

Influence of Permissive 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 complex, partly due to the lack of parental guidelines and enforcement of rules and regulations. This study investigates the influence of permissive parenting style on the management of students' discipline in public secondary schools in Meru County. A descriptive survey design using both quantitative and qualitative approaches was utilized. Data were collected through questionnaires and interview schedules from a sample of 552 respondents, including students, principals/deputy principals, guidance and counselling masters, and parents' representatives. The analysis revealed that permissive parenting style did not have a significant impact on students' discipline management ($X^2=.000$, $df=1$ and $p\text{-value}=1.000>0.05$; $X^2=.676$, $df=1$ and $p\text{-value}=0.411>0.05$). These findings indicate that a permissive parenting style may not effectively contribute to effective discipline management in schools. Recommendations include encouraging parents to adopt a more structured approach that balances freedom and responsibility, and promotes responsible behaviour while maintaining authority. Implementing these recommendations is likely to improve discipline management in schools and contribute to a better society. The findings of this study can inform the Ministry of Education and Secondary School Management in formulating effective policies to address indiscipline associated with permissive parenting style, while also holding parents accountable for their role in discipline management.

Keywords: *Permissive parenting, management of student discipline, public secondary schools*

1.0 Introduction

Discipline management in Kenyan secondary schools has become complicated as time goes by. Some studies such as Durisic and Bunijevac (2017) blame such eventualities on minimal parental involvement in children's discipline, resulting in low responsiveness with regard to respect to authority and poor adherence to set rules and regulations. The secondary school management system entails a set of strategies; rules, punishment, and behavioral strategies, that aim to increase and maintain appropriate behavior while decreasing inappropriate behavior among learners and staff (Ministry of Education, 2015). It is a proactive process that emphasizes teaching and reinforcing appropriate conduct. It is worth noting that, the management of students within a school setting is the responsibility of various stakeholders including the senior management team, teachers, interdisciplinary team members, teaching support assistants, students, parents, and local residents who have a stake in the success of the

school and helping students to achieve the highest possible standards. With the ban of physical and psychological abuse through the Kenya Children Act 2001 in legal notice Number 56, the school conduct management team is left with the responsibility of ensuring that students adhere to school rules and regulations without using corporal punishment (Wanja 2014). However, this is directly linked to parental discipline practices which shape an individual student's response to conduct strategies adopted by the conduct management team. According to the Task Force on Student Discipline and Unrest in secondary schools (2016), parents influence the management of students' conduct; for instance, non-violent parental practices characterized by love, guidance and counseling, moral training, and guidance on self-direction lead to positive influence on conduct management where the students respect others and easily follow set guidelines and rules.

Gafoor and Kurukkan (2014) highlight that parents have a huge effect on the lives of individuals. They argue that by studying the approaches to help understand the parental influence on human behavior, individuals can understand how and why different individuals behave differently. Specifically, this study focuses on permissive parenting style which is distinguished by parents giving their children freedom, due to their low levels of enforcement of rules and authority, but are also expressive of their affection and warmth for them (Wanja 2014). The high acceptance levels by permissive parents due to their roles as friends rather than parents facilitate easier communication and allow children to make their own decisions.

Discipline management is one of the biggest challenges that is affecting school management worldwide. In France, just like most countries across Europe, the declining standards of discipline are a growing concern. Most of the schools reporting indiscipline cases had issues such as student truancy, (46%), lack of respect for teachers (18%), and alcohol and drug use (25%, (OCDE, 2017). French parents use control and physical beating to discipline their children despite continued pressure from other European countries to ban physical violence in the country. The effect of total control over the children's behavior has led to an increase in rebellious and aggressive behavior among adolescents who do not conform to school rules and due to lack of proper communication channels at home, fail to voice their dissatisfaction. In Zambia, cases of indiscipline have not been different. For instance, school pupils in Mukobeka secondary school set rules that scared teachers from attending classes in 2014 (Hamalengo, 2016). Permissive parenting is prevalent among the lower working class where the children were given free reign over their lives and the parents failed to monitor and follow up on their child's lives including the friends they have or the activities they engaged in leading to irresponsible children; hence, the increase in indiscipline cases since the ban of corporal punishment in 2004. In Tanzania, levels of indiscipline were as high as other countries in East Africa in 2016. About 55% of teachers in Uganda reported destructive behavior among students, which was a moderate problem affecting educational achievements (Semali & Vumilia, 2016).

In Kenya, the situation is not different, since there has been a rise of unrest in secondary schools in the past few years especially when National examinations are around the corner (The Standard January, 2021; Omollo, 2018; Wanzala & Muinde, 2016). Since 2001 when the Children's Act was enacted, which outlawed the use of violence to discipline children, many schools have banned the use of violence like canning. However, in most homes, the majority of parents still use physical violence and other forms of abuse that may result in severe injuries and psychological trauma as their preferred means of disciplining children. Contrary, in some homes, parents are blamed for denying their responsibility towards their children with modern

parenting styles like permissiveness where the child has no set of rules to follow, punishment regime, or guidance and counseling approaches. This has seen a rise in rebellious, aggressive, and irresponsible students who flaunt rules and engage in truant behaviours against the set regulations just for the fun of it. It is in light of this background, that this study sought to answer the research question: What is the influence of permissive parenting style on the management of student discipline in public secondary schools in Meru County?

2.0 Literature Review

Johnson, and Kelly (2016) define permissive parenting as the style of parenting described by a high degree of acceptance and low level of demand and or control. In this approach to parenting, there is a high extent of nurturance and little degree of maturity hassles from the children. Low degrees of control and interaction with the children is also an inherent trait of permissive parenting. The authors further go ahead to argue that this parenting approach does little to educate the children to be responsibly independent as the children are allowed to experiment by allowing them to take charge of their decision while the parent acts more as a friend. These children are permitted to do as they wish and are allowed to make decisions even when they are not mentally and emotionally ready (Richfield, 2017).

In another study, Moreno-Ruiz, Estévez, Jiménez, and Murgui (2018) conducted a study to analyze the relationship between permissive parenting style and reactive and proactive school violence among peers. The research sampled 2399 Spanish adolescents aged between 12-18 years. The study found that indulgent or permissive parenting led to lower scores in proactive violence. Social learning in indulgent or permissive families encourages the development of other positive behavior traits obtained from affection and the ability to resolve problems independently. The high emotional involvement, positive communication, parental support, trust between the parents and the children, and low levels of imposition grants children several resources which can be used to resolve any challenges making violence and aggression the last and least likely resort to the children from such homes. The study, was, however, conducted in Spain; hence the findings were not generalizable to the local context due to the difference in cultures and social structures.

Gomez-Ortiz, Romera, and Ortega-Ruiz (2016) examined the effects of parenting approaches and the incidences of bullying focusing on the interceding role of parental role modeling and physical reprimand. The descriptive research design randomly selected 2060 Spanish high school students across Spain. The data was obtained using questionnaires and analysis done using structural equation modeling. The findings revealed that a mediating role of parenting style and indiscipline in high schools existed. Furthermore, the results revealed that parents who led by example and took the role of a friend while expressing warmth and affection gave rise to students who were likely to follow the school rules and look up to authority for guidance. The researcher's findings agree with those of Tsai and Cheney (2015) who found that parents who are role models to their children and supportive tend to raise emotionally and mentally equipped children who respect their peers and acknowledge those in authority by being obedient. The data was, however, conducted in Spain which has different social, economic, and cultural factors which may limit the generalizability of the findings in the local context.

In another study, Fatima and Malik (2015) collected data from 30 secondary schools teachers randomly selected using structured interviews. The descriptive qualitative study was conducted in Islamabad, Pakistan, and sought to address the cause of aggressive behaviour among secondary school students. The data was analyzed and revealed that negative home and family environments and unfriendly parents who use vulgar language, swearing, and used threats on

their children contributed to increased cases of indiscipline in schools. Aggressive behaviour by parents leads to limited freedom of choice by the children especially those whose parents are authoritative which makes both boys and girls aggressive. This is due to a lack of acceptance, allowing the child to make their own decision and providing a warm and affectionate environment for the children as the researchers assert that children often emulate their parent's tendencies. In summary, the findings associate the indiscipline behaviour of students at school with the parenting style adopted by parents at home and their approach towards parenting when called to the school when their children misbehave. Malik, Khatoun, and Khurisgi (2014) agree with these findings and claim that parents who use supportive, accepting, warm and affectionate, encouraging languages, maintain emotional closeness to their children and avoid issuing threats promote healthy behaviors by the students who are emotionally and psychologically stable. The researcher's target sample was only teachers yet the problem involves more stakeholders whose view would have provided a more in-depth insight on the cause of indiscipline in relation to parenting style. This study will expand the scope of the research to involve head teachers and deputy head teachers, guidance and counseling masters, students, and parents.

In their literature review study, Checa and Abundis-Gutierrez (2018) found that permissive parenting tends to be child-centered, but is non-demanding in that the parents are tolerant of their children and are accepting of their children's desires, impulses, and actions. Permissive parenting was found to allow considerable self-regulation and low demands on mature behavior from the children. Moreover, permissive parents were found to avoid confrontation and are intent on non-punitive actions to accomplish their actions. There is also a lack of focus on monitoring their children's behaviors. This kind of parenting style was associated with children who are self-entitled and who do not care much about rules and regulations. They are self-indulgent and have no respect for authority due to the minimal demands placed on them by their parents.

A study was conducted in Nigeria by Echedom, Nwankwo, and Nwankwo to investigate the influence of different parenting approaches on the reading outlooks of the students in Anambra State. The researchers targeted 4,987 senior secondary students in public secondary schools sampled through a proportionate stratified sampling technique. Questionnaires were adopted to aid in obtaining data through the descriptive survey research method. The study found that a permissive parenting style has a moderate as well as an encouraging influence on the reading attitudes of the students. The parents were found to be focused more on being their children's friends rather than guiding figures and the children were given a chance to explain what they like or did not like with the parent providing little input on the children's decisions. This leads to independent children, but who have little respect for authority figures. The study focused on different parenting styles, but it leaves a gap in the literature because it focuses on the student's reading attitude whereas the current study seeks to determine how a permissive parenting style influences the overall behavior of a student.

Chou and Lee (2017) also examined the influence of parenting styles on Taiwanese junior secondary school students. It was established that the majority of the students in the secondary schools, especially the boys experienced permissive or negligent parenting styles. 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 research found that the indulgent parenting style has somewhat the same outcomes as authoritative parenting for traditional bullying and cyberbullying victimization.

Muyalo (2017) also set out to investigate the parent-related factors that influence the performance of students in KCSE in public secondary schools in Igembe North sub-county. Using a descriptive research design, the researcher used simple random sampling to select participants. The findings revealed that parents who are involved in the academic lives of their students and other aspects of their lives by allowing their children to set their own pace and make their friends while spending their free time with them, encouraging them, and serving as good role models and friends to their students while also encouraging them to make their own decisions tend to perform well academically, but do not conform well to rules as their parents let them make their own set of rules to follow and act more as the children’s friend rather than a parental figure. Further, the findings showed that parents who respect and collaborate with the teachers and the school management tend to instill the same behaviors in their children. The study, despite contributing to how parental practices influence students, was focused on academic performance of learners while the current study’s dependent variable was the management of students’ discipline in secondary schools. To achieve this, the current study will use perspectives from the head teachers, deputy head teachers, and the parents to determine whether the parent’s disciplinary approach correlates with the management of student discipline.

3.0 Methodology

A descriptive survey design was utilized in this study because it utilizes both qualitative and quantitative data to establish a comprehensive analysis of the research problem (Cresswell, 2003). Sekaran (2003) highlights that surveys are used to collect methodically, truthful data which is necessary for decision-making. The independent variable was permissive parenting because it influenced the child’s behaviour while the dependent variable was the management of the student’s discipline. The study was conducted in Meru County because it has recorded sporadic strikes and burning of the school property in recent times. Additionally, Meru County was ideal for the study because it has an aspect of both rural and urban settings thereby providing diversity in terms of different family experiences. The target population was drawn from 50 public secondary schools in Meru County. The target population and sampling strategy were as displayed 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%	

The major data collection instrument utilized in this study was a close-ended and open-ended questionnaire. These were utilized to collect data from, the students and principals/deputies because they were cost-efficient, free from the bias of the interviewer, and efficient in collecting data from a large sample size (Kothari, 2004). Interviews were used to collect data from parents and the school counseling masters. The Quantitative data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) while qualitative data collected was analyzed thematically using keywords and phrases that kept on re-occurring.

4.0 Results and Discussion

After obtaining and cleaning the data, a response rate of 97.6% (380 respondents) was achieved from the principals, counselors, and parent representatives. The student's discipline was categorized as either good or delinquent and figure 4.1 shows the categories and frequency of the students based on their discipline. The student's discipline was determined by their school records based on their past behaviours.

Figure 1 shows that 183(50%) of the students were good and delinquent respectively. For comparison and to establish the overall influence of parenting style on the student's discipline, an equal number of disciplined and delinquent students were selected in the public schools guided by the existing students' records regarding their behaviours. This implies that in a school setup, there are students who are good while others have a tendency to commit minor or major crimes. This selection allowed the study to include good and delinquent students. This would give a fair representative sample.

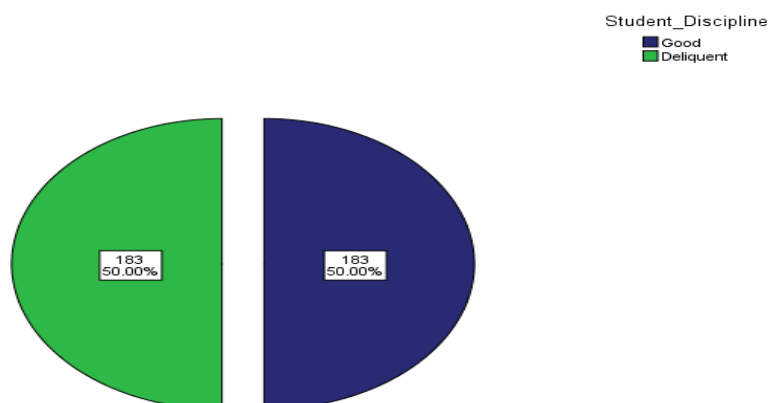


Figure 1: Students' Discipline

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First, the students were issued a range of items on a Likert scale and asked to indicate the extent to which they perceived them to be wrong or right based on the knowledge of their parents. Table 2 displays the student's responses to the mothers' permissive parenting style items.

Table 2: Students' Responses on Mothers' Permissive Parenting

	Very wrong'		Mostly wrong'		Sometimes right, sometimes wrong		Mostly right'		Very right		M	SD
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
	Sets low demands for me	201	54.9	35	9.6	48	13.1	40	10.9	42		
Provides a few guidelines for me	126	34.4	49	13.4	48	13.1	52	14.2	91	24.9	2.82	1.62
Are more like friends than parental figures	138	37.9	40	11.0	39	10.7	26	7.1	121	33.2	2.87	1.74
Only inquires about the reason for my failure without any consequences	126	34.4	81	22.1	40	10.9	44	12.0	75	20.5	2.62	1.55
Doesn't emphasize being responsible	225	61.8	47	12.9	34	9.3	14	3.8	44	12.1	1.91	1.39
Emphasizes my freedom	115	31.4	81	22.1	55	15.0	44	12.0	71	19.4	2.66	1.51
Rarely enforces any type of consequences	164	44.8	54	14.8	50	13.7	40	10.9	58	15.8	2.38	1.52

The students were also issued a range of statements on the Likert scale and asked to indicate the extent to which the statements were right or wrong regarding their fathers' permissive parenting style. The findings are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3: Student's Responses to Father's Permissive Parenting

	Very wrong'		Mostly wrong'		Sometimes right, sometimes wrong		Mostly right'		Very right		M	SD
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
	Sets low demands for me	203	55.5	37	10.1	45	12.3	32	8.7	49		
Provides a few guidelines to me	106	29.1	47	12.9	54	14.8	70	19.2	87	23.9	2.96	1.56
Are more like friends than parental figures	119	32.5	51	13.9	57	15.6	41	11.2	98	26.8	2.86	1.62
Only inquires about the reason for my failure without any consequences	132	36.1	54	14.8	70	19.1	48	13.1	62	16.9	2.60	1.49
Doesn't emphasize on being responsible	208	56.8	67	18.3	27	7.4	17	4.6	47	12.8	1.98	1.41
Emphasizes my freedom	121	33.1	77	21.0	55	15.0	33	9.0	80	21.9	2.66	1.54
Rarely enforces any type of consequences	153	41.8	56	15.3	60	16.4	37	10.1	60	16.4	2.44	1.51

Table 2 shows the results of the students' perceptions regarding their mothers' permissive parenting styles. As the table shows, the majority of the students indicated that their parents do not set low demands on them as deduced from the mean value 2.14 which implies that most of the students' responses regarding their mothers' setting of demands were mainly skewed toward mostly wrong. However, the high standard deviation value of 1.46 implies that the students' views regarding their mothers' setting of demands too low for them were not similar as some of the students claimed that the statement 'Sets low demands to' was very right 42(11.5%) and 40(10.9%) claimed that the statement was mostly right. However, the majority of the students, 201(54.9%) claimed that the statement was very wrong and 35(9.6%) claimed that the statement was mostly wrong. Based on these findings, it can be deduced that the majority of the students' mothers do not set low demands for their children, but some parents embody this aspect of permissive parenting.

The findings displayed in Table 3 show that the majority of the students generally claimed that the statement 'Sets low demands to me' was either very wrong or mostly wrong as was the case for their responses for the mothers. These findings are supported by the frequency analysis

which skewed towards mostly wrong as seen in the mean value of 2.14. This implies that the majority of the students claimed that their fathers do not set low demands for their children. However, the findings were highly dispersed evidenced by the high standard deviation value of 1.49 which suggests that though the majority of the students claimed that the statement was mostly wrong, some claimed that it was also very right or mostly right 49(13.4%) and 32(8.7%) respectively. These imply that in some cases, there were fathers who set low demands on their children which may become a challenge for the students in school when they are subjected to high demands in terms of the school rules and regulations as well as academic and social stipulations. However, some of the students, the majority, claimed that the statement was very wrong 203(55.5%) and 37(10.1%) claimed that the statement was very right. From these arguments, it can be deduced that the majority of the fathers just like the mothers of the secondary school students in Meru County have high demands from their sons and daughters.

During the interviews, the guidance and counselors argued;

'Most parents nowadays do not engage their children. They do not set any demands on them and this has led to students who do not know the value of responsibility (GC IV)'

Similarly, the interviews also showed that the mothers and fathers of the students according to the parent's representatives set demands on their children;

'In many cases, the fathers and mothers ensure that their children, in some way, have responsibilities and the parents also have certain expectations from them. This can be as simple as cleaning their room, taking part in the household chores, completing their assignments, going to school on time, and ensuring that they adhere to the set rules and regulations (PAR 4).'

From these claims, it is evident that one of the challenges facing the school administration is the management of the children who have not been raised with any demands being placed on them. As the guidance and counselors argue, the students, when not exposed to demands at home, are unable to cope with the high demands that come with secondary schools. The research findings agree with those by Tsai and Cheney (2015) who found that parents who are role models to their children and supportive tend to raise emotionally and mentally equipped children who respect their peers and acknowledge those in authority by being obedient which they do by setting demands on their children and guiding them towards achieving them.

Table 3 also shows that the majority of the students' views regarding the statement 'Provides few guidelines to me' were skewed towards mostly wrong as indicated by the mean value of 2.82 which implies that most students claimed the statement was very wrong 126(34.4%) and 49(13.4%) 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, 92(24.9%) which is a substantial number of students, claimed that the statement was very true while 52(14.2%) claimed that the statement was mostly right. Based on these findings, it can be deduced that some mothers provide their children with few guidelines; hence the children are often free to do as they please and this runs the risk of the students engaging in behaviors that compromise their discipline due to the limited involvement of their mothers in setting guidelines for them to follow.

Table 3 also shows a mean value of 2.96 for the statement 'Provides few guidelines to me' which implies that the majority of the students' views were skewed towards mostly wrong which then implies that the fathers generally provide guidelines to their children. Nonetheless, the views were highly dispersed from the average mean based on the high standard deviation value of 1.56 which suggests that while the majority of the students claimed that the statement

was very right 106(29.1%) and 47(12.9%) of the students stated that this was mostly true. However, most of the students 54(14.8%) claimed that this statement was sometimes right and sometimes wrong while 70(19.2%) claimed that it was mostly true whereas 87(23.9%) claimed that it was very right. Based on the highly dispersed views in regard to the provision of guidelines by the fathers, some of the students' fathers were reported to provide their children with few guidelines whereas some seemed to provide many guidelines for the children. Therefore, based on these results, it can be deduced that fathers generally provide their children with guidelines to help them through their days and in making choices. However, some fathers also fail to do this for their children which leaves them to make all the choices without any experienced guidance from their fathers According to Checa and Abundis-Gutierrez (2018) permissive parenting tends to be child-centered, but is non-demanding in that the parents are tolerant of their children and are accepting towards their children's desires, impulses, and actions. Permissive parenting was found to allow considerable self-regulation and low demands on mature behavior from the children.

The table also shows a mean value of 2.87 for the statement 'Are more like friends than parental figures' with most responses lying on either side of the Likert scale. This shows that the students' views of their mothers being more like friends and that the parental figures were highly dispersed as is also evident in the high standard deviation value of 1.74. The findings show that a section of the students 138(37.9%) claimed that the statement was very wrong showing that for these students, the mothers do not act like friends, but play their role as the parents in their children's lives. However, 33.2% of the students also claimed that the statement was very right which also shows that a good number of the mothers are more like friends rather than parents to their children. This implies that for some students, their mothers are their friends rather than the parents and this leaves a gap in the parental roles that the mothers should play in their children's lives.

The table 4.7 also shows that the majority of the students claimed that the statement 'Are more like friends than parental figures' was mostly wrong implying that for most of the students, their fathers play their role as parental figures and not as friends. However, the high standard deviation value of 1.62 also implies that the students' views regarding the role their fathers play in their lives were diverse with some of the students claiming that this was very true while others claimed that this was very wrong. For instance, 119(32.5%) students claimed that the statement was very wrong implying that their fathers play the role of a parental figure as opposed to playing the role of a friend. This was also evident in 51(13.9%) of the students who also claimed that the statement was mostly wrong. However, some of the students 98(26.8%) claimed that the statement was very right which implies that in some instances, the fathers are more like friends than parents to their children as also supported by 41(11.2%) of the students who claimed that the statement was mostly right. Based on these findings, it can be seen that there are some instances where the students' fathers are more of their friends than their parents whereas in some cases, the fathers play their role as the parents. These findings imply that parents can either take on the role of the parent or the friend and in the case of the population studied in this case, the findings revealed that the parents for some of the students played the role of friends whereas there were some cases, the parents played a parental role.

During the interviews with the guidance and counsellors and the parents, it was also established that the parents nowadays tend to be friends with their children. For instance,

'I know of parents who, due to the pressures in society today, are trying to be best friends with their children, but these behaviours have corrupted our children. They do

not have role models and no authority figure. They are wayward and do not listen to anyone (GC VI).'

As revealed by Gomez-Ortiz, Romera, and Ortega-Ruiz (2016) parents who fail to lead by example and took the role of a friend while expressing warmth and affection gave rise to students who were likely to follow the school rules and look up to authority for guidance.

The table also shows that the majority of the students' views regarding the statement 'Only inquire the reason for my failure without any consequences' were also dispersed from the mean value of 2.62 as indicated in the moderately high standard deviation value of 1.55. The researcher, from these findings, can deduce that the mothers of most of the students claimed that the statement was very wrong 126(34.4%) and 81(22.1%) claimed that this statement was mostly wrong. These findings suggest that for most of the students, their mothers made inquiries about the reason for their failures, but there were consequences for the failure. However, there was also a section of the students 75(20.5%) who argued that the statement was very right, and 44(12%) claimed that the statement was mostly right. From these claims, it is evident that some of the students' failures have no consequences from their mothers even for those who make inquiries about their children's failures.

Table 3 further shows that the majority of the students also generally claimed that it was mostly right that their parents only made inquiries for reason of their failure without any real consequences which were similar to those they made for the mothers too. Based on the mean value of 2.60, it can be deduced that the majority of the students' views were that their fathers cared not only about the reasons for their failure but take further steps or enforce consequences once they knew the reason for the failure. Nonetheless, the standard deviation value of 1.49 implies that the students' views regarding their fathers' enforcement of consequences following their inquiries for reasons of failure were diverse. For example, some of the students 132(36.1%) claimed that the statement 'Only inquires the reason for my failure without any consequences' was very true while 36.1%) claimed that the statement was mostly right. These responses suggest that the majority of the students' fathers enforce consequences for their children's failures. Nonetheless, some students claimed that the statement was mostly right 48(13.1%) while 62(16.9%) claimed that the statement was very right. These findings suggest that for most of the students, their failure had consequences for them from their fathers.

These findings are in line with those by Moreno-Ruiz, Estévez, Jiménez, and Murgui (2018) permissive families encourages the development of other positive behaviour traits obtained from affection and the ability to resolve problems independently. Permissiveness was found to be characterized by high emotional involvement, positive communication, parental support, and trust between the parents and the children, and low levels of imposition grants children several resources which can be used to resolve any challenges making violence and aggression the last and least likely resort to the children from such homes

The table further shows that the majority of the students also claimed that the statement 'Doesn't emphasis being responsible' was mostly wrong or very true as indicated by the mean of 1.91. However, the views were also dispersed from the mean as the standard deviation was 1.39 implying that some of the students' views were different from the others where they claimed that the statement was mostly right or very right. For instance, some of the students 44(12.1%) claimed that the statement was very right and 14(3.8%) claimed that the statement was mostly right implying that for some of the students, their mothers do not emphasize their children being responsible. However, the majority of the students 225(61.8%) argued that the statement was very wrong and 47(12.9%) claimed that the statement was mostly wrong. These

findings suggest that while some of the mothers do not emphasize their children being responsible, the majority of the mothers greatly emphasize their children being responsible. This implies that in the majority of families, the mothers drive their children towards being responsible rather than letting them act however way they want.

Table 3 further shows that the majority of the students, 208(56.8%) claimed that the statement 'Doesn't emphasis being responsible' was very wrong whereas 54(14.8%) claimed that the statement was mostly wrong which was similar to the responses they provided for their mothers. These findings suggest that the majority of the students generally agreed that their fathers emphasize on being responsible as is also supported by the mean value of 1.98 which shows that the majority of the students were of the view that the statement was generally very right as supported by the frequency analysis. The findings further show that the standard deviation value was high at 1.41 which implies that though the majority of the respondents generally claimed that the statement was very right, some of the students also claimed otherwise in regard to their fathers' emphasis on being responsible. Some of the students 47(12.8%) claimed that the statement was very right while the other 17(4.6%) claimed that the statement was mostly right. From these findings, it can be deduced that for most of the students, their fathers emphasize responsibility, though for some minorities, this insistence on responsibility is lacking.

The table also shows that the majority of the respondents generally claimed that the statement 'Emphasizes my freedom' was mostly wrong as seen in the mean value of 2.66. However, the responses from the students regarding this statement were dispersed from the mean as evidenced by the high standard deviation value of 1.51. This implies that some of the students were of the opinion that this statement was very right 71(19.4%) while 44(12%) claimed that the statement was mostly right. This implies that some of the mothers of the students emphasize their children's freedom. However, most of the students 115(31.4%) claimed that the statement was very wrong and 81(22.1%) also claimed that the statement was mostly wrong. From these findings, it can be deduced that most of the mothers do not emphasize their children's freedom. It can also be seen from the table that the majority of the respondents insisted that their fathers generally don't emphasize their freedom as seen in the mean value of 2.66 which implies that the responses were skewed towards mostly wrong and very wrong. For instance, most of the respondents 121(33.1%) claimed that the statement was very wrong whereas 72(21%) claimed that the statement was mostly wrong. These findings imply that the majority of the students' fathers do not emphasize on their children's freedom meaning that they play a major role in their children's lives and that they engage with them in almost all aspects of their lives. However, the standard deviation value of 1.54 was also high and showed a high dispersion of the responses from the mean value. This is evident in the responses where some of the students 80(21.9%) claimed that the statement was very right and 33(9%) also claimed that the statement was mostly right. From these findings, it can be deduced that for most of the students, their fathers tend to place less emphasis on their freedom implying that the students do not accord their children too much freedom.

Lastly, table 4 also shows that the majority of the students' views regarding the statement 'Rarely enforce any type of consequences' were skewed towards mostly wrong with a mean of 2.38 implying that the majority of the mothers enforce consequences on the student's behaviours. These views were however, dispersed as some of the students 164(44.8%) claimed that the statement was very wrong while 54(14.8%) claimed that the statement was mostly wrong. However, some mothers reinforced consequences as indicated by 58(2.38%) and 40(10.9%) of the students who claimed that the statement was very right and mostly right

respectively. From these findings, it can be deduced that the majority of mothers reinforce consequences for behaviours regularly as compared to those who do not reinforce consequences on their children’s behaviours.

Table 4 lastly, shows that the majority of the student respondents also generally claimed that the statement ‘Rarely enforces any type of consequences’ was mainly wrong implying that for the majority of the students, their fathers reinforce consequences for actions their children take. This view is seen in the frequency analysis where the majority of the respondents 153(41.8%) and 56(15.3%) of the respondents claimed that the statement was very wrong and most wrong which suggests that the majority of the fathers ensure that their children face consequences, albeit different for different types of behaviours. This majority of frequencies for mostly right were supported by the mean value of 2.44. However, the standard deviation value of 1.51 was very high implying that the responses were dispersed from the mean value. For instance, some of the students were of the view that the statement was very right 60(16.4%) while 37(10.1%) claimed that the statement was mostly right. These findings reveal that the majority of fathers reinforce consequences for behaviors, but also there are a few parents who do not reinforce consequences for their children’s behaviors. These findings are contrary to those by Checa and Abundis-Gutierrez (2018) found that permissive parents were found to avoid confrontation and are intent on non-punitive actions to accomplish their actions.

The study further sought the opinions of the principals regarding permissive parenting. Their responses were as displayed in Table 4.

Table 4: Principal's Responses on Permissive Parenting Style

	Father				Mother			
	Yes		No		Yes		No	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Parents have low demands on their children	34	77.3	10	22.7	34	77.3	10	22.7
Parents have set few guidelines for their children	30	68.2	14	31.8	30	68.2	14	31.8
The relationship between some parents and their children is more like friends than parental	28	63.6	16	36.4	28	63.6	16	36.4
Parents often inquire about the reason for their children’s failure without any consequences	30	68.2	14	31.8	30	68.2	14	31.8
The parents do not emphasize on their children being responsible	24	54.5	20	45.5	24	54.5	20	45.5
Parents emphasize their children’s freedom	14	31.8	30	68.2	14	31.8	30	68.2
The parents rarely enforce any type of consequences	30	68.2	14	31.8	30	68.2	14	31.8

Table 4 shows the principals' responses in regard to the fathers and mothers' permissive parenting. The table first shows that the majority of the principals 34(77.3%) indicated that the fathers have low demands on their children whereas the majority of the principals 38(86.4%) claimed that mothers have low demands on their children. From these findings, it can be deduced that according to the principals, both the fathers and mothers have low demands on their children.

The table further shows that the majority of the principals, 30(68.2%) also claimed that the fathers have set few guidelines for 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 set many guidelines for their children.

Further, the table also shows that the majority of the principals 28(63.6%) and 35(79.5%) indicated that the relationship between the parents and their children is more like friends than parental for the fathers and mothers respectively. From these findings, it can be argued that according to the principals, both fathers and mothers generally have more friendship-like relations, but the mothers tend to have a more friendly relationship rather than a parental one.

The study further shows that the majority of the principals indicated that the parents generally make inquiries about the reasons for their children's failures, but they do not enforce any consequences as the majority of the principals indicated 30(68.2%) for the fathers and 34(77.3%) for the mothers. This suggests that the principals think that the majority of mothers and fathers are only concerned about the reasons for failure, but they do not take any actions to rectify the situation.

Further, it can also be seen from the table that most of the principals 34(54.5%) indicated that the fathers do not emphasize their children being responsible with 20(45.5%) responding differently. Similarly, most of the principals 27(61.4%) argued that mothers do not emphasize their children being responsible. These findings suggest that in general, the mothers and fathers place little focus on their children being responsible which may explain the challenges of principals and other school authorities.

Further, the findings also revealed that the majority of the principals 30(68.2%) claimed that fathers do not emphasize their children's freedom, but this was contrary for the mothers as the majority of the principals 25(56.8%) claimed that mothers tend to emphasize on their children's freedom. The table also that the majority of the principals 30(68.2%) claimed that the fathers rarely enforce any type of consequences for their children's behaviors. Similarly, the majority of the principals 36(81.8%) also claimed that the mothers rarely enforce any type of consequences. From these findings, it can be deduced that the majority of the mothers and fathers fail to enforce any type of consequence for their children's behaviors. 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 they good or delinquent.

The researcher also sought to understand whether permissive parenting influences students' discipline management. The students' responses on permissive parenting for the mothers and fathers were computed who scored low on the scale i.e. less than 3.5 were categorized as non-permissive while those who scored high (>3.5) were categorized as permissive parents. Table 5 shows the chi-square analysis on the influence of permissive parenting style on the management of students' discipline.

Table 5: Chi-Square Results; Permissive Parenting and Student's Discipline Management

		Student Discipline				X ²	Df	P Value
		Good		Delinquent				
		F	F	F	F			
Permissive Mother	No	162	44.2	155	42.3	.676	1	.411*
	Yes	21	5.7	26	7.1			
Permissive Father	No	159	43.4	159	43.4	.000	1	1.000*
	Yes	24	6.5	24	6.5			

Table 5 displays the chi-square results for permissive parenting and the management of student discipline in Meru County Public Secondary Schools. As the table shows, the majority of the students whose mothers were not permissive 162(44.2%) were likely to be students with good discipline while the majority of the students whose parents were permissive 26(7.1%) were likely to be permissive. The findings suggest that mothers who were not permissive were more likely to have students whose discipline was good. In this sense, the majority of the mothers who did not adopt the permissive parenting style were more likely to raise children exposed to consequences for their actions and ensures that their children are exposed not only to responsible behaviors but also have high demands on their children. The chi-square results also show that permissive parenting does not have a statistically significant influence on the student's discipline as can be seen in the results ($X^2=.676$, $df=1$ and $p\text{-value}=.411>0.05$). This suggests that the permissive parenting style among the mothers did not influence the students' discipline management.

Furthermore, these findings show that permissive parenting which emphasizes letting the children make the choices on all aspects of their lives with little to no consequences for their behaviours does not have an impact on the student's discipline management. The mothers adopting permissive parenting do not hold their children accountable, do not set any demands for them, do not enforce any consequences, and do not act as any form of authority for their children as they tend to play the role of a friend rather than that of a parent. Therefore, it is highly likely for their children to adhere to any form of authority and regulations because they have been exposed to free choice and lack of answerability for their actions.

The table further shows that just like in the case of the mothers, there is no association between permissive parenting and the students' discipline as evidenced in the chi-square results ($X^2=.000$, $df=1$ and $p\text{-value}=1.000>0.05$). These results, just like the ones for the mothers show that a permissive parenting style does not have a significant influence on the management of the students' discipline in secondary schools. These findings suggest that a permissive parenting style, which does not set any boundaries to guide the children's behaviours and no expectations whatsoever from the parents on their children is not statistically associated with the student's discipline. This implies that there is a low likelihood of permissive parenting affecting the students' discipline because of the lack of a formal structure and clearly outlined expectations, rules, guidelines, and enforcement of consequences for behaviors placed on the students. Consequently, the students are more likely to be used to making their own un-guided decisions, especially at a time in their lives when they need guidance and mentoring from those around them. This leaves them at risk of peer pressure which can negatively affect their behaviors and make it difficult for them to adhere to the school rules and regulations.

Discussion

The study aimed to establish the influence of permissive parenting style on the management of student discipline in public secondary schools in Meru County. From the questionnaires issued to the principals, it was found that in general the principals claimed that aspects of permissive parenting were evident in most of the parents. These include the fathers and mothers who set low demand for their children, give them few guidelines, act like friends and not parents, only make inquiries about reasons for failure and do not enforce any consequences, fail to emphasize responsible behaviors, emphasizes freedom and failure to enforce consequences for behaviors. similar claims were made in general by the students whose general responses were mainly that the items such as setting low demand, giving them few guidelines, acting like friends and not parents, only making inquiries about reasons for failure, and do not enforce any consequences, fail to emphasize on responsible behaviors, emphasizes on freedom and failure to enforce consequences for behaviors were indicated as being mostly wrong. This implies that for most of the students, their parents were not very permissive. The chi-square results, however, show that permissive parenting does not influence secondary school students' discipline management as the p value was not significant ($X^2=.000$, $df=1$ and $p \text{ value} =1.000 > 0.05$; $X^2=.676$, $df=1$ and $p \text{ value} =0.411 > 0.05$). Hence, there is no statistically significant influence of permissive parenting style on the management of students' discipline in secondary schools.

5.0 Conclusion

The study concludes that there is no statistically significant influence of permissive parenting style on the management of students' discipline in secondary schools.

6.0 Recommendations

Parents should be encouraged to set guidelines for their children, balance their role as the parental figure and friend for their children and also balance between granting their children freedom and promoting responsible behavior through a more structured approach to a highly responsive and highly demanding parenting approach.

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