

# The Role of Parents in Enhancing Discipline among Students in Public Day Secondary Schools in Ngong Divison, Kajiado North, Kenya

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**Abstract:-**This study investigated the role of parents in enhancing discipline among students in public day secondary schools. Stakeholders' must play their roles especially in day secondary school along with the teachers to enhance discipline among students. This paper guided by five research questions on the following issues; roles of parents in enhancing discipline among students in day secondary schools and parental factors that affect parents as they try to play their roles. The Balance theory of Litwak and Meyers (1974) was used as the theoretical framework to guide the study. According to the theory as applied in this study parents play a crucial role in the students discipline from home to school. Their collaborative efforts with the teachers would enhance discipline among students especially in day secondary schools. The researcher used descriptive survey and naturalistic designs. The study used a sample of 206 respondents who comprised of 5 head teachers, 10 class teachers, 20 parents and 171 students from five selected day secondary schools. The study used questionnaires and interview as instruments for data collection. The instruments for this study were validated through application of content validity determined by experts' judgement inclusive of scholars. On the other hand, reliability of the questionnaires was determined by split half co-efficient of internal consistency after pre-testing of the instruments in four purposively selected pilot schools. Results for the correlation co- efficient of the instruments were 0.68 for student's questionnaire, 0.70 for parent's questionnaire. The data collected was analyzed using both-quantitative and qualitative approaches. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze quantitative data to derive frequencies, percentages and graphs using the SPSS computer software version 11.5. Analysis of qualitative data was an on-going process whereby narratives and interpretive reports were written down to depict the situation as it was on the ground. The study found out that parents in the area of study played some few roles like guiding and counselling students and reporting cases of student misconduct while out of school. However other equally crucial roles were not adequately played like supervising remedial work at home, reprimanding students over discipline cases and monitoring their movements while out of school. This failure of parents to

play these roles contributed to the discipline problems experienced in the schools on the area of study. The study concluded that parents needed to play their roles actively in collaboration with the school administrators so as to enhance discipline among students. The study recommended that the Ministry of Education should legalize the PTAs so that parents can be sensitized and effectively play their roles. The parents also need to be sensitized through seminars, meetings and workshops on the roles. The school administrators too need to encourage the open perspective of the balance theory by actively involving parents in student discipline issues in schools.

## **Keywords:-**

**Discipline** - It deals with teaching the child what is right or wrong.

**Day school** – Refers to type of school where students go to in the morning and leaving by five in the evening.

**Student** – Refers to a person studying in a school especially secondary for this study.

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

According to Donnel (1994), parents are the primary educators of their children and therefore have an obligation to their children's education. She further says that every child's learning in school has its source in the everyday life of a child at home. This implies that when children perform exceedingly well in their academics, both teachers and parents are applauded and when a child is not disciplined, an accusing finger is pointed to the parents as well as the teachers.

In the modern education setting, parents have a legitimate role to play in spheres of their children's health, education and morality. The school comprises of the teacher, the parent and the student, each with a specific role to play. However Kithinji (2005) states that the home is the first socializing school for children where the parents' role of instilling values amid shaping their children into successful individuals overrides that of the teacher since the school only supports parents in the training.

In day schools, the student commutes from home to school every day. This means that families need to work together

with schools to support learning for the child to succeed not just in school but throughout in life. As explained by Henderson & Berla (1997), there should be mutual reinforcement of values between the school and the home at all times because family practices in the home that stimulate and support learning more significantly impact so much on student achievement. Otula (2007) states categorically that parents must work hand in hand with teachers to ensure discipline. Griffin (1996) further expounds that if the school is attempting to cure a boy from a bad habit or remedy a weak area, the parents must be informed so that they apply necessary continuity of supervision during the vacation. In agreement Barasa (2007) states that parents are therefore expected to furnish the teachers with relevant information an area that was found wanting and therefore need for this study

According to MOE (2008), the role of parents in the upbringing of children cannot be underrated. This is because the way parents handle their children in the formative year's impacts so much on the discipline of children in the later years. The personality of every student reflects the upbringing by the parent as children mimic parent's attitude and behavior despite whatever they learn in schools the teachers therefore complement parents in helping the adolescent student discover his /her potential through successful discipline. Parents therefore play a significant role in ensuring their children maintain discipline in schools. They should not relegate this responsibility wholly to teachers, neither should school administrators underrate parents role while enhancing discipline.

The role of parent's teachers association and Board of Management in the students discipline is derived from section 23 of the Children's Act of 2001. According to the Act, parental responsibility means, all the duties, rights, powers and authority which by law, a parent of a child has in relation to the child in a way that enhances his/her growth. The key responsibility here is for parents to provide a home for the child, discipline the child and choose to provide for the child's education (Mundia, 2009)

Parental involvement in Kenyan secondary schools since independence has been coordinated by PTA, which was empowered in 1979. Apart from mobilizing funds, their other functions include ensuring discipline in schools by providing guidance and counselling services and motivation of students and teachers. These roles have also been echoed in the MOE Master Plan of 1997-2010 (MOE 2008). The rise of discipline problems among secondary school students in Kenya has been a controversial issue. In public day secondary schools student discipline has become a challenge which has translated into poor academic performance. Records have shown that the KCSE Performance in public day secondary schools is relatively low compared to public boarding secondary schools (Kenya Education Directory, 2009). This is a clear indication that for the day public secondary schools to improve in

academic performance, high discipline must be maintained both at home and in schools.

In the year 2008, statistics held in the provincial Education Office recorded a total of 59 schools who went on strike (MOE 2008). Since the ban on corporal punishment (MOE 2001), a number of strategies which require collaboration efforts of teachers and parents have been suggested. Some of them being: clearly stated rules, guidance and counselling and, parent and community involvement. All these measures recognize the indispensable role of parents in enhancing student discipline. This study was guided by the premises that since schools in the area were still experiencing students discipline problems despite the recommended methods; it implied that all education stakeholders were not actively playing their roles to enhance discipline. It was against this background that this study sought to find out the role of parents in enhancing discipline among students in public day secondary schools in Ngong Division, Kajiado North.

## II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Student's unrest in secondary schools has been a major problem affecting the society. The public has observed with awe and amazement at the effects of acts of indiscipline problems. The main reason of concern is the realization that deterioration of student behaviour has far reaching educational, political and social implications. According to the District Education Office (DEO, 2009), Kajiado North, out of 11 public day secondary schools in Ngong division, (9) had students discipline problems which seemed to affect KCSE performance. Parents have a role to play in their children's education. However nobody seems to shoulder fully the responsibility of student's discipline which is an issue of major concern in our society today. Studies have been carried out but so far Ngong Division still remains to be investigated and documented for further action. It is in the light of this that the researcher sought to establish the roles parents play and factors affecting their involvement in enhancing discipline in public day secondary schools

## III. THE PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study set out to establish the roles parents play and factors affecting their involvement in enhancing discipline in public day secondary schools. The study also aimed at informing on parental role, on discipline issues in Kenyan context given past efforts. Specific research question that guided this paper were to; what roles do parents play in enhancing student discipline in day secondary schools? And, what parental factors affect parent's involvement in enhancing student discipline in public day secondary schools?

#### IV. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Findings from the study may assist the policy makers, especially at the centre in redefining clearly the relationship between the centre and the periphery. The study findings will offer an opportunity to parents to re-evaluate themselves on their roles in restoring and maintaining high discipline standards in schools. The task force of 1991, 2001 and 2008, on student discipline have given commendable reports. However, in response to them, there has been little focus on parent's roles. It is therefore hoped that this findings would draw attention of policy makers into revising education policies to effectively involve parents in student discipline and ensure higher disciplines that will reflect in better academic performance

#### V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey design and naturalistic design. The study was Ngong Division Kajiado North, Kenya. The study targeted 11 day mixed secondary schools in Ngong Division. The target population comprised of 854 forms two and form three students, 96 teachers, and 854 form two and three parents and 11 head teachers. Sample size was determined at 20% as proposed by Babbie (2005) in Kamindo 2008. The sample included 171 students, 20 parents, 10 teachers and 5 head teachers giving a total of 206 respondents.

Questionnaires were developed and administered to each of the following; students and parents. Separately, the teachers and head teachers were interviewed using tailor made interview schedule by the researcher. The instruments for this study were validated through application of content validity determined by experts' judgement inclusive of scholars. On the other hand, reliability of the questionnaires was determined by split half co-efficient of internal consistency after pre-testing of the instruments in four purposively selected pilot schools. Results for the correlation co-efficient of the instruments were 0.68 for student's questionnaire, 0.70 for

parent's questionnaire. This was slightly above the alpha index of 0.6 as recommended by Berthoud (2000).

Descriptive statistics was applied when analyzing the qualitative data obtained. Data was analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. Field notes from interview schedules were analysed qualitatively. On the other, data derived from the questionnaires was subjected to both qualitative and quantitative analysis. Orodho (2005) observes that although textual data are gathered by non statistical based methods, the analysis of qualitative data can be vigorous as that generated by quantitative research methodologies and can be quantified and subjected to statistical tests. In this study therefore, the frequencies of the data obtained by questionnaires in relation to each objective of the study were recorded and percentages worked out. When using descriptive statistics to analyze such data, frequencies, were calculated and presented in the form of tables for interpretation.

#### VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

##### A. Roles of Parents In Enhancing Students Discipline

The researcher in this research question was interested in knowing if parents in the area of study were aware that they were expected to play some roles in enhancing student discipline in public day secondary schools.

The findings revealed that majority (14) said "yes" and a sizeable number of (6) parent respondents said "no". This was taken to imply that the parents were aware that they had roles to play in school in order to enhance student discipline. To gain further insight to the research question the researcher presented to the parent respondents a question with outlined roles of parents. Using a five point likert scale of strongly agree(SA), Agree(A), Undecided (UD), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree(SD) the parent respondents were to give their opinions on how they played these roles in their respective schools. Data on the same were collected and analyzed and the results are as displayed in Table 1.

| No    | Role of parent                                       | SA(5)<br>F | A(4)<br>F | UD(3)<br>F | D(2)<br>F | SD(1)<br>F |
|-------|--|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|
| i.    | Urge compliance to school rules                      | 11         | 4         | -          | 4         | -          |
| ii.   | Report misconduct when out of school                 | -          | 14        | 2          | 3         | -          |
| iii.  | Guide and counsel                                    | -          | 11        | 5          | 3         | -          |
| iv.   | Supervise remedial work                              | -          | 8         | 1          | 10        | -          |
| v.    | Reward those who behave well during meetings         | -          | 5         | 10         | 4         | -          |
| vi.   | Reprimand on discipline cases                        | 1          | 1         |            | 15        | 2          |
| vii.  | Monitor students movement/friends when out of school | 2          | -         | 7          | 10        | -          |
| viii. | Ensure regular attendance and punctuality            | 1          |           | 9          | 7         | 2          |

Table 1: Parents Responses on Roles Played by Parents to enhance Student Discipline (N=19)

The findings as summarized in Table 1 show that majority (15) of the parent respondents were in agreement that they urge students to comply to school rules with only a few (4) disagreeing with this view. Asked how this was done one of the head teachers said;

"...when our students report in form one, the parents are invited and we discuss with them our school rules so that those who are comfortable with them bring their children. They then sign on the student admission form too. Their compliance is seen when they buy the right uniforms ....and in fact form ones start of very well. However mwalimu, when these students enter form two that is when they start breaking school rules and this could likely be because of other factors like peer influence which affect them strongly as adolescents, but I tend to support my parents here ,they try their best..."

Majority of the parent respondents (14) agreed that parents reported students 'misconduct to the school administrators when the students were out of school. One parent who was a PTA representative noted that they communicated with the school administration about this and the communication was not necessarily about one's own child. The study established through these responses that the parents acted as watch dogs. One head teacher on the same said the parent representatives were very active and they constantly communicated though when it came to individual parents and their children at home then some did not play this role.

In relation to guidance and counselling, most of the parent respondents (11) were of the opinion that they played this role both at home and during various meetings with their children at school. Most of the parents who were interrogated said that they guided their children on choice of subjects and even friends. A sizeable number of parents (8) who disagreed reported that they did not play this role were taken as an eye opener for the school administration to sensitize the parents on their role in as far as student discipline was concerned.

Other Statistics collected from the parent respondents clearly showed that parents do not play quite a number of roles. A good number of parents, (10) disagreed that they did not supervise remedial work at home, while (8) of the parents agreed that they did supervise completion of home work. Lack of supervision was seen by the study as the beginning of the discipline problem. During the interviews on the same, several teachers reported that they had a big problem with student completion of homework. One teacher gave the following explanation,

"... the assignments are to be done after classes and madam since this is not a boarding school, we do not have extended evening preps. We expect our parents therefore to assist us by supervising or just ensuring the student utilizes some time at home to do homework. Unfortunately most times they come the following day with undone homework and we keep on punishing them but until when... with this trend do you think

we can compete well academically with the boarding schools?"

It was also very interesting to note that only (5) parents were of the opinion that they rewarded students who performed well while few (4) parents disagreed. On an interview with head teacher it was pointed out that in most cases students were rewarded for academic improvement. Though some few students were rewarded for good behaviour and cleanliness but this was rarely done. He further said,

"... in fact my teachers have suggested that we give good attention to rewarding students with regard to their discipline ... and we are hoping to do this because of the realization that this may be an additional method to help us reduce the discipline problems we have today among our students ... "

The study concluded that a good reward system would motivate students who would always strive to do what they are praised and rewarded for. A good reward system is therefore a new measure that can be put in place to enhance student discipline in schools.

On reprimanding student on discipline problems it was unfortunate to note that the majority of parents (15) did not do it while only a small number of parents (2) said they did it. A head teacher when interviewed on the same explained that if parents would be reprimanding students over discipline cases often, then cases of lateness, in decent dressing, failure to do homework amongst others would reduce. Unfortunately it looked like most of the parents had left this work to the teachers who could not manage without cooperation from the parents.

Concerning monitoring of students while out of school, the study found that only a minimum number of parents (2) said they played this role while a majority of the parents (10) disagreed. This was taken to be caused by the fact that most of the parents were unemployed and could therefore be spending most of the time struggling to make ends meet. Moreover as had been indicated by the study some of the parents were employed and probably spend much of their time at the work place. To explain the point further, one of the parent respondent in the study indicated that most parents were never at home when the students reported back from school. This was most common among the employed and self employed parents. It was quite sad to find out that only one parent ensured regular attendance of students to schools. A majority of (9) parent respondents indicated that they did not play this role. The study concluded that most of the parents in the schools in the area of study did not play their roles of enhancing student discipline. This was supported by an interview with one of the teachers, who said,

"... the biggest problem we have had for a long time is to have parents who actively play their roles in enhancing student discipline. Some seem not to care and even make follow ups to their students conduct and even performance. Truly the

teachers try to play their roles but this alone is not enough considering that most of the methods used to enhance discipline seem ineffective and others require a lot of patience for instance, guidance and counselling. "

The finding on this research item seems to indicate that the parents in the schools in the area of study, urge students to comply to school rules, report cases of misconduct to the school administration, guide and counsel students and to a small extent reward those who behave well. However the study noted that the parents did not play the most crucial roles of enhancing student discipline like, supervising remedial work, reprimanding students on discipline cases, monitoring their movement while out of school and ensuring the students' regular attendance to school. According to the study there is

an urgent need to guide parents on how to play most of the roles that enhance student discipline. This is in an attempt to approve the balance theory which encourages parental involvement in school administration and for the sake of this study, student discipline. This according to the theory should be done in a way that is not viewed as interference (Litwak and Meyer, 1974).

#### *B. Students' views on Roles Played by Parents To Enhance Student Discipline*

The study was further interested in establishing the students view on the roles played by their parents in enhancing discipline in school. The data collected were analyzed and the findings are as presented in Table 2.

| No    | Students responses                             | Strongly Agree | Agree    | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|-------|--|----------------|----------|-----------|----------|-------------------|
| i.    | Ensure regular attendance and punctuality      | 35(22.7)       | 48(31.2) | 30(19.5)  | 20(13.0) | 15(9.7)           |
| ii.   | Monitor students movements while out of school | 34(22.1)       | 29(18.8) | 24(15.6)  | 38(24.7) | 21(13.6)          |
| iii.  | Reward those who behave well during meetings   | 31(20.1)       | 31(20.1) | 60(39)    | 26(16.9) | 10(6.5)           |
| iv.   | Guide and counsel                              | 18(11.7)       | 39(25.3) | 62(40.3)  | 15(9.7)  | 13(8.4)           |
| v.    | Report misconduct when out of school           | 29(18.8)       | 19(12.3) | 42(27.3)  | 30(19.5) | 27(17.5)          |
| vi.   | Ensure compliance to school rules              | 26(16.9)       | 21(13.6) | 80(51.9)  | 11(7.1)  | 9(5.8)            |
| vii.  | Supervise remedial work                        | 30(19.5)       | 16(10.4) | 79(51.3)  | 8(5.2)   | 13(8.4)           |
| viii. | Reprimand on student in discipline cases       | 29(18.8)       | 16(10.4) | 48(31.2)  | 24(15.6) | 21(8.6)           |

Table 2: Students' Responses in percentages % on the Roles played by Parents (N=153)

Table 2 demonstrates that the majority of the student respondents (53.9%) agreed that their parents ensured their regular attendance and punctuality in school. A minority of the student respondents (22.7%) disagreed. Interviews with several teachers revealed that the teachers were in agreement with minority of the student respondents on the fact that parents did not ensure regular attendance and punctuality in school .One teacher said,

"... madam ,we normally have quite a number of students to punish every week because of lateness and at times we use other students to find why another has been absent from school for a long time ... meaning that that these parents are not keen about the regular attendance of some students ... ". .

This remark made the study to establish that the parents in the area of study had not yet fully complied to UNESCO (2005) requirement that parents ought to ensure that lessons begin promptly and on time and that their children attend school regularly, .ensure punctuality and even provide reasons for any absence. Concerning monitoring of students while out of school, a sizeable (40.9%) of the student respondents said their

parents played this role while another sizeable (38.3%) disagreed on the same. These contradicting responses were taken to indicate that the role wasn't adequately played by the parents.

A sizeable number of (40.2%) agreed that parents rewarded students who behaved well, while a small number of (23.4%) disagreed. The percentages of both respondents indicated to the study that this role was not well played by the parents in the area of study. With regard to guidance and counselling a sizeable number of students (37%) agreed that the parents played the roles but a small number of students (18.1 %) disagreed that the parents did not play the role. On further interrogation by the researcher one of the head teachers revealed that most parents provided guidance only when an offence had been committed.

Reporting student misconduct while out of school was agreed upon by a small number of students (31.1 %) while another small number of (27%) disagreed. Few students (30.5%) reported that their parents urged them to comply with school

rules and very few student respondents (12.9% disagreed. Supervision of remedial work at home was a role that was not played by parents as only (29.9%) agreed while (13.6%) disagreed. On reprimanding students on discipline cases a small number of students (29.2%) agreed that the parents played the role while (24.2%) disagreed. Although the study findings tend to indicate that some students agreed that their parents played some roles to enhance student discipline, it was observed that in this research item most of the students were undecided. This was taken to imply that these roles were not played to the expected levels by the student's parents.

### C. Parental Factors Affecting Involvement In Student Discipline

In this research question the study was interested in establishing the parental factors affecting parents in their attempt to play their roles to enhance student discipline in schools. An item was posed to the class teachers and head teacher respondents during the interviews on how they rated the parents' attendance of meetings when invited in school. Data collected revealed that most of these participants said the turn outs were average. An interview with one of the head teachers revealed that most parents following their life style of pastoralist did not take school meetings 'seriously.

The study was further interested in finding out parental factors that affected parents as they tried to play their roles in enhancing discipline among students. Data regarding the same were collected, analyzed and the results reported as presented in Table 3.

| No                       | Parental Factor            | Very Disciplined F | Disciplined F | Not Sure F | Less Disciplined F | Very Indiscipline F |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|---------------|------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Employment Status</b> |                            |                    |               |            |                    |                     |
| i.                       | Employed                   | 4                  | 6             | 3          | 4                  | 2                   |
| ii.                      | Self Employed              | 1                  | 5             | 5          | 3                  | 5                   |
| iii.                     | Un employed                | 2                  | 3             | 4          | 7                  | 3                   |
| <b>Marital status</b>    |                            |                    |               |            |                    |                     |
| iv.                      | Two parent family          | 6                  | 7             | -          | 5                  | 1                   |
| v.                       | One parent Family          | 2                  | 6             | 3          | 3                  | 5                   |
| vi.                      | Widow/ Widower             | 1                  | 4             | 4          | 6                  | 4                   |
| <b>Parenting styles</b>  |                            |                    |               |            |                    |                     |
| vii.                     | Authoritarian/ Very Strict | 1                  | 4             | 3          | 9                  | 2                   |
| viii.                    | Authoritarian / Warm       | 6                  | 8             | 1          | 3                  | 1                   |
| ix.                      | Permissive / Liberal       | 1                  | 4             | 3          | 5                  | 6                   |

Table 3: Effect of parental factors on the discipline of the students (N=19)

As can be seen from Table 3, majority (10) of the parent respondents were of the view that when parents are employed it did not so much affect the parents in playing their roles of enhancing student discipline since their children were found to be either very disciplined or disciplined. However, a sizeable number of (6) parent respondents too pointed out that employment affected parents in playing their roles and ended up having children who were not disciplined.

During the interviews on the effect of employment on student discipline, one head teacher said that some employed parents were very keen on their children's discipline. Though they may not always be at home when students are leaving for school or coming back but they freely discussed with their children discipline issues as well as academic issues. The head teacher further observed that some, despite their busy schedules at their work places ensured that they attended

meetings and even communicated occasionally to be informed about their children's progress. On a further interview with the teachers, quite a number said that they also had students whose parents are employed who have discipline problems. One said,

"...some employed parents do not come for meetings and at times they give very many excuses ...in the long run they looetouch with the teacher who may also give up on a particular student's discipline ...all their effort is put in paying school fees and buying school uniform."

According to the study, these finding implied that employment affects some parents who end up having students with discipline problems in school. Besides, as expressed by some teacher respondents employed parents who spend ample time with their children and constantly communicated with the

teachers and school administrators helped to enhance discipline among their children.

A small number of parents (5) were of the view that self-employment did not so much affect parents in playing their roles to enhance student discipline. A good number of parent respondents (9) however said that this status affected parents so that quite a number of their children would also have discipline problems in school. A teacher pointed out that this would depend so much on the type of business a parent was doing. This was because according to the teacher respondents some businesses required a lot of attention which denied the parents an opportunity to attend to their children.

One head teacher on the same explained that most of the small businesses the parents did were in the small towns and markets around. Some students would be spotted assisting their parents when they even ought to be in school. He further said, "...One time a student who had been absent for some time was seen with a bicycle supplying and selling milk ...and he was later spotted helping the mother to sell in the shop."

This kind of situation most likely led to discipline problems like lateness, failure to do homework; theft and drug abuse and even school drop outs. Through such findings, the study established that some business the parents did failed to motivate their children to take their studies seriously. This was especially so when another teacher said that quite a number of their students end up doing small business and some are even touts! This factor had contributed to very few students qualifying for higher education into the state universities. This was mostly because their parents did not spend enough time discussing discipline issues with their children which also affected them academically.

With regard to unemployment status, majority of (10) parent respondents pointed out that this affected parents in playing their roles to enhance student discipline. Minority of (5) parents felt it did not affect some parents in playing their roles. During the interviews, in support of the majority parent respondents one teacher said, "...madam, most of our parents are unemployed and as a result they do not provide for their children ...this has encouraged a lot of theft in our school ...not to mention indecent dressing."

One of the head teachers concurred with the teacher on the issue of unemployed parents when he cited that in general school administration and the academic performance had been greatly affected by the fact that most of the parents were unemployed. Mentioning just but a few was the fact that these parents could not pay fees and buy the required school textbooks. This made them unwilling to attend meetings and even be in touch with the teachers. As already mentioned, the implementation of certain methods of enhancing discipline like paying of fines for damages had been disabled by this factor. He was quoted saying;

"...when you send a student home to replace a damaged book or to buy a barbed wire because of passing through the fence be sure that you have expelled the student..."

With regard to marital status, majority of parent respondents (13) were of the view that two parent families brought up children who were mostly disciplined. One of the teachers supported this view by saying that when addressing student discipline problems in case one parent become unreliable they would opt for the other parent. A small number of parents (6) said some children from these families were not disciplined.

On one parent families the findings indicate that a sizeable number of parent respondents (8) indicated that such families had both disciplined and children with discipline problems respectively. The findings seem to concur with the task force (2001) which found that some of the students who actively participated in student unrest were from single parent families while some were orphans. However an interview with one of the class teachers revealed that some of the single parents brought up much disciplined children. He cited the example of the top students in KCSE 2008 who were both from single parent families. He further remarked that it was their good discipline that allowed such results.

Majority of parent respondents (10) said students from widowed families had many discipline problems as opposed to (5) of the parent respondents who said that students from such families were disciplined. This was probably because of the many problems the families encountered after losing a spouse and a parent. Concerning parenting styles used by different parents the study found that majority of the parent respondents (11) said that parents who were mainly authoritarian and very strict brought up children with discipline problems. Only a minority (5) said parents brought up disciplined students. During the interviews, one of the class teachers said that from her experience, students whose parents were very strict and were dictators ended up having children who were rebellious. In fact according to this teacher such students become rude and secretly take drugs and alcohol. The same teacher gave an example of a very strict parent who in fact made the boy to drop out in school while in Form two at the beginning of the year.

Majority of parent respondents (14) indicated that parents who were authoritative and warm brought up disciplined students with very few parents (4) pointing out that some students from these families also had discipline problems. One head teacher in support of this view remarked that such parents were easy to deal with especially when it came to the discipline of the students. According to this head teacher, such parents provide an environment full of understanding and tolerance to the student. He explained that, "...a student who had involved herself with bad peers was talked to by the parent in my office and by the next day the student had written a letter to the head teacher that she would change and become serious with her studies..."

With regard to permissive parenting style, the findings were that the majority of the parents (11) said that students from these families had discipline problems. Few parent respondents (5) however said that students from these families were disciplined. In an interview with one of the class teachers, it was established that the reason why most students had discipline problems was because some of their parents were permissive in their parenting and did not monitor their children's movements and neither did they want to disappoint their children. She explained further that this was a big problem among single parents whom she said at times gave in so much to their children's wishes and in fact when invited during student discipline problems one would get embarrassed at the way they would just listen and not want to be offensive to their children. According to the study the permissive parents seem to compensate their absence and irresponsibility by giving in to their children's wishes in order to please them.

On neglectful parents the study found that majority parent respondents (17) said students from families with this parenting style were not disciplined. Only minimum number of (2) parents said some children from such families would be disciplined. An interview with one head teacher established that children from neglected parents had no control over their behaviors because their parents never control them. According to this head teacher, these were the most problematic students who were negative about any discipline measures taken against them. The head teacher explained this was one of the reasons why most school administrators did not involve parents in enhancing discipline in schools. In conclusion the findings in this research item seems to indicate that there are many parental factors that affect parents as they play their role

of enhancing student discipline. These factors range from; marital status, employment status and parenting styles. On marital status, the study found those students from two parent families were more disciplined than those from widowed and one parent families.

Although the study established that most students whose parents were employed were more disciplined in this area of study, as already established most students came from families with unemployed parents and this was taken to explain the various student discipline problems in the schools sampled for the study. Student from families that used authoritative parenting styles were mostly disciplined as compared to those where other parenting styles namely; authoritarian, permissive and liberal were used. The latter mostly have students with discipline problems. Finally the study findings seem to imply that most parents in the schools in the area of study were not involved in enhancing student discipline since they were unemployed and were likely applying the three parenting styles namely; permissive, authoritarian and uninvolved as reported by the head teachers. The different marital status of the parents also seemed to affect them when playing their roles. This was revealed by the respective percentages of the cases with discipline problems.

#### *D. Students' Views on how Parental Factors affect the Students' Discipline*

The study sought for information from students on what parental factors affected their discipline. The responses from the field were analyzed and the findings were as shown in Table 4.

| <b>Parental Factors</b>        | <b>F</b> | <b>%</b> |
|--------------------------------|----------|----------|
| Parents social economic status | 87       | 56.9     |
| Marital Status                 | 45       | 29.4     |
| Parenting styles               | 34       | 22.2     |
| Parents' low education level   | 78       | 51       |
| Ignorance                      | 72       | 47.1     |
| Unavailable parents            | 68       | 44.4     |

Table 4: Distribution of Responses on Parental Factors Affecting Student Discipline (N=153)

Table 4 clearly shows that the majority of the students (56.9%) were of the opinion that the parents' social economic status affected parents in their roles as they tried to enhance student discipline. Concerning the parents' economic status the study found that the economic status was low and this was why they could not afford the school requirements like buying textbooks and even attending meetings. This was also taken to be the reason why they were not rewarding the well behaved students. This had prompted the teachers and other

stakeholders to work on their own in enhancing student discipline.

Half of the student respondents (51%) said that their parents' low level of education affected them in playing their roles. This factor has denied them an opportunity to actively participate in decision making as they were considered illiterate or: semi-illiterate. There was therefore bound to be a communication breakdown between these parents and the teachers and even with their children. Following closely was



Ignorance of the parents which was cited as a factor affecting parents in their attempt to enhance student discipline by (47.1 %) of the student respondents.

According to the head teachers the parents were ignorant of any educational activities and more so their roles on enhancing student discipline. The findings on a question on whether the parents were aware of their roles in enhancing student discipline revealed that majority of the parents were not aware of their roles. An interrogation of one of them brought forth the finding that according to the parents their major role was paying school fees for their children. Unavailable parents registered a response of (44.4%). It was established through an interview with the teacher that most of the students had absentee parents. These parents due to being unemployed as already established left home early and came back late in their efforts to make ends meet. They also had no time to attend school meetings and supervise remedial work. This scenario left the students to take care of themselves and at times they even forego school to assist the other siblings in the absence of the parents.

A small number of student respondents (29.4%) said that the parents' marital status affected the parents as they tried to play

their roles. Some of the students pointed out cases of death, divorce and separation which affected the parents who could not play the role of the absentee parent in enhancing student discipline. An equally small number of students (22.2%) indicated that parenting styles was a factor affecting parents as they tried to enhance student discipline. Students whose parents did not monitor them were reported to be in disciplined; those whose parents were restrictive were also reported to be in disciplined. The students, whose parents were warm and tolerant, brought up disciplined students. The study concluded that the parenting styles used by parents were very crucial in enhancing student discipline.

#### *E. Ranking of Parental factors affecting Parents in their attempt to enhance Discipline among Students.*

The researcher was further interested in finding out the ranking of the factors that affected the parents as they played their roles of enhancing student discipline. The students were asked to group and rank these factors using a scale of 1 – 8 where the most serious was ranked 1 and the least serious was ranked 8. Data from the field were analyzed and the findings are as outlined in Table 5.

| <b>Factors</b>                  | <b>Ranking</b> | <b>F</b> | <b>%</b> |
|---------------------------------|----------------|----------|----------|
| Parenting styles                | 1 – 2          | 97       | 63.4     |
| Employment status of parents    |                |          |          |
| Parents' social economic status | 3 – 5          | 65       | 42.5     |
| Parents' low level of education |                |          |          |
| Ignorance of parents            |                |          |          |
| Marital status of parents       | 6 – 7          | 37       | 24.2     |
| Unavailable parent              |                |          |          |

Table 5: Students' Ranking of Parental Factors Affecting Parents in their Attempt to Enhance Student Discipline.

Table 5 demonstrates that, according to the majority of students (63.4%), Parenting styles and employment status of parents were ranked between 1 and 2. This implied that they were the main parental factors which affected parents in their attempt to enhance discipline among students. A good number of students (42.5%) were of the idea that, the parents' social economic status, parents' low level of education and ignorance of parents were ranked between 5 and 6. This gave an implication that these parental factors were not affecting the parents in their attempt to enhance student discipline in a very serious way.

A small number of students, who could not be ignored (24.2%), indicated that, marital status of parents and unavailable parents were ranked between 7 and 8. This implied that these parental factors were less serious in terms of affecting parents in their attempt to enhance student discipline. These findings seemed to indicate that there are several parental factors affecting parents in their attempt to enhance

student discipline. When ranked according to how they affected the parents they fell into 3 categories namely; 1 – 2, 3 – 5 and 6 – 7. For instance factors like parenting styles which were characterized by, authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and neglectful and employment tended to affect the parents' role of.

## **VII. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

From the finding of this study, based on the stated Research questions, the study found out that parents in the area of study played some few roles like guiding and counselling students and reporting cases of student misconduct while out of school. However other equally crucial roles were not adequately played like supervising remedial work at home, reprimanding students over discipline cases and monitoring their movements while out of school. This failure of parents to play these roles contributed to the discipline problems experienced in the schools on the area of study. On parental factors affecting

parental involvement in enhancing discipline, the study finding revealed: parents' low level of education affected the parents from as they tried to play their roles, parenting style and employment status also affected them most in their attempt to enhance discipline as compared to marital status and unavailable parents. The study concluded that parents needed to play their roles actively in collaboration with the school administrators so as to enhance discipline among students.

### VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommended that the Ministry of Education should legalize the PTAs so that parents can be sensitized and effectively play their roles. The parents also need to be sensitized through seminars, meetings and workshops on the roles. The school administrators too need to encourage the open perspective of the balance theory by actively involving parents in student discipline issues in schools.

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