

## **Influence Of Duration In A Parenthood On Self Esteem, Discipline And Interpersonal Relationships Of Students I Selected Secondary Schools In Nakuru Municipality, Kenya.**

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**ABSTRACT :-** Children from single parent families tend to be viewed as having low self esteem and challenges associated with it despite the fact that children from duo parent background are not immune to the same challenge. This study therefore aimed at investigating the influence of duration in single and dual parenthood on a students' self-esteem, discipline and interpersonal relationships from selected schools in Nakuru Municipality, Kenya. It adopted the causal comparative research design. A total of 4257 Form 3 and Form 4 students comprised the population of the study. The study was carried out in 18 public secondary schools within Nakuru Municipality, Kenya. A sample size of 360 students, from single parent families took part in the study. Stratified and Purposive sampling techniques were used to obtain the sample. Data was collected by use of a questionnaire that included a self esteem test. Analysis of data was done using descriptive and inferential statistics including independent samples t-test. The level of significance was set at  $\alpha = 0.05$ . The analysis was performed using Statistical Package for Social sciences (SPSS) version 17. Findings of the study indicated that there was statistically significant relationship between duration lived in a parenthood and students' levels of self esteem, discipline and interpersonal relationships ( $p > 0.05$ ). Duration lived by students in either single or dual parenthood did influence their self esteem, discipline and interpersonal relationships levels. In this case, the length of time a student spent with a parent(s) was crucial in influencing their self esteem, discipline and interpersonal relationships. The study recommended that parents should be made to understand the need to spend more time with their children so as to inculcate important social and moral values as well as psychological needs, necessary in the improvement of self esteem, discipline and interpersonal relationships of children.

**Keywords -** *Influence ,Duration in Parenthood, Self Esteem, Discipline, Interpersonal Relationships .*

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

There is an increasing rate of single parenting in Kenya and the world at large today, yet this type of parenthood is viewed negatively. This negative perception of single parenting by the Kenyan society implies that children brought up in such family structures may not get adequate acceptance, support and recognition from teachers, students and the society at large compared to children brought up in dual parent households. Indeed children from single parent households may be stigmatized which may adversely affect their self esteem and result in indiscipline, drug abuse and poor academic achievement. It is also important to note that low self esteem is not a preserve for children from single parent families. There exists a general condemnation of children from single parent households and much indiscipline, drug abuse, truancy among other ills tend to be attributed to them yet children from dual parent families have an similar challenge to contend with. This study therefore seeks to determine the influence of type of single parenthood on students self of self esteem among single and dual parent households.

#### **Literature Review**

##### **1.1 Self-esteem: Meaning and how it is acquired**

Self-esteem has been defined differently by different writers. According to Harter, (1990), self - esteem is our evaluation of ourselves. Muchinsky (1989), defines self-esteem as the extent to which people see themselves as competent and needs satisfying. Maslow (1970), in his theory of hierarchy of needs, says that "satisfaction of the self-esteem needs leads to feeling of self-confidence, worth, strength capability and adequacy, of being useful and necessary in the world. But thwarting of these needs produces feelings of inferiority, of weakness and of helplessness". Children cannot articulate a concept of self-worth at the age 8 years, but they show by their behaviour that they have one (Harter, 1990, 1993). In young children, self esteem - the judgement one makes about one's worth - is not based on a realistic appraisal of abilities or personality traits. Children between 4

years and 7 years usually overrate their abilities. Thus, children tend to accept the judgements of adults, who often give them positive, uncritical feedback (Harter, 1990).

Confidence is directly related to one's self-esteem. A background of stability and warm relationships, particularly in childhood, helps to boost self-esteem and confidence, but if things go wrong and one feels under stress, confidence can ebb away. It thus follows that low self - esteem can be a major factor in many problems we experience (Powell 2000). Thus, underachievement, destructive relationships, chronic depression, and substance abuse have all been linked to a lack of positive self-esteem (Powell, 2000).

## **2.2 Influence of Single Parenthood on Children's Self-Esteem and Discipline**

A number of indiscipline cases among children can be attributed to absent parents who abdicate their parental responsibilities to housemaids. Hence children lack adequate parental guidance in their character formation. Drafoo (1990), postulated that having insufficient bonding with parents, as well as parents who do not monitor, supervise, offer guidance, or communicate with their children, or who are either authoritarians or too permissive, are all strongly associated with children's indiscipline. In one study (Papalia, Olds & Feldman, 1999), contends that by encouraging some behaviours and discouraging others, parents transmit the culture's standard. In addition, the way they provide for their children's psychological need for attention and affection affects the child's behaviour, exerting a strong influence the kind of person he or she becomes.

While it is true that all parents face a variety of discipline challenges, single parents, however, face unique challenges when it comes to discipline. Many single parents find being the sole disciplinarian can feel like dictators until effective techniques are discovered. Delinquents describe their parents' disciplinary techniques as erratic, overly strict, and involving both physical punishment and a high degree of hostility (Dusek, 1996). The home atmosphere of delinquents is thus characterized by a greater degree of parental rejection and a lower degree of cohesiveness than that of non-delinquents. Consequently, parents of delinquents have minimal aspirations for their offsprings. They also express little interest in their child's school performance and may have a host of personality and adjustment problems of their own (Dusek, 1996).

Paternal absence is one aspect of the father - son relationship that is related to delinquency (Hamner & Turner, 1985). Paternal absence may produce an overcompensating masculine personality in the adolescent male, particularly if the father leaves home before the child is about 5 years of age (Dusek, 1996). In addition, paternal absence is related to recidivism rates of males. Disruptions in home atmosphere and routine in monitoring of the adolescent behaviour following divorce, can lead the adolescent to engage in delinquent acts (Hamner & Turner, 1985), particularly if the child is young when the father leaves home. Nevertheless, however, it is important to continue being a parent after becoming a single parent father or mother. One should therefore not feel guilty that the child is growing up in a single parent household and should continue disciplining the child and also set age appropriate limits (Dusek, 1996). Compared with children in intact families, children in one parent families are more on their own. They have more household responsibility, more conflict with sibling, less family cohesion, and less support, control or discipline from fathers (Amato, 1987). They are also more likely to be poor, and financial hardship has negative effects on children's health, well-being, school achievement, as well as affecting their self-esteem adversely (Amato, 1987).

## **2.3 Influence of Single Parenthood on Children's Interpersonal Relationships**

Single mothers in particular, often suffer from the mother's low earning capacity and the father's failure to pay child support (McLanahan & Booth, 1989). Students from one-parent homes tend to have more problems in school among them poor academic achievements and poor interpersonal relationships (Dawson, 1991): but what looks like a single-parent effect is often a low-income effect. In general, though, children tend to be better - adjusted when they have had a good relationship with a single parent than when they have grown up in a two parent home marked by discord and discontent (Papalia et al, 1999). An inaccessible, rejecting, or hostile parent can be more damaging than an absent one (Hetherington, 1989). A study done on single African mothers of seventh and eighth - graders in a Midwestern city that was experiencing widespread unemployment, indicated that unemployed mothers, especially those without outside help and support, tended to become depressed; and depressed mothers tended to be negative in their perception of their maternal role and punitive with their children. Young people who saw their relationships with their mothers deteriorate tended to be depressed themselves and to have trouble in school (McLoyds, Jayaratne, Ceballo & Borquezz, 1994).

Another study looked at 51 poor, urban African American families, in which teenagers were living with their mothers, grandmothers, or aunts. The study revealed that the more social support the women received the greater their self-esteem and acceptance of their children. They also tended to be more stable psychologically.

As a result, they exercised firmer control and closer monitoring while granting appropriate autonomy and their teenage children were more self-reliant and had fewer behaviour problems (Taylor & Roberts, 1995).

#### **2.4 Dual Families and Their Influence on Children's Self-Esteem and Discipline**

Much research has found that children, tend to do better in traditional, or intact, families - those that include two biological parents or parents who adopted a child in infancy (Bray & Hetherington, 1989, Dawson, 1991). In U.S.A a nationwide study of 17, 110 children, under 18 years, those living with single or remarried mothers were more likely than those living with both biological parents to have repeated a class of school, to have been expelled, to have health problems or to have been treated for emotional or behavioral troubles in the previous year. (Dawson, 1991). Consequently, these children are bound to have low self-esteem and behaviour problems.

In addition, dual families do not have to deal with the stress and disruption experienced in families driven by divorce or the death of a parent; with the financial, psychological and time pressures on single parents; or with the need to adjust to remarriage. Among 136 fifth-graders, those in dual (traditional) families were better adjusted than children in non-traditional families. Traditional parents did more with their children, talked more with them, disciplined them more appropriately and consistently, and were likely to share parenting responsibilities more cooperatively than non traditional parents. Deficiencies in family relationships in single parent households were almost entirely linked to socioeconomic status (Bronstein, 1988). In a traditional family, a father's involvement is usually deeper when there is at least one son. Fathers are more likely to play with, supervise, and discipline sons than daughters. A father's involvement with his children may be a gauge of whether the parents will stay together. When a father is heavily involved, the mother is likely to be more satisfied and to expect the marriage to last.

#### **2.5 Dual Families and Their Influence on Children's Interpersonal Relationships**

Children brought up by two parents will in most cases have high self regard leading to good interpersonal relationships (Kaplan, 1991). Parental shaping of boys' and girls' personalities however begins very early. Consciously or not, parents behave differently towards baby boys than towards baby girls. Mothers' facial expressions show a wider range of emotion with baby girls than with baby sons; perhaps this helps to explain why girls are better than boys at interpreting emotional expressions (Kaplan, 1991). Fathers treat boys and girls more differently than mothers do, even during the first year (Maccoby, 1983). During the second years, this difference intensifies. Fathers talk more and spend more time with sons than with daughters (Lamb, 1981). Fathers, more than mothers, seem to promote gender - typing, the process by which children learn behaviour that their culture considers appropriate for each sex. (Bronstein, 1988). However, it is to be noted that children from single parent homes may have fewer psychosomatic illnesses, lower delinquency rates and better emotional adjustment than do children from intact but unhappy homes (Sarigiani, 1989). Research has found out that children tend to do better in academic Achievements in dual parent households than in single parent households (Bray & Hetherington, 1993). Consequently, self-esteem, discipline and interpersonal relationships are generally better in dual parent families than single parent families.

## **II. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

To investigate the influence of duration in single and dual parenthood on a students' self-esteem, discipline and interpersonal relationships.

## **III. HYPOTHESIS**

There is no statistically significant difference between duration in parenthood and student's self-esteem, discipline and interpersonal relationships.

## **IV. METHODOLOGY**

The study was conducted in 18 public secondary schools with a target population of 4257 comprising of form three and four secondary school boys and girls, in Nakuru Municipality. A sample of 30 students from single parent families took part in the study. Both purposive and stratified random sampling were used to get the sample for the study. The study adopted a causal- comparative research design. This design was appropriate for this study because it was used to explore causal relationships between levels of self-esteem among students from single parent families. A structured questionnaire which consisted of a self esteem test was used to collect qualitative and quantitative data from the respondents. Data collected was analyzed using inferential statistics mainly the ANOVA. The analysis was done with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 17.

**2. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The objective of the research was to determine investigate the influence of duration in single and dual parenthood on the students' self esteem, discipline and interpersonal relationships. This hypothesis states that "there is no significant relationship between duration in parenthood and the students' self esteem, discipline and interpersonal relationship". The duration one has lived in any type of parenthood, and the self esteem, discipline and interpersonal relationship of the students were measured in the actual number of years and overall scale scores of the study variables, respectively. Tables 1, 2, 3 show the relationship between duration lived in a parenthood by a student and overall self esteem, discipline and interpersonal relationships of the students respectively. These results indicate that the longer the period a student lived in a parenthood, the higher the student's level of self esteem, discipline and interpersonal relationships and vice versa.

Table 1  
Students overall Level of self esteem by Duration lived in a parenthood

Duration in years	Overall level of self esteem			Total
	Low	Moderate	High	
Below 2 years		13	9	22
3 to 5		26	11	37
6 to 10		24	26	50
11 to 15	1	27	17	45
16 to 22	4	96	106	206
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>360</b>

Table 2 Students overall level of discipline by duration lived in parenthood  
overall level of discipline

Duration (years )	Low	Moderate	High	Total
Below 2 years	0	1	21	22
3 to 5	1	5	31	37
6 to 10	0	3	47	50
11 to 15	1	5	39	45
16 to 22	0	23	183	206
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>360</b>

Table 3 Students Level of interpersonal relationships by Duration lived in a parenthood

Duration in years	Overall level of self esteem			Total
	Low	Moderate	High	
Below 2 years	0	8	14	25
3 to 5	0	20	17	37
6 to 10	0	23	27	50
11 to 15	2	28	15	45
16 to 22	0	98	108	206
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>360</b>

Results in Tables 1, 2 and 3 depict that the longer the period a student stayed in a particular parenthood, the higher was his or her level of self esteem, discipline and interpersonal relationships. This may have been due to the fact that a longer period enabled a student to adjust appropriately with the strengths and the weaknesses of a particular parenthood. ANOVA was then used to establish how the duration in a parenthood influenced students' self esteem, discipline and interpersonal relationships. This is represented in tables 4,5 and 6 respectively.

1. Table 4 Independent Sample t-test Analysis on the Level of Overall Self esteem of Students Based on Duration Lived in a Parenthood

Variable	Mean	S.D	Std Error Mean	t-value	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
<b>Duration lived Parenthood</b>	<b>a 10.49</b>	<b>5.51</b>	<b>.29</b>	<b>36.117*</b>	<b>359</b>	<b>.000</b>

\* denotes significance at 0.05 level N = 360

The results indicated that  $t = 36.117$ ,  $P < 0.05$ . Hence, the null hypothesis which states that "there is no statistically significant difference between students' self esteem levels and duration lived in a parenthood" is rejected. This therefore implies that the period the students lived in a parenthood influenced their self esteem. This study finding therefore suggests that the self esteem of students who had lived in single parenthood longer was more adversely affected as compared to that of their counterparts who had lived for a shorter period in this category of parenthood. On the contrary, those students who had lived in dual parent households for a relatively longer period had high self esteem as compared to their counterparts who had lived in this category of parenthood for a relatively shorter period.

Table 5 Independent Sample t-test Analysis on the Overall Level of Discipline of Students Based on Duration Lived in a Parenthood

Variable	Mean	S.D	Std Error Mean	t-value	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
<b>Duration lived a Parenthood</b>	10.06	5.54	.29	34.489*	359	.000

\* denotes significance at 0.05 level N = 360

An examination of the results in Table 5 indicate that  $t = 34.489$ ,  $P < 0.05$ . Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis that states "there is no statistically significant difference between duration lived in a parenthood and discipline level of students". This means that students' discipline is affected by the period one lives in a parenthood. This may suggest that the longer the period a student lives in a parenthood, the more affected he/she is likely to become in as far as discipline is concerned and vice versa. However, as children advance in age, they continue to acquire more and new values from their parents. This may be attributed to the fact that as students advance in age, they become more eager to learn from their parent (s). This finding concurs with those of earlier researchers which attributed behaviour problems of children to lack of adequate and proper parental care and guidance (Drafoo, 1990).

Table 6 Independent Sample t-test Analysis on the Level of interpersonal relationships of Students Based on Duration Lived in a Parenthood

Variable	Mean	S.D	Std Error Mean	t-value	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
<b>Duration lived a Parenthood</b>	10.44	5.55	.29	37.727*	359	.000

denotes significance at 0.05 level N = 360

The results in Table 6 depict that  $t = 35.727$ ,  $P < 0.05$ . Hence we reject the null hypothesis that states "there is no statistically significant difference between duration lived in a parenthood and the level of students' interpersonal relationships". This therefore implies that students' interaction with other people is influenced by duration a student lives in a parenthood. This maybe the case because the longer one lives with a parent(s), the more one gathers confidence and interaction skills. This finding is in agreement with the earlier research findings which attributed poor interpersonal relationships among children to insufficient parental care, affection and provision of basic needs (Hamner & Turner, 1985).

## V. CONCLUSION

It was concluded that there is statistically significant relationship between duration lived in a parenthood and students' levels of self esteem, discipline and interpersonal relationships. Duration lived by students in either single or dual parenthood did influence their self esteem, discipline and interpersonal relationships levels. In this case, the length of time a student spent with a parent(s) was crucial in influencing their self esteem, discipline and interpersonal relationships. Hence, students who had lived longer in dual or single parenthood recorded high levels of self esteem, discipline and interpersonal relationships as compared to their counterparts who had spent relatively shorter period with their parent(s). Hence, students' levels of self esteem, discipline and interpersonal relationships depended on relevant parental care, support and guidance attained during the time a parent spends with the child. Longer stay in a single parenthood setup may affect students' self esteem negatively.

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

CHILDHOOD WAS NOTED AS AN IMPORTANT STAGE IN A PERSON'S LIFE WHEN PARENTAL GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT WAS CRUCIAL IN PSYCHOLOGICAL, PHYSIOLOGICAL, MORAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF A CHILD,

WHICH WOULD BE REFLECTED IN ADULTHOOD. WITH THIS INFORMATION THEREFORE, A PARENT(S) SHOULD BE MADE TO UNDERSTAND THE NEED TO SPEND MORE TIME WITH THEIR CHILDREN SO AS TO INCULCATE IMPORTANT SOCIAL AND MORAL VALUES AS WELL AS PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS, NECESSARY IN THE IMPROVEMENT OF SELF ESTEEM, DISCIPLINE AND INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS OF CHILDREN. IN ADDITION, THE STUDY FINDINGS INDICATED THAT GENDER OF THE SINGLE PARENT DID INFLUENCE THE STUDENTS' SELF ESTEEM, DISCIPLINE AND INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS. THIS IMPLIED THAT CHILDREN BROUGHT UP BY SINGLE PARENTS SHOULD BE PROVIDED WITH COUNSELLING SERVICES AND PROPER GUIDANCE SO AS TO MAKE UP FOR THE ABSENCE OF THE OTHER PARENT. THIS WILL HELP TO POSITIVELY IMPROVE THEIR MORAL, SOCIAL AND INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

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