



## A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF PARENTAL NURTURANCE ON BEHAVIOR ACQUISITION AMONG PUPILS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KENYA

Lucy Njuguna<sup>1i</sup>, Ruth W. Thingiri<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Mount Kenya University, School of Education,  
P.O Box 342-00100, Thika, Kenya

<sup>2</sup>Dr., Mount Kenya University, School of Education,  
P.O Box 342-00100, Thika, Kenya

### Abstract:

The purpose of the study was to explore the impact of parental nurturance on behavior acquisition among primary school pupils in Kenya. The government invests heavily in education sector each year yet problem behaviors among pupils affects effective learning in primary schools a state that is likely to lead to wastage of resources. The problem behaviors studied included fighting, bullying, stealing and truancy among others. The objectives of the study were to critically analyze the impact of parental availability, parental provision, and parental dialogue with the pupil, parent's marital status and parental role modeling on behavior acquisition among primary school pupils in Kenya. Qualitative research design method was employed since it was effective in critically analyzing the findings. The study recommended that schools should organize seminars with parents to enlighten them on the significance of their availability on the pupils' behavior and academic performance, the government and school administrators should sensitize parents on the importance of parental provision on positive behavior acquisition among pupils and the parents should be educated on the importance of embracing dialogue with their children as it reduces conflicts hence enhancing moral development of pupils. The study also recommended that parents should be sensitized on the significant role they play in role modeling pupil's behavior.

---

<sup>i</sup> Correspondence: email [kibelucyg@gmail.com](mailto:kibelucyg@gmail.com)

**Keywords:** parental availability, parental provision, parental dialogue, parent's marital status, parental role modeling, behavior acquisition, problem behaviors, marital status, pupil

## 1. Introduction

Pupils grow up in a variety of diverse settings. How much do the content in which pupils live in affect what they learn especially behavior and personality? Do pupils behave differently in certain settings, time or do their individual predispositions and personality cause them to behave similarly across a broad range of situations? Some of the behaviors exhibited in school originate from home.

The causes of problem behaviors include; parent been uncooperative and constantly agree with their children regardless of mistake done, truant parent who surrender their parental duties to housemaids and poor role models by parents among others. . Parent-child involvement has been an interest to many scholars in the field of psychology today. Most scholars argue that, child skills in learning activities, socialization and behaviors are influenced by the parent's way of upbringing. Couples today are confused whether to meet economic need at the expense of child care development.

## 2. Statement of the Problem

Today there are many diverse problem behaviors among school going children in Kenya (Nyawira & Kamau, 2015). In the year 2016, many cases involving problem behaviors among learners were witnessed. Over 100 schools were reported to have closed down due to burning of school property by students (Daily Nation July, 27<sup>th</sup> 2016). Other problem behaviors among school going children include fighting, bullying, stealing and truancy. Problem behaviors among learners impacts negatively on academic achievement and socio-economic development a concern that necessitated this study to find out their root the causes and suggest the way forward to avert the situation. This study investigated some of these problem behaviors that may have originated from the parental nurturance. The findings of this study may benefit school teachers and administrators by highlighting the relationship between parental nurturance and problem behaviors among learners. As opposed to conducting interventions solely with pupils who have problem behaviors, educational practitioners may find the study findings useful in designing intervention strategies that are more holistic and inclusive of family members, especially parents.

### **3. Purpose of the Study**

This study aimed at bringing to the attention of the parents how their nurturance influences the behavior of their children. This research also aimed at critically analyzing how pupils do behave in school set up in relation to their upbringing.

### **4. Objectives of the Study**

1. To critically analyze the impact of parental availability on behavior acquisition among primary school pupils in Kenya.
2. To critically analyze the impact of parental provision on behavior acquisition among primary school pupils in Kenya.
3. To critically analyze the impact of parental dialogue on behavior acquisition among primary school pupils in Kenya.
4. To critically analyze the impact of parent's marital status on behavior acquisition among primary school pupils in Kenya.
5. To critically analyze the impact of parental role modeling on behavior acquisition among primary school pupils in Kenya.

### **5. Research Questions**

1. To what extent does parental availability impact on behavior acquisition among primary school pupils in Kenya?
2. How does parental provision impact on behavior acquisition among primary school pupils in Kenya?
3. What is the impact of parental and pupil dialogue on behavior acquisition among primary school pupils in Kenya?
4. To what extent does marital status impact on behavior acquisition among primary school pupils in Kenya?
5. What is the impact of role modeling on behavior acquisition among primary school pupils in Kenya?

### **6. Research Methodology**

The study employed qualitative research method to generate reliable and valid factual data as per the topic. The method was used to gather all the findings required in the study. The method ensured creativity and gave all-inclusive and real findings. The criteria used in conduction of research have an impact on future qualitative research through academic journals reviewed and publication (Kothari, 2008).

## **7. Significance of the Study**

The research findings may be of use to the parents by providing information to help them understand their role in child upbringing. It may also be useful to the pupils by making them understand better on how the home environment influences their behavior. The teacher also may benefit from this research in that she/he will understand the pupil's behavior well and hence give the necessary advice. Policy makers may also benefit from this research in that they can modify some of the policies like leave policy in order to give mothers time to be with their children especially the first six months after delivery. The research findings may benefit school executives and teachers by providing information on the impact of perceived parental nurturance on problem behaviors. Other educational stakeholders may also benefit as the findings may be used to designing new strategies that are used in development of pupils in primary schools. The information may be useful to parents on the significant of nurturance in children's psychological development.

## **8. Literature Review**

### **8.1 Impact of Parental Availability on Behavior Acquisition among Pupils**

The availability of parent is strongly correlated with problem behaviors among pupils. It also influences the psychological growth of a child. A study done by Schwartz et al. (2012) showed that parental nurturance combined with at least parental availability was related to high scores on individual adjustment measures. There is a positive relationship between parental availability and several dimensions of self-perception such as social acceptance, morality, intellectual ability among others. Kagendo (2009) notes that adolescent's character is determined by parent's affection in upbringing.

Alarmed by the occurrence of problem behaviors among learners in Kenya, Ndeti (2007) conducted a study in Nairobi to examine the prevalence and frequency of bullying in relation to parental nurturance among learners. The findings showed that between 63.3% and 81.8% of the learners reported various types of bullying. The perpetrators of bullying were reported to be mostly from families where parents had busy work schedules and hence had little time for their children.

Muchiri (2012) did a study to investigate the relationship between perceived parental nurturance and problem behaviors among learners in selected counties. The study established that there was a significant negatively correlated relationship between perceived parental nurturance and problem behaviors among learners. The study findings were contradictory, a concert that prompted the current study.

## **8.2 Impact of parental provision on behavior acquisition among pupils**

Children are entitled to rights such as right to association with parents, human identity as well as provision of basic needs which include protection, food, universal education, healthcare among others. According to Sir William Blackstone (1765-1769), parental duty to the child is maintenance, provision, protection and education. When parents provide basic needs to their children, they develop trust, feel loved and warmth of their parents. This makes them portray preferred behavior outcomes in school, children whom their parents do not provide basic needs due to negligence portray problem behavior in school such as stealing, aggression, fighting, withdrawals or low self-esteem.

A study by Kaur & Sandhu (2012) revealed that children's problem behavior and psychological change is correlated with parental provision. According to Lee and Larson (2000) 2381 children were reported to have committed suicide in the year 2011 in Korea because of poor academic outcomes that were linked to parental provision. Haigen, Shun-Ling and Renmin (2011) explored a cross-cultural study of school going children problem behaviors in middle schools. The findings revealed that there were problem behaviors among learners which were found to be related to conflicts with others. The results also showed that in each of the countries sampled, problem behaviors among learners was related to parental provision. However, the studies did not report on the extent to which parental provision impacted on behavior acquisition among pupils as the current study did.

Mother and father should support their children consistently, looking after them hence children enjoying the warmth of parent throughout their life. This would higher nurturance scale of parent. According to Becker (1964) and Baumrind (1969), parents' capacity to provide for their children is seen to be an important variable in predicting positive behavior outcome for their children. According to Eisenberg (1992), there is a strong correlation between parental provision and positive social behavior of children.

How parents respond to the needs of their children, being there for their children to respond to their questions or even play with them, behavior exhibited by parents in presence of their children, how often parents get involved in one-on-one dialogue with their children and their marital status directly correlate to their children's behavior acquisition. From the literature reviewed majority of the study results showed that parental provision had an impact on behavior acquisition among learners. However, the findings were inconclusive

## **8.3 Impact of parental dialogue with child on behavior acquisition among pupils**

Dialogue refers to exchange of information among people with intention of solving or agreeing on an issue. Dialogue is the key to harmony and problem solving among the pupils in schools. Dialogue enhances critical and creative thinking which portrayed

competence in learning institutions. With regard to the parental nurturance, dialogue contributes to moral values and peace through social skills. One approach to give pupils successful framework is through one-on-one dialogue. With regards to one-on-one dialogue, intelligent exchanges help pupils advance their learning and enhance their critical thinking capacity in problem solving. The pupils involved in reflective dialogue are significant as it maintain classroom and school order.

Dmitrieva (2004) carried out a study to examine the impact of parental relationship on problem behaviors among children. The study revealed that the parent child relations had an impact on children's problem behaviors. In another study, Day and Padilla-Walker (2009) examined parental-child approach in problem solving and how it impacted on child development. According to the findings, parental-child approach based on dialogue impacted positively on child's pro-social behavior.

Parent's physical availability, quality of relationship and involvement in the upbringing of children impacts positively on behavior acquisition among children which leads to high self-esteem (Bulanda and Majumdar, 2009). Although the findings showed a significant positive relationship between parent-child relationship and children problem behaviors, it used samples drawn from developed countries with different cultures which limit generalization of the findings.

#### **8.4 Impact of parent's marital status on behavior acquisition among pupils**

Child growth up in a household with two parents is advantageous and persists on to be more important during adolescence in terms of self-esteem development, interpersonal relationships and avoidance of problem behaviors. The family types either single or married as well as parental behaviors are crucial in child development and as far as discipline is concerned. Children with high self-esteem level come from families whose parents are highly accepting, warm and provide a conducive environment that understands and is tolerant (Reid & Finley, (2010).

Rutter (1981) asserts that the absence of parents especially the mother has adverse effects on child development leading to among others; dependent behavior is, attention seeking, indiscriminate friendliness and clinging behaviors.

Goldfarb (1943) did a study among children to investigate the impact of type of parenting on child development. He established that those children who were brought up by both parents scored highly in most behavioral aspects. The current study focused on children in the African context.

Mother and father contribute in different ways to the social competencies of development during childhood and adolescence. Each of them plays a significant role of maturational changes associated with transition from childhood to adolescence age. Divorce or separation of parent influence the growth and development of children hence attribute to problem behaviors associated by pupils in schools.

### **8.5 Impact of parental role modeling on behavior acquisition among pupils**

Social cognitive theory holds that knowledge can be acquired by observing others within the context of social interactions, experiences and influences whose outcomes depends on factors like environment, people and their behaviors (Edwin & Harold, 1931). Family values especially those established by parents form the basis of behavior acquisition among children as they communicate expectations and attitudes as agents of control of family norms (Perkins, 2002). McIlwaine & Moser (2004) carried out a study to examine the impact of community attitudes towards problem behaviors among children in Colombia and Guatemala. According to the findings, children acquired problem behaviors from society for example alcohol consumption which had been accepted as way of life.

The family is the basic social unit of every culture where behavior acquisition among children begins (Atingi, 2012). According to Atingi (2012), children are better socialized at the family level than in the peer group, but parental socialization and parental example outweighs them all. Positive social values are closely linked to family in relation to the child's behavior. Behavior acquisition among children largely depends on family experiences and values to the extent the child can reason consistently (Maliki & Opukiri, 2013). The family environment has been argued to contribute significantly to behavior acquisition among children (Midigo, 2002).

Even though these studies reported that family environment contributed significantly to behavior acquisition among children, they did not report how different levels of parental role modeling impacted on behavior acquisition among children as the current study did.

Home is an environment that can affect person's behavior. There are social and physical environment. Social environment include family, friends, and colleagues. Environment and people keep on influencing each other. Social environment has a role to play in behavior acquisition among primary school pupils. Learning by observation from the behavior of parents can directly correlate with behavior outcome among pupils. Children will do what their parents do rather than what they say.

### **8.6 Theoretical Framework**

The study employed Nurturant Parent theory which outlines the significance of parental nurturance on problem behaviors. The theory was developed as a framework to explain problem behaviors through social-psychological aspects. It consist of three major system used to curb problem behavior. These included behavior system, personality system and environment system perceived. The behavior system constitutes of problem behaviors and conventional behaviors. Problem behaviors embrace that participation in one type behavior raises the probability of involvement in other behaviors. The personality system concepts include socio-cognitive variables, attitudes

among others. The environment system perceived focused on model, support and morals.

Parental nurturance perception by students will have impact on or dispose on engaging in problem behaviors. Parents who have little or no care on pupils; their children have high likelihood of engaging in problem behaviors. Parental support and control is crucial in ensuring a child grows with good moral behaviors.

## 9. Recommendations

From the study findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. The school should organize seminars with parents to enlighten them on the significance of their availability on the pupils' behavior and academic performance.
2. The government and school administrators should sensitize parents on the importance of parental provision on positive behavior acquisition among pupils
3. The parents should be educated on the importance of spending time with their children as it enhances self-esteem as well as inculcates moral values. This help to raise discipline level and interpersonal relationships.
4. Parents should be sensitized on the significant role they play in role modeling pupil's behavior.

## 10. Conclusion

The study found that both mother and father play an equally significant role in behavior acquisition of a child. The difference in marital status between married and single parents is significant in respect to perceived parental nurturance. It was established that marital status must be considered when parental nurturance is analyzed as it influences problem behaviors among pupils. The study also found that dialogue is very significant in problem solving and should be embraced by parents and teachers in solving problem behaviors among pupils.

## References

1. Kagendo, D. A. (2009). Effectiveness of the strategies used in managing student indiscipline in secondary schools: a case of Maara District, Kenya. Unpublished master's thesis. Kenyatta University.

2. Kaur, D., & Sandhu, D. (2012). Adolescent problem behavior in relation to emotional autonomy and parent-child relationship. *Canadian Social Science*, 8(1), 29.
3. Kothari, C. R. (2008). *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques* (Vol. 2nd Revised Edition). New Delhi: New Age International.
4. Maliki, A. & Opukiri, A.(2013). Family Background Variables and Niger Delta University Undergraduates' Attitude towards Drug Abuse. *International Journal of Research in social science*, 1, 3
5. Midigo, A. (2002). Why Young people are hooked into drugs? Today in Africa
6. Ndetei, D.M., Khasakhala, L.I., Syanda, J. Mutiso, V. Otieno, C. J. Odhimbo G. & Kokonya D. A.(2007). Bullying in Public Secondary schools in Kenya. *Journal of Child Adolescent Mental Health*.19 (1), 45-55
7. Nyawira, L. & Kamau, M.(2015 August 7<sup>TH</sup> ).*Students Caught in a Bus taking Drugs*: Standard Newspaper
8. Reid, M.L. & Finley, G.E. (2010).Trends in African American and Caribbean fathers' nurturance and involvement. *Culture, Society and Masculinities*, 2 (2), 107-120
9. Schwartz, O., Dudgeon, P., Sheeber, L., Yap, M., Simmons, J., & Allen, N. (2012, Jan). Parental behaviors during family interactions predict changes in Depression and Anxiety Symptoms during adolescence. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 40(1), 59-71.

Lucy Njuguna, Ruth W. Thinguri  
A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF PARENTAL NURTURANCE ON BEHAVIOR ACQUISITION  
AMONG PUPILS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KENYA

---

Creative Commons licensing terms

Author(s) will retain the copyright of their published articles agreeing that a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0) terms will be applied to their work. Under the terms of this license, no permission is required from the author(s) or publisher for members of the community to copy, distribute, transmit or adapt the article content, providing a proper, prominent and unambiguous attribution to the authors in a manner that makes clear that the materials are being reused under permission of a Creative Commons License. Views, opinions and conclusions expressed in this research article are views, opinions and conclusions of the author(s). Open Access Publishing Group and European Journal of Education Studies shall not be responsible or answerable for any loss, damage or liability caused in relation to/arising out of conflicts of interest, copyright violations and inappropriate or inaccurate use of any kind content related or integrated into the research work. All the published works are meeting the Open Access Publishing requirements and can be freely accessed, shared, modified, distributed and used in educational, commercial and non-commercial purposes under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License \(CC BY 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).