

Influence of Negligent Parenting on the Management of Students' Discipline in Public Secondary Schools in Meru County, Kenya

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Abstract

Discipline management in Kenyan secondary schools has become increasingly complicated, with many studies citing parenting style as a major determiner of its effectiveness. One of the major parenting styles that is dominant in the 21st Century is Negligent parenting, hence this study sought to establish how it influences management of students' discipline in schools. The style is characterized by a lack of parental involvement, supervision, and responsiveness. The study aimed to investigate the association between negligent parenting and student discipline management to shed light on the unique challenges and implications in this context. The research utilized a descriptive survey design and incorporated both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Data was collected using questionnaires and interview schedules from a sample size of 552 respondents, comprising students, principals/deputy principals, guidance and counselling masters, and parents' representatives within public secondary schools in Meru County. The study findings reveal that negligent parenting style has a statistically significant influence on student discipline management ($\chi^2=26.428$, $df=1$, $p=0.000<0.05$). The study concludes that addressing negligent parenting behaviors is crucial for effective student discipline management in schools. Therefore, it is recommended that parents be encouraged to increase their involvement, supervision, and responsiveness to their children's needs to promote a more disciplined school environment. The findings of this study hold implications for educational policymakers, school administrators, and parents in developing targeted interventions and strategies to address the impact of negligent parenting on student discipline.

Keywords: *Negligent parenting style, management of students' discipline, public secondary schools*

1.0 Introduction

Recently, the number of indiscipline cases and student unrest has been on the rise in Kenya. Examples of such incidences include a wave of arson cases in secondary schools across the country after schools resumed following the long COVID-19 breaks in March 2020 (The Standard January 2021). About 26 secondary schools in the Nyanza region were closed indefinitely within July due to persistent unrest (Omollo, 2018). Also, over 100 schools were faced with unrest within two months in 2016 (Wanzala and Muinde, 2016), some leading to the burning of school structures.

Wanzala (2017) associated these cases with several incidences including poor social backgrounds and upbringing that promote indiscipline among students. Waithaka (2017)

revealed that Students discipline and unrest in Secondary Schools were largely due to social economic pressures on most urban dwellers in the form of inadequate housing, high cost of living, and poorly developed social amenities which meant that both parents in a family had to be employed, thus spending most of the time away from the children. The important social and moral upbringing of most urban children therefore was left in the hands of adolescent babysitters or housemaids with no experience in childcare and who themselves needed moral and social guidance and counseling. The committee recommended that parents are the first educators of their children and should be encouraged to spend more time with them, educating, guiding, counseling, and socializing them in matters pertaining to responsible adulthood, (Republic of Kenya, 1991).

As highlighted in past reports and studies, parents play a crucial role in the development of children's behaviour and are considered the first educators of their children (Gafoor & Kurrukkan, 2014; Republic of Kenya, 1991). Kuppens & Ceulamans (2019) highlight that several styles of parenting are demonstrated by parents when bringing up their children and are classified based on the parent's responsiveness and demandingness. By studying parenting behaviour, a better and in-depth understanding of the role of parents in influencing a child's behaviour and social characteristics is well understood in relation to an individual's development outcomes. Specifically, this study focuses on one of the emerging parentings styles which is negligent parenting style. Wanja (2014) highlights that negligent parents are inattentive towards their children where the children's emotional and mental needs are neglected due to the little time and attention given to the child. Students brought up by negligent parents are not discouraged from immature responses and are not self-reliant which leaves the child, mostly boys, being selfish, rebellious, aggressive, and aimless with low independence and sense of achievement.

Issues related to the management of student discipline are among the major challenges affecting school management worldwide. In Japan, issues such as bullying are a great concern, with an increase of 25% in 2000. Violence against teachers also rose by 19.2%. Such figures indicate a rise of school indiscipline in 21st century as opposed to the previous years due to an increasingly individualistic society (Hendell, 2000). Japanese parents use a mix of verbal reprimanding and guidance to help discipline their children with low self-efficacy. However, traditional Japanese discipline entailed total control and verbal and physical beating, but this has changed in recent years to a more negligent discipline regime which has seen an increase in self-centered and rude students.

In South Africa, school violence is rampant, with 12.8% of students having been threatened, 5.8% battered, 4.6% stolen from, and 2.3% having experienced sexual violence while in school (Ncotsa and Shumba, 2013). Krittza and Grobler (2015) found that South Africa has taken some important measures to improve management of students' discipline in schools. Some of the strategies involve the use of advocacy and social mobilization where parents are engaged in ways of promoting child discipline by setting examples through non-violent approaches to handling issues as well as giving the children a sense of direction. These moves also seek to address cases of sexual violence in schools by encouraging parents to engage their children in the good moral behaviors and organizing seminars to educate the public on the adverse effects of the use of physical violence, use of threats demeaning languages, giving the children total freedom with no monitoring and follow-up on the violence and indiscipline of children in schools and in the neighborhoods (UNICEF, 2018).

The trend is no different in Kenya, especially in Meru County. According to the data provided by CDE-Meru County (2022), both private and public secondary schools have been

experiencing a range of school unrest across the year. These unrests include walking out of school, going on strikes, burning down the dorms, and more serious unrests such as arson and class-boy-cots. It is in light of this background that the study seeks to answer the research question: What is the influence of negligent parenting style on the management of student discipline in public secondary schools in Meru County?

2.0 Literature Review

Martínez, Murgui, Garcia, and Garcia (2019) conducted a study to analyze parenting styles that could serve as risk or protective factors for cyberbullying and bullying victimization in Spain taking into account the predisposition to aggression of the adolescents. The research argued that the risk effect or protective effect of parenting style for adolescent-related behavior such as self-esteem, antisocial behavior, and school adjustment was analyzed. The research sampled 1109 adolescents aged between 12 and 17 years. The results found that indulgent or permissive parenting which is characterized by the use of reasoning and warmth practices serves as a protective factor for traditional bullying and cyberbullying victimization. The study found that negligent parenting is characterized by a higher risk factor for bullying and victimization. The study, was, however, conducted in Spain which limits the generalizability of the study results to the current context.

Lutfi (2020) conducted a study to analyze the factors that predispose adolescents to behave as delinquently. The research targeted the use of motorbikes by students aged 17 years, which was below the traffic acts in Turkey. The researchers adopted a quantitative research method where 394 students were sampled. The paper focused on the form of parenting and how it was associated with under-age driving of motorbikes despite it being a violation of rules and regulations. The findings revealed that the respondents knew that their behaviors were a violation of the rules. However, the environment they were raised in was found to allow for these actions as it made them feel safe. That is society was found to be generally negligent when the children were raised by less strict parents who did not set any demands or rules to guide the behaviors of their children. As a result, the children felt free to engage in any form of behavior, even those that go against the local laws. The study, however, focused only on the students' use of motorbikes as an indication of delinquent behaviors; hence other behaviors that can manifest due to negligent parenting were not explored.

In a more recent study, Islam, Shoukat, and Ibrahim (2021) argue that juvenile delinquency is a major problem across the world. So, the researchers conducted a study to examine how family institutions influenced childhood delinquency. The researchers hypothesized that negligent parenting is much more likely to result in childhood delinquency. To test this, the researchers targeted three prisons in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to understand how family influences juvenile delinquency. The research found that negligent parenting where there is low demandingness and low control leads to delinquent acts. These families are characterized by parents who leave children to their own devices with no demands set for them, no involvement in their lives, no consequences for wrongful behavior, and no affection. The study, was, however, conducted in prisons; hence the findings were not generable to the current context.

Similarly, Huassain and Warr (2019) also conducted a study to examine the influence of negligent parenting style on children's behaviors. The researchers adopted an intensive approach in case study research where 200 respondents were selected for the study in rural and urban areas of Srinagar district in Kashmir Valley. The study aimed to trace the causes of child anger and aggressiveness and how parent negligence contributes to these behaviors. The research found that parental negligence is characterized by detached fathers and mothers who

are not responsive or demanding. They may be careless and unaware of their children's need for affection and discipline. Negligent parents hands and are low in warmth and control and are not engaged, understanding, or concerned with their children. The negligent parents were also found to dismiss their children's emotions and emotions even when they provide their children with basic needs.

According to Hoskins (2014), neglectful or uninvolved parents refers to the parenting approach where the parent simply fulfills the physical needs of the child while being removed emotionally and disciplinary-wise in raising their children. Sanwar (2016) argues that uninvolved or neglectful parenting approaches have the most negative effect on the outcome of adolescents as compared to other styles of parenting. Such parents do not monitor their children or even supervise their behaviors such as the time spent with friends or watching on their phones while giving them money and a lot of free unmonitored time which fails to support the children's self-regulation. A neglectful parent is characterized by both low responsiveness and low demandingness. These terms show that parents are disengaged from the responsibilities of child-rearing. There is a lack of structure of control over one's children which also portrays a lack of intimacy in the parent-child dyad. Consequently, the adolescent of such parents engrosses in expressing behaviors. Such behaviors include delinquent acts such as vandalism, petty theft, rape, assault, and other offenses. Sanwar (2014) further found that adolescents of parents who were uninvolved in their lives were more likely to drink alcohol and smoke as compared to adolescents from households where parents practice authoritative parenting.

Checa and Abundis-Gutierrez (2018) conducted a literature review study in Mexico and Spain to examine the influence of negligent parenting style on the behaviors and academic performance of children. The study found that negligent parenting is characterized by both low responsiveness and demand; hence, neglectful parents are not warm nor supportive and are uninvolved. For instance, they minimize their interaction with their children and show indifference to their needs and demands. Additionally, the neglectful parents were found not to monitor their children's actions and activities and also neglect discipline entirely while failing to also provide a structured environment for their children. Negligent parents may also neglect discipline or not use strict disciplinary practices regularly.

In another study, Moreno-Ruiz, Estévez, Jiménez, and Murgui (2018) conducted a study to analyze the relationship between neglectful parenting style and reactive and proactive school violence among peers. The research sampled 2399 Spanish adolescents aged between 12-18 years and it was found that neglectful parenting style was associated with low parental control of the children's behavior and low perception of parental support or affective involvement. These types of parenting are associated with frequent school bullying behavior. Moreno-Ruiz, Estévez, Jiménez, and Murgui (2018) found that neglectful and authoritarian parenting styles were most associated with violence among the youth because they have scarce parental emotional involvement. The absence of emotional support is an important dimension in adolescents' engagement in violent behaviors. The study, was, however, conducted in Spain; hence, the findings were not generalizable to the local context; hence the current paper sought to fill this gap in the literature.

Parenting styles are strongly associated with adolescent discipline, health and well-being in general asserts Lau, Wong, and Dudovitz (2018). The three authors sought to examine how parenting and school disciplinary style affect student behaviour. The longitudinal natural study experiment utilized a 2-year follow-up survey and interviews targeting 1159 students from 159 high schools across Los Angeles. The researchers determined the behaviour of students in

different schools and families based on their parenting styles. The findings revealed that a significant association exists between schools and families with no formal rules, structure or punishment. It was found that negligent parents use excessive love where the children are shown love even when they do wrong or are bought gifts such as trending clothes and phones to solicit good behavior from the children. This was also found to result in an increase in violent delinquency, substance abuse, and teenage pregnancy among other unhealthy behaviours.

The findings concur with Gerlinger and Wo (2015) who found that authoritative parenting provides a sense of security as well as a structure that fosters responsibility and respect for authority in contrast to permissive parenting which leads to neglect and vulnerability to peer influence. The children are left to their own devices as parents accept the children's privacy without following up on their friends or activities to determine whether they are appropriate for their age. Wanja (2014) opines that negligent parenting is a recipe for disaster with parents assuming that their children are mature and self-reliant which leaves them vulnerable to influence by peers. They are also not used to being accountable which makes them rude and adept attention seekers even if it comes at the expense of breaking rules. The current study is limited by the self-reporting nature of the study from a single point in time. The measures of parental and school disciplinary style may not be an accurate reflection of an existing culture. The current study will combine questionnaires soliciting the parenting styles of both mothers and fathers and interviews to ensure that bias from self-reporting is eliminated.

Mirzae and Kadivarzare (2014) investigated the association between child-rearing styles and high school resoluteness in Tehran. The correlational and cross-sectional study targeted 176 high school learners selected using multi-stage cluster sampling. Personal surveys and parental authority questionnaires were used to collect data which was analyzed using SPSS software. The study conclusions showed that a positive noteworthy association exists between parenting style and hardiness. In reference to negligent parenting, the researchers found that students from such backgrounds tend to like self-direction and self-discipline due to the lack of a formal authoritative figure in their life to make them accountable for their actions. These students were found to be prone to irrational decision-making and abuse of drugs because their parents give them money whenever they demand without asking what the money is for while also allowing the children to have freedom as they desire.

Nathanson, Rivers, Flynn, and Brackett (2016) agree with this view pinioning that emotionally intelligent students need a stable home environment with clear set rules, and code of conduct, and an authoritative figure to foster emotionally and mentally strong students. However, the findings are limited by study methodology which assessed students using self-reports of perceptions instead of conducting an objective and independent evaluation of parent behaviours and characteristics. The current work will overcome this limitation by focusing on objectivity and independence in evaluating parental styles for both father and mother; rather than relying solely on self-reports.

In a study conducted and purposed to determine the challenges facing the school administration in public primary schools in Imenti South Sub County in Meru, the researcher used simple random sampling to select 303 respondents who were issued with questionnaires and subjected to interviews. The findings revealed that unfriendly home environments, parents who failed to meet the needs of the pupils, and who abuse alcohol posed a challenge in the management of pupil's discipline. The findings, though reflecting the situation in Meru County has not only been done in one sub-county, but also focused on primary school learners while the current study seeks to examine the management of students in secondary schools.

3.0 Methodology

The study employed a descriptive survey design, which allowed for the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem (Cresswell, 2003). Surveys are recognized as a methodical approach to gather accurate and reliable data, essential for informed decision-making (Sekaran, 2003). In this study, the independent variable examined was negligent parenting, which has a significant influence on child behavior, while the dependent variable focused on the management of student discipline. Meru County was selected as the study location due to the occurrence of sporadic strikes and incidents of school property being burned in recent times. Additionally, Meru County provided an ideal setting as it encompasses both rural and urban areas, thereby offering diversity in terms of different family experiences. The target population consisted of 50 public secondary schools within Meru County, and the sampling strategy is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Study Population and Sample

Category	Total Population	Number Sampled	Sample%	Research Instrument
Student	12500	376	68.12	Questionnaire
Principals/ Deputies	50	44	7.97	Questionnaire
Guidance & Counseling Masters	50	44	7.97	Interview
Parents	50	44	7.97	Interview
Total	12650	552	100%	

For data collection, a combination of close-ended and open-ended questionnaires was employed as the primary instrument in this study. These questionnaires were administered to students and principals/deputy principals due to their cost-effectiveness, minimal interviewer bias, and ability to efficiently collect data from a large sample size (Kothari, 2004). Additionally, interviews were conducted with parents and school counselling masters to gather qualitative data. The quantitative data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), while the qualitative data was thematically analyzed by identifying recurring keywords and phrases.

4.0 Results and Discussion

After data collection and cleaning, a high response rate of 97.6% (380 respondents) was achieved from principals, counselors, and parent representatives. The student's discipline was categorized as either good or delinquent, and Figure 1 illustrates the distribution and frequency of students based on their discipline. The determination of students' discipline was based on their school records, taking into account their past behaviors.

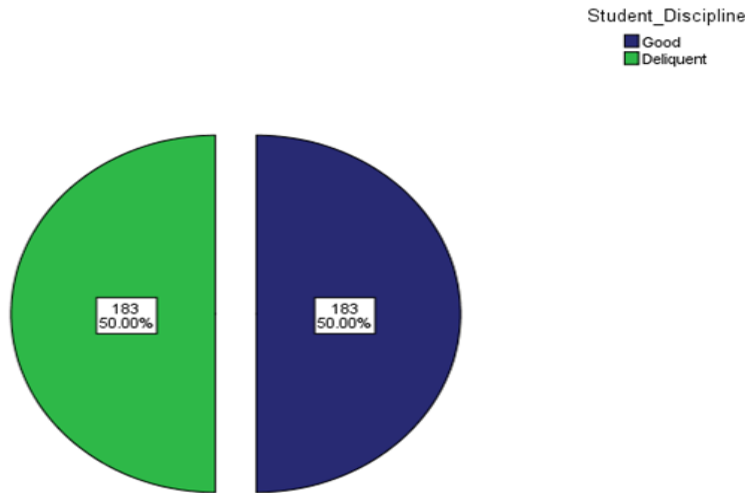


Figure 1: Distribution of Student Discipline

Figure 1 demonstrates that 183 students (50%) fell into both the good and delinquent categories. To ensure fairness and facilitate a comprehensive analysis of the influence of parenting style on students' discipline, an equal number of disciplined and delinquent students were selected from public schools based on existing records of their behaviours. This selection process allowed for the inclusion of both well-behaved and delinquent students, providing a representative sample for the study.

The researcher issued the principals and students with statements on a Likert scale and asked them to indicate their responses on negligent parenting style. Their responses are as displayed in the tables 2, 3, and 4.

Table 2: Students' Responses on Mothers' Negligent Parenting

	Very wrong'		Mostly wrong'		Sometimes right, sometimes wrong		Mostly right'		Very right		Mean	SD
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
Are emotionally distant from me	203	55.5	42	11.5	29	7.9	17	4.6	75	20.5	2.23	1.618
We have limited interactions	159	43.4	59	16.1	24	6.6	48	13.1	76	20.8	2.52	1.623
Provides no supervision over what I do	182	49.7	30	8.2	57	15.6	35	9.6	62	16.9	2.36	1.562

Sets no demands for my behavior	216	59.0	39	10.7	30	8.2	16	4.4	65	17.8	2.11	1.562
Skips school events	244	66.7	32	8.7	21	5.7	32	8.7	37	10.1	1.87	1.404
Give me the freedom to do as I desire	176	48.1	65	17.8	46	12.6	25	6.8	54	14.8	2.22	1.471

Table 3: Students' Responses on Fathers' Negligent Parenting

	Very wrong'		Mostly wrong'		Sometimes right, sometimes wrong		Mostly right'		Very right		Mean	SD
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
	Are emotionally distant from me	181	49.5	36	9.8	42	11.5	27	7.4	80		
We have limited interactions	115	31.4	59	16.1	37	10.1	62	16.9	93	25.4	2.89	1.612
Provides no supervision over what I do	153	41.8	37	10.1	63	17.2	45	12.3	68	18.6	2.56	1.565
Sets no demands for my behavior	173	47.3	40	10.9	47	12.8	34	9.3	72	19.7	2.43	1.601
Skips school events	187	51.4	43	11.8	38	10.4	31	8.5	63	17.3	2.30	1.587
Give me the freedom to do as I desire	145	39.6	56	15.3	60	16.4	31	8.5	74	20.2	2.54	1.559

Table 2 shows the results of the students' perceptions regarding their mothers' negligent parenting styles. As the table shows, the majority of the students indicated that their mothers are not emotionally distant from them deduced from the mean value 2.23 which implies that most of the students' responses regarding their mothers' emotional distance from them were mainly skewed towards mostly wrong. However, the high standard deviation value of 1.618 implies that the students' views regarding their mothers' emotional distance were not similar as some of the students claimed that the statement 'Are emotionally distant from me' was very

right 75(20.5%) and 17(4.6%) claimed that the statement was mostly right. However, the majority of the students, 203(55.5%) claimed that the statement was very wrong and 42(11.5%) claimed that the statement was mostly wrong. Based on these findings, it can be deduced that the majority of the students' mothers were not emotionally distant from them, but some parents were emotionally distant from their children.

In Table 3 the students' responses regarding their fathers' negligent parenting styles are provided. As the table displays, the majority of the students generally claimed that it was mostly wrong that their fathers were emotionally distant from the mean value ($M=2.89$, $SD=1.612$). The mean value suggests that the majority of the students' fathers were not emotionally distant from them as the majority of the students (49.5%) claimed that the statement 'Are emotionally distant from me' was very wrong with only 59(16.1%) asserting that the statement was mostly wrong. On the contrary, only a minority 42(11.5%) claimed that the statement was sometimes right and sometimes wrong, 27(7.4%) claimed it was mostly right and 80(21.9%) claimed that it was very right. These findings suggest that in general, the student's fathers generally are close to them emotionally, but based on the standard deviation value, the students' responses were highly varied. Nonetheless, these findings suggest that the fathers are emotionally close to their children which in turn means that their children feel secure in their fathers' feelings for them which also inspire confidence and caring attitudes among the students. Moreover, as Lutfi (2020), found, the environment in which children are raised shapes their actions. It can either make them feel safe or threaten them. Negligent parents do not set any demands or rules to guide the behaviors of their children. The parents are emotionally unavailable to the children is high.

The table also shows that the majority of the students' views regarding the statement 'We have limited interactions' were skewed towards mostly wrong as indicated by the mean value of 2.52 which implies that most students claimed the statement was mostly wrong supported by the frequency analysis which showed that 159(43.5%) claimed that it was very wrong and 59(16.1%) claimed it was mostly wrong. However, the high standard deviation value of 1.62 also shows that there was a lot of deviation from the mean value regarding the mothers' provision of a few guidelines. For instance, 76(20.8%) which is a substantial number of students, claimed that the statement was very true while 48(13.1%) claimed that the statement was mostly right. Based on these findings, it can be deduced that some mothers rarely interacted with their children. However, for the majority of the children, their mothers tend not to be negligent implying that they have a lot of interaction with their mothers.

Table 3 further shows that the majority of the fathers provide supervision for what their children do as seen in the mean ($M=2.56$, $SD=1.565$) which suggests that the majority of the students' actions were supervised by their fathers. Furthermore, the frequency analysis also shows that the majority 153(41.8%) claimed that the statement was very wrong and 37(10.1%) claimed that the statement was mostly wrong. These findings imply that fathers supervise the actions and behaviors of their children. However, the views were also dispersed from the mean average value as seen in the high standard deviation value which shows that not all of the students' fathers supervised the behaviors of the students, though a minority claimed that the statement was very right 68(18.6%) and 45(12.3%) also argued that the statement was mostly right. This suggests that some of the fathers failed to supervise what their children do, though the majority did supervise their children. As Wanja (2014) opines that negligent parenting is a recipe for disaster with parents assuming that their children are mature and self-reliant which leaves them vulnerable to influence by peers. They are also not used to being accountable which makes them rude and adept attention seekers even if it comes at the expense of breaking rules.

Table 2 also shows a mean value of 2.36 for the statement ‘Provides no supervision over what I do’ with most responses lying on either side of the Likert scale. This shows that the students’ views which suggests that the students view on their mothers providing no supervision were highly dispersed as is also evident in the high standard deviation value of 1.562. The findings show that a section of the students 182(49.7%) claimed that the statement was very wrong showing that for these students, the mothers do provide supervision for what their children do. However, 62(16.9%) of the students also claimed that the statement was very right which also shows that a good number of the mothers also fail to provide any form of supervision for their children. This implies that for some students, their mothers do not make any effort to supervise what they do. However, this is not the case for all the students as a huge number of the students claimed that their mothers supervise what they do.

Table 3 also shows a mean value of 2.43 for the statement ‘Sets no demands for my behavior’ implying that the majority of the fathers mostly set demands on their children’s behaviors as can be seen in the frequency analysis where 173(47.3%) of the students claimed the statement was very wrong while only a minority 43(11.8%) claimed the statement was mostly wrong. From these findings, it can be deduced that the children were given demands on their behaviors by their fathers implying that the fathers have certain expectations from their children. Even so, the responses, despite being skewed towards setting demands on the children’s behaviors, were also dispersed from the mean value as is evidenced by the high standard deviation from the mean (SD=1.601) which implies that for some of the students 63(17.3%) and 31(8.5%) the statement was very right and mostly right. This suggests that some fathers failed to set any demands on their children’s behaviors. Similar to the arguments by Lutfi (2020) negligent parents do not set any demands or rules to guide the behaviors of their children. As a result, the children feel free to engage in any form of behavior, even those that go against the local laws. In addition, Martínez, Murgui, Garcia, and Garcia (2019) also found that negligent parenting is characterized by a higher risk factor for bullying and victimization due to the lack of a structured and guided environment. Additionally, as Lau, Wong, and Dudovitz (2018) argue, a significant association exists between schools and families with no formal rules, structure, or punishment. It was found that negligent parents use excessive love where the children are shown love even when they do wrong or are bought gifts such as trending clothes and phones to solicit good behavior from the children.

Table 2 also shows that the majority of the students’ views regarding the statement ‘Sets no demands for my behavior’ were also dispersed from the mean value of 2.11 as indicated in the high standard deviation value of 1.562. The researcher, from these findings, can deduce that most of the students claimed that the statement was very wrong 216(59.0%) and 39(10.7%) claimed that this statement was mostly wrong. These findings suggest that for most of the students, their mothers set demands for their behavior. However, there was also a section of the students 65(17.8%) who argued that the statement was very right, and 16(4.4%) who claimed that the statement was mostly right. From these claims, it is evident that some mothers do not hold their children accountable for their actions nor set demands on their behaviors. This signifies the mothers’ lack of emotional involvement in their children’s lives which has serious implications for the children.

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Table 2 also shows that the majority of the respondents generally claimed that the statement 'Skips school events' was generally very wrong as seen in the mean value of 1.87. However, the responses from the students regarding this statement were dispersed from the mean as evidenced by the high standard deviation value of 1.404. This implies that some of the students were of the opinion that this statement was very right 37(10.1%) while 32(8.7%) claimed that the statement was mostly right. This implies that some of the mothers do not attend their children's school events. However, most of the students 244(66.7%) claimed that the statement was very wrong and 32(8.7%) also claimed that the statement was mostly wrong. From these findings, it can be deduced that most of the mothers do not miss their children's school events which further implies that the mothers are supportive of their children's academic and school life which they show by engaging in the activities or events in the schools.

In addition, the students in Table 4 also generally claimed that the statement 'Skips school events' was mostly wrong 43(11.8%) and very wrong 187(51.4%). This suggests that most of the students, did not skip any school events. This observation is supported by the mean value of 2.30, but the high dispersion from the mean value presented in the SD (1.587) however, implies that these views were not uniform among all the students. Rather, some of the students' fathers seemed to miss their children's school events. This can be seen for instance, in the responses 63(17.3%) of the students claimed the statement was very right while 31(8.5%) claimed the statement was mostly wrong supporting the observation that some of the fathers attend their children's school events. These are similar to the claims made by Islam, Shoukat, and Ibrahim who argue that families are characterized by parents who leave children to their own devices with no demands set for them, no involvement in their lives, no consequences for wrongful behavior, and no affection. These findings are in line with the claims made by Checa and Abundis-Gutierrez (2018) who argue that neglectful parents do not monitor their children's actions and activities and also neglect discipline entirely while failing to also provide a structured environment for their children. However, in the case of these findings, the mothers were reported to attend their children's school events and not miss out on activities involving their children.

Lastly, the table also shows a mean value of 2.22 for the statement 'Give me the freedom to do as I desire'. This shows that the students' which suggests that the students view on their mothers on their mothers giving them freedom were highly dispersed as is also evident in the high standard deviation value of 1.471. The findings show that a section of the students 176(48.1%) claimed that the statement was very wrong showing that for these students, the mothers do not

give their children the freedom to do as they desire. However, 54(14.8%) of the students also claimed that the statement was very right which also shows that a good number of the mothers also give their children the freedom to do as they desire. This implies that for some students, their mothers do not make any effort to be engaged or to know what their children are up to. The children are given the freedom to choose and do as they desire. However, this is not the case for all the students as a huge number of the students claimed that their mothers do not give them the freedom to do as they choose implying that there are some guidelines on how the students are supposed to act. As stated, by Huassain and Warr (2019) parental negligence is characterized by detached fathers and mothers who are not responsive or demanding. They may be careless and unaware of their children’s need for affection and discipline. Negligent parents hands off and are low in warmth and control and are not engaged, understanding or concerned with their children. The negligent parents were also found to dismiss their children’s emotions and emotions even when they provide their children with basic needs.

Aside from the children, the principals were also given a range of items and asked to indicate with Yes or No the fathers’ and mothers’ authoritative parenting styles. Table 4 shows their responses.

Table 4: Principal's Responses on Negligent Parenting Style

	Father				Mother			
	Yes		No		Yes		No	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Parents are emotionally distant from their children	38	86.4	6	13.6	40	90.9	4	9.1
Parents have limited interactions with their children	32	72.7	12	27.3	40	90.9	4	9.1
Parents do not supervise what their children do	34	77.3	10	22.7	40	90.9	4	9.1
Parents set no demands on their children’s behavior	31	70.5	13	29.5	40	90.9	4	9.1
Parents skip school events	41	93.2	3	6.8	37	84.1	7	15.9
Parents give their children the freedom to do as they desire	40	90.9	4	9.1	29	65.9	15	34.1

Table 4 shows the principals’ responses in regard to the fathers' and mothers’ negligent parenting style. The table first shows that the majority of the principals 38(86.4%) indicated that the fathers are emotionally distant from their children and similarly 40(90.9%) of the principals were of the same view as the fathers. From these findings, it can be deduced that according to the principals, both the fathers and mothers are emotionally distant from their children.

The table further shows that the majority of the principals, 32(72.7%) also claimed that the fathers have limited interactions with their children, and the same views were also expressed

by the majority of the principals 40(90.9%) for the mothers. These findings imply that the mothers and fathers of public secondary school students do not interact and spend quality time with their children. The limited association between the children and parents common in these types of parenting is associated with delinquent behaviors such as school bullying behavior. Moreno-Ruiz, Estévez, Jiménez, and Murgui (2018) found that neglectful parenting style was most associated with violence and delinquent behaviors among the youth because they have scarce parental emotional involvement where parents fail to spend quality time with their children. The absence of emotional support is an important dimension in adolescents' engagement in violent behaviors.

Further, the table also shows that the majority of the principals 34(77.3%) and 40(90.9%) indicated that the fathers and mothers respectively do not supervise what their children do. From these findings, it can be argued that according to the principals, both fathers and mothers generally do not engage with their children in terms of seeing and guiding what they do, but rather let them do anything they want without supervision. The study further shows that according to the majority of the principals, the parents generally set no demands for their children's behaviors, as the majority of the principals indicated 31(70.5%) for the fathers and 40(90.9%) for the mothers claimed that there are no demands set on the children's behaviors. This suggests that the principals think that the majority of mothers and fathers are not concerned with overseeing and setting any demands for how their children act. Moreover, as Checa and Abundis-Gutierrez (2018) indicate, neglectful parenting is characterized by both low responsiveness and demand; hence, neglectful parents are not warm nor supportive and are uninvolved. For instance, they minimize their interaction with their children and show indifference to their needs and demands. Additionally, the neglectful parents were found not to monitor their children's actions and activities and also neglect discipline entirely while failing to also provide a structured environment for their children. Negligent parents may also neglect discipline or not use strict disciplinary practices regularly.

Further, it can also be seen from the table that most of the principals 41(93.2%) indicated that the fathers do not attend school events for their children. Similarly, most of the principals 37(84.1%) argued that the mothers skip their children's school events. These findings suggest that in general, mothers and fathers place little focus on their children's school events. Lastly, the findings also revealed that the majority of the principals 40(90.9%) claimed that fathers give their children the freedom to do as they wish, but this was contrary for the mothers as only most of the principals 29(65.9%) claimed that mothers tend to give their children the freedom to do as they desire. From these findings, it can be deduced that the majority of mothers and fathers give their children a lot of freedom to do as they wish. This implies that the majority of the students, according to the principals are not exposed to any type of consequences for any actions or behaviors be it good or delinquent.

The student's discipline was identified based on their previous records obtained from the schools. To determine the influence of neglectful parenting styles for both the mothers and fathers on the children's discipline, the items on neglectful parenting were computed and the parents who scored low on the scale i.e. less than 3.5 were categorized as non-negligent while those who scored high (>3.5) was categorized as negligent parents. Table 5 shows the chi-square analysis on the influence of neglectful parenting style on the management of students' discipline.

Table 5: Chi-Square Results on Negligent Parenting and Student Discipline Management

		Student Discipline				X ²	Df	P Value
		Good		Delinquent				
		F	F	F	F			
Negligent Mother	No	179	48.9	149	40.7	26.428	1	.000
	Yes	4	0.11	34	9.29			
Negligent Father	No	156	43.4	141	38.5	4.018	1	.030
	Yes	27	7.38	42	11.47			

Table 5 displays the chi-square results for the fathers' and mothers' negligent parenting styles and the management of the student's discipline. The table shows that the majority of the students who had good discipline 179(48.9%) were more likely to be those whose mothers were not negligent whereas the majority of the mothers who were negligent 34(9.29%) were more likely to have delinquent students. Based on these findings, it can be deduced that mothers who are negligent in their parenting style were much more likely to have students with bad discipline. However, the students with good discipline were more likely to be from families where the mothers were not negligent implying that the students were not neglected emotionally, were not given the freedom to do as they desire, and were guided by their parents through the setting of demands. This association was found to be statistically significant based on the chi-square results where ($x^2=26.428$, $df=1$, $p=0.000<0.05$) which suggest that mothers with negligent parenting styles were associated with discipline management in the schools.

Table 5 also displays the chi-square results for the father's negligent parenting style and the management of the student's discipline. The table shows that the majority of the students who had good discipline 156(43.4%) were more likely to be those whose fathers were not negligent whereas the majority of the fathers who were negligent 42(11.47%) were more likely to have delinquent students. Based on these findings, it can be deduced that fathers who were negligent in their parenting style were much more likely to have students with bad discipline. However, the students with good discipline were more likely to be from families where the fathers were not negligent implying that the students were not neglected emotionally, were not given the freedom to do as they desire, and were guided by their parents through the setting of demands. This association was found to be statistically significant based on the chi-square results where ($x^2=4.018$, $df=1$, $p=0.030<0.05$) which suggest that mothers with negligent parenting style were associated with discipline management in the schools. Negligent parenting, the researchers found that students from such backgrounds tend to like self-direction and self-discipline due to the lack of a formal authoritative figure in their life to make them accountable for their actions (Mirzae & Kadivarzare 2014; Onsando, Mwenje, & Githui, 2021). These students were found to be prone to irrational decision-making and abuse of drugs because their parents give them money whenever they demand without asking what the money is for while also allowing the children to have freedom as they desire. Mirzae and Kadivarzare (2014) and Nathanson, Rivers, Flynn, and Brackett (2016) agree with this view pinioning that emotionally intelligent students need a stable home environment with clear set rules and a code of conduct and authoritative figure to foster emotionally and mentally strong students.

In general, the chi-square results for negligent parenting. These findings imply that negligent parenting style has a statistically significant likelihood on the students' discipline in secondary schools. Therefore, negligent parenting style has a statistically significant influence on the management of the student's discipline in secondary schools. Thereby, based on these findings, it is evident that parents who ensure that their children are not neglected emotionally, who set

demands for their children, attend their school events, spend their time with the children, and who ensure that their children do not do as they desire are more likely to have children who have good discipline. Gerlinger and Wo (2015) find that in contrast to authoritative parenting permissive parenting leads to neglect and vulnerability to peer influence. The children are left to their own devices as parents accept the children's privacy without following up on their friends or activities to determine whether they are appropriate for their age.

Summary

The study sought to establish the influence of negligent parenting style on the management of student discipline in public secondary schools in Meru country. The findings from the study revealed that the students reported that their parents were not negligent. For instance, they argued that statements such as their parents were emotionally distant from them, have limited interactions, provides no supervision, sets no demands on their behavior, skips school events, gives them freedom to do as their desire were reported to be mostly wrong. Contrarily, however, the majority of the principals were of the view that the parents were emotionally distant from their children, have limited interactions, provides no supervision, sets no demands on their behavior, skips school events, gives them freedom to do as they deserve. The chi-square results analysis showed that negligent parenting has a statistically significant influence on the students' discipline management ($\chi^2=4.018$, $df =1$, $p=0.030<0.05$; $\chi^2=26.428$, $df =1$, $p=0.000<0.05$). Therefore, there is a statistical significant influence of negligent parenting style on the management of students' discipline in secondary schools.

5.0 Conclusion

The study concludes that there is a statistically significant influence of negligent parenting style on the management of students' discipline in secondary schools.

6.0 Recommendations

The study recommends that the parents should be encouraged to be more involved in their children's lives, both academically, socially, and emotionally by organizing parents meetings with experts and professionals on parenting, organizing seminars and workshops

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