

**EFFECTS OF EMOTIONALLY ABSENT PARENTS ON THE BEHAVIOUR OF
ADOLESCENTS IN SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MACHAKOS
COUNTY, KENYA.**

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES
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DECLARATION

I declare that this research project is my original work and has not been presented in any other university for consideration of any certification. This research project has been complemented by referenced sources duly acknowledged. Where text, data, graphics, pictures or tables have been borrowed from other sources including internet, these are specifically accredited and references cited in accordance with anti plagiarism regulation.

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ABSTRACT

Students' indiscipline is a problem that has become common in most of Kenyan secondary schools. However, discipline of the adolescents in secondary schools is not an aspect of the school systems alone. Parents have a role to play in shaping behavior of children through the process of nurturing. However, many parents remain emotionally absent from their children as they engage in other activities. Using the attachment theory as proposed by John Bowlby, the study explored the relationship between emotionally absent parents and the indiscipline of adolescents in secondary schools in Machakos County-Kenya. The study used the correlational study design and the target population was all adolescent students with a record of indiscipline in Machakos County. The sample population was obtained by stratified random sampling whereby, 200 students were selected from ten secondary schools in different classes in the County. The researcher used a questionnaire as a tool for data collection. Both descriptive and inferential methods of data analysis were used to analyze data. The findings of the study show that younger participants in forms one and two were affected by the emotional absence of their parents more than those in forms three and four. Majority of participants as represented by 35.7% who expressed emotional parental neglect also expressed hatred for school rules and elders, and reported having engaged in different forms of indiscipline while in school. The study found strong positive correlation coefficients of 0.853 with a p-value of 0.013 which is less than 0.05 at 95% confidence level between parental emotional absence and the challenges faced by the respondents. It was expected that the findings of this study would be useful in making parents understand the need to accord their children more quality time while at home. Based on the findings, it was recommended that, employers, social organizations and churches should educate parents on the need to create more quality time by being emotionally present to their children.

DEDICATION

To all teachers and administrators of public and private secondary schools in Kenya, that they may embrace teaching as a unique calling, and work towards assisting their students to know and love themselves better. To all parents with adolescent students, that they may appreciate their children and accord them sufficient parental emotional presence.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

St.	Saint
U.S.	United States
U.S.A.	United States of America

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Adolescent: -The age from about eleven years to around eighteen years, when young people are disturbed by the growth spurts which may occasion emotional imbalances. It is the age when effects of parental emotional absence will be highlighted in this study.

Agoraphobia: - fear of being in a place where one suspects one will not get immediate help in case of danger, like in lift or in a public place. Adolescents from in secure families are prone to this disorder.

Antisocial personality disorder: a personality disorder characterized by a pervasive disregard for the law and the rights of others, a disorder that may be occasioned by parental absence to children during their earlier years and may be manifested during adolescence.

Borderline personality disorder: a personality disorder characterized by extreme "black and white" thinking, instability in relationships, poor self-image, identity and behavior often leading to self-harm and impulsivity. This form of disorder has been categorized as prevalent among adults whose parents were not available to them during their infancy.

Dependency: - a personality disorder characterized by pervasive psychological dependency on others. Children who lack parental love have been known to be at very high risk of acquiring this disorder.

Effects: - the impact of emotional parental absence on the life of adolescents

Emotional absence: - the lack of the caring presence of parents to their children, a presence that would provide love and a feeling of security to their children.

Emotionally Absent Parents: - Parents who do not sacrifice quality time for their children.

Indiscipline: - Behavior among adolescent students that is not congruent to the schools regulations and which could be detrimental to the life of the student.

Paranoia: - insecurity in an individual that makes one not to trust others, especially people in authority, in this case, students with this disorder may never trust their parents and teachers and believe they want to harm them. This could lead to strikes, due to impatience occasioned by mistrust.

Parental Emotional Absence: - the parental emotional unavailability and failure to accord psychological warmth to one's children. Ignoring the emotional and psychological needs of the child and failing to protect the child from emotional stress.

School Machinery: - the administrative team in charge of overseeing discipline matters and ensuring the school runs smoothly, in this case, teachers and departmental heads

School phobia: - getting sick in the morning in order not to go to class and devising other forms of avoiding going to school. Children who are afraid of teachers are likely to develop this attitude.

Selective Mutism: -psychological loss of power of speech only when a feared person or object is present. Children whose parents were very strict with them have been known to develop this problem.

Transference: - the unconscious transfer of one's feelings onto other people, and in this case, students feelings onto their teachers or superiors

Truancy: - Irregular attendance of school by students, dodging lessons or refusal to attend school.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background to the Study

Secondary schools in Kenya are the abode of thousands of adolescents, whose needs cannot be ignored or wished away without future dire consequences to both the students and the world at large. Cases of misbehavior in secondary schools have become very common and although school administrators are doing a lot to contain the situation, there is still much more that need to be accomplished in order to reduce misbehavior in Kenyan secondary schools to negligible levels. Cases of homosexuality, lesbianism, truancy, sexual immorality, delinquency, drug abuse, devil worship and many other cases of misbehavior have become very common in our secondary schools in spite of the efforts being made by the school administrators, (Biu, 2011).

Misbehavior in schools is not a new phenomenon. From a global perspective students have manifested cases of misbehavior in various parts of the world. Holland and Cavanaugh (2000) noted there was a high rate of misbehavior in schools in the U.S., especially among the adolescents of between 16 and 17 years, whom he claimed were at their peak of adolescence. The school administration was concerned with the high rate of students taking drugs and involved in sex. Serious cases of bullying in secondary schools drove Olweus (1993) to conduct a study in a Swedish university with approximately 21000 students to establish the possible causes of such high rate of indiscipline in Swedish schools. He found out that 60% of boys involved in bullying had unstable backgrounds.

In Kenya there have been cases of indiscipline in secondary schools ranging from school absconding, name calling of teachers by students, fights among students and theft to serious cases of misbehavior such as riots in and outside the school compounds, drug abuse, sexual immorality, rape, bullying of other students and especially new comers, truancy, burning of schools and even murder of fellow students. A case in point; in Upper hill Secondary School in Nairobi- Kenya, a deputy school captain perished while trying to save his fellow students from a burning dormitory that was believed to have been set on fire by the students. At Nyeri high school, some school students locked prefects in their cubicle, poured petrol and set the room on fire, killing four of them, (Biu, 2011).

In Machakos County, 68 students died in an arson attack at Kyanguli Secondary school in 2001 that was orchestrated by other students in the same school. In 2008, students from Tala Boys in Machakos County stormed the neighboring Mackenzie Educational Centre and beat up its students. In the same year, Machakos School students attacked Kithaayoni Mixed School and injured a number of students. In September 2012, girls from Mua secondary connived with boys of Ngelani secondary school and successfully sneaked them into the dormitories at night where a sexual orgy ensued from around seven in the evening until the early hours of the following day, (Biu, 2011).

However, it is not only the schools that have the responsibility of inculcating and maintaining good behavior among the students. Parents too have the responsibility to ensure that their children are well behaved. In their role as nurturers, the parents are expected to instill discipline into their children particularly by being emotionally present to them and avoiding as much as possible to reward negative behaviors. Parents are being

faced with a serious challenge when it comes to bringing up their children, and as it was observed by Skinner (1969), most human behavior is learned through operant conditioning, just as a sculptor shapes a lump of clay. Parents therefore play a major role in determining the discipline of their adolescent students once in secondary school. Parental emotional presence to growing children has been established by many theorists like Mahler (1975) and Ainsworth (1978) as a very powerful force in shaping the character of children.

John Bowlby's attachment theory (2009) is significant in revealing the need for parental emotional warmth to children and shows how its absence may breed children with serious emotional imbalances. According to Bowlby, parental emotional presence to children involves availing quality time, being passionate and expressing keen interest to their needs and being present to them by providing the necessary warmth, tender care and love; protecting them from emotional and psychological pain and being kind and supportive to them. This means it is not so much the amount of time the parent stays with the child, but how loving and caring the parent is to the child while they are together. Proponents of this theory encourage parents to spend as much time as possible with their children, and the encounter to be as loving, caring and indicative of parental emotional presence as possible.

Parental emotional absence denies children the warmth that propels them through to psychological and emotional maturity, Bowlby (2009). Citing Bowlby, Engler (2010) reveals that the child should experience a warm, intimate and continuous relationship with its parents, in whom both find satisfaction and enjoyment, and that, not to do so,

many children manifest significant mental health challenges later in life. The implication is that emotional presence of parents at an infancy stage provides the basis for secure development that could manifest in a well-disciplined adolescent. To the contrary emotional absence of a parent at infancy stage and at adolescence could breed an undisciplined child. Parental presence therefore is significant in helping the child to grow trusting in the self and in others; being confident and viewing the world positively, (Engler 2010).

In her study in The State University College in New York on the needs of children, Rath (2007) established eight hierarchical emotional needs which are essential for the balanced growth of children. The first and most significant of these needs is the need for love and affection. Rath believed that parental emotional presence was crucial and contributed largely in forming well rounded children. Another of her significant findings is the great need for children to be free from deep feelings of fear. Lack of such parental emotional presence according to Rath makes the child insecure, weakens the bond between the child and the parent and could make the child emotionally unstable. Rath therefore encourages parents to be emotionally present to their children in order to avail to them that much needed love and affection which enables them to grow with emotional stability. Children who lack this basic component from their parents in their earlier years are prone to acquiring a disheveled character and may experience health problems, Rath (2007).

The behaviorist Skinner (1904-1990) bases his theory on operant conditioning, whereby, according to his theory, the behavior of children is based on the reinforcements received

during growth. A caring, loving parent who is emotionally present to the child will definitely reinforce positive behavior to the child by showering love to the child, caring and rewarding the child's good behavior. Similarly, a parent who denies a child emotional love breeds an adult who lacks trust for self and others; bitter with life and less focused. In Wellington College, England, similar findings about the need for parental presence were arrived at by Winkley, (2002). He found out that, children with more severe problems are those who have experienced serious failures of parenting which mainly involved lack of emotional parental presence.

In a longitudinal research conducted in the United States by Santrock (2008) on the need for children whose parents were always away revealed that, parents with poor working conditions such as long working hours and lack of autonomy at work are likely to be more irritable at home. According to Santrock such parents may engage in less effective parenting skills than their counterparts who have better working conditions or who stay at home with their children. Such parents, although physically present, may not accord the warmth necessary for the positive growth of their children. Their presence could be abusive thus impacting negatively on the children and was detrimental to their growth. However his finding did not have a direct link between the behavior of children who lacked parental emotional presence and the discipline of adolescents in secondary schools.

Researching in Uganda for his doctoral dissertation, Kiyingi (2012) found out that, boys who lacked parental emotional presence missed the parental warmth which has a unique role in their lives. The parents' presence, according to Kiyingi, enhances in the boy child

the confidence and masculine skills which are crucial for adult life. On the contrary lack of a warm relationship between the parent and his children could breed adults who are less confident and with an insecure personality. In Kenya, similar views are expressed by Bui (2011) who states that, the parental emotional absence to children may cause them serious psychological imbalances. From her research in some Kenyan secondary schools, Bui (2011) concurs with Mahler and Ainsworth on the need for parental emotional presence in molding a holistic adult. She laments that, Kenyan parents have become so preoccupied in the pursuit for wealth that being emotionally present to their children has become a huge challenge. Bui feels that, Kenyan parents are so much intent on amassing much wealth in order to leave their children “comfortable”, when they die, but most of these children squander all the wealth soon after their parents are dead. For Bui, what matters is not what we leave *for* our children, but what we leave *in* our children; *parental emotional love*.

Of concern therefore in this study is to establish whether the parental emotional absence to children has any effects on the behaviour of adolescent students in secondary schools. This research therefore aims at determining the effects of parental emotional absence and how it influences the character of students during their adolescence period in secondary schools.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Misbehavior in secondary is on the rise and efforts to contain it do not seem to bear much fruit. Due many socio-economical strains being experienced in families today, many parents have become emotionally absent from their children. Yet parents play a

significant role in shaping the children's behavior. From attachment theories emotional attachment mediates in behavior of children. However, few studies have looked at the relationship between emotionally absent parents and the indiscipline of the adolescents.

Studies that have been conducted have been general without specific focus on behavior. For example Kiyangi (2012) focused on how lack of paternal affection affect adolescent boys, while Bui (2011) examined general causes of indiscipline in secondary schools. This research therefore sought to find out the effects of parental emotional absence on the behavior of adolescents in secondary schools in Machakos County. If this problem remains unresolved it may lead to children who misbehave in secondary schools.

1.3. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to establish whether parental emotional absence to children has any effect on the behavior of adolescent students in secondary schools in with an aim of establishing what can be done to improve on the parental emotional presences.

1.4. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were:-

- i. To establish if there are adolescent students with emotionally absent parents in secondary schools of Machakos County
- ii. To find out the challenges faced by adolescents in secondary schools with emotionally absent parents
- iii. To find out the effects of parental absence on the behavior of adolescents in secondary schools in Machakos.

- iv. To establish what can be done to encourage emotional presence of parents to their children

1.5. Research Questions

The following research questions were pertinent to this study:-

- i. To what extent are parents emotionally absent to their children?
- ii. What challenges do adolescent students with emotionally absent parents face in secondary schools?
- iii. In what ways does emotional absence of parents affect behavior of adolescents in Machakos County?
- iv. How can parents of Machakos County be encouraged to be emotionally present for their adolescent children?

1.6. Justification and significance of the Study

Children who grow up in a warm environment where parents accord them quality time express more emotional stability and are likely to maintain discipline in the schools contributing to their good performance. On the contrary those who lack emotional care in their earlier years manifest various forms of maladjustments, which may lead to indiscipline later as adolescents, leading to poor performance and antisocial behaviour. However this can only be achieved through empirical study. This research that aims at establishing the relationship between parental emotional absence and the behaviour of adolescent students is therefore justified.

From the findings of this study, important information on how parents should relate with their children and how school administrators should deal with adolescent students who manifest weird characteristics could be established. This knowledge could help parents see the need to be more present to their children. The findings could also help the school administrators handle cases of indiscipline among the adolescent student with more objectivity. The Ministry of education may also use these findings to enhance the teacher-student rapport in secondary schools; empower the Counseling Department in schools with more resources and help them to create a better leaning environment for the adolescents in their schools. This study may help the students in their adolescent age to understand some of the psychological complications they experience during their adolescence could be the outcome of the lack of emotional support from their parents prior to or during their adolescence period.

1.7. Scope and Limitations of the Study

The study was carried out only on adolescents in secondary schools in Machakos. The study mainly concentrated on cases of indiscipline perceived to be occasioned by emotional parental absence to their adolescent students only in the county of Machakos. The researcher limited his population to only students in secondary schools. The instrument for interviews was formulated in way that it controlled for all other extraneous variables.

1.8. Assumptions of the Study

This study assumes thus:

- i. There are parents who are emotionally absent from their children
- ii. There are students whose discipline has been influenced by parental emotional absence in the course of their growth
- iii. All the respondents of the questionnaires would be honest and truthful.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to establish whether parental emotional absence has any effect on the indiscipline of adolescent students in secondary schools. This chapter contains the theoretical framework, a review of related literature according to the objectives, a summary of the literature review and the conceptual framework.

2.2.1. The Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study was informed by the Attachment Theory as mooted by John Bowlby.

2.2.2. The Attachment Theory by John Bowlby

This theory was formulated by a British psychiatrist John Bowlby (1903-1990), and advanced by Mary Ainsworth, (1989). This theory is based primarily on ethological theory, which is basically the science of the races and evolution of mankind; the way people relate to one another and the dynamics of the long term relationship between humans. Its most important tenet is that children need to develop a relationship with at least one primary care giver for social and emotional development to occur normally, (Sigelman & Rider, 2009).

This theory was chosen to inform this study due to its consistent analytical emphasis on the innate desire of every offspring to develop a long term relationship with at least one primary caregiver for social and emotional development to occur. The attachment theory explains how much the parent relationship with the child influences the child's

development. The formation of an emotional attachment to a permanent caregiver attributes to the positive formation of later emotional and personality development. Events that interfere with attachment such as abrupt separation from familiar people or the significant inability of caregivers to be sensitive, responsive or consistent in their interactions have short term and possible long term negative effects on the child's emotional and cognitive life. Bowlby's main emphasis is that, children should experience a warm intimate and continuous relationship with their parents, where both parties find satisfaction and enjoyment, and that, not to do so, many people grow to have significant mental and psychological health consequences, (Engler, 2010).

According to Bowlby, the attachment in children is primarily a process of proximity seeking to an identified attachment figure in situations of perceived distress or alarm for the purpose of survival, Engler (2010). Children become attached to parents who are sensitive and responsive in social interactions with them, and who remain consistent caregivers (Dowdney, 2011). Informed by the attachment theory, parental emotional presence should go beyond the spontaneous presence of parents to children to the conscious desire to fulfill a psychological and emotional requirement of their children. This provides both psychological and social security that facilitates development of a well behaved child.

In relation to this study, adolescents who enjoy sufficient parental presence as they grow learn to love others and remain sensitive to authority. They are trusting and more likely to obey rules since they trust that the rules within the society are meant for their own good. On the contrary, children who grow up without parental presence are distrusting and may

feel dejected and are likely to be rebellious to the society. The school rules represent the social standards that they do not ascribe due to insensitive parenting. This may make them not obey the school rules or engage in other anti-social behaviors, (Dowdney, 2011).

2.3. Parental–Emotional Absence to Adolescent Students

Many researchers have established that parental emotional presence is an essential requirement for the balanced growth of children. For example, Bowlby (2004), suggested that, seeking interpersonal attachments is a primary goal of development. He developed attachment theory as a way of understanding the tendency of people to bond to specific others and to account for the distress that may follow separation, (Engler, 2010). Ainsworth (1978) elaborated on the three categories of attachment, the *Secure*, the *Avoidant* and the *Resistant*. He classified the *avoidant* and the *resistant* as those children who have not enjoyed adequate parental presence and whose parents have not been warm to them. As they grow, such children show lesser ego strength, peer incompetence, dejection, manifestations of insecurity and depression, (Engler 2010).

According to Engler, the *avoidant* and the *resistant* also manifest lesser ego strength; are paranoid and less competent in problem solving. These characteristics may allude to the misbehavior manifested by adolescents in secondary schools. Lines (2012), stipulates that, the loss of parental emotional presence has two main effects. First, security is disturbed because the concept of the family has been shattered and secondly, the adolescent's world is less stable and far less predictable. According to Lines, many cases of misbehavior in secondary schools are therefore occasioned by students' lack of

persistence and the knowledge to solve problems as they arise. This classification by Ainsworth and stipulation by Lines therefore suggests that, children who lack parental emotional presence may develop characteristics which may constitute to misbehavior in adolescents. This research therefore seeks to find out whether there is any link between parental emotional absence and behavior in secondary school adolescents.

According to Winkley (2002), children need a firm emotional foundation on which to build their early life. Winkley believes that, children with more severe problems are those who have experienced serious failures of parenting which may be caused by neglect, rejection, deprivation or abuse. According to Ellis (2009), the basis for this secure emotional foundation is found within the child's relationship with parents as much as it is possible, and if all go well, is built up and established over childhood years of the child's life and through to the adolescence stage.

In India, Vatsyayan (2000) found out that when children establish a secure base, they feel free to explore the physical and social surroundings and develop other appropriate behaviors. This early attachment creates a basic pattern for later relationships with others. In contrast, those children who grow lacking a secure base may lack such qualities and may develop inappropriate behaviours. This study seeks to find out whether these inappropriate behaviours, which may constitute indiscipline among adolescent students, have any direct connection with emotional parental absence.

Findings from a longitudinal study in New York with 193 infants of both housewives and working mothers, Horney (1967) stressed further the importance of emotional parental

attachment. She found out that parental emotional presence is a requisite to a rounded growth for children. She concluded thus, parental emotional absence bred children who lacked emotional stability, (Engler, 2009).

According to the behavioral theory, the impact of learning can be seen in families in which parents don't socialize much and tend to be suspicious of other people. Such parents might promote social anxiety in their children by influencing them to interpret social situations as threatening. Abuse or other traumatic childhood experiences also increase the risk of developing anxiety and panic disorders, (Bernstein, 2006). Children with such disorders may not know how to respond well to threatening situations and pressure from academic institutions, which may lead them to behave in ways which are incongruent to school regulations, hence indiscipline.

In her research on the role of society in the indiscipline of secondary schools in Kenya, Biu, (2011), a high school tutor established that society in general has a major contribution on the indiscipline of students in secondary schools. Her research also established that, lack parental physical involvement with the affairs of their children contributed to their indiscipline. However, Biu's research was not involved with parental emotional absence and its effects on the indiscipline among adolescent students, hence this study.

2.4. Challenges Faced by Adolescent Students with Emotionally Absent Parents

A descriptive research by Fuhrmann (1999), in Illinois, U.S.A. on the impact of employed mothers on their growing children established that most parents did not show

concern on their adolescent students by remaining at home to empathize with them during sickness or in times of distress, nor did they bother to accompany their adolescent students to school on snowy days, (Fuhrmann, 1999). Fuhrman found out that, adolescents expressed their dissatisfaction by not having their parents around when they needed them most, especially when they were experiencing psychological pain.

Santrock (2008), in his longitudinal research in New York on how lack of fatherly care affects the life of the girl child found out that, adolescent girls who lacked proper fatherly attention in their earlier years were never stable in their relationships and most of them moved from one boyfriend to another. Santrock's research further established that, this laxity in character and instability in sexual relationships could lead to other forms of misbehavior. It is therefore possible these other forms of misbehavior could be linked to indiscipline in secondary schools. However this study did not look into possibility of parental emotional absence as one the causes of such psychological imbalances in these girls, hence this study.

Bowlby's experiment dated 1969 with forty-four juveniles in London, though dated revealed that, lack of parental love and care in the critical formative five years bred adolescents with very low self-esteem. Parental love basically entails parental emotional presence, which includes parental encouragement to the child, protection and provision of psychological security. This helps the adolescent to build a sense of positive self-concept leading to high self-esteem. Adolescents with high self-esteem generally exude confidence and trust more, making them less inclined to cases of indiscipline. On the contrary children growing up without parental love may lack self-confidence, be less

trusting and eventually get involved in acts of misbehavior in a desperate unconscious need to salvage their image, leading to low self-esteem. It is possible that adolescents with low self-esteem may suffer from a myriad of characteristic disorders, like schizoid, borderline, or antisocial disorders. Such disorders can lead a student to behave in ways that are not acceptable by the school machinery, amounting to misbehavior, Morris and Maisto, (1998). This study therefore seeks to underpin how emotional parental absence could affect indiscipline in secondary schools.

A research on the origins of conduct disorder by Winkley (2002) in London found out that the underlying cause in the majority of cases of indiscipline among adolescents is the lack of basic, stable, warm and secure family background. He believes something has gone wrong over time in the line of parental care and children who grow in such an unloving environment fail to develop a sense of inner security and trust due to the apparent lack of consistent, stable and permanent parent figure with whom they could identify, (Winkley, 2002) However Winkley did not establish the exact link between parental absence and its impact on the discipline of adolescents in secondary schools, hence this study.

From Nigeria, Uba (1989) in his longitudinal study on parental guidance in relation to abuse of drugs by students in secondary schools observed that the tempestuous growth spurts in adolescence students called for extra understanding from parents in order to provide better direction to the adolescents who are at the time both vulnerable and delicate to handle. If deprived of parental guidance at this stage, adolescents can either deviate and engage in mischief, loose hope in life, abuse drugs and fall into depression.

Researching on the same from Uganda, Kiyangi (2012), in his longitudinal study with 400 boys found out that children who grew without the necessary parental love faced several challenges as adolescents, abused drugs, experienced growth and developmental problems and poor attachment levels that affect them in their adulthood if not worked upon. Uba and Kiyangi were however concerned with parental guidance to children, not parental emotional presence. This study will be concerned with parental presence and its effects on indiscipline in secondary schools.

In Kenya, Muganda, (1996) in his descriptive research on the Dilemma of Growing Children in Kenya and the Challenge of Parenting found out that most parents have lost the fight in their bid to bring up children with the parental love and affection that is necessary to accord them stability for a balanced growth. Muganda lamented that, poverty and ignorance on the part of parents contributed largely in denying children the guidance they deserved from parents. As a result, children grew up with the intent to look for that lost affection in the wrong places like in drugs and promiscuity.

Researching on how neglected adolescents behave in schools, Ngwiri and Tumuti, (2010) found out that, when adolescents feel neglected and un-appreciated at home, they could engage in mischief in order to attract parental attention, in most cases by disrupting learning in school so that they may be send home,. However, their study concentrated on general neglect, not examine whether parental emotional absence. The current study hopes to establish if parental emotional absence contributes to indiscipline in adolescent students

From these studies, it is evident that there are cases of parents who are not emotionally available to their children. It is also evident that children are affected in different negative ways by these parental absences. However, most of these studies were about the parental physical presence, not emotional presence. From these studies, it is not clear how parental emotional absences affect the discipline of adolescents in secondary schools. This study aims at establishing the link between the parental emotional absence and discipline among adolescents in secondary schools, if any.

2.5. Effects of Emotionally Absent Parents on the Behavior of Adolescents in Secondary Schools.

A longitudinal research was carried in London by Holland, (2000), on 183 adolescents whose parents had separated leaving their children unattended. The adolescents from such backgrounds manifested physiological disorders, emotional vulnerability, behavioral disturbance, delinquency, antisocial behavior, clinging, neuroticism, depression and psychiatric disturbance. A similar study by Lines (2012) found out that children need to see their father and receive his support, approval and loving care to feel very special. This means not just seeing him but experiencing genuine interpersonal warmth, love and encouragement in place of sympathetic discipline and punishment.

Another research conducted in the United Kingdom by Olweus, (2008), on parental presence to children found out that, child neglect is characterized by failure to provide for child's basic needs. He categorized neglect in three ways; *physical* abandonment, *educational* abandonment and *emotional* abandonment. He classified the emotional

abandonment as marked by parental inattention to the child's emotional needs and claimed this is by far the most common form of child maltreatment today.

A distinction was made by Guttman,(1997),in his study in New York, U.S.A. between *emotion-coaching* parents and *emotion-dismissing* parents. Emotion-coaching parents monitored their children's emotions and viewed their children's negative emotions as opportunities for teaching, assisting and balancing their emotions. These parents coached them on how to deal effectively with emotions. In contrast, the emotion dismissing parents viewed their role as to deny, ignore or change their children's negative emotions. The study found out that, the children of the emotion-coaching parents were better at physiological soothing themselves when they got upset and were still better in regulating their negative affect; could form their attention better and had fewer behavioral problems than the children of the emotion-dismissing parents (Santrock, 2008). Sigelman and Rider (2009) conducted a survey in the Chicago, U.S.A., with street mothers and found out that, parental-emotional neglect occasioned serious psychological, verbal and mental injuries to children that could be replicated in adolescents' serious behavioral, cognitive and emotional problems, and which may lead children from street mothers to also end up in the streets.

From Nigeria, Uba (1989) explores extensively on how poor parenting methods affect adolescents. He believes that, because African men are normally out looking for money and maintaining better out-of-home contacts, this has left children without a male fatherly model to imitate. His research with 200 participants recommended that, parents should make their adolescent sons and daughters feel emotionally secure in their homes and

avoid whatever may occasion psychological pain to their adolescent children. Some of the things done by parents which may occasion psychological pain to their adolescent sons and daughters are like being indifferent to their problems, expression of personal differences by parents in the presence of their children, parents failure to empathize with their children in times of lose, parents being poor role models or being extremely permissive and allowing their children to do as they wish and lack of clear communication rules to guide the adolescents, (Uba, 1989). Children from such backgrounds are likely to replicate such behaviours from their homes in school, and those from permissive parents may find school regulations too strict to adhere.

From his longitudinal research in Uganda, Kiyingi (2012) confirms that adolescents who have grown without emotionally available parents are open to getting involved in drugs and alcoholism; to getting involved in juvenile delinquency and theft cases in search for the missing parental attachment. Such adolescents will very likely act out sexually in attempt to cover the emotional gap that was never covered by the parents and are open to suicidal tendencies. Adolescent boys will have problems with authority and may end up running away from home, consequently becoming school drop-outs, (Kiyingi 2012).

Biu, a secondary school tutor in Kenya asserts that, nothing can substitute a parent's presence in the life of his or her children, not even the money or material things that one could avail them. She narrates several examples of parents who were emotionally unavailable to their secondary school adolescents in her secondary school. In one of these practical cases, Biu narrates a case of a student whose parents separated while he was only five years. Both parents were showering him with money and material things while

he was in secondary school in a bid to win him over but were never emotionally available for him. John developed serious psychological problems while his father rebuffed the idea of getting him a counselor. He ended up abusing drugs and dropped from school in form two, (Biu, 2011). It is in view of such occurrences as narrated by Biu this study is being carried out; to establish whether parental emotional absence had any link with John's woes and his eventual dropping out of school.

In their descriptive research on the rise of cases of drug abuse in secondary schools with 50 adolescent boys in a secondary school where they are teaching in central Kenya, Ngwiri and Tumuti (2010), found out that, poor parenting skills were a major contributing factor in the rising of the vice. It was evident from their findings that many parents were lacking in skills as far as bringing up all rounded children was concerned. They also noted that the many cases of students committing suicide every time national exam results were announced was occasioned by parental pressure on their students to excel in academics. Unfortunately many parents did not understand that, they themselves could constitute a major part in making their sons and daughters excel in exams by being good role models to their adolescent students, where in return, the children would learn good discipline, which in turn would help them in producing good result in the exams, Ngwiri and Tumuti (2010). Exacting excessive pressure on students by parents may create some friction between them, which may subsequently erode the cohesiveness expected between children and their parents. This study endeavors to establish whether such parental pressure could be directly linked with cases of suicide among adolescent students.

In view of these revelations from the above literature, parental presence has been revealed as essential in shaping the behavior of children. Some consequences of parental absence to their children have been illuminated, which include self-esteem, self-control and even physical health benefits. The literature also reveals that some parents' understanding of being present to their children can also be erroneous, like in cases whereby parents superfluously provide their children with material things, such extremes may erode the discipline of children.

However, the literature is not clear on certain issues, like the particular way in which parents need to be present to their children. This study is therefore designed to show the necessity of emotional presence of parents to their children in relation to Bowlby's attachment theory; identify the extremes parents need to watch in regard to being present to their children; what it means for parents to be emotionally present to their children; and to find out whether the effects of parental emotional presence of one parent is different from that of both.

2.6. The need for Parents to be Present to their Children; what can be done

According to Biu, (2011), many parents today believe the best way to bring up children is to avail superfluous material provisions to their children. This has turned many children to view their parents just like material providers and nothing more and has greatly eroded the mutual cohesiveness that is supposed to exist between parents and their children.

When children learn the truth about their origin, and the origin of their young siblings from their own parents, and not from neighbors or house helps, they develop a very deep

sense of trust in their parent and create a great sense of security within them, (Vatsyayan 2000). Parents should understand that domestic wrangles can occasion serious stresses to their children and so do whatever is possible to avoid exposing their children to such situations of open disputes among themselves. According to Gormly and Brodzinsky (2008), divorce of parents can be another cause of acute emotional stress to children; hence parents should do their best to avoid separation. Divorce is an unpleasant, stressful and painful experience to all involved but mainly to the children who may not fully understand what problems their parents may be going through. Many researchers have viewed divorce as an unpleasant experience that extends over several years, and not just a single event because the basic structure of the family is completely shaken. This leaves the children in limbo as both parents tear them apart in a desperate need to endear them.

Parents should remember the words of Billy Graham as quoted by Biu (2011) that “The family is the foundation of every society, you mess up with it and you mess the whole society”. Biu insists that, what our children do in school is a reflection of what they see happening in the homes. Parents should take their parenting roles very seriously. According to Biu (2011), couples spent so much time in schools and colleges preparing for their careers but do very little or nothing to prepare for parenthood. More time and energy is needed in the rearing of children than that put in the preparation for careers and in the jobs or businesses parents engage in.

2.7. Summary of Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

This study was based on Attachment Theory. The basic tenet of this theory which was developed by Bowlby,(1977-1980), and advanced by Ainsworth (1978) focused on the

need for people to bond with specific others and accounted for the distress that may follow in case of separation. From the literature review, most researchers are in consensus that children's need for parental emotional love and warmth helps them to grow as more balanced human persons and exhibit better peer relationships as adolescents. Although the literature revealed that lack of parental emotional presence may occasion psychological maladjustment in growth of children and adolescents, it does not show to what extent parental emotional absence affects adolescent students' discipline in secondary schools. This study is therefore an attempt to fill such gaps.

The theoretical framework and literature reviewed provide knowledge upon which the conceptual framework to guide the research can be based. The conceptual map is captured in the diagram below:

2.8. Conceptual Framework

This study was concentrated on the microsystem level of the model. It was interpolated on how the interactions and activities between the adolescent's developments punctuated by the lack of parental emotional presence, through to adolescent's life in school with teachers are influenced. This included highlights on negative psychological perceptions, both in the home and in school settings as accrued by the infant through to adolescence.

The following diagram illustrates the conceptual framework:

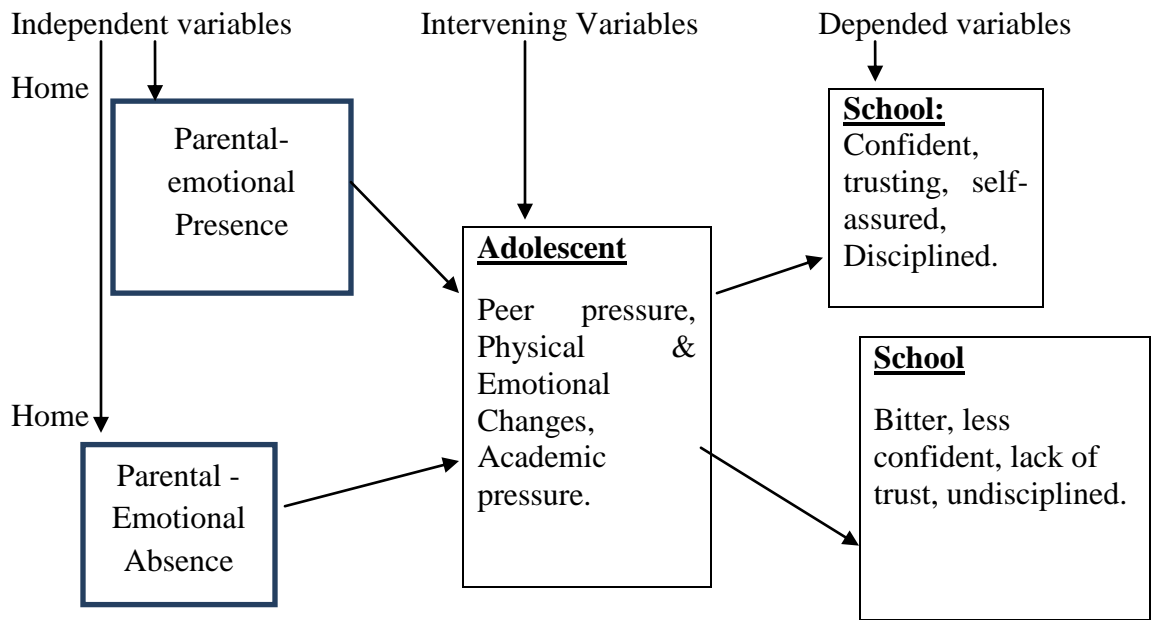


Figure 2.1: The perceived cause-effect relationship between parental-emotional absence and the psychological wellbeing of children and adolescents

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

The purpose of this study is to establish whether parental-emotional absence has any effects on the way adolescent students behave in secondary schools, and if so, what are some of these effects and how can they be resolved. This chapter therefore focuses on the research design, description of the population, sample research instruments together with the data collection procedures and analysis.

3.2. The Research Design

For this study, the researcher employed the correlational research design, where a causal relationship between the emotional-parental absences was correlated with the susceptibility to the students' psychological wellbeing and character in secondary schools. This means the researcher began with the independent variables; mainly the perceived parental emotional absence in the home.

3.3. Research Variables

The dependent variables in this study were the adolescent's cases of indiscipline at school. Such cases which were considered in this study included sneaking, truancy, fighting, stealing, vandalism, co-dependency disorders, abuse of drugs, sex offences, depression, and arson as self-reported by the adolescents themselves. The independent variables in this study were the emotional-parental absence or presence to their children. The gender, age and location of both the parents and adolescents were the intervening variables.

3.4. Site of the Study

This study was conducted in the County of Machakos. Machakos is located at the Southern part of the Eastern Province in Kenya. One of the reasons why researcher chose this site is because cases of indiscipline are rampant in the secondary schools of the county. Another reason for the choice of this location is because, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, such a study has not been conducted in the area before and given that the county has not been performing very well academically compared to neighboring counties.

3.5. Target Population

This study was conducted on adolescents attending secondary schools in the County of Machakos who are estimated at 15,000 in total. It was expected that they were in their adolescent years (14-21 years). Students in this age bracket are normally very outgoing, prone to risk taking and very daring. They are also adventurous and curious, and so getting information from them may not be difficult. These participants came from the high, middle and low socio-economic backgrounds. The participants were also being taken from all forms of families, single parents, monogamous and polygamous families. The researcher targeted this population because adolescents constitute a very large percentage of the population of Kenya and are the future strength the nation.

3.6. Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

Ten secondary schools were selected by the use of stratified random sampling technique. The assistance of teachers in charge of the counseling department were sought in order to select twenty students perceived to manifest cases of indiscipline from each secondary

school through a stratified random sampling to make a total of 200 participants. This sample consisted of various types of schools in the county, public, private, day and boarding as illustrated in the column below so that all areas of gender, backgrounds and economic disparities may be covered.

Table 3.1 Schools Types to Be Sampled and the Number of Students from Each School

Boys Boarding Public	20
Girls Boarding Public	20
Boys Day Public	20
Girls Day Public	20
Mixed Day Public	20
Mixed Boarding Public	20
Mixed Day Private	20
Girls Private	20
Boys Private	20
Mixed Boarding Private	20

3.7. Research Instruments

The tool selected for this study was a questionnaire for the students. A questionnaire tool was selected due to its convenience in collecting information from a large sample and also because it upholds confidentiality better. Students were required to provide two types of data- the demographic data which provided the necessary insights into their school behavior in school and their family backgrounds.

For this reason, the questionnaire had two sections. One part contained information on gender, home, and their school grade. The second part of the questionnaire was on the parental emotional relationship with their adolescent children, prior and during the adolescent age. It is proposed that, the report was divided into the following parts: Introduction; The demographic characteristics of study population; the impact on the parental-emotional absence on children; the impact on what children expect; the impact on parental-emotional parental absence on adolescents; the impact on the expectations of adolescents from parents; the students' own assessment on their involvement in mischief; summary, conclusions and recommendations.

3.8. Validity and Reliability

As regards to validity, the researcher ensured the construct validity has been achieved by ensuring that the key variables were operationalized accurately to measure what they purported to measure. Further, content validity was achieved by ensuring that the domains of concern as captured in the specific objectives were covered, ascertaining the contribution of each construct to the total variance has been realized, based upon statistical procedures. An external consistency procedure, the test/re-test method, with a span of two weeks in between to minimize the recalling of participants' previous answers was applied to test the reliability of the instrument.

3.9. Pilot Study

Before collecting the actual data, the researcher carried out a pilot test using a single school not among the ones selected for the main study. Twenty adolescent students from a school in Makueni County were selected to provide participants for the pilot study.

Makueni County was selected because the populations there share similar behavioral characteristics with those of Machakos County. This was done to ensure the reliability of the research instrument. Piloting the instrument also helped in checking whether the items were clear and relevant and whether the time allocated will be sufficient. The pilot study also helped in ensuring that there are no ambiguous questions and that the participants understood the questions properly.

3.10. Data Collection and Procedures

The researcher personally distributed the questionnaires to all the selected participants and administers the questionnaires personally. The participants were requested to be very keen in the answering of the items in the questionnaires. They were required to fill them in forty-five minutes.

3.11. Data Analysis and Presentation

The researcher collected raw data. After collection, the raw data was scored, coded and data files prepared for analysis. The dependent and the independent variables were measured through the responses received from the respondents. The data from the completed questionnaires was cleaned, decoded and captured into the computer using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences for analyzing data. Data analysis and the findings will be reported as part four of the research paper. A correlational statistics (frequency analysis) was computed for presentation and analysis. The data description analysis enabled the researcher to describe the aggregation of raw data in numerical terms. This method incorporates the use of frequency distribution tables, graphs and pie charts that facilitate description and explanation of the study findings.

3.12. Data management and Ethical Considerations

The researcher needed to be authorized by the relevant University, in this case Kenyatta University, in order to obtain a research permit from the Commission of Science, Technology and Innovation to conduct the research. He then provided the participants with information about the nature of the study and its contribution to society and sought consent from them in accordance with the Kenyatta University Ethics Review Committee. Participants were accorded maximum respect and a clear agreement on terms and conditions reached with the participants before any interviews took place. The procedural processes were clarified and the participants assured of absolute protection against any physical or psychological harm in the process of the study. Participants were assured of total confidentiality regarding the interview, with its limits and privileges. Debriefing with the participants before the interview begins was followed in case the questions asked may evoke some negative emotions. The researcher ascertained that the data collected be safely kept and should never be accessed by any un-authorized persons.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND PRESENTATION

4.1 Introduction

The study investigated the influence of parental emotional absence on adolescent behaviours. This chapter contains the findings of the study and discussions on the findings. The findings answer the following research questions:-

- The extent to which parents are emotionally absent to their children,
- The challenges faced by adolescent students who have absent parents,
- How emotional absence of parents affect discipline of adolescent students,
- How parents can be encouraged to be emotionally present to their adolescent children.

4.2 Response Rate

The study targeted 200 respondents. However, 194 questionnaires were fully completed. Therefore the response rate was 97%. This high response rate was attributed to the fact that research assistants and the researcher administered questionnaires and returned at a later date to collect them as agreed with the respondents. According to Babbie (2012), any response of 50% and above is adequate for analysis thus 97 % was found to be high enough for analysis.

4.3. Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The study was interested in establishing the demographic characteristics of the respondents. These characteristics included gender, age, class and parental status distribution of the respondents. This was to establish whether the effects of parental

emotional absence to children had any relationship with demographic characteristic of the adolescents.

4.3.1. Distribution of the Respondents by Gender

Table 4.1 shows the distribution of the respondents by gender.

Table 4.1 Distribution of the Respondents by Gender

Gender	F	%
Male	90	46.4
Female	104	53.6
Total	194	100.0

Table 4.1 shows that majority, 104(53.6%) of the respondents were females while only, 90 (46.4%) were males. According to Engler (2010), females are more responsive to opening up to matters regarding their private lives than males; hence it appears that more females opted to fill in the questionnaires than males.

4.3.2 Distribution of the Respondents by Age

Table 4.2 shows that distribution of the respondents by Age

Table 4.2 Distribution of the respondents by Age

Age (yrs.)	F	%
14	19	9.8
15	83	42.8
16	49	25.3
17	30	15.5
18	5	2.6
19	4	2.1
20	4	2.1
Total	194	100.0

Table 4.2 shows that majority, 83(42.8%) of the respondents were aged 15 years, followed by 49 (25.3%) were aged 16 years, next 30(15.5%) were aged 17 years,19(9.8%) were aged 14 years while 4 (2.1%) respondents each were aged 19 and 20 years. The low response rate of those aged 14 could be attributed to the fact that, students at the age 14, who according the Kenyan system of education are largely in form one, are still strangers in the school and afraid to make mistakes. Bui, (2011), explains how bullying in Kenyan secondary school intimidates form ones, making them confused, highly suspicious and naïve. At the ages of 15 and 16, most Kenyan students are in form two and three. At this age, they are savoring fully the joys of being in secondary school and are at their peak of adolescence. According to Bui (2011), adolescents at this age are most responsive, daring and inquisitive. Academic pressure is also less, unlike those in the fourth form, hence the high rate of response. At the ages of 18 to 20, being in their late adolescence, students tend to become less daring and less inquisitive (Paikott and Brooks-Gum, 1991). At this age, most Kenyan students are in form four, when academic pressure is highest (Bui, 2011). This may have accounted for the low rate of response.

4.3.3. Distribution of the Respondents by Form

Table 4.3 Distribution of the Respondents by Form

Form	F	%
1	30	15.5
2	79	40.7
3	43	22.2
4	42	21.6
Total	194	100.0

Table 4.3 shows that majority, 79 (40.7%) were in Form 2, followed by 43 (22.2%) were in Form 3, next 42 (21.6%) were in Form 4 while only 30 (15.5%) were in Form one. The low response rate by form one may have been caused by the low number of form ones who had reported to school by the time of the study as data was collected in the beginning of the year. In many of the schools the researcher visited to collect data, form three and four students were sitting for opening exams and not all schools released them for the interview schedules, hence the low response rate. The form two response rates were highest because in most schools the teachers did not have problems with releasing them for the interview schedule.

4.3.4 Distribution of the Respondents by Parental Status

Table 4.4 Distribution of the Respondents by Parental Status

Parental status	F	%
Both Parents	139	71.6
Single Parent	40	20.6
No Parent	15	7.7
Total	194	100.0

Table 4.4 shows that 139 (71.6%) of the respondents had both parents, 40 (20.6%) had only one parent while 15 (7.7%) were orphans.

4.4 Opinions of the Respondents on Parental Emotional Absence

The main aim of this research was to find out the effects of emotional parental absence on the discipline of secondary school students. This section was therefore intended to bring out the extent to which parents are emotionally absent to their children. The parental emotional absence was measured by finding the students' responses on a five-point Likert-scale from Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D) and

Strongly Disagree (DS). The respondents rated their feeling on the following eight statements on parental emotional absence. The results are presented in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6 Opinions of the respondents on Parental Emotional Absence

	Statements	SA		A		U		D		SD	
		f	%	f	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	I enjoy working with my parents	161	83	0	0	9	4.6	24	12.4	0	0
2	The house-help is like our mother, she does everything	107	55.2	32	16.5	0	0	17	8.8	38	19.6
3	My parents are never bothered with how I feel	108	55.7	32	16.5	0	0	17	8.8	37	19.1
4	My parents take me to school	24	12.4	26	13.4	3	1.5	26	13.4	120	61.9
5	When faced with a problem I share with my parents freely	8	4.1	36	18.6	1	0.5	109	56.2	40	20.6
6	My father provides almost everything but I rarely see him as he is very busy	120	61.9	26	13.4	3	1.5	21	10.8	24	12.4
7	My parents always listen and re-assure me when I am afraid	41	21.1	55	28.4	6	3.1	44	22.7	48	24.7
8	I spend most time with my parents while at home on holidays	43	22.2	54	27.8	3	1.5	74	38.1	20	10.3

Table 4.6 shows the majority of the respondents, 161 (83%) strongly agreed that they enjoyed working with their parents while 107 (55.2%) of the respondents agreed that the house-helps acted like their mothers by doing everything in their homes. Further many of them, 108 (55.7%) agreed that their parents were never bothered on how they felt. A big number (120, 61.9%) of the respondents disagreed their parents took them to school. In addition, another 109(56.2%) disagreed that when faced with a problem they shared it

with their parents freely. More a half, 120 (61.9%) of the respondents agreed that their father provided most of what they needed but rarely saw him as he was very busy. The study also found out that, 48 (24.7%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement that parents always listened and reassured them when afraid. Finally, a great number of the respondents, 74 (38.7%) disagreed that they spent most of their time with the parents while at home on holidays.

According to Lines (2012), children who grow under the supervision of house helps are likely to be maladjusted. This is because most of house helps lack the skill of basic child care and may never understand the needs of children in terms of parental warmth. In their research on Parenting in Kenya, Ngwiri and Tumuti (2010) found out that, some house helps come from dysfunctional backgrounds where they never received the parental warmth from their own care givers. Such house helps are likely to transfer their own misgivings to the children under their care by abusing them in the absence of the parents. Ngwiri and Tumuti also found out that, some parents mistreat their house helps by denying them their basic needs like good food and security, abuse them physically and even deny them just wages, making them very bitter (Ngwiri and Tumuti, 2010). Because of this Bitterness, the house helps in turn vent their anger and frustrations on the children under their care by molesting them in revenge (Ngwiri and Tumuti, 2010). If the parents of such children are emotionally absent from them, they never realize what is happening to their children, which make the children sick deeper into emotional pain.

There are a great number of students, 24.7%, whose parents never listened to them and reassured them while afraid. According to Ngwiri and Tumuti (2010), young people

highly value parental guidance, being listened to and reassured by their parents. When this is not forthcoming from the parents, they turn to their peers for assurance, where they are likely to be misled and to be taught negative behavioral traits (Ngwiri and Tumuti 2010). Emotionally absent parents get shocked when they realize that the discipline of their children's has deteriorated and do not understand where they erred. The 27% of the respondents who are not listened indicate that many parents still need to be made aware of the necessity of listening to the pleas of the adolescents. A research by Winkley (2002) on the origins of conduct disorder found out that the underlying cause in the majority of cases of indiscipline among adolescents is the lack of basic, stable, warm and secure family background. In his research, Uba (1989) found out that, if deprived of parental guidance and love at this stage, adolescents can either deviate and engage in mischief, loose hope in life, abuse drugs and fall into depression. The society therefore has reasons to be worried when such a big number of adolescents claim to have been left at the mercy of house helps, and their own parents do not stand by them while emotionally disturbed.

4.5 Challenges Faced by Respondents Due to Parental Emotional Absence.

The second objective of the study was to find out the challenges faced by adolescents in secondary schools with emotionally absent parents. The study established the following six challenges. The respondents opinions on challenges facing them due to parental emotional absence was measured by finding the students' responses on a five-point Likert-scale from Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (DS). The findings are presented in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7 Responses on the Challenges by respondents Faced Due To Parental Emotional Absence

	Statements	SA		A		U		D		SD	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	I have no one to talk to when I have problems except my friends	34	17.5	117	60.3	8	4.1	22	11.3	13	6.7
2	I feel unable to love my parents as I should	33	17.0	101	52.4	17	8.8	25	12.9	18	9.3
3	School life makes me very uncomfortable	43	22.1	74	38.1	3	1.5	54	27.8	20	10.3
4	I feel very lonely most of the times	108	55.7	32	16.5	0	0	17	8.8	37	19.1
5	I hate school rules	103	53.1	55	28.4	6	3.1	8	4.1	22	11.3
6	I hate all authority	106	54.6	46	23.7	1	.5	11	5.7	30	15.5

Table 4.7 shows the highest number of respondents, 117 (60.3%) agreed that they had no one to talk to on the problems that faced them except their friends. This indicates that many parents do not spend quality time with their own children, don't listen and empathize with them. In her work, Biu (2011) has expressed the same concern by indicating that, many parents are either too busy to spend quality time with their children, or are too ignorant to understand that their children need their emotional presence. Also, 101(52.4%) of the respondents agreed that they were not able to love their parents as they should. Lines (2012) states that, when parents do not bond well with their children, a rift is likely to occur between the children and their parents. This rift may create suspicion and animosity on the part of the children towards their parents because children expect

their parents to understand and love them irrespective of their natural limitations, (Lines 2012) In addition, a good number of students, 74 (38.1%) agreed that school life made them very uncomfortable while another, 103 (53.1%) strongly agreed that they hated school rules. This could be attributed to the fact that, parents who are emotionally absent from their children may also not be available to make rules for their children and enforce them (Muganda 1996). Children from such families may abhor school life and find school life very uncomfortable (Ngwiri and Tumuti 2010). 103 (54.6 %) of the respondents strongly agreed they hated all authority. Finally, 108 (55.7%) agreed that they felt lonely most of the times. According to Muganda (1996), feelings of loneliness among adolescents are commonly associated with lack of sufficient parental love and care of children, which creates a sense of insecurity in them and feelings of being unwanted. Also in his Attachment Theory, John Bowlby (2004) explains how infants desperately seek the warmth of a care giver by attaching themselves to the caregiver. According to Bowlby, infants need to get warmth from the parent, receive tender care, emotional security, and get prompt assurance of protection when afraid. If these basic emotional needs are denied, the infant succumbs into a state of despair and loneliness. If nothing is done to correct the situation, the infant may grow into a lonely adolescent, and probably into a lonely adult (Bowlby 2004).

4.6 Effects of Parental Emotional Absence on the Respondents

The third objective of the study was to establish the effects of parental emotional absence on the respondents. The students responded to statements on perceived effects of parental emotional absence. They rated them on a five-point Likert-scale from Strongly Agree

(SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (DS). The results

	Statements	SA		A		U		D		SD	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	I easily succumb to peer pressure	43	22.2	93	47.9	14	7.2	18	9.3	24	12.4
2	I avoid classes/school for no good reason	101	52.5	47	24.2	4	2.1	2.2	11.3	20	10.3
3	I have learnt to take hard drugs/alcohol to deal with my stresses	40	20.6	109	56.2	1	.5	36	18.6	8	4.1
4	I often experience negative feelings about myself	73	37.6	31	16.0	9	4.6	42	21.6	39	20.1
5	I steal from fellow students just for annoy them	47	24.2	101	52.1	4	2.1	22	11.3	20	10.3
6	I am always afraid that my closest friends would desert me	73	37.6	53	27.3	3	1.5	33	17	32	16.5
7	I don't trust grownups	43	22.2	74	38.1	3	1.5	54	27.8	20	10.3
8	Bullying other students makes me feel better	108	55.7	32	16.5	0	0	17	8.8	37	19.1
9	I feel very shy in the presence of people/strangers	40	20.6	109	56.2	1	.5	36	18.6	8	4.1
10	I like to revenge	66	34.0	77	39.7	3	1.5	32	16.5	16	8.2
11	I have often cheated in exams	120	61.9	31	10.6	0	0	15	7.7	28	14.4
12	I have participated in organizing strikes in school	108	55.7	32	16.5	0	0	17	8.8	37	19.1
13	I watch pornographic materials	40	20.6	109	56.2	1	0.5	36	18.6	8	4.1
14	I enjoy seeing other people suffer	66	34.0	77	39.7	3	1.5	32	16.0	16.5	8.2
15	Most times I feel very unhappy for reasons I really can't tell	69	35.6	75	38.7	3	1.5	31	16.0	16.0	8.2

are presented in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8. Effects of Parental Emotional Absence on the Respondents

Table 4.8 shows that, 93(47.9%) of the respondents agreed that they easily succumb to peer pressure while 101(52.5%) strongly agreed that they avoid classes/school for no good reason. It also shows that a high proportion, 56.2% (109) of the respondents had learnt to take drugs or alcohol to deal with stress. Further, 73 (37.6%) of the respondents agreed that they often experience negative feelings about themselves.

These findings are congruent with findings of Kiyingi (2012) in Uganda, who found out that, one of major causes of indiscipline among adolescents in secondary schools was poor parenting, and mainly lack of parental emotional availability to their children. Kiyingi found out that, adolescent boys who lacked guidance from their fathers were likely to abuse drugs and bully others in school in a desperate attempt to fill the emptiness within them. According to Olweus (2008), lack of approval and support from parents make adolescents develop negative feelings within them and lowers their self-esteem. People with low self-esteem develop coping mechanisms to fill the void within them. Some of these coping mechanisms include taking drugs, bullying others, petty theft and promiscuity (Santrock 2008).

Table 4.8 on frequency distribution also shows that, most of the respondents, 105(52.1%), steal from fellow students just for fun, while a high proportion, 73 (37.6 %) are always afraid that their closest friends would desert them. According to Bui (2011), poor parenting can cause co-dependences whereby, one develops an unconscious desperate desire to cling to other people and is afraid of being deserted. In his attachment theory, Bowlby (2004) explains how a child whose innate desire to attach to a higher being is not fulfilled in the earlier years may grow to develop a co-dependence disorder,

which is an unconscious fear of being left again. These negative traits reported can therefore be linked to the lack of parental emotional absence to their children, as reported by earlier researchers like Olweus (2008).

Another set of respondents, 74 (38.1%), said they do not respect grownups, 108 (55.7%) of the strongly agreed that bullying other students makes them feel better, 109 (8.2%) feel shy in the presence of strangers while a high number, 77(39.7%) often like to revenge. A high proportion, 120 (61.9%) of the respondents strongly agree to cheating in examinations while 108 (55.7%) strongly agreed to have participated in organizing strikes in their school. The results also shows that, majority, 109 (56.2%) of the respondents agreed to have watched pornographic materials as an effect of parental emotional absence. Further, a high proportion, 77 (39.7%) of the respondents agreed to enjoying seeing other people suffer with almost an equal number, 75 (38.7%) agreeing to feeling unhappy most of the times for reasons they cannot tell.

The frequency distributions are usually not conclusive in research study. Therefore it was found necessary to conduct a correlation test to establish if indeed there was a relationship between emotional absence of parents and indiscipline in schools. Pearson's product moment correlation analysis was employed for the study variables. Pearson's product moment correlation tests were chosen in order to assess whether there is a relationship between parental emotional absence and behavior of adolescence students in secondary schools. The results are shown in table 4.9 below

Table 4.9: Correlation of the study variables

		Emotional parental absence	Emotional parental presence	Adolescent cases of indiscipline at school
Emotional parental absence	Pearson Correlation	1	.216**	.853
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002	.013
	N	194	194	194
Emotional parental presence	Pearson Correlation	.216**	1	.289
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002		.076
	N	194	194	194
Adolescent cases of indiscipline at school	Pearson Correlation	.853	.289	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.013	.076	
	N	194	194	194

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

As can be seen from the correlation output table, there is a strong positive relationship between emotional parental absence and adolescent cases of indiscipline at school, which is at correlation coefficients of 0.853 with a p-value of 0.013 which is less than 0.05 at 95% confidence level. The study also shows that there is a weak positive relationship between emotional parental presence and adolescent cases of indiscipline at school with correlation coefficients of 0.289; however the correlation is not statistically significant as the p-value of 0.076 is greater than 0.05 at 95% confidence levels. This could be suggestive that some parents may be present emotionally but fail to take up their roles of effectively guiding and controlling their children which could still lead to indiscipline. Parents need to take their roles seriously.

In one of his experiments, Bowlby found out that children who did not receive sufficient parental care rated very low in self-esteem and were very prone to cases of indiscipline.

Another research by Santrock (2008) had similar findings. In his longitudinal research in New York, Santrock established that, bitterness among the adolescents, lack of respect to elders, dishonesty and the desire to revenge could be traced back to lack of fatherly emotional presence to their adolescent children. Other cases of indiscipline related to lack of parental emotional presence included laxity in character, sexual promiscuity, theft, lack of self-esteem, drug abuse and lying. Another research by a Kenyan tutor on the role of society in the indiscipline of secondary schools in Kenya, Bui, (2011), established that parents have a major contribution on the discipline of students in secondary schools. Her research established that, lack parental physical and emotional involvement with the affairs of their children largely contributed to their indiscipline in schools. In her research, Bui found out that most cases of indiscipline in secondary schools were committed by students who never received parental emotional love. Such students were prone to cases of sexual promiscuity, cheating in exams, bullying others, truancy and abusing drugs. Cases of co-dependency, low self-esteem and shyness were also common among such students. Parental emotional love instills confidence in children and heightens their self-esteem. People with high self-esteem feel confident and do not need to prove themselves in society (Santrock2008). Parental emotional love is only possible when parents spent quality time with their children. Children who have their parental support when they need it are therefore able to overcome these developmental hurdles (Olweus, 2008).

The findings of this study resonate with the findings of Bowlby (2004), Santrock (2008) and Bui (2011), who found out that there is a link between parental emotional presence to

children and their discipline in schools. In his research, Santrock (2008) established that parents played a key role in instilling discipline in their children. Parents should do this by training their children from the earliest stage till after adolescence and into early adulthood. Olweus (2008) maintains that, parents have a moral obligation to guide their children and provide parental emotional love to them. According to Olweus, parents should sacrifice their time to be with their children not only when there are problems to be discussed, but always. It is therefore time parents understood that, when cases of indiscipline are raised in schools, a lot has to do with the parents, and before blaming the teachers, the government and the society in general, it is important the parents seriously considered asking themselves how available, caring, listening, understanding and emotionally available they have been to their own children.

4.8 Strategies to Encourage Emotional Presence of Parents to Their Children

The fourth objective was to find out what can be done to encourage emotional presence of parents to their children. The students gave their responses to statements on perceived strategies to encourage emotional presence of parents on a five-point Likert-scale from Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (DS). The results are presented in Table 4.10.

Table 4.9 Strategies to Encourage Emotional Presence of Parents to Their Children

	Statements	SA		A		U		D		SD	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Training on how to love their children better	43	22.2	115	59.3	9	4.6	18	9.3	9	4.6
2	Parents should be encouraged to love each other more	39	20.1	113	58.2	8	4.1	22	11.3	12	6.2
3	Parents Creating bonding activities with their children	85	43.8	88	45.4	5	2.6	10	5.2	6	3.1
4	Parents should listen to their children at all times	104	53.6	83	42.8	5	2.6	3	1.5	0	0
5	Parents should create more time for their children	103	53.1	82	42.3	5	2.6	3	1.5	0	0

Table 4.10 shows that majority, 115 (59.3%) of the respondents agreed that the parents need to undergo a training on how to love their children better as a strategy to encourage parental emotional presence to their children. It also shows that a high number, 113 (58.2%) of the respondents agreed that parents should be encouraged to love each other more. Perhaps then the love will be extended to the children because they would be more available to their children. In his research Santrock (2008) found out that, parents who fight among themselves create a wedge between themselves and their children, driving their children further away from them. This is because being so tender, the tension between the parents deeply affects the child and the child becomes uncomfortable in their presence (Santrock 2008). When a child is uncomfortable in the presence of parents, communication becomes blurred, and the child is eventually denied the necessary

parental love. The child then develops negative coping mechanisms like hatred for elders and rules (Santrock 2008). According to Santrock, fights between parents often spill over to the children, and while the children expect sympathy and warmth from the parents, such parents only deliver tension and fear. Such children therefore experience an emotional lacuna within themselves, which in turn creates negative attitudes towards life. These negative may attitudes lead to indiscipline among the adolescents (Santrock 2008). Another high number of the respondents, 88 (45.4%) agreed that parents should create bonding activities with their children. These respondents felt parents were not putting deliberate efforts to be emotionally present to them. These efforts would include planning for picnics and outings, going to church together, staying late at night with them when possible to discuss issues which affect their lives and going shopping or gardening together. Researchers like Kiyingi (2012) have established that, such activities help to bond children with their parents and make children trust their parents more. According to the respondents, these moments of interaction may not be very lengthy, but could be brief but highly involving.

Another section of the respondents, 104 (53.6%) strongly agreed that parents should listen to their children at all times so as to encourage emotional presence. These response resonate with the findings of several other researchers who have established that, adolescence is a very trying period and many adults do not fully understand those going through it, (Ngwiri and Tumuti 2010), (Biu 2011), (Muganda 1996). Many parents deduce the changes in character among their adolescent children to be rudeness which may make them to ignore their children and repulse any attempt to discuss with them

(Lines 2012). When the adolescents feel ignored by their parents, their sense of mistrust to elders deepens and their own self-image worsens (Biu 2011). These negative feelings may make them look for ways to make their presence felt, commonly by causing mayhem in schools. Olweus (2008) in his research found this to be one of the major causes of indiscipline among adolescents in secondary schools.

Finally, a high proportion, 53.1% (103) of the respondents strongly agreed that parents should create more time for their children. According to the findings of Holmbreck (1994), adolescence has been attributed to a period of tempest and storm, but more significantly, a time when these youths become very inquisitive. It is imperative therefore that the parent becomes more available to answer the child's concerns in order to make the adolescent feel more accepted and understood (Holmbreck, 1994). If at this stage the parent is not available to answer the numerous concerns of the adolescent, the adolescents' trust to the parents ebb and they quickly look for raw answers from peers and other sources like the media (Holmbreck, 1994). These sources of information are likely to mislead them and erode their morals, (Paitcott & Brooks, 1991). From her research on causes of indiscipline in secondary schools, Biu (2011) found out that, parents' quest for wealth has driven them away from their children emotionally. When they come home after a period of absence, parents are either too tired to offer quality time to their children, or too ignorant to see the need to do so.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the findings of the study. In addition, conclusions and recommendations from the findings are presented. Additional research areas have also be given. The implications of the study at various levels have been outlined.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

The purpose of this study was to establish the influence that parental emotional absence has on the behaviour of their adolescent children. It was guided by four objectives:-

- To find out whether adolescent students in secondary schools of Machakos County consider to have emotionally absent parents
- To assess the challenges faced by adolescents in secondary schools with emotionally absent parents
- To establish the influence of parental emotional absence on the challenges faced by adolescent students in secondary schools in Machakos County
- To seek out the strategies for encouraging emotional presence of parents to their children

As regards the first objective, the study found out that Form 1 and 2 students agreed that they had emotionally absent parents while Form 3 and Form 4 disagreed that they had emotionally absent parents. The study further found out the female students agreed to have had emotionally absent while the males were undecided whether their parents were emotionally absent. The study also found out those aged between 15-17 years felt that

they had emotionally absent parents while those aged 18-20 years were undecided whether they had emotionally absent parents. In addition, the study also found out that the respondents with both parents dis-agreed they had emotionally absent parents while the orphans and those from single parenthood agreed that they had emotionally absent parents.

In regard to the second objective, the study found out there were a number of challenges facing the adolescent students as result of parental emotional absence. Top of the list was the hate of school rules, followed by hate of all authority, next was the feeling of not been able to love their parents. Other challenges included the lack of people to share their problems with, feeling lonely most of the times and uncomfortable school life.

The third objective was to establish the influence of parental emotional absence on the challenges faced by adolescent students in secondary schools in Machakos County. To this end the study found a strong positive correlation between parental emotional absence and the challenges faced by the respondents, with a correlation significance of 0.853 with a p-value of 0.013 which is less than 0.05 at 95% confidence level.

In regard to the last objective, the study found out that there are several strategies for addressing the parental emotional absence. These include training parents on how to love and bond with their children. this can be done by encouraging parents to attend seminars on relationships; going for marriage encounters and motivational talks related to parenting; parents making conscious efforts to love each more for the sake of their children; parents making deliberate efforts of being more at home than out there for the

sake of their children; parents creating bonding activities with their children like going for picnics, farming and church together; parents listening to their children unconditionally and creating more quality time for them. Parents can also learn better corrective methods of correcting their children when they err and avoid shouting at them and corporal punishment as much as possible.

5.3 Conclusions

Reflecting on the purpose of the study, the study concludes that there is a strong relationship between parental emotional absence and indiscipline of students in school. Most children are negatively affected by the emotional absence of their parents and they face a number of challenges. Some of the challenges facing the adolescent students as a result of parental emotional absence include the hate of school rules, hate for authority, feeling of not been able to love their parents, lack of people to share their problems with, feeling lonely most of the times and leading very uncomfortable school lives. These partly contribute to indiscipline in school.

However, it was noted that the effect of emotional absence is moderated by; class level, age, gender and parental status which influence children's perception on parental emotional absence. Children in junior secondary, that is forms one and two, are more likely to perceive parental emotional absence than those in upper secondary classes that is form three and four. This could be due to the fact that they have not gotten used to being away from home and from their parents like their counter parts in the upper classes. The younger students are also likely to perceive parental emotional absence than the older students. This response may have been contributed by the fact, being younger; their need

for attachment is higher than that of the older students. Females are also likely to feel the parental emotional absence that the males. This may be because females are more emotionally attached beings than males, and so may miss parental emotional presence more than the males (Engler 2009). The study found out that, students with both parents are not likely to experience parental emotional absence unlike the orphaned and single-parented students. This could be due to the fact that, children from families with both parents are likely to enjoy parental emotional presence than those from homes with single or no parent at all. A family with both parents is likely to provide love and warmth because in the absence of one parent, the other can be present and cohesiveness can be enhanced better in such a setting (Santrock 2008).

Finally, the study concluded that there are several strategies for addressing the parental emotional absence. These include training parents on how to love their children and helping parents understand how to create bonding occasions and activities with their children

The study concluded that there is a strong positive correlation between parental emotional absence and the challenges faced by adolescent students.

5.4 Recommendations

From the conclusions of the study, policy recommendations were made to a number of key stakeholders. These stakeholders include parents, employers, teachers and the government. The recommendations were made as follows:-

1. Parents should create time and bonding activities so as to interact with their children more.
2. Employers should give parents annual leave of 10 days or more particularly to bond with their children.
3. Schools should create parents-students bonding days.
4. The government should institute more serious punitive measures to parents who neglect their children's emotional needs.

5.5 Recommendation for further research

The researcher recommends that, a further research would be done on the influence of technology, materialism and secularization on the discipline of students.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: THE STUDY WORK PLAN

Month/Year	Activity
June-December 2013	Proposal Writing, literature Review, drafting of chapter one to Chapter Three
January 2014	Submission of the Proposal for Approval
January-February 2014	Preparation for Piloting and Collection for Data
March 2014	Submission of Finally Corrected Proposal and Preparation for Defense
8 th of April	Defense 26 th of Nov, 2015 Submission of Final Document 3 rd of December, 2015 Final Defense 18 th of December 2015 GRADUATION

APPENDIX 2: THE STUDY BUDGET

ACTIVITY.	AMOUNT
1. Proposal Preparation: Gathering of literature, purchase of printing materials, upkeep in the library and in the university	4,000
2. Development of Research Instrument: writing and printing of questionnaire	2,000
3. Photocopying: Preparation and printing of proposal manuals copies for the supervisors, preparation and printing booklets for defense	6,000
4. Travelling: Fuelling form Machakos to Kenyatta University to work on the proposal and meet my supervisors	30,000
5. Personal Library: Buying of crucial research material	6,000
6. Miscellaneous: Accessing the internet, airtime	3,000
Total	57,000

APPENDIX 3: RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

QUESTIONNAIRE

I am a Master of Arts (Counseling Psychology) student of Kenyatta University, conducting a study on adolescent students in Machakos County.

The purpose of the questionnaire is to establish whether there is a relationship between the issues faced by adolescent students in secondary schools and the parental emotional absence during the adolescents early years in the family. The information given here will be treated with extreme confidentiality and will be used for educational research only. You are kindly requested to answer these questions truthfully and honestly. Your faithful participation may assist in making our secondary schools better educational centres. Do **NOT** write your name anywhere on the questionnaire.

Part A:

Personal Information

1. State the name of your school _____
2. State your class _____
3. State your gender (Male/Female) _____
4. Year of Birth _____
5. Birth Order (Number in Family, First born, last born, the Only Child) _____
6. Parental Status (Both Parents, Single Parent, No parent) _____

General Information

In this section, you are required to indicate in a five-point scale the extent of agreement or disagreement between the feelings expressed in each statement and your own feelings. Below is a five point scale:

SA=Strongly Agree, **A** =Agree, **U** =Undecided, **D** =Disagree, **SD**=Strongly Disagree

PARENTAL PRESENCE	SA	A	U	D	SD
7. I enjoy working with my parents					
8. The house-help is like our mother, she does everything					
9. My parents are never bothered with how I feel					
10. My parents take me to school					
11. When faced with a problem I share with my parents freely					
12. My father provides everything but I rarely see him as he is very busy					
13. My parents always listen and re-assure me when I am afraid					
14. I spend most time with my parents while at home on holidays					
CHALLENGES					
15. I have no one to talk to when I have problems except my friends					

16. I feel unable to love my parents as I should					
17. School life makes me very uncomfortable					
18. I feel very lonely most of the times					
19. I hate school rules					
20. I hate all authority					

EFFECTS	SA	A	U	D	SD
21. I easily succumb to peer pressure					
22. I avoid classes/school for no good reason					
23. I have learnt to take drugs/alcohol to deal with my stresses					
24. I often experience negative feelings about myself					
25. I steal from fellow students just for pleasure					
26. I am always afraid that my closest friends would desert me					
27. I don't trust grownups					
28. Bullying other students makes me feel better					
29. I feel very shy in the presence of people/strangers					

30. I like to revenge					
31. I have often cheated in exams					
32. I have participated in organizing strikes in school					
33. I watch pornographic material					
34. I enjoy seeing other people suffer					
35. Most times I feel very unhappy for reasons I really can't tell					
WHAT CAN BE DONE					
36. Parents should be educated on how to love their children better					
37. Parents should be encouraged to love each other more					
38. Money is not the solution to all problems of children					
39. Parents should listen to their children at all times					
40. Parents should create more time for their children					

Part B

Please give a short answer to the following questions

1. Do your parents give you enough attention while at home and do they have time for you?

Yes No

If not, how does that make you feel?

.....
.....

2. What challenges are you facing now in school that you feel would have been avoided only if your parents were more available to you as you grew up

.....
.....

3. State some indiscipline issues that you were involved in school that you believe would have been avoided only if your parents were more available to you emotionally as you grew up

.....
.....

4. What do you think your parents would have done differently in terms of emotional presence to make your life better in school?

.....
.....

Thank you very much for your cooperation and participation. May God Bless you and help you in your studies that you may become dependable personalities for the service of humanity.