequently, these students are unable to compete effectively with peers whose parents promote openness, emotional expression, and understanding. For instance, a child might face a problem that, if not resolved promptly, could disrupt their focus. However, due to the unapproachable demeanor of their parents, the child refrains from discussing the issue, ultimately leading to academic failure (Principal 6).

A report from Principal 4 postulates that parents displaying traits of an authoritarian parenting style have a negative impact on a child's social and academic achievements. The above findings are consistent with those of Obiunu (2018), who concluded that a high level of parental control within the authoritarian parenting style reduces the learner's

intrinsic motivation, making them reliant on extrinsic sources which interfere with the learning process. In a similar view, Sarwar (2016) corroborates that authoritarian parenting style triggers poor communication, which is a crucial predictor of academic success.

4. Discussion

The results indicated that a significant portion of students perceived their parents to adopt authoritarian parenting styles, with a considerable number of parents confirming this approach. The study found that students with parents displaying authoritarian traits had a higher GPA, suggesting a positive correlation between authoritarian parenting and academic achievement. The above findings are consistent with those of Yang and Zhao, who concluded that authoritarian parenting Leadership style and training help learners attain filial piety as a form of socialization by laying an emphasis on parental authority and obedience from the child. They asserted that this control forces the child to work hard in school, leading to an improvement in academic self-achievement. The above findings also agree with those of Kulmala et al. (2020), who postulated that empathy and attitudes play a determinant role in helping the child to emerge as an adult, thus developing academically better in institutions of higher learning. They described the relationship between parents and emerging adults as a shared agency since the goals are supported by their parents. Similarly, Watabe et al. (2014) concluded that the authoritarian parenting style is suitable for helping students fulfil their academic satisfaction.

In the qualitative analysis, principals expressed concerns about authoritarian parents' involvement in their children's education. These parents often impose their conditions, disregarding teachers' advice and hindering effective communication with their children. The principals noted that such behavior negatively impacted the students' academic performance. The findings align with existing research, indicating that high parental control characteristics of authoritarian parenting hampers students' intrinsic motivation and communication skills, affecting their learning process. The above findings are consistent with those of Obiunu (2018), who concluded that a high level of parental control within the authoritarian parenting style reduces the learner's intrinsic motivation, making them reliant on extrinsic sources which interfere with the learning process. In a similar view, Sarwar (2016) corroborates that authoritarian parenting style triggers poor communication, which is a crucial predictor of academic success.

5. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that students with authoritarian parents exhibit higher GPAs, suggesting a positive correlation between this parenting style and academic achievement. Although this may be productive, high parental control associated with authoritarian parenting could hinder students' intrinsic motivation and communication skills, ultimately impacting their academic performance negatively.

6. Recommendations

The study recommends that authoritarian parents need to be educated on the significance of actively participating in school-related activities. Educational initiatives should be developed for both parents and teachers to emphasize the importance of positive parental involvement.

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