

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTING PRACTICES AND EMOTIONAL REGULATION OF STUDENTS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THARAKA NITHI COUNTY, KENYA

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Abstract

Emotional regulation refers to a balanced, complex, brief, involuntary, patterned, full-system response to internal and external stimuli. The skill of emotional regulation is necessary in order for individuals to control emotional processes for effective response to external situations. Since emotions are innate and contextual in nature, the skills to regulate emotions are acquired throughout a lifespan. Therefore, parenting practices among other factors are paramount in shaping an individual's emotional outcomes. In view of this, the study sought to determine the relationship between parenting practices and emotional regulation of students in public secondary schools in Tharaka Nithi County in Kenya. The descriptive and correlational research designs were adopted for the study with a population of 45,795 comprising of 45,495 students, 150 class teachers and 150 PTA representatives in Tharaka Nithi County. Purposive, simple random and proportionate sampling techniques were used to obtain a sample of 387 respondents. To collect the required data, questionnaires, interview guides and focus group discussions were used. Data were analyzed by use of both descriptive and correlational statistics. The specific statistical methods employed included means, standard deviations and Pearson correlation. The results of the study indicated that parental presence, sharing family time, protection from harm, parental bonding and rewards or reinforcement helped in emotional regulation among the students. It was recommended that parents need to develop a cordial relationship with children as this will stabilize emotions or help in emotional regulation.

Key Words: Parenting practices, Emotional regulation, Secondary schools, Mental health.

1. Introduction

According to Sandstrom, (2007), emotional regulation is a balanced, complex, brief, involuntary, patterned, full-system response to internal and external stimuli. Liable and Thompson (1998) argue that for people who are able to cope with and regulate emotions, the patterned full-system response can become the wisdom they use to respond to recurrent similar environmental situations proactively and effectively. For example, the emotion of fear can prompt individuals to be more aware of their surroundings, avoid situations, distract from thoughts, fight, cry for help or hide (Dunn, 1992; Gross, 2002). Social learning researchers have also emphasized the importance of parental monitoring and control in preventing the child from developing affiliations with deviant peers (Brown, 2003). A related approach proposes that social-cognitive capacities, such as emotional understanding, perspective taking and emotional regulation, are developed in the context of the early parent-child relationship and carried forward to later social relationships including those with peers (Parke *et al.*, 1989; Dekovic & Janssens, 1992; Dunn, 1992; Carson & Parke, 1996). While emotions prove to be beneficial, they can also be harmful to individuals who are unable to regulate them. When individuals are vulnerable to their emotions, they respond to emotions with

enhanced sensitivity and reactivity making it difficult to learn from or use emotional wisdom from previous situations (Sandstrom, 2007). Individuals who respond to emotions with high sensitivity and reactivity may feel easily overwhelmed causing them to try to numb their emotions with drugs and alcohol and participating in self-injurious behaviors to inflict the pain they feel on others, committing violent crimes; or to end their own suffering by committing suicide. In order for someone to use emotional wisdom to respond appropriately, he or she needs to use a combination of rational thought and understanding of emotion, to influence his or her emotional responses (Dunn, 1992; Gross, 2002).

The skill of emotional regulation is necessary in order for individuals to influence their emotional processes so they can effectively respond to external situations. In order to respond effectively, an individual must be able to influence, experience and express emotions (Gross, 2002). These skills are developed during childhood through interactions between children and their attachment figures (Maccoby, 1992). The first year of a child's emotional life is dedicated to the development of emotional communication through attunement and the creation of secure attachment. Attunement involves the intermittent alignment of states of mind in which there are alternating moments of engaged alignment and distanced autonomy the capacity to read the signals (often nonverbal) that indicate the need for engagement or disengagement" (Schore & Schore, 2008; Siegel, 1999). Eye contact is necessary during infancy to help children understand the mindset of others by feeling and not by thinking. This special dance, or engagement, between attachment figure and child, creates a world of emotional understanding for the child, in which they can begin to feel some control (Siegel, 1999). An example of attunement would be parents observing their child seeking attention and recognizing the need to communicate and engage with them, using nonverbal languages, such as facial expression, eye contact, posture, and tone of voice. Likewise, when the child who is getting attention presents as overwhelmed, the parent would disengage by looking down briefly to allow the child to feel less aroused and calmer. Appropriate disengagement also allows the child to become comfortable with the idea of autonomy in their relationship with their caregiver (Schore & Schore, 2008).

Jones (2008) asserts that throughout the first year of a child's life the process of attunement and attachment physically develops the brain's right hemisphere, teaching the child how to react to their emotions and external distress. If they reached secure attachment with their caregivers and received attunement during this time, they will be able to cope with life stresses and challenges with resilience. Conversely, if they were not able to receive attunement during their first year of life and instead experienced dominant periods and separation, distress, fear and rage, the intensity of emotional and distress they felt like an infant in effectively burnt in their right hemisphere causing them to feel easily dysregulated and overwhelmed by emotions as they continue to grow into adulthood. For these children, emotions seem unexplainable and overwhelming, causing it to be difficult to understand that they could feel distressed and recover from it (Blakeslee, 2006; Schore & Schore, 2008; Siegel & Hartzell, 2003). It is difficult to help a child develop or change their emotional regulation after infancy because the hemisphere of the brain that controls emotional responses has been developed (Schore & Schore, 2008). This development is not permanent and the learned pathways can be shifted to help the child create new experiences. In order to do this, therapists have to help the child and caregiver experience attunement and create a safe environment for the development of a secure attachment to form (Shimmerlik, Stern & Walker, 1999). Adverse parenting practices can affect a child's resilience gained from an initial secure attachment, eliminating their ability to regulate their emotions effectively (Laible & Thompson, 1998). Parenting

may teach children that relational manipulation is an appropriate method of meeting their needs because guilt and threatening of love withdrawal are used as parental discipline tactics (Bayer & Segala; 1992; Sandstrom, 2007). Children raised in this type of family system are often found to be selfish, impulsive, and aggressive in relationships, due to not learning how to compromise or how their actions affect others (Sailor, 2004).

A case study on an authoritarian household was presented in which the mom expressed her anger in a way that was not self-regulated, and the child responded in kind. Such interaction is congruent with the literature, which states children raised in authoritarian homes were found to react with overt and relational aggression when they become frustrated (Marsiglia et, al 2007; Sailor, 2004; Sandstrom, 2007). In addition, Baumrind was able to again generate the same findings and added that girls raised in this environment seemed dependent and unmotivated, while boys seemed angry and defiant (Marsiglia et, al; Sailor, 2004). In addition, Hetherington identified that growing up in an authoritarian environment affected children's desire and willingness to be parented, causing them to often react aggressively and hostilely toward their parents (Hamon & Schrodt, 2012; Wahloer & Williams, 2010). The mother's behavior is congruent with literature stating that the personality trait of verbal aggressiveness is correlated with an authoritarian parenting style (Bayer & Cegala, 1992). Verbally aggressive individuals identify challenges from others as an assault to their personality (Bayer & Cegala, 1992; Infante & Wigley III, 1986). The assault is encountered by attack on the challenger's self-concept, which may be received as character attacks, competence attacks, insults, ridicule, profanity, threats, or nonverbal meaningful symbols, causing embarrassment, anger, irritation, discouragement, relationship deterioration, and relationship termination (Bayer & Cegala, 1992; Infante & Wigley III, 1986). These individuals may not have the skills to work through conflict; therefore, violence is used to deal with their frustration (Infante & Wigley III, 1986).

In addition, parents who have experienced separation from their caregivers during their childhood are often found to have difficulties building relationships caring for their own. Erikson (1968) a developmental psychologist, proposed eight life stages through which each person must develop. In order to move on to the next stage, the person must work out a "crisis" in which a new dilemma must be solved amicably. In each stage, they must understand and balance to conflicting forces, and so parents might choose a series of parenting practice that helps each child as appropriate at each stage. The first five stages occur in childhood: The virtue of hope requires balancing trust with mistrust and typically occurs from birth to one year. Will balances autonomy with shame and doubts around the ages of two to three. Purpose balances initiative with guilt around the ages of four to six years. Competence balance industry against inferiority around age is seven to twelve. Fidelity contrasts identity with role confusion in ages thirteen to nineteen.

According to Posse and Malgosa (2002) in most families with more than one child, parents will adjust their parenting practices accordingly based on what their child responds best to, however, a high level of differential parenting can have negative effects on children. The effect that differential parenting has on families differs, though there are usually negative effects on both children. The severity of effects is extreme for the child who is viewed as disfavored. The "disfavored" child generally has a variety of personal development issues such as low self-esteem and depression. The favored child tends to have higher self-esteem and more friends in school (Gardner, 1989). However, Dunn (1992) notes that both the favored and disfavored child tend to have problems with interpersonal relationships as well as problems with managing their emotion. A high level of differential parenting influences how siblings treat one another and the level of conflict in the

sibling's relationship. Other viewpoints emphasize that the effect of any environmental experience such as parenting will have a different impact, depending on the wider social context. Thus, if causal claims were supported at all, they would have to be prescribed for individual children in particular circumstances (Gill, 2007), reported that in studying high-risk behaviors in young people, Pettit *et al.*, (1999) notes that parental monitoring plays a particularly important role in preventing delinquency in adolescents living in violent and high-risk neighborhoods. The effect of similar levels of monitoring in low-risk environments was less pronounced – presumably because of the lower level of ambient risk, exposure to delinquent peers and reduced opportunities for delinquency. Kochanska (1997) found that, for temperamentally fearful children, gentle parental control was associated with optimal behavioral/emotional regulation, whereas temperamentally more aggressive ('fearless') children required firmer control to achieve the same positive results. Similarly, children with difficult or irritable temperaments may be less likely to develop behavioral problems under conditions of firm control (Bates, 1998). Further, in suggesting that children who are more irritable may be more susceptible to rearing influence, parents may be unable to exert a particularly strong impact on their child's development (Belsky, 1997).

McGue *et al.*, (1996) compared the correlation between parent-reported measures of family functioning and adolescent self-reports of behavioral problems in adopted and biologically related families. Across a number of measures, the authors found that the association between family environment and child outcome was consistent, although not invariably, greater for biologically related parent-child dyads than for adoptive dyads. The implication is that genetic factors mediated some of the effect attributed to family relationships and that is genetically related enhances the strength of the link between parent-child relationship quality and child behavioral outcomes (Phillips, 1972). Putallaz (1987) viewpoint on relationship skills was that parents (husbands and wives) ought to maintain a healthy relationship with each other, significant other or co-parent and model effective relationship skills with other people; Autonomy and independence – parents should treat their children with respect and encourage them to become self-sufficient and self-reliant; Education and learning promotes and models learning and open-mindedness for the child life skills. Putallaz, further notes that parents should have steady income to provide for their children and plan for their future. Parents should also make extensive use of positive reinforcement and punish only when other methods of managing behavior have failed. On health, parents should model a healthy lifestyle and good habits, such as regular exercise and proper nutrition for their child and on religion; they should support spiritual or religious development and participate in spiritual or religious activities. Precautions to protect their child's activities and friends are also crucial (Maccoby, 1992).

2. Objectives

The main objective of this study was to determine the relationship between parenting practices and Emotional Regulation of students in public secondary schools in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya.

3. Methodology

The descriptive and correlational research designs were adopted for the study with a population of 45,795 comprising of 45,495 students, 150 class teachers and 150 PTA representatives in Tharaka Nithi County. Purposive, simple random and proportionate sampling techniques were used to obtain a sample of 387 respondents. To collect the required data, questionnaires, interview guides and focus group discussions were used. Data were analyzed by use of both descriptive and correlational statistics. The specific statistical methods employed included means, standard deviations, and

Pearson correlation. To guard against ethical malpractice, ethical clearance was obtained from the ethical committee and permit to conduct the study acquired. Respondents were granted the freedom to withdraw participation at any point of the study to enhance voluntary participation.

4. Results and Discussion

The results of the study are presented starting with the demographic characteristics of the respondents, the descriptive analysis and then the correlation between parenting practices and emotional regulation of students.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Main Respondents

The analysis of gender distribution of the respondents showed that the number of male respondents were 177 which formed 45.7% of the total number of respondents whilst that of female respondents were 210 which formed 54.3% of the total number of respondents. This means that there was high female response rate in the study compared to their male counterparts. Based on the age of the respondents, 28.4% were between 15 years and below, 54% were between 16-17 years while 17.6% were 18 years and above. Consequently, it can be inferred that majority 54% of the respondents were between 16-17 years. With regard to schools selected for the study, 40.3% (156schools) were girls' school, 40.1% (155 schools) were boys' school while 19.6% (76 schools) were mixed schools. Geographically, 37.5% of the schools were in Meru South, 10.6% of the schools were in Tharaka South, 43.2% of the schools were in Maara while 8.8% were in Tharaka North.

4.2 Descriptive Analysis of Student's Emotional Regulation

The study sought to determine how students' emotions were being regulated. Some of the practices examined included harsh treatment that lowers self-confidence, lack of sympathy when hurt or frustrated, use of corporal punishment, spanking or shouting, resentment and anger about one's upbringing and talking openly about one's problems to make them feel accepted. The results were shown in the Table 1. The likert scale values were as follows: 1. Strongly Disagree, 2. Disagree, 3. Undecided, 4. Agree, 5. Strongly Agree. Only one tick is needed for each statement.

Table14: Descriptive Analysis of Students' Emotional Regulation

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
i. I am normally treated in a harsh manner and this has lowered my self-confidence.	47.8	40.3%	0 %	7.0 %	4.9 %
ii. Whenever I am hurt or frustrated no one sympathizes with me.	20.4	20.7%	17.3%	14.0%	27.6%
iii. Use of corporal punishment, spanking and shouting has made me a rebellious person.	34.4	29.7%	2.6 %	22.7%	10.6%
iv. I am a conformist, quiet and am never happy	35.9	38.2%	1.0 %	16.0%	8.8%
v. Am resentful, angry and unhappy about my upbringing	24.0	24.8%	3.4 %	17.8%	30.0%
vi. I am usually encouraged to talk openly about my problems and this makes me feel accepted.	17.8	14.5%	1.6 %	23.0%	43.2%

Information in Table 1 indicates that majority of the students (88.1%) reported that they were not treated in a harsh manner. Few of the students (11.9%) agreed with this statement that they are being treated harshly. Almost an equal number of respondents disagreed and agreed with the statement that when hurt nobody sympathized. Majority of students (64.1%) reported that spanking had not made them rebellious while 33.3% agreed that corporal punishment had turned them into rebels. Most students (74.1%) postulated that they were not conformists and unhappy. Only 24.8% that they were unhappy and conformists. Almost an equal number of respondents disagreed and agreed with the statement that they are unhappy and resentful- 48.8% of the students disagree (disagreed and strongly disagreed) whilst 47.8% agreed with this statement they are resentful and unhappy (agreed and strongly agreed). 66.2% of the students who represent the majority reported that they are being encouraged to talk about their problems openly (agreed and strongly agreed). Few of the students who represent 32.3 % disagreed with this statement (disagreed and strongly disagreed) showing that they are not being encouraged to talk about their problems openly.

The respondents were also asked to mention what made them happy. Most respondents pointed out aspects such as sharing family time, being rewarded and recognized, Parental presence, Provision of basic needs, Understanding family, Great family bond, Parental guidance, and Protection from harm. The results were represented in Figure 1.

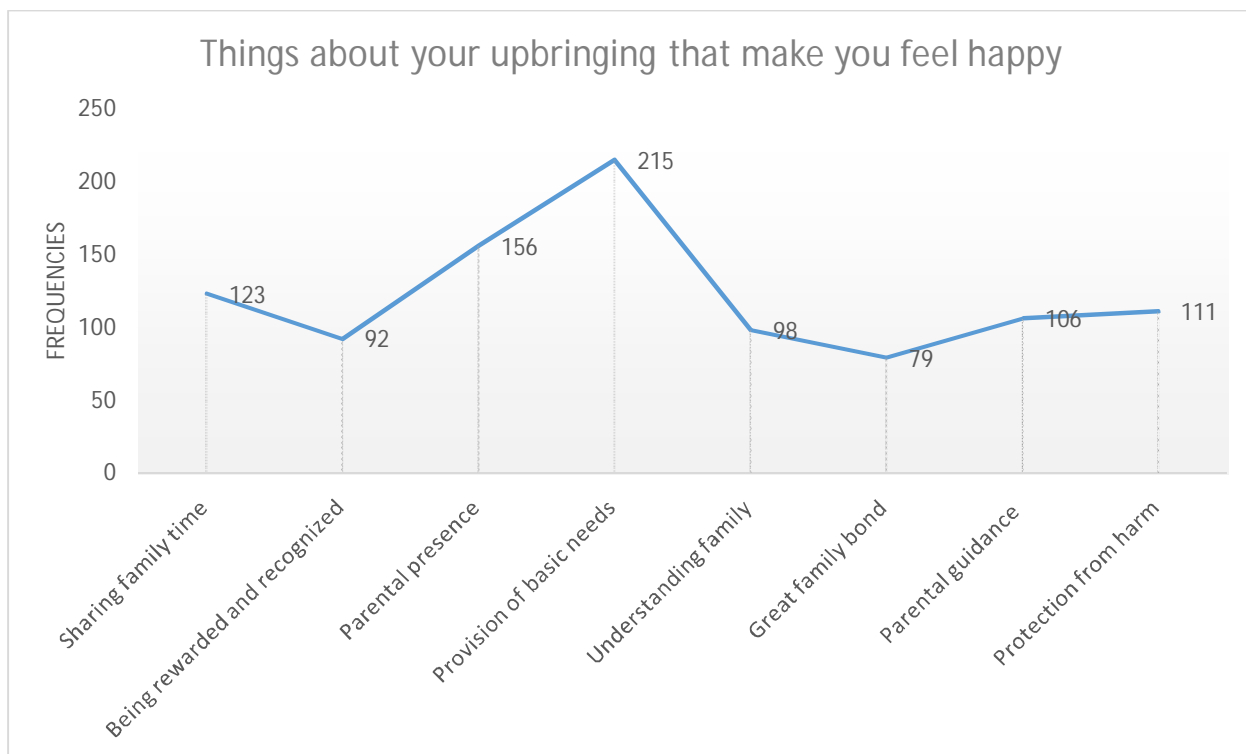


Figure 1: Things about Student's upbringing that makes them Happy

4.3 Correlation between Parenting Practices and Emotional Regulation of Students

The respondents were asked to indicate whether parenting practices had a relationship with students' emotional regulation. Results are given in Table 2.

Table 21: Correlation between Parenting Practices and Emotional Regulation by Regions

Sub-County	Parenting Practicing	SER	Pearson Correlation Coefficient Values	Sig. (2-tailed)
Meru South			-.107	.201
Tharaka South			.571*	.017
Maara			-.054	.487
Tharaka North			.414*	.015

* - Means significant at 5% level

Table 2 shows the results of the analysis of the correlation of between parenting practices (PP) and Students' Emotional Regulation (SER) of students in public secondary schools in Tharaka Nithi Sub-Counties. There was a statistically significant relationship between PP and SER in Tharaka South and Tharaka North sub-counties, where the Pearson correlation coefficients were .571 and .414 respectively, with the P-values less than .05. All the coefficients (r) were a positive correlation which means that an increase in PP practice in Tharaka South and Tharaka North sub-counties lead to significant increase in SER. In Meru South and Maara however, the Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) of the two variables i.e. PP and SER was not significant at 5% level.

To determine the overall relationship between parenting practices and students' emotional regulation in public secondary schools in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya, the respondents were asked to indicate whether parenting practices had a relationship with students' emotional regulation. The results are stipulated in Table 3.

Table 3: Correlation between Parenting Practices and emotional Regulation of Students

Area	Parental Practicing	SER	Pearson Correlation Coefficient Values	Sig. (2-tailed)
Tharaka Nithi County			.531	.010

* - Means significant at 5% level

Information in Table 3 shows the data analysis of whether there was no statistically significant relationship between parenting practices and students' emotional regulation in public secondary schools in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya. The results indicate that there was a statistically significant relationship between parenting practices and students' emotional regulation in the public secondary schools where the Pearson correlation coefficients was .531 with the P-value being less than .05. The Pearson correlation coefficient (r) showed a strong positive correlation, which means that an increase in parenting practices leads to significant increase in students' emotional regulation in public secondary schools in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0), 'There is no statistically significant relationship between parenting practices and students' emotional regulation in public secondary schools in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya' was therefore rejected and alternative hypothesis (H_a) accepted.

There is a growing evidence that the involvement of parenting practices to assist their children in emotional regulation. There has been a number of researches carried out on school going children in various countries. Rogers, Ryan, Theule, Keating and Adams (2009) conducted a research to assess the perception level of school going children about their parents and its relation to the involvement by their parents in the emotional regulation, the personal qualities of the children and their academic achievement at schools. They utilized an Ecological Model that encompassed Ecological theories (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The ecological model denotes that the emotional regulation and achievement regarding the schools results of school going students is influenced by myriad of factors in a contextual hierarchy. 110 grade 5 student participated in the study out of whom 47 were boys and 63 were girls. The participants also consisted to 121 grade 6 students with 63 being boys and 58 being girls. These students were selected on random from a Canadian school. The results of this study suggested that there is inverse influence of the father's academic pressure. Fathers were found to be less supportive in comparison to mothers. Mother's continuous guidance and reinforcement resulted in the school going children proper emotional regulation as well as their academic competence. The study also suggested that parental behavior was different towards male and female children. Both parents were applying more pressure on their son for an academic achievement while in the case of their daughter they were more patient and supportive. It is therefore evident that if the parental practice of strict monitoring and pressure is applied to the children, they tend to have distorted emotional regulation as opposed to if they are granted guidance and reinforcement instead. The findings are quite in unison with the findings of the current study, which established that there was indeed significant relationship between parenting practices and emotional regulation. In fact, they have a strong relationship.

4.5 Teachers and PTA Views on Parental Practices and Student's Emotional Regulation

The study sought the input of teachers and parents on parenting practices and emotional regulation of students. Most of the parents pointed out the link between parental control and emotional regulation of children as being directly proportionate. They said failure to control children results in indiscipline and development of behavior such as disregard for set rules. The teachers also emphasized on firm control parenting by asserting that when adolescents are left to make decisions without complete parental involvement the results are lack of self-control, social incompetence, inability to handle independence and immaturity on the part of the students. Some of the teachers also pointed out the link between the emotional regulation behaviors observed in the child and those exhibited by the parent. Emotionally unstable children pick the traits from parent's behavior. The following statements illustrate the findings:

All this boils down to parents. What parents teach their children as right, what parents show their children when faced with same circumstances is so important. If the parent gets irritated and batters the mum, the children will mirror this. You know why? (Pause) It is because this is an accepted behavior at home- to lose control of your anger.

[T3_Female_MS_TC_KII]

.....how we package our approach is what matters. We have also received a lot of support from some of our parents who constantly give their input whenever need be. Your children need to realize that there are acceptable ways of expressing frustrations, disappointments, happiness, anger or any other passionate feelings. It is advisable that the children can cry or lock themselves in a room when dealing with anger or frustrations but not break the glasses, or torch the house or hit his/her other siblings. You have to exercise

control. However, you must be understanding when they face such feelings and maybe give them space to process them and not just be there directing her or him on what to do.

[T2_Male_MS_TC_KII]

It happened that the father used to batter his mum while they watch which resulted to divorce. If I did not express interest in giving him a chance, the principal would have probably not admitted him. However, I believe in the process of control, monitoring and guidance that I can offer. We take them through a process that will eventually make them understand how their behaviors and attitude towards others affect people negatively, by conforming to our idea, they eventually adapt to new ways of doing things.

[T2_Female_TS_TC_KII]

Through communication, it is possible to coach the learners on coping mechanisms to regulate their emotions thus allowing one to cope with overwhelming or painful emotions. Some of the positive or healthy emotional regulation can include counting to 10 when angry, talking with friends when upset, walking backwards when angry, walking to relieve stress, journaling, and meditation. The healthy coping mechanisms encourage a person or persons to think through their emotions, which encourage them to use them repeatedly because they help and do not cause harm. Whilst, the negative or unhealthy emotional regulation includes smoking, drinking alcohol or using substances, cutting, bottling it up, denial, and lashing out. These are not so good because they can cause injury and drive others away. When used, they often allow the person to avoid their feelings instead of dealing with them.

[T5_Male_MS_TC_KII]

Everything boils down to communication. How an approach is made determines its success and whether it will be positively embraced or not. Language gives us the vehicle to communicate approval and disapproval, which would act as a guidance to help the child understand and positively regulate their emotions.

[T6_Female_MS_TC_KII]

Being a class teacher of a girls' school this is a key strategy we use. Girls' are taught to regulate their emotions especially since they are more affected by mood swings. Girls also show what affects them emotionally easily compared to boys. If you monitor them closely you might realize some indications of gloominess when they are facing some challenges or when they are facing some emotional issues. If you realize that, you can take steps as a parent or teacher, which in some cases might need counseling, and in some, just some guidance.

[T4_Female_TS_TC_KII]

Parental warmth directly impacts on emotional regulation of the children. As far as I am concerned, keeping their emotions in check is the first step to gaining control of any situation no matter how hard. We work inseparably with the parents in ensuring that the students exercise emotional regulation and control. We have a very active guidance and counseling department- we even extend our counseling to the parents by advising them on how to handle children in a loving and warm way. The guardians have been supportive and I am happy to say most of our parents are warm and friendly. Children love when guardians

are friendly. In turn, they learn how to be friendly, how to be patient, how to respond to different circumstances because of the example they get from their parents

[T5_Male_TS_TC_KII]

Parents have to be warm to their kids to achieve high levels of emotional regulation and discipline. Parents who are not warm should know that they are nurturing very unfeeling children, children who will not care about what others feel as well. Being warm according to me is the single most important aspect of parental practices that directs the emotional regulation of the child. The teachers as well should show warmth and love to our children. Trust me if you are warm to your child, they would emotionally regulate themselves just to always win your warmth. People love peace and love and so do children.

[R2_Male_TN_PT_FGD]

The findings are consistent with the views by Baumrind (2005) who found out that youths raised in an authoritative parenting style environment were more competent and capable of adjusting. Santrock (2004), also posits that children, especially adolescents develop behaviors such as a disregard for rules if not properly controlled and this might further lead to a lack of respect and an inability to control personal behaviors; making them to be “domineering, egocentric, non-compliant, and have difficulties in peer relation”. The results concur with those of Spera (2005) who suggests that appropriate levels of behavior control guide and regulate children’s behavior by providing clear, consistent parental expectations and the structure to facilitate competent and responsible behavior. The results were also similar to those of Brown (2003) who identified that Children’s temperaments and parental behavior interact and influence each other. Posse and Malgosa (2002) noted that harsh or physical discipline, yelling or scolding, expressing disappointment, and shaming, all of which are hallmarks of authoritarian parenting, have detrimental effects on child adjustment in cultures around the world. However, the findings of Gardner (1989) on inconsistent parenting imply that even though parental behavior is influenced by child behavior, parents’ actions contribute distinctively to a child’s later behavior.

In the role of development of children’s emotional regulation, parents are thought to play a major role in adolescent risk engagement and response to issues through the parenting practices employed. Parental monitoring has been found to be the influential and most consistent parenting practice that impacts on adolescents’ sexual risk taking (Baumrind, 2005). Findings in this study are therefore consistent with these aforementioned scholarly works. Generally, the responses provided prove that there is a link between parental warmth and emotional regulation. The parents said some negative emotions of children are learnt because of harsh parenting practices. The teachers who directed most of the blame to fathers who are absent or cold towards children which affects the temperaments and self-control of the children also shared these statements. The teachers reiterated a clear link between bad parenting practices and children’s emotional deregulation which in the long run leads to social problems.

These findings are consistent with the views posited by Hamon, & Schrodts (2012), who asserted that emotion regulation among children is socialized through processes such as parental practices. Parents impact on children’s self-control skills and shape children’s emotion regulation through parental warmth (Belsky, 1997). Parental affection, warmth, and love is related with low levels of externalizing behavioral problems and children’s effortful control which in turn results in emotion regulation and positive attachment (Dunn, 1992). These views are consistent with the views posited

by Brown, (2003) who asserted that emotion regulation among children is socialized through processes such as parental practices. Parents impact on children's self-control skills and shape children's emotion regulation through parental warmth (Belsky, 1997). Parental affection, warmth, and love is related with low levels of externalizing behavioral problems and children's effortful control which in turn results in emotion regulation and positive attachment (Baumrind, 2005).

5. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- i. Parents need to monitor and control the behavior of children since this is likely to translate into students' emotional regulation, academic achievement and low-risk health behavior.
- ii. Students need to establish cordial relationships with parents in order to enhance emotional regulation.
- iii. The county government may consider providing civic education to parents on the need to embrace proper parenting practices as a measure of curbing emotional instability among students.

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