



THE ROLE OF FAMILY STRUCTURE AND PARENTING ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF TEENAGE CHILDREN: THE CASE OF EMBAKASI CONSTITUENCY OF NAIROBI COUNTY

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Abstract: The family is usually the major source of the basic necessities which is made possible by the prevailing socio-economic, environmental and sometimes political conditions. However, the structure of family influences the provision of the basic needs to the adolescents and hence their school attendance and concentration in class. This study sought to examine the role of family structure and parenting on the academic performance of teenage children, to establish the types of family structure, to identify the characteristics of different types of family structure, to examine the relationship between family structure and school related activities among teenagers, to establish the effect of family structure on academic performance of teenagers and to examine how family structure in relation to socio-economic status influence the academic performance of teenagers. This research study used a descriptive research design. The target population of this study was 385 3rd year students and teachers in the four public secondary schools. In addition, this study used systematic sampling method to select 20 percent of the target population. The sample size of this study was 77 respondents and 8 teachers. The study used primary data which was collected by use of questionnaires; which included structured and unstructured questions. Quantitative data was analyzed by use of descriptive and inferential statistics with the help of a data analysis software, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The study also used correlation analysis to establish the relationship between the dependent variable and independent variables. The study found that there is an association between socio-economic status and parenting and academic performance of students in secondary schools. Family structure influences self-esteem, class concentration, parental support, school attendance and tardiness, parent-teenager relationship among teenagers. The study also revealed that school fees payments, healthy cognitive and social development and the provision of good uniform (clothing) influence the academic performance of the teenagers significantly. The various stakeholders in the education sector need to come up with strategies to identify various backgrounds of different students in their schools. This may enable them to understand clearly the nature of each student and thus being able to handle them with ease and appropriateness so as not to hamper the educational progress. In addition, there is also need for guidance and counseling processes in the public secondary schools. The main role of these counseling sessions may be to encourage and motivate the students to see beyond their limitations and put more focus on the future through persistence and determination in their education.

Key Words: Family structure, Academic performance, Teenager, Socio-economic status:

Introduction

Over the years, the investigations of the factors that influence academic performance of students have attracted the interest and concern of teachers, counselors, psychologists, researchers and

school administrators in Kenya (Ajila & Olutola, 2007). This is because of the public outcries concerning the low standard of education in the country (Amato & Fowler, 2002). The declining quality of education in the country and the breeding of graduates with little technical know-how have resulted in serious setbacks to the industrial development of the nation. Different factors are capable of influencing the academic performance of university students. Such factors may be the student's internal state (intelligence, state of health, motivation, anxiety etc.) and their environment (availability of suitable learning environment, adequacy of educational infrastructure like textbooks and well-equipped laboratories) (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002). Investigation of these factors has produced several findings by researchers. For example, Brody et al., (2002) have attributed the cause of poor academic performance to a combination of personal and institutional factors. Personal factors relate to the individual's intelligence, knowledge and ability.

While institutional factors are family or parental influences, societal influences, institutional influences and school related factors- student/lecturer rapport, teacher related factors, accommodation and living conditions. In the same vein, Brooks-Gunn & Waldfogel (2002) established that intellectual ability, poor study habit, achievement motivation, lack of vocational goals, low self-concept, low socio-economic status of the family, poor family structure and anxiety leads to indiscipline in schools and low level of educational standard.

There is an awareness of the importance of the home environment or family on pupil's/student's academic performance. The home has a great influence on the students' psychological, emotional, social and economic state. In the view of Ajila and Olutola (2007), the state of the home affects the individual since the parents are the first socializing family background and context of a child affect his reaction to life situations and his level of performance. Although, the school is responsible for the experiences that make up the individual's life during school periods, yet parents and the individual's experiences at home play tremendous roles in building the personality of the child and making the child what he is. The environment in which the student comes from can greatly influence his performance at school. According to Conger, Reuter & Conger (2000), children from single parent homes are more hostile, hyperactive and aggressive in nature. Many of the problems that single parents have are similar as those for two parents' family, but these problems seem more difficult to bear or manage when the home is being tutored by only one person. For example, all children feel hostile towards their parents as they grow-up and try to be independent. But in a situation, where the anger and rebellion are all directed towards one person, it may seem worse, if there is only one to bear it, not for the two to share. There are some problems that are exceptional, which are only faced by the single-parents, which make it somewhat difficult to raise children. These problems include: bitterness towards the absent spouse, loneliness, poverty and insecurity about raising children alone without a help. For these and some other reasons, single parents sometimes cling to their children or over-indulge them (Gilding, 2001).

Statement of the Problem

Although, the home or family environment has been recognized as having a lot of influence on the academic performance of students (Ajila and Olutola 2007), previous studies have been concentrated in the area of socio-economic status of parents. Other aspects of parental environment such as the structure of the family have been grossly neglected. Yet, Merlo &

Rowland (2000) stated that parent's constant disagreement affects children emotionally and this could lead to poor academic performance in school.

Single-parent families have on average lower income than two-parent families and are thus more constrained in ensuring adequate financial resources to meet their children's learning needs. In addition, since single parents must cope with the double responsibility of work and childrearing, it may be more challenging for them to provide and maintain a supportive learning environment for their children. These conditions are not conducive for effective learning. This is because when the single parent is overburdened by responsibilities and by their own emotional reaction to their situation, they often become irritable, impatient and insensitive to their children's needs which may affect children performance in school (Katz & Woodin, 2002).

There is immense of literature on family structure, single parenting and academic performance, both globally and locally. For instance, globally, Uwaifo (2008) conducted a study on the Effects of Family Structure and Parenthood on the Academic Performance of Nigerian University Students. However, since this study was conducted in Nigeria, a country which differs from Kenya in terms of economic characteristics, culture and political environment, its findings cannot be generalized to Kenya. In addition, the study was conducted among university students which are different from secondary schools. In addition, Suleman (2012) conducted a study on the effects of Family Structure on the Academic Performance of Students at Elementary Level in District Karak, Khyber Pukhtunkhwa (Pakistan). However, the findings of this study cannot be generalized to the Kenyan case due to differences in cultural beliefs, environment, policies, economic factors and other factors. This study therefore sought to investigate the effects of family structure and parenthood on the academic performance of teenagers in Embakasi Constituency of Nairobi County.

This study sought to answer the following questions;

- i. What is the relationship between family structure and school related activities among teenagers in Embakasi Constituency?
- ii. How does family structure influence academic performance of teenagers in Embakasi Constituency?
- iii. How does family structure in relation to socio-economic status influence the academic performance of teenagers in Embakasi Constituency?

Theoretical Framework

The research on family structure is grounded in Bandura's (2002) social cognitive theory because the theory contends that human development is influenced, in part, by environmental agents. Family structure is an environmental agent that impacts human development and therefore student achievement. Social cognitive theory is the view of psychologists who emphasize behavior, environment, and cognition as the key factors in development. Family structure is an environmental factor that affects the development of adolescents and, in turn, impacts student achievement and academic performance. Children in intact families tend to have greater academic achievement and educational attainment and are less likely to exhibit behavioral problems in school. Their parents tend to be more involved in their school activities and to have higher expectations for them. Compared to children living in intact families, peers

living in single mother families, single-mother families with cohabiting partners, and married families with stepfathers were more likely to have ever been suspended or expelled from school; more likely to have engaged in delinquent activities in the past twelve months; more likely to have problems getting along with their teachers, doing homework, and paying attention in school; and more likely to have lower grade point averages.

Conceptual framework

This study sought to examine the role of family structure and parenting on the academic performance of teenage children in Embakasi Constituency of Nairobi County. The dependent variable of this study will be academic performance of teenage children in Embakasi Constituency while the dependent variables will be family structure (characteristics of different types of family structure and family structure's).

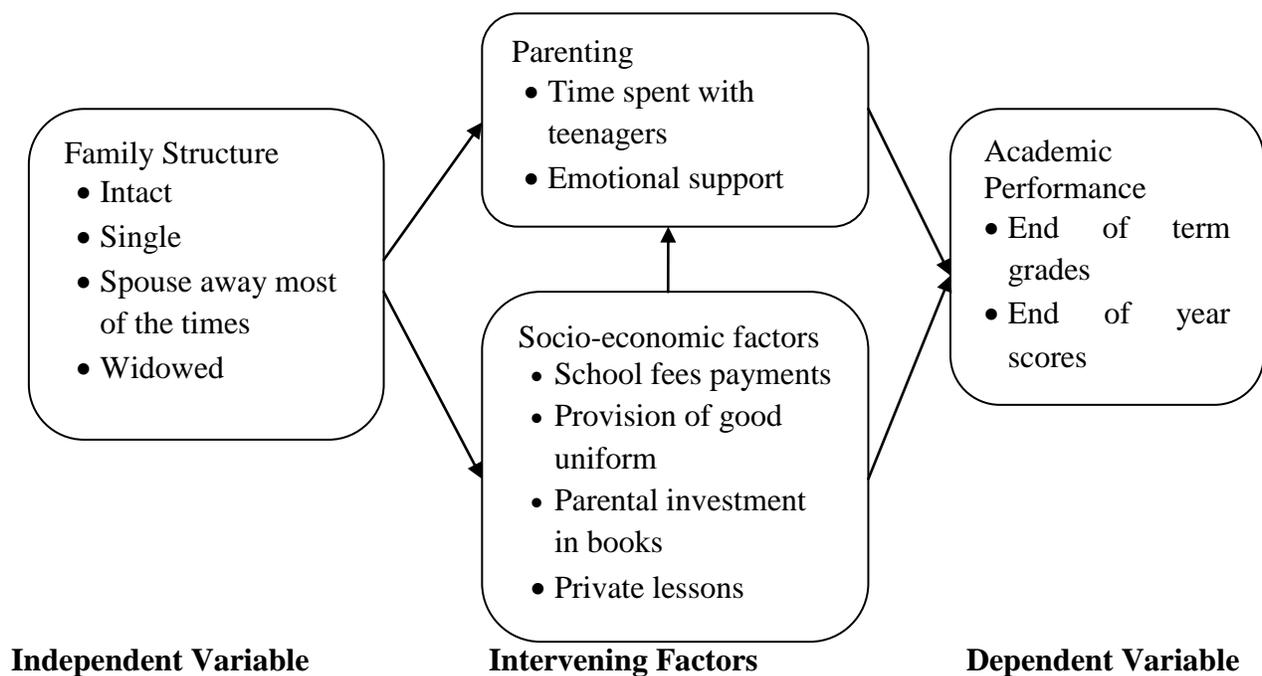


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Relationship between family structure and school related activities among teenagers

Family structure has also been shown to be associated with children's psychological well-being and social behaviors, ranging from school misbehavior to more risky behaviors such as smoking, drug use, and teen pregnancy. Lansford et al., (2001) analyzed over 3,000 cases from NSFH, finding, consistent with prior research, that children (age 5 to 18) from intact homes had the fewest incidences of misbehavior. When economic resources were included in the regression analyses predicting behavior problems, these resources accounted for about 10 percent of the association between family structure and behavioral outcomes. Income loss appears particularly detrimental to child outcomes in single-mother families, accounting for 50 percent of the association between family structure and misbehavior. Another family characteristic explored in analyses was parental support, which consistently contributed to the statistical relationship between family composition and child outcomes. Families in which mothers cohabited with a

partner and mother/step-father families reported the lowest levels of parental support, and this lack of support appears to negatively influence children's behavioral outcomes (Katz & Woodin, 2002). Lansford et al., (2001), results showed that there are varying effects for economic and emotional support among different family types. Nonetheless, it appears that lacking either economic or emotional resources is associated with higher incidences of behavioral problems.

Duncan & Brooks-Gunn (2000) also found an association between family structure and school misbehavior among adolescents, examining over 2,000 cases from the second wave of the National Survey of Children, a longitudinal study based on a probability sample of U.S. households with children age 12 to 16. Compared with children living in non-traditional families, living in an intact family was associated with the lowest levels of school misbehavior, based on parent responses to questions about whether the child had ever been expelled or suspended or if the parent had ever received a note or been called into the school because of a child's discipline problems. Both boys and girls in families where the mother had divorced and remarried had the highest rates of misbehavior (approximately three times higher than the rate for adolescents from intact families). These results differ from Lansford et al., (2001) findings that single-mother families, in contrast to blended families, reported more child behavioral problems. Lansford et al., (2001) findings point to income loss as a mediating variable between family structure and behavioral outcomes, whereas Duncan & Brooks-Gunn (2000) results suggest that parent-child relationships reduce the association between family type and behavioral outcomes. Stepparents have been shown to be less likely to have close relationships with their step-children and to have lower levels of social control. Feelings of social distance between stepparents and stepchildren may be particularly problematic for adolescents, who are especially in need of guidance, supervision, and direction.

Family structure has also been shown to affect adolescent school attendance and tardiness. Gilding, (2001) conducted analyses using twelfth grade data from the second and third follow-ups of NELS:94-2000 and found that students from non-traditional families miss school, are tardy, and cut class about 30 percent more often than students from intact homes even when taking into account demographic characteristics. Students from families headed by foster parents, other relatives, or adoptive parents were the most likely to report frequently being late or missing school. Multivariate analyses indicated that income accounts for some of the difference in truancy and tardiness rates between two-parent and one-parent families (Ajila & Olutola, 2007). However, income did not substantially explain differences in misbehavior between traditional and non-traditional two parent families. The authors concluded that close relationships between biological parents and children in traditional homes facilitate supervision and monitoring, and a lack of such relationships in other types of families may contribute to higher rates of tardiness and truancy.

Differences in family structure have also been associated with variations in the sexual behavior of adolescents, including the likelihood of teenage pregnancy. It has been argued that adolescents from non-traditional families may model their sexual behavior on the dating or cohabiting relationships they see their parents engage in, that these adolescents may be less closely supervised, or that their risky behavior may be a result of the instability of family and their relationships with their parents during divorce (Moore & Chase-Lansdale, 2001). The similarity of sexual behavior patterns among adolescents in step and single-parent families in this study suggests that remarriage may present some risks for effectively monitoring adolescent behaviors

and transmitting values that would deter early sexual relationships. However, results regarding the effects of remarriage remain inconclusive.

Effect of family structure on academic performance

The effects of family structure on academic success continue through high school. Analyzing longitudinal data from HS&B, Ajila and Olutola (2007) investigated the effect of having an absent father or mother on grades and standardized test scores. Students from both single father and single-mother homes had test scores that were on average three tenths of a standard deviation lower than those of students in two-parent homes. Unlike other studies of the effects of family structure on academic achievement, coefficients were not altered when the lower income of single-parent homes was taken into account (Duncan & Brooks-Gunn, 2000). However, when student misbehavior variables, such as school tardiness/absence, not doing homework, and frequent dating, were included in the model, the negative effect of nontraditional family structure becomes insignificant. The authors conclude that non-traditional family structure is associated with adolescent misbehavior, which subsequently affects grades and test scores negatively (Lansford et al., 2001). They also argue that non-traditional family structure may more substantially influence other outcomes, such as high school dropout rate, high school graduation, and age at first pregnancy, than grades. This appears to be the case based on the evidence reported in a number of studies examining these outcomes.

Across all three models, being in a single-parent home negatively affected the likelihood of graduating from high school. When comparing estimates across models, the one with extensive measures of prior information on family characteristics produced coefficients that showed the most robust association between family structure and high school dropout rates (Kershaw, 2000). By using a rigorous analytical strategy, the researchers were able to conclude that the characteristics of parents who are likely to divorce may have independent effects on their adolescent's likelihood of graduating from high school. Manski et al. caution family structure researchers to construct more inclusive models when determining the direct effect of family structure on outcomes. Conger, Reuter & Conger (2000) compared the likelihood of graduating from high school among adolescents in intact, stepparent, and single-parent families, as well as families that experienced a change in marital status in the 1979-1985 waves of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY). Children in any kind of non-intact family were less likely to receive a high school diploma than those from intact families. Controlling for income did not significantly affect the relationship between family structure and high school graduation:

The only instance in which income had a significant effect was in single-parent families (income accounted for 15 percent of the effect size of family structure on high school graduation). Adding additional control variables to the model indicated that the negative effect of living in a non-intact family can be mediated to some degree by high levels of self-esteem and perceived parental expectations for college, but the negative effects of non-traditional family structure on high school completion still remained (Agulanna, 2001). One area that has received considerable attention is how parent and family characteristics, including family structure, influence children's college attendance. Empirical evidence suggests that non-traditional family structures are associated with lower college attendance rates and matriculation to less competitive institutions. Painter and Levine (2000) compared students in the NELS: 88-94 dataset whose parents divorced during high school to those whose parents either divorced or remarried prior to

the first year of the study, when the students were in eighth grade, and found that adolescents from both stepfather and mother-only households were 16 percent less likely to attend college than students from intact families.

Other research indicates that the effect of family structure on college attendance is often indirect. Studying family composition and college choice of HS&B respondents, Lillard and Gerner (2004) found that non-traditional family structures were negatively associated with educational outcomes-specifically applying to, gaining admission to, and attending college, particularly more selective institutions. They also showed that the additional economic resources two parents can provide accounted for much of the difference in outcomes between students from intact versus non-intact families. This is not unexpected as the costs of higher education have outpaced increases in household income, and financial considerations are often seen as the major deterrent to pursuing postsecondary education.

Family structure in relation to socio-economic status and academic performance

The economic circumstances of families decline after divorce, especially among mother-headed families. Fomby & Cherlin (2007) outlined a range of ways in which the economic position of a family might exert effects on child wellbeing: Financial hardship may negatively affect children's nutrition and health; it reduces parental investment in books, educational toys, computers, private lessons; it constrains choice of residential location, which means that the family may have to live in a neighborhood where school programmes are poorly financed, services are inadequate and crime rates are high; children are more likely in such neighborhoods to associate with delinquent peers (Jafee et al., 2003). As well as having a direct impact on child outcomes, economic factors are also likely to have impacts through indirect pathways. The stress associated with economic hardship can have negative impacts on parental mental health, which in turn can have consequences for children's wellbeing (Leibowitz, 2004).

A number of studies have found that when controls for income are applied, the effects of parental separation decline significantly (McLanahan, 2001) or even vanish entirely (e.g. Blum et al. 1988), which implies that post-separation economic circumstances account for much of the deficit in wellbeing among children in separated families. However, other studies show that the post-separation economic situation of families is not fully responsible for adverse outcomes among children and, moreover, that this has varying impacts on different outcomes. Osborne & McLanahan (2007) found that the impact of a change in family structure on the probability of a premarital birth was largely unaffected when controls for income measures were applied, and noted that this suggested that family instability and income have largely independent effects on the probability that a young woman would bear her first child outside marriage.

Children who experience persistent poverty face developmental deficits (Jafee et al., 2003). One reason may be that low-income families are not able to afford adequate food, shelter, and other material goods that foster healthy cognitive and social development of children (Fomby & Cherlin, 2007). Family income also affects the type of neighborhood in which families can afford to live, and children in higher income communities are more likely to receive positive peer influences that encourage achievement and prosocial behavior. In addition, poverty and economic stress may lead to less effective parenting which, in turn, has adverse consequences for children's development and adjustment. Parents have genetic endowments such as health and

intelligence that are considered heritable and thus, are passed on to children directly (Fomby & Cherlin, 2007). Therefore, a child will inherit intellectual and health endowments from his/her parents regardless of the family structure. However, parental genetic endowments also affect child outcomes by influencing the level and allocation of resources within the household. Family dissolution ultimately influences the resources devoted to child development. A highly intelligent and healthy father living in the household could significantly increase household income and subsequently the investments of both time and goods devoted to the child (Antecol & Bedard, 2007). The mother could also increase her time allocation within the household and her interaction with the child as a result (Cavanagh & Huston, 2008).

Research Methodology

This research study used a descriptive research design. The target population of this study was 3rd year students and teachers in the four public secondary schools in Embakasi West Constituency. There are 11 teachers in each of the four public secondary schools in Embakasi West Constituency. In addition, there are 385 students in the four public secondary schools in Embakasi West Constituency. These students constitute the target population from which the sample was drawn.

This study used systematic sampling method to select 20 percent of the target population. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) a sample size of 10 to 20 percent is a good representation of the target population. In this study the names of the students in each and every school were arranged alphabetically. By numbering pieces of paper, say 1-84 in the case of Dr Mwenje Secondary School, the first respondent was selected from the number picked randomly. In Peter Kibkosa secondary school, the number picked was 16 then the first respondent was number 16 as per the list, then every 5th respondent was chosen systematically. In Kayole secondary school, the first respondent was number 13 and every 5th person was selected. In Kayole south secondary school, the 8th person in the list was selected as the first respondents and every other 5th person was selected. In addition, head teachers and one more teacher were selected randomly from each of the four schools for Key Informant Interviews. The sample size of this study was 8 teachers and 77 students, whose distribution by school and gender.

Table 1: Determination of Sample Size According to Gender

Schools	Target population			Sample size (20%)		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Dr Mwenje Secondary School	48	36	84	10	7	17
Peter Kibkosa secondary school	41	56	97	8	11	19
Kayole secondary school	45	67	112	9	13	22
Kayole south secondary school	38	54	92	8	11	18
Total	172	213	385	34	43	77

The study used primary data which was collected by use of key informant interview guides, focused group discussions and questionnaires; the questionnaire included structured and unstructured questions. On the other hand, interview guide for the key informants was used to collect data from teachers and head teachers. On the other hand, Focused Group Discussion was

used to collect qualitative data from the students. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), data analysis software, was used to analyze the quantitative data. Further, quantitative data was analyzed by use of descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics such as mean, frequencies, standard deviation and percentages was used to profile sample characteristics and major patterns emerging from the data.

Study Results and Discussions

The sample size of this study was 77 students and 8 teachers from secondary schools in Embakasi Constituency, Dr Mwenje Secondary School, Peter Kibkasia secondary school, Kayole secondary school and Kayole south secondary school. Out of this sample size, 70 students filled and returned their questionnaires and 8 teachers were interviewed. This represents a 91.76% response rate on the questionnaire while 100% response on interviews. According to Babbie (2002) any response of 50% and above is adequate for analysis thus 91.76% is even better.

Relationship between Family Structure and School Related Activities among Teenagers

The first objective was to examine the relationship between family structure and school related activities among teenagers in Embakasi Constituency. The students were also asked to indicate the extent to which various issues in their families influence their school related factors where 5 was very high extent, 4 was high extent, 3 was moderate extent, 2 was low extent and 1 was no extent at all.

Table 2: Influence of Family Structure Situation on Students' School Related Factors

School Related Factors (issues of influence)	Mean
psychological well-being	3.600
Teen pregnancy	2.386
Absenteeism and lateness for school	3.773
Parental support	3.960
Behavior outside and inside school	3.626
Expulsion and suspension from school	3.693
School attendance and tardiness	3.920
Concentration in class	3.960
Parent-teenager relationship	3.906
Abuse of drugs and alcohol	3.840
Self-esteem	4.026

The students indicated with a mean of 4.026 that the situations in the families influence their self-esteem to a high degree. Also, the students indicated with a mean of 3.960 that the situations in the families influence their class concentration of the respondent in school to a high degree. Further, the students indicated with a mean of 3.960 that the situation in the families influence parental support to a high degree. These findings agree with Lansford et al., (2001) argument that lacking either economic or emotional resources is associated with higher incidences of behavioral problems. Also, the students indicated with a mean of 3.920 that that the situation in the families influence their school attendance and tardiness to high degree. Also, the students

indicated with a mean of 3.906 that the situations in their families influence the parent-teenager relationship to a high degree. This agrees with Duncan and Brooks-Gunn (2000) that parent-child relationships reduce the association between family type and behavioral outcomes. The students further indicated with a mean of 3.840 that the situation in their families influences the abuse of drugs and alcohol to a high degree. The students also indicated with a mean of 3.773 that the situation in their families influences their absenteeism and lateness for school to a high degree.

Moreover, the students indicated with a mean of 3.693 that the situation in their families influences their expulsion and suspension from school to high degree. Furthermore, the students indicated with a mean of 3.626 that the situation in their families influences their behavior outside and inside school to a high degree. Further, the students indicated with a mean of 3.600 that the situation in their families affects their psychological well-being to a high degree. Finally, the respondents indicated with a mean of 2.386 that the situation in their families influence teen pregnancy to low degree.

In the key informant interviews, the study sought to establish the effect of family structure on school related activities. From the findings, the interviewees indicated that compared to children living in intact families, peers living in single mother families, married families with stepfathers were more likely to have ever been suspended or expelled from school; more likely to have engaged in delinquent activities in the past twelve months; more likely to have problems getting along with their teachers, doing homework, and paying attention in school; and more likely to have lower grade point averages. The interviewees also indicated that children's ability to adapt to classroom routines appears to be influenced to some degree by the marital situation of their parents. The interviewees further indicated that Children whose parents have divorced have more behavior problems than those in intact families; children living in stepparent and blended families also tend to have more behavior problems, though the effect sizes are smaller and the relationship is less consistent.

Effect of Family Structure on Academic Performance

The second objective sought to establish the effect of family structure on academic performance of teenagers in Embakasi Constituency. The students were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with various statements in relation to family matters and academic performance.

Table 3: Family Matters influence on Academic Performance

Family Maters	Mean
The absence of mother or father affects the academic performance of teenagers	4.080
Low family income affects the academic performance of teenagers negatively	3.906
Lack of involvement of parents with teenagers affects the teenagers completion of homework	3.560
Family structure affects adolescent's behavior, which subsequently affects grades	4.306
Family structures affect school dropout rate	3.573
Parents' divorce or remarrying affects the academic performance of teenagers negatively	4.026

The respondents agreed with a mean of 4.306 that family structure affects adolescent's behavior, which subsequently affects grades. This agrees with Duncan and Brooks-Gunn (2000) findings that that non-traditional family structure is associated with adolescent misbehavior, which subsequently affects grades and test scores negatively. Further, respondents agreed with a mean of 4.080 that absence of mother or father affects the academic performance of teenagers. This agrees with Ajila and Olutola (2007) argument that students from both single father and single-mother homes had test scores that were on average three tenths of a standard deviation lower than those of students in two-parent homes.

Furthermore, the respondents agreed with a mean of 4.026 that parents' divorce or remarrying affects the academic performance of teenagers negatively. This agrees with Duncan and Brooks-Gunn (2000) that parents' divorce itself is responsible for negative outcomes of the children's performance. Further, the respondents agreed with a mean of 3.906 that low family income affects the academic performance of teenagers negatively. Also, the respondents agreed with a mean of 3.573 that Family structures affect school dropout rate. Finally, the respondents agreed with a mean of 3.560 that lack of involvement of parents with teenagers affects the teenagers' completion of homework.

The interviewees were asked to indicate how availability of resources affect the academic performance of teenagers. From the findings, the interviewees indicated that there is a difference between students from single parent families and those from two parent families in terms of attitude to examination malpractices, attitude to studies and academic performance. Further, the interviewees indicated that adolescents growing up in families under economic stress or with a single parent may be poorly supervised and often gain autonomy too early. The teachers also indicated that children in single-parent families have lower academic performance, are more susceptible to peer pressure to engage in deviant behavior, have higher dropout rates from high school, and have greater social and psychological problems.

In addition, the interviewees suggested that economic hardship in single-parent families is likely to require adolescents to work long hours and to take greater responsibility for younger brothers and/or sisters. As a result, these time-consuming activities are likely to be related to lower school achievement. In a family socialization perspective, the absence of a parent was associated with a decrease in total parental involvement, which in turn is related to poorer school outcomes. It is often claimed that the absence of fathers has particularly negative socialization influences, which is detrimental for boys. Lastly, the interviewees indicated that children in intact families tend to have greater academic achievement and educational attainment and are less likely to exhibit behavioral problems in school. Their parents tend to be more involved in their school activities and to have higher expectations for them.

Family structure in relation to socio-economic status and academic performance

The third objective sought to examine how family structure in relation to socio-economic status influences the academic performance of teenagers in Embakasi Constituency. Also, the students were asked to indicate the extent to which socio-economic aspects affect the academic performance of teenagers.

Table 4: Ratings on the Effect of Socio-Economic on Academic Performance of Teenagers

Social Economic Aspects	Mean
Children's nutrition and health	4.453
School fees payments	4.360
Parental investment in books	3.906
Provision of computers	2.733
Private lessons	3.773
Healthy cognitive and social development	4.280
Provision of good uniform (clothing)	4.080

The students reported with a mean of 4.453 that children's nutrition and health affects the academic performance of the teenagers to a very great extent. Further, students reported with a mean of 4.360 that school fees payments affect the academic performance of the teenagers to a very great extent. The students further reported with a mean of 4.280 that healthy cognitive and social development affects the academic performance of the teenagers to a great extent. Also the students reported with a mean of 4.080 that provision of good uniform (clothing) affects the academic performance of the teenagers to a great extent. This agrees with Jafee et al. (2003) that financial hardship may negatively affect children's nutrition and health; it reduces parental investment in books, educational toys, computers, private lessons; it constrains choice of residential location.

Furthermore, the students reported with a mean of 3.906 that school parental investment in books affects the academic performance of the teenagers to a great extent. This agrees with Fomby and Cherlin (2007) that there is a range of ways in which the economic position of a family might exert effects on child wellbeing. Also, the students reported with a mean of 3.773 that private lessons affect the academic performance of the teenagers to a great extent. Finally, the students reported with a mean of 2.733 that provision of computers affects the academic performance of the teenagers to a moderate extent.

The teachers were asked to indicate how availability of resources affects the academic performance of teenagers. From the findings, the students reported that children from high and middle socio-economic status parents are better exposed to a learning environment at home because of provision and availability of extra learning facilities. Further, the interviewees indicated that the effect of socioeconomic status on families, neighborhoods, schools, and health care guarantees that poor and low-income adolescents arrive at young adulthood in worse health, engaging in riskier and more dangerous behaviors, and with lower educational attainment and more limited career prospects than their more affluent counterparts. In addition, the teachers and head teachers indicated that socio-economic and education background of parents in this research setting is not significant factors in students' academic performance. However, educational qualification of parents and health status of students are significant factors that affect the academic performance of students.

Conclusion

The study concludes that the most common the nuclear family was the most common family structure among the students followed by single parent families, step families and extended

families. The study concludes that family structure influences academic performance of students in secondary schools in Embakasi Constituency. In addition, there is an association between socio-economic status and parenting and academic performance of students in secondary schools in Embakasi Constituency.

The study also concludes that harmony in the parents' relationship and soundness of parent-child relationship, provision of basic needs (food, shelter and clothing) and mental wellbeing and adequacy of economic resources were highly influencing academic performance of students in secondary schools in Embakasi Constituency. In addition, family structure influences self-esteem, class concentration, parental support, school attendance and tardiness, parent-teenager relationship among teenagers. The study also revealed that school fees payments, healthy cognitive and social development and the provision of good uniform (clothing) influence the academic performance of the teenagers significantly.

Recommendations

The various stakeholders in Embakasi constituency need to come up with strategies which are geared towards identifying the various backgrounds of different students in their schools. This may enable them to understand clearly the nature of each student and thus being able to handle them with ease and appropriateness so as not to hamper with their educational progress.

The Ministry of Education, school administrators and the local authorities need to come up with frequent community based forums that are specifically structured towards enhancing parental participation in their children's education. During these forums, the parents may be highlighted on the importance of education not only in the child development but also community growth.

There is also need for guidance and counseling processes to be introduced in the public secondary schools. The main role of these counseling sessions may be to encourage and motivate the students to see beyond their limitations and put more focus on the future through persistence and determination in their education.

The study found that single parenthood was highly affecting academic performance among teenagers. The researcher recommended that the families should be structured on a functionality level to avoid single parenthood if academic performance has to be achieved.

Areas for Further Research

This study focused on the role of family structure and parenting on the academic performance in Embakasi constituency. Since this was a case study of Embakasi constituency, the findings of this study cannot be generalized to other constituency and counties in Kenya. The study also recommends further studies on the effect of family structure and parenting on the academic performance in other counties in Kenya. The study also suggests further studies on other factors, apart from family structure that affecting the academic performance of teenagers in Kenya.

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