

## **Assessing the Impacts of Parenting Styles on Academic Achievement in Early Childhood Education and Development in Narok South Sub-County, Kenya.**

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### **Abstract**

*The study sought to assess the impact of parenting styles on academic performance in Early Childhood Education Service in Narok South Sub County. The study was conducted in public primary schools in Narok County using descriptive survey. Qualitative and Quantitative data collection techniques were combined for the study. The instruments for the study included questionnaires, observation checklist and structured interview. Purposive sampling was used in the selection of the population. 50 respondents from 20 ECDE centers were selected for the study. After analyzing data, it was presented in tabular and graphical form. The researcher established that parenting styles have an impact on the academic achievement of learners at the ECDE level. Parents and the community at large should be sensitized on the effects of parenting styles on the young children. The result and findings of the study yielded data and information that would be of importance to the policy makers on how they can involve parents in seminars and workshops on life skills. It would also inform them on the need to strike a balance between high handedness and acceptable parenting styles for the good of the young children.*

**Keywords:** *parenting styles, authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, uninvolved parenting*

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### **1. Introduction**

Since time immemorial, parenting requires interpersonal skills and makes emotional demands (Santrock, 2006). Santrock states that most parents learn practices from their own parents accepting some while discarding others. The argument is further forwarded that when parenting methods are passed on from one generation to the next, both desirable and undesirable practices are perpetuated. This may consist of cultural values which more often than not are passed from one parent to the other. Parenting styles have been psychological construct representing standard strategies that parents used in child rearing practices since time immemorial. There were many different theories and opinions on the best ways to rear children as well as differing levels of time and efforts that parents are willing to invest (Santrock, 2006).

Parental investment begins before birth. Many parents create their own style from a combination of factors and these may evolve over time as the children develop their own personalities and move through life stages. Parenting style is affected by both the parents and the children's temperaments and is largely based on the influence of one's own parent's and parenting practices from their parents. The degree to which a child's education is part of parenting is a further matter of debate. Beginning in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, two philosophers independently wrote works that have

been widely influential in child rearing. John Lockes (1693) and Jean Jacques Rousseau (1762) concurred that the child's interaction with the world depends on the consistent parenting and concerted cultivation like plants.

Baumrind (1971) proposed a theory of parenting which states that the manner in which parents resolve their child's needs for nurturance and limit setting has a major impact on the degree of social competence achieved and behavioural adjustment of their children. There is a strong consensus that parents matter on how their children develop and function. Many of the skills children acquire are fundamentally dependent on their interactions with their caregivers and the broader social environment. The quality of parenting a child is considered the strongest potentiality modifiable risk factor that contributes to the development of behavioural and emotional problems in children. Parent-child interactions affect many different areas of development and behaviour.

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

Various studies show that parents have a great influence on behavioural and emotional feelings of the children. Evidently, many children have run away from home due to lack of conducive environment and opted for the streets. In view of this, the current study assessed the impacts of parenting styles on academic performance in Narok South Sub County.

### **1.2 Scope and Limitation**

The focus of the study was examining the impacts of parenting styles on academic achievement on performance in ECDE Centers in Narok South Sub County. In the initial stages, teachers and parents were suspicious but were reassured of confidentiality of information given. Unreliable and invalid responses were tackled by triangulating the data through observation and interviews.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The study was guided by the following objectives:-

- To examine the different types of parenting styles and their effect on academic achievement of children in ECDE Centers in Narok South Sub County.
- To investigate the effects of parenting styles on academic achievement of learners in ECDE Centers in Narok South Sub County.
- To find out ways of fostering good parenting styles to facilitate academic achievement in learners in ECDE Centers in Narok South Sub County.

### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

The parents and community at large are expected to benefit from the study as they will foster good parenting styles for the young children. Teachers may also benefit from the study as they will be in a position to counsel and guide parents on the importance of discarding some parenting styles that may be impacting on the children negatively. Information and data yielded from the study may be useful to future scholars who may desire to study further child rearing practices.

## **2. Parenting**

Self G, (2012) postulates that the process of raising a child from birth till adulthood is referred to as parenting. Parenting can also refer to carrying out the responsibilities of raising and relating to children in such a manner that the child is well prepared to realize his/her full potential as a human being. In essence, parenting means taking care or supporting a child from birth to adulthood involving the physical, emotional, social and intellectual capabilities. It is a state of being a parent either biological or non-biological. Parenting requires interpersonal skills and makes emotional demands on the person partaking parenthood (Santrock, 2006). Most researchers argue that the majority of parents display one of four different parenting styles. These styles include: authoritarian, authoritative, permissive and uninvolved parenting styles.

Cherry, (2012) states that authoritarian parenting style expects the child to adhere or follow the strict rules established by the parents. Normally because the parents have ordered, it must be done without explanations and questions. Failure to follow the rules results in punishment. Authoritative parents establish rules and guidelines that their children are expected to follow. However, this parenting style is much more democratic (Cherry, 2012 & Santrock, 2006). Parents who practice this style are responsive and ready to listen and cooperate. In this style of parenting, the parents are assertive but not intrusive and restrictive (Baumrind, 1991). On the other hand, permissive parents have few demands to make of their children and they allow their children a lot of freedom (Santrock, 2006). They hardly punish or discipline them. Uninvolved parenting is attributed with few demands and little communication though the parents fulfil the needs of the children; they rarely get attached to the child (Cherry, 2012).

Several works on parenting has brought about a number of conclusions as far as the impact of parenting styles on children are concerned. Authoritarian parenting styles have been reported to result in children who are obedient and proficient but rank lower in happiness, social competence and self esteem. Maccoby (1992) asserts that authoritative parenting styles leads to children who are happy, capable and successful. He further goes on to state that permissive parenting styles breed children who are low in happiness and uninvolved parenting styles lead to children who have low self control, low self esteem and highly incompetent.

A key implication for educators is that children from any cultural background who have experienced harsh punishment or uninvolved parenting may exhibit assorted behaviour problematic both at home and in the classroom. Teachers are tasked with typically making special efforts to communicate rules, give reasonable consequences when rules are disobeyed, reward good behaviour and encouraging where need be. Bradley, H., Corowyn, M., & Call(2001) state that parents vary in how they express affection and implement discipline. Whereas authoritative parents employ a blend of high involvement and firm but fair discipline, the uninvolved parents exhibit a don't care attitude on matters of bringing up children. The current study established that the parenting styles have a very big influence on how children will achieve academically.

### **3. Methodology**

Descriptive survey design was used to get the information under investigation. The design has been described as studies concerned with describing the characteristics of a particular individual or a group (Kothari, 2004). The design has been postulated as the most appropriate design in the behavioural sciences as it seeks to find out factors associated with certain occurrences, outcomes and conditions of behaviour (Best and Kahn, 1993). The researcher is able to collect in-depth information concerning the issue under investigation. A survey is an attempt to collect data from members of a current status of a particular population with respect to one or more variables (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999).

The study location was purposively selected and it consisted of selected ECDE Centers in Ololulunga, Mulot and Lemek divisions in Narok South Sub County. The researcher selected 20 ECDE Centers from the divisions. A group of people believed to be reliable for the study is purposively selected (Kombo and Tramps, 2006). The main research tool was the questionnaire. It included both open and close ended questions. Questionnaires were in two sets: one for the head teachers and the other for the ECDE teachers. The development of the questions was done in such a way that difficult questions were first asked before placing sensitive questions at the end. Observation checklists were also used to observe the behaviour of the learners during class time and outdoor activities. Interview schedules were also used solely for parents to gather data on parenting styles and academic achievements.

In order to examine the interview schedules and observation checklists before identifying the patterns and organizing data into categories, qualitative data was done. To make meaning of the findings, research responses were compared and interpreted bearing in mind the perceptions, opinions and experiences. Quantification and categorization of data was involved by assigning numerical values to the various categories to facilitate the statistical representation of data. The statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer package version 17.0 was used to centre the coded responses. The presentation and interpretation of analyzed data was done using descriptive statistics. This encompassed frequency tables, bar graphs, mean and percentages.

### **4. Results and Discussion**

In this section, data analysis, presentation and interpretation are reported. The following main objectives were instrumental in compiling the result:-

- To examine the different types of parenting styles and their effect on academic achievement of children in ECDE Centers in Narok South Sub County.
- To investigate the effects of parenting styles on academic achievement of learners in ECDE Centers in Narok South Sub County.
- To find out ways of fostering good parenting styles to facilitate academic achievement in learners in ECDE Centers in Narok South Sub County.

In order to systematically address the above objectives, the researcher grouped the data into sub themes, background information of the respondents, enrolment in the ECDE Centers and impacts of parenting styles on ECDE learners.

#### 4.1 Background Information of the Respondents

A total of 60 questionnaires were issued to the head teachers and preschool teachers. In this section, the researcher sought to find out the characteristics and gender of the respondents. The information is tabulated below:-

**Table 1: Distribution of head teachers and preschool teachers**

Sex	Head teacher		Preschool teacher	
	f	%	f	%
Male	17	85	8	20
Female	3	15	32	80

**Source: Research Data (2016) Key: f-frequency, % percent**

The respondents were requested to indicate their gender on their questionnaires. The above table presents the gender of the participants who were involved in the study. 85% of the head teachers who participated were male while 15% were female. This was a representation of 17 head teacher and 3 females respectively. Evidently, males dominate as head teachers while the teachers are predominantly female with 80%. This is a confirmation from the educational statistical booklet (2003-2014) that the female ECDE teachers have been predominantly female.

**Table 2: Educational level of head teachers and preschool teachers**

Level	Head teachers		Preschool teachers	
	f	%	f	%
Degree	4	20	0	0
Diploma	7	35	13	32.5
Certificate	9	45	27	67.5

**Source: Research data(2016)**

**Key: f-frequency, %-percentage**

The respondents were requested to indicate their academic qualification in the questionnaires, 20% of the head teachers are degree holders while 35% have diploma education and 45% possess a certificate. 32.5% of the preschool teachers have diploma education while 67.5% have a certificate. This indicates that all the teachers are professionally trained and qualified to effectively teach ECDE children.

**4.2 Findings on the Impact of Authoritative Parenting Style Among Children**

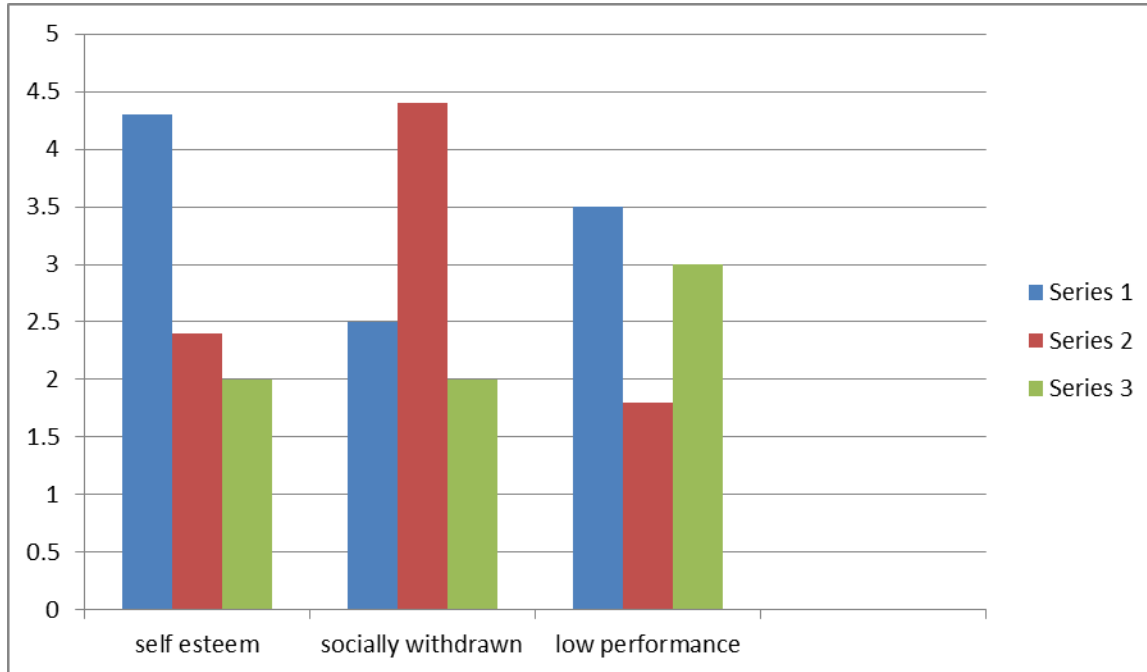
**Table 3: Impact of authoritative parenting style among children**

Impacts	Ilemek		Mulot		Ololulunga	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
High self esteem	5	25	6	30	5	25
High level of sensitization	6	30	5	25	6	30
High discipline	5	25	4	20	5	25
Retention in school	4	20	5	25	5	25

Source: Researcher 2016

These conditions were found to have impact on academic achievement as a number of them were able to concentrate in class. All victims were almost to the same average most children experienced high self esteem and high level of socialization and this was evident in all the four divisions with 25-30% respectively.

**Figure 1: Impacts of authoritarian parenting style on academic achievement**



Source: Researcher 2016

It was noted during the study that most of the children rarely learn to think on their own because they fear involving the parent/teacher in their thought. It was realized that children were often socially withdrawn and lower their academic performance due to keeping off their peers and teachers. As a result of fear of failure due to pressure from their parents and teachers, the children experienced low self esteem, socially withdrawn from peers and low performance. From

the above data, it was evident that many pupils from the study areas experience low performance.

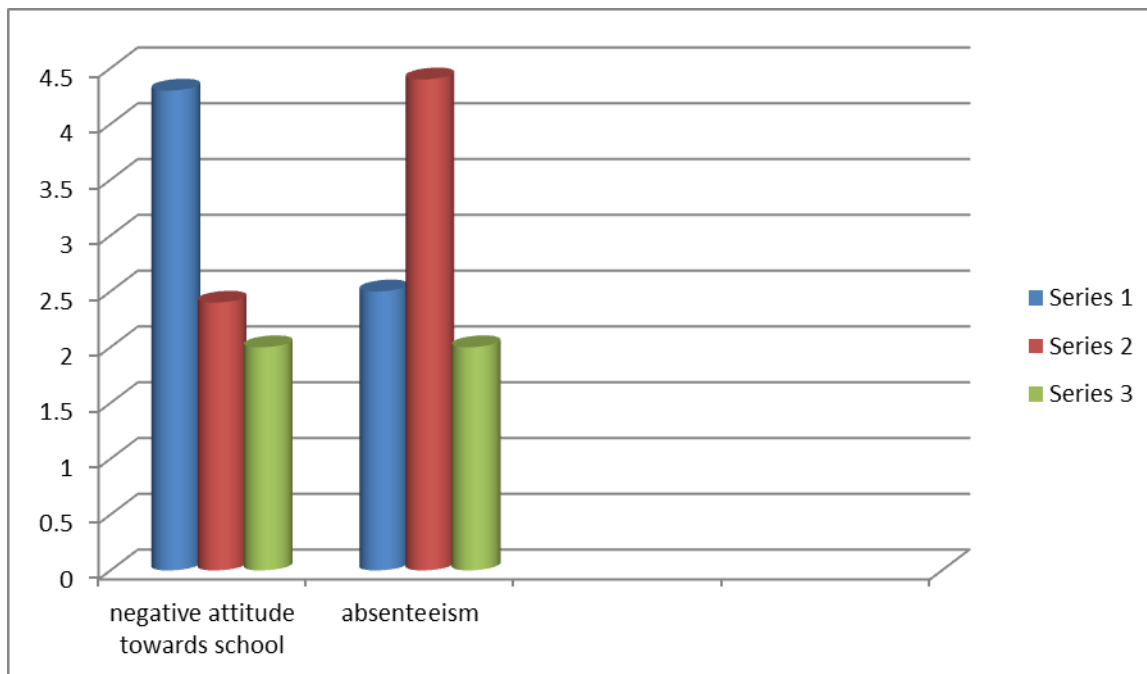
**Table 4: Impacts of permissive parenting styles in children**

Effects	Lemek		Mulot		Ololulunga	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Lack of communication	5	25	5	25	6	30
Lack of self control	12	60	13	65	10	50
Unruly(rudeness)	3	15	2	10	4	20

Source: Researcher2016

From the result presented above, it was evident that all the three divisions in the sub county have issues with self control (60%, 65%, 50% respectively). Learning is best achieved when there is self control as it leads to positive interaction between teachers and learners and amongst children themselves. Though most children lacked self control, some experienced lack of communication which was as a result of poor interaction. It was evident that there were cases of unruly children (15%, 10%, 20%) from the data analyzed.

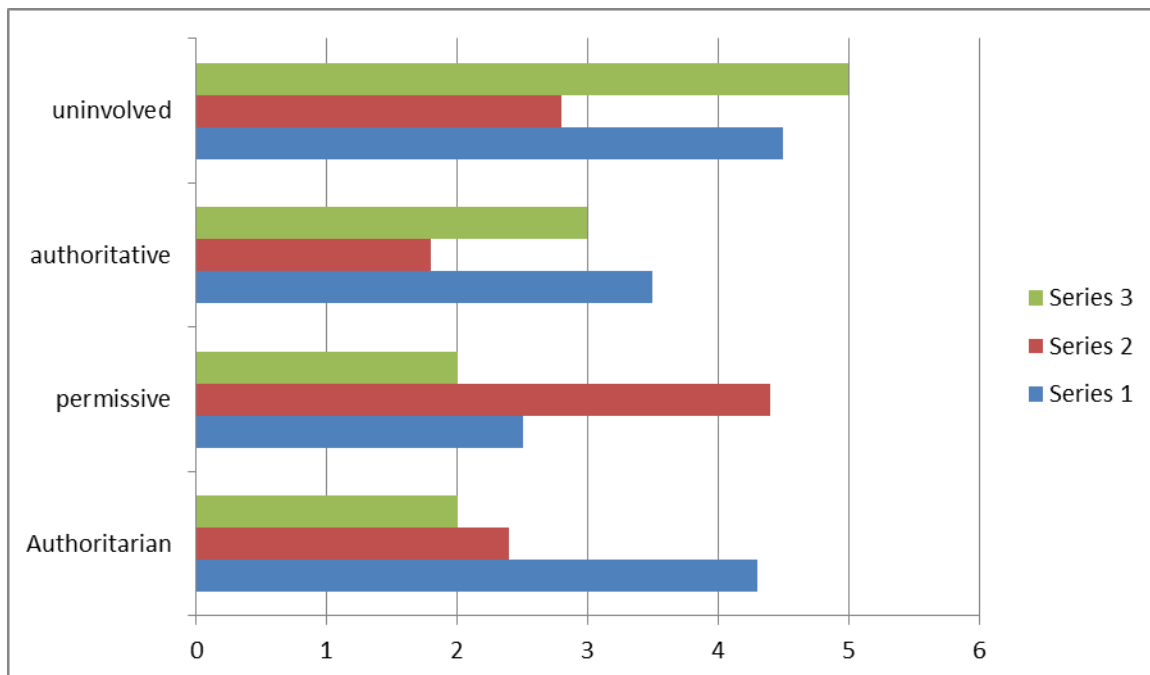
**Figure 2: Impacts of uninvolved parenting style on academic achievement**



Source: Researcher 2016

From the above figure, it was evident that most children were victims of uninvolved style of parenting in Narok South Sub County. Absenteeism was rampant in the area because parents were uninvolved in their studies (25%, 10%, and 15 % respectively). Some children developed negative attitude towards school in all the divisions with a percentage of 25 %, 44% and 34% in Lemek, Mulot and Ololulunga respectively. This translates to mean that the children would perform dismally given the above factors.

**Figure 3: Percentage of common parenting styles in the study area**



**Source: Researcher 2016**

From the figure above, it is clear that uninvolved parenting and permissive parenting styles are the most common forms of parenting in the study area. This has evidently led to poor performance for the children in preschools. This is due to lack of non committed parents who care less about their educational well being.

## **5. Summary of Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **5.1 Conclusions**

The research was based on the assessment of the impact of parenting styles on academic achievement in ECDE Centers in Narok South Sub County. The main purpose of the study was to find out whether parenting styles have an impact on academic achievement on learners in ECDE Centers in Narok South Sub County. The study revealed that on average authoritative parenting style is not associated with lower educational levels among victims though this did not mean that all victims have higher educational level than the permissive. It was discovered that children who were reared through authoritative style tend to be very social at schools and interact with the teachers to achieve the goals set by parents.

Authoritarian parenting results in children being socially withdrawn and this can lower their academic performance due to withdrawing from peers and mostly from teachers. Permissive parenting led to children who are mostly impulsive, disorganized and they were less successful on academic tasks. They appeared to be under achievers and mostly miss out on school than their authoritarian peers hence leading to difficulties in learning and in school performance.

From the findings, it was evident that uninvolved parenting and permissive parenting styles are the most common forms of parenting styles in the study area. This has impacted negatively on academic achievement of the learners.

### **5.2 Recommendations**



From the findings of this study, the researcher is obliged to recommend the following:-

- Community members should be sensitized and educated on parenting styles that promote positive learning and achievement in young children.
- Parents should be educated on the merits and demerits of each parenting style
- Guidance and counselling should be strengthened in schools to assist children who have been reared by high handedness parents.

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