RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHER AFFECTION AND STUDENTS' EMOTIONAL ADJUSTMENT IN PUBLIC BOARDING SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA.

Keino Kangogo Josephine[1], **Stephen Mbugua Ngari**[2] **and James Mwaura Kimani**[3]

[1 & 3]Department of Education Foundation and Psychology, Maasai Mara University, Kenya

[2] Department of Education Counselling and Psychology, Catholic University of Eastern Africa

(CUEA), Kenya

Email: jkangogo7@gmail.com

Abstract

Globally, student maladjustment in schools has been associated with different factors. This is not different from Kenyan schools and specifically schools in Nairobi County. This problem of adjustment is one of the vital issues of student life in boarding secondary school especially in today's complex society; therefore, it is a matter of serious consideration despite guidance and counselling programs in schools. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between teacher affection and students' emotional adjustment in public boarding secondary schools in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The study adopted Ex post facto research design. To gather data, a developed questionnaire was administered to secondary school students in Form one and two who at this time are in the process of adjusting to school. To get a general understanding of student school adjustment, 24 class teachers were interviewed. The study was guided by Bronfenbrenner's Bio ecological systems theory, Ceci, and Connell's Self-Determination theories. The target population was 7,123 students. Stratified random sampling was used to obtain a sample of 692, among them were 335 boys and 357 girls. To ensure validity, the researcher sought the expert opinion of her supervisors who checked the face and content validity against the stated objectives. Reliability of instruments was established by use of Cronbach Alpha and a reliability coefficient of 0.7 or higher was considered acceptable. Student questionnaire was administered by the researcher with the help of class teachers of the six sampled schools. The interview schedule was administered personally by the researcher. The collected data was then organized and summarized by use of descriptive statistics and analyzed by use of statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) computer programme version 21.0 and presented in percentages, means, in tables and figures. Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient was used to determine the relationship between variables and a significance level of 0.05 was used to test the null hypothesis. Data from interviews was analyzed based on emerging themes and reported in a narrative form. The study found that adjustment to boarding school is a challenge to form one and form two students. The findings may be used to improve student adjustment in public boarding secondary schools. It may also form a base for further research on affective teacher-student relationship.

Key words: teacher affection, students' emotional adjustment, public boarding secondary schools, Kenya.

1.0 Introduction

The affective domain and the emotional health of students as well of society are emerging to be of interest to stakeholders and nations. According to Kenya Vision 2030, the social strategy underscores education to provide globally competitive quality education, training and research for development and enhanced emotional well-being.

In their study on the mental health and wellbeing among high school boarders, Lester and Mander (2020) found increases in emotional problems among boarding students over time. According to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural

Organization (UNESCO, 2011), school safety refers to the process of establishing and maintaining a school that is physically, cognitively and emotionally safe space for students and staff to carry out learning activities. Teacher education and professional development programs vary greatly but most focus on preparing teachers to effectively deliver curriculum content, manage classroom behavior and asses' growth. While all these components are critical to quality educational experiences, they cannot be separated from the emotional climate developed through interpersonal relationships (Hamre, Pianta, Downer, DeCoster, Mashburn, Jones, Brown, cappella, Atkins, Rivers, Brackett, & Hamagami, 2013).

Adjustment is not a recent problem in education. Kathleen (2000) conducted a survey among post primary students in a City school near Dublin, Ireland. The findings portrayed a mixture of feelings experienced by students on their first day in Post-Primary school. From a sample of 128 students, 20% expressed that they were delighted, 15% found it a frightening experience, 35% were a little frightened, while 30% had no particular feeling. These findings are a glimpse of the emotional vulnerability new students experience in a new environment.

Rajeswari and Eljo (2013) examined the emotional adjustment of adolescent students. Using disproportionate random sampling he collected data from 200 adolescents who constituted 107 girls and 93 boys of age bracket of 13 to 16 years. Most of the students, 181 (90.5%) came from an urban set up in India. He adopted the Adolescent's Emotional Adjustment Inventory developed by Patel (1989), and reliability co-efficient of the scale under the split half method was 0.82. The findings of the study revealed that 71% of the respondents had low level of emotional adjustment while only 29% had high level of emotional adjustment. He concluded that there exists low level of emotional adjustment ability among the adolescent school students. The study does not enumerate the causes for this low level of emotional adjustment. However, it established that cordial relationship between students and teachers stood at 70% (140) of the respondents while 30% (60) did not have cordial relationship with their teachers.

Arnold and Preeti (2012) conducted a study on Adolescent adjustment in high school: a brief report on mid-adolescence transitioning. The research aimed to identify adjustment difficulties of high school students across emotional, social and educational domains in an urban area in India. A sample of 101 boys and 103 girls in the age group of 14 to 18 years were randomly selected for the study. Adjustment Inventory for School Students (AISS) by A.K.P Sinha and R.P Singh was administered on the 204 students. The self-report inventory consisted of 60 items, 20 items for each area of adjustment. The total score on adjustment was obtained by summing the individual domain scores that indicates the general adjustment status. On the emotional domain boys recorded 7.91 against the normative value of 5.62, while girls recorded 7.6 mean against 6.55 normative value. The obtained values were found to be significantly higher than the normative value at 99% confidence interval, an indication of unsatisfactory emotional adjustment levels. The results of each item revealed that students had major issues with their families and this was a major predictor of low emotional adjustment among students in school. Attachment to parents, on the other hand, was associated with better school adjustment in all the domains.

Rucinski, Brown and Downer (2018), conducted a research on Teacher- Child relationship among elementary pupils in New York City. They used quasi-experimental research design to collect data from a sample of 526 pupils and 35 teachers. The pupils completed Self-report measures and the teachers completed an on-line self-report measure. An alpha of p<.05 was considered in the analysis. The findings showed that child-reported depression was significantly predicted by child-reported relationship quality (b= -0.07, p< .007), with higher relationship quality related to lower depressive symptoms. Classroom emotional support significantly moderated the association of teacher-reported conflict and teacher-reported aggression (b= -0.24, p<.01), with a strong negative association between teacher-child conflict and teacher reported aggression in classrooms with the lowest levels of emotional support than in classrooms with the highest levels of emotional support.

Logan (2008) examined how relational care, interpersonal intimacy and emotional attunement are enacted in a Swedish preschool among 1 to 5year old children through recurrent adult child physical conduct, specifically affection and affectionate-controlling touch. It entailed 24 hours of video recorded observations of everyday activities. The sample consisted of 9 professionals and 35 children. The study employed a multimodal interactional approach that inductively examines how embodied social actions are accomplished in social encounters.

The analytical focus was on adults' and children's touch behavior and what can be identified as the interactional response to touch displayed through the participants' publicly visible actions. The findings showed that the educators' compassionate touch was used for emotion regulation as compassionate response to children's distress, Amicable touch engaged children in spontaneous affection; and, affectionate controlling touch was used to mildly control and direct the child's bodily conduct and participation in preschool activities or to mitigate the educators' verbal disciplining. The study demonstrated the complexity of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) enacted through the practices of haptic sociality. It supports the holistic policies arguing that embodied relational care should be integrated in ECEC, contrary to ideas that connect professionalism with emotional distance and lack of physical contact.

The above reviewed literature reports different perspectives of teacher affection and student emotional adjustment. Empirical studies show clearly that new students go through emotional experiences. Most students feel frightened; a situation that if ignored, could lead to further psychological problems. Some studies point that adolescents generally experience low levels of adjustment. Their school adjustment is coupled with biological development adjustment. Other empirical studies contend that the quality of teacher-student relationship was related with depressive symptoms and consequently low emotional adjustment. Other researchers posit that educators' compassionate touch engaged children in spontaneous affection and increased Childs' participation in pre-school activities.

The study hypothesized that stated there is a negative significant relationship between teacher affection and students' emotional adjustment in boarding public secondary school in Nairobi County, Kenya. It assumed that respondents have some knowledge on teacher affection and how it relates to their school adjustment in boarding school.

The findings are expected to equip school administrators with ideas, knowledge and skills to enable them provide leadership that is geared to socializing students toward better school adjustment.

Table 1: shows the final sample distribution.

2.0 Methodology

This study adopted an Ex post facto research design which is a Quasi-experimental design where participants are not randomly assigned. Vasalampi (2009) defined Ex post facto research as: that research in which the independent variable or variables have already occurred and in which the researcher starts with the observation of a dependent variable or variables. He then studies the independent variables in retrospect for their possible relations to, and effects on, the dependent variable or variables.

The study was conducted in three Sub-Counties in Nairobi City County, Kenya. These included Dagoretti, Langata and Makadara sub-counties. It is within these Sub-county's boarding schools that issues of student maladjustment have greatly been witnessed.

The researcher used random sampling technique which allowed each individual in the population to have an equal probability to be selected. It also provided the ability to generalize to the population.

Stratified random sampling was used to ensure equal representation of boys and girls. The selected Sub-counties have 16 public boarding secondary schools that satisfied the researchers' criteria.

The researcher used purposive sampling based on the schools' residential status to select only boarding secondary schools. This was followed by stratified random sampling based on gender to ensure adequate representation of both girls and boys secondary schools in the Sub-Counties with unequal number of boarding schools of boys and girls.

In obtaining the sample size that would increase population validity of the study, the researcher adhered to the guidelines given by Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) and Kombo and Tromp (2006) which gives selection process of an appropriate sample size from a particular population. They recommend 10% to 20% of the target population which will yield a relatively larger sample size.

Sub-County	Name of school	Class Population		Sample size across gender				
				Sample				**Sampled**
		FI	FII	FI	FII	Boys	Girls	Class Teachers
Dagoretti	Dagoretti High	389	363	79	73	152	-	4
	Precious Blood	360	272	73	55	-	128	4
Makadara	Buruburu girls	324	330	65	67	-	132	4
	Ofafa Jericho	237	219	48	44	92	-	4
Langata	Langata Boys	250	200	51	40	91	-	4
	Nembu girls	253	227	51	46	-	97	4
				367	**325**	**335 boys**	**357 Girls**	**24**
						48.41%	**51.59%**	
		Sample size		**692 (100%)**				

Two male and two female class teachers were sampled from each school from the six sampled schools to participate in the study. This gave a sample size of 24 teachers. The researcher collected information about the general atmosphere of student school adjustment of their respective schools from the sampled class teachers.

Student questionnaire that consisted five sub-scales of 20 items each to measure the components of students' school adjustment. An interview schedule with 6 open-ended questions was developed by the researcher and used to elicit information from class teachers on students' school adjustment.

Descriptive statistics, that is percentages, means, mode, standard deviation and skewness were derived. The descriptive statistics helped to summarize, describe the data with reference to demographic variables (gender and class) and the dependent variables, that is adjustment to school routine, emotional adjustment, academic adjustment and social adjustment. The results of the analyses were presented in figures. Pearson correlation coefficient was used to make predictions about the target population. Pearson correlation Coefficient was chosen because the nature of the study does not require to fit in a normal distribution, the data is interval and finally, the statistic is used to measure relationship between variables as is the case in this study. The results of the analyses were presented in form of figures.

Pearson Correlation test at 0.05 level of significance was used to determine the relationship between teacher affection and students' academic adjustment in public boarding secondary school.

3.0 Research Findings

Percentages were used to describe and summarize the demographic characteristics of the respondents and presented in figures.

Comparatively, form I respondents were more than form II, an indication that the enrolment of Form I students in Nairobi County in public boarding schools was slightly higher than Form II enrolment. The levels of teacher affection were categorized as low, moderate and high for interpretation purposes. Low level of teacher affection ranged from 20% -

46%, Moderate 47% - 73% and 74% - 100% was categorized as high.

The results of the distribution of respondents' level of emotional adjustment across gender and class are shown in figure 1 below.
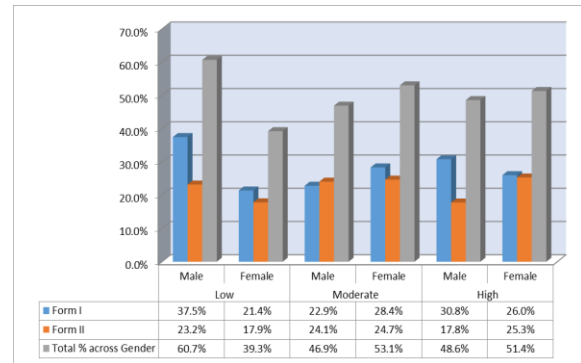

Figure 1: Distribution of respondents' level of emotional adjustment across gender and Form

The results of the findings in figure 1 indicate that majority of the male students (60.7%) are within low levels of emotional adjustment as compared to (39.3%) of the female students. Those within high level of emotional adjustment is comparable across gender. However, majority of form I male (30.8%) fall within high level of emotional adjustment compared to only (17%) form II male students contrary to convention expectation since the form two students comparably, have been in school longer than the form I students.

Form I male and female respondents exhibited differences in emotional adjustment. The male respondents had a mean score of 65.0 (SD=12.8) and (SK= -0.3). The negative skewness among the male respondents implied that they rated themselves highly in emotional adjustment scale. On the other hand, form I female respondents had a mean score of 63.6 (SD= 11.2 and (SK= 0.1). The positive skewness implies that the female respondents rated themselves low on the emotional adjustment scale. These findings imply that male students are more emotionally adjusted compared to their female counterparts in the same form. Social adjustment scores were closely comparable for both male and female with negative skewness (SK= -0.4 and -0.3) respectively. The negative skewness implies that the

participants rated themselves highly in social adjustment scale.

Table 1: Descriptive analysis for Teacher Affection scores and Students' Emotional Adjustment Scores

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Teacher affection Total Score	57.9263	14.91467	692
Emotional Adjustment Scores	63.8309	11.54173	692

According to the results presented in table 1 student' emotional adjustment scores had a mean score of 63.8, (SD=11.5). The scores were then correlated with teacher affection scores using Pearson correlation and tested at 0.05 level of significance. Table 10 presents the summary of the analysis of the students' emotional adjustment.

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Test for the Relationship between Teacher Affection scores and Emotional Adjustment scores

		Emotional Adjustment Scores
Teacher affection Total Score	Pearson Correlation	.645**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	692

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results as presented in Table 2 indicates that there is a significant and positive relationship between students' emotional scores and teacher affection scores (r (692) =0.645, P< 0.05) among form one and two students in Nairobi Sub-County. It was significant at 0.01 level of significance. In line with the findings of this study, the null hypothesis which stated that: There was no statistically significant relationship between teacher affection and students' emotional adjustment in boarding public secondary school in Nairobi County, Kenya, was rejected. These findings revealed strong correlations as indicated above. Students with high scores in emotional adjustment had high scores in teacher affection hence, important conclusions can be drawn

about how the two variables associate with each other in educational contexts.

The results of this study correlate with the findings of Maly, Umezawa Leake and Silliman (2005) who found out that emotional support which is given through but not limited to Guidance and Counselling is linked to a good psychological adjustment and generally fewer symptoms of depression and anxiety among students. High school context requires students to adapt to harder tasks and to achieve different goals therefore placing great pressure on their emotional well-being (Melissa, 2020).

This implies that students' emotional adjustment in boarding school cannot be taken for granted and therefore should be a matter of concern to teachers and parents. Further, empirical studies have shown that negative teacher-student relationships can be detrimental to students' academic and social-emotional development (McCormick and O'Connor, 2014). With regard to this, teacher affection may be an important emotional resource favoring students' emotional adjustment thereby limiting behavior problems. Responding to an interview schedule on how teacher affection relates with students' emotional adjustment, one respondent commented thus:

'' it is critical in the modern times for teachers to find time to develop awareness of students' emotional challenges and needs and to model compassionate behavior toward them. This is because there are many forms of dysfunctions in the society and in families that students go through and they come to school with all that baggage''.

The above statement implies the dynamic impact the society has on students and the need for teachers to lovingly listen and empathize with their students in order to alleviate emotional strains that students sometimes may have to contend with and so enhance students' emotional adjustment.

Further studies have reported that warm and supportive student teacher relationships may also fulfill students' need for belonging which, in turn, can foster their adjustment to the new school environment (Martin and Dowson,2009).

4.0 Conclusions

The findings of the study lead to the conclusion that an integrative approach by teachers which entails

cognition and affection are likely to dynamically influence student adjustment to school routine, emotional, academic and social adjustment. Emotional adjustment, social adjustment and adjustment to school routine is as important as academic adjustment. The ability of student to actively engage and persevere in challenging academic activities, or to handle adolescent unstable emotions and to solve problems productively are learned abilities, as is the capacity to treat peers with concern and compassion. Boarding school represents a distinct educational ecology and socializing environment in which these abilities could be enhanced for better school adjustment.

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