



RESEARCH ARTICLE

PERSPECTIVES ON INFLUENCE OF SINGLE PARENTING ON STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN BULLYING IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KENYA: A CASE STUDY OF KAKAMEGA EAST SUB COUNTY

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 21st November, 2017
Received in revised form
19th December, 2017
Accepted 16th January, 2018
Published online 28th February, 2018

Key words:

Perspectives, Influence,
Single Parenting,
Student Involvement,
Bullying Secondary Schools,
Kakamega East Sub County,
Kenya.

ABSTRACT

In Kenya cases of bullying in schools are shocking and the vice has persisted for decades. It is shocking because this has led to students dropping out of schools due to stigmatization and in some cases physical injury to the extent that some have been maimed. According to the World Health Organization- backed Global School Based Student Health Survey violence among adolescents in Kenya is highly widespread in schools. The survey a collaborative surveillance project with United States Centres for Disease Control (CDC) ranks Kenya among countries with the highest level of bullying. These are countries with prevalence rates of between 43% and 74% among adolescents aged 13-17 years reporting being the target of bullying at least once in two months. Boys were found to be more victims than girls. In Australia bullying prevalence lies between 15 and 20% while in the USA between 15 and 30%. Victims of bullying are normally insecure, anxious, suffer low esteem and rarely defend themselves. Most of them are socially isolated, physically weaker and tend to be close to their parents who are in turn over protective. But at the same time they rarely tell their parents, teachers or other adults about their bullying incidence, instead preferring to confide in their closest friends. Parents play an important role in influencing student discipline. Studies in some parts of the world have shown that some students from single parent families tend to be undisciplined. It is envisaged that single parents have little time for their children and in the process children develop habits that are prone to indiscipline. Hence when they join school, they display antisocial behaviour that encourages bullying. In Kakamega East Sub County, between 2006 and 2011, many cases of indiscipline were experienced in schools, bullying accounting for 28(80%). The objective of this study was to establish influence of single parenting on student involvement in bullying in secondary schools in Kenya. A conceptual framework showing influence of single parenting on student discipline was used to guide the study. The study established that single parenting had influence on student involvement in bullying. However the influence was marginal this means that children of single parent did not influence much bullying in schools. Nevertheless, children of single parenting were both perpetrators and victims of bullying. The study recommended that school administrators should involve single parents in dealing with cases of bullying among other vices.

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Citation: Olive Taabu Baraza. 2018. "Perspectives on influence of single parenting on student involvement in bullying in secondary schools in kenya: a case study of kakamega east sub county", *International Journal of Current Research*, 10, (02), 65835-65844.

INTRODUCTION

Family plays an important role in one's life. It not only provides people with physical, economic, and emotional support, but it is also the smallest basic unit of socialization where people first socialize with others. Families play a very important role in instilling discipline in their children based on the accepted norms in the society. In a school set up, student discipline is a matter of concern. The importance of school discipline is emphasized repeatedly in surveys, polls and literature about education and student achievement (Gary & Angus, 2011).

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Studies that have been done indicate that single parent families can have both positive and negative effects on the children. According to Magar (2012), development of close bonds with parents can be one big positive effect of single parenting. Single parenting involves looking after the child's requirements singly, which amounts to a large time to be spent with the child. If the parent is successful in turning these moments into deep bonding sessions, it would create a permanent goodwill and strong relationship between the parent and the child. This is supported by Kunz (2010), on the effects of single parenting on child's behavior who found out that children in single parent families often form close bonds with their parent, as they are closely dependent on each other throughout the child's life. Children from single-parent families may also form closer bonds with extended family members or family friends, as

these people often help raise them. Single parenting however, can also have negative effects on children. In U.S.A, Silbereisen and Sharma (2007), on revisiting an era in Germany from perspective of adolescent in mother-headed single parent families, observed that adolescent from mother-headed single parent families and step-mother were significantly less comfortable with their family environment in comparison to adolescents living with biological parents. Further study by Ketteringham (2007) in U.S.A, observed that single parent fathers do not communicate with their children as much as mothers. This leads to children from single father households being more likely to use marijuana and use illicit drugs, to have been drunk three or four times and to have had sex at an earlier age. This contradict the fact that most people think that fathers are more strict than mothers, when in fact they tend to be less stricter than mothers. This study is supported by Fenster (2011) who observed that once a child is subjected to growing up in a broken family, her propensity towards using drugs, alcohol, and engaging in unprotected sex becomes much higher than for a teenager who lives in a home where both of her parents are still married. According to him, statistics show that a teen girl who is the product of divorced parents is more likely to become pregnant. Otieno and Ofulla (2009), found out that in Kisumu city students were exposed to drugs and it affected all age groups.

Spriggs (2008), found that living with two biological parents was protective against bullying involvement for White students only. Negative associations between family communication and bullying behaviors for White, Black and Hispanic adolescents suggest the importance of addressing family interactions in future bullying prevention efforts. Adolescents' family environment and interactions can affect bullying behavior through multiple mechanisms. Family violence shapes bullying behavior through the modeling of aggressive behavior and the establishment of pro-aggression norms. For example, both exposure to inter-parental conflict and adolescent physical punishment have been positively associated with bullying perpetration. Parental monitoring problems affect aggression through adolescents' unsupervised time and affiliation with deviant peers. The study is supported by Zirpoli (2010), who concluded that young children are exposed to a variety of environmental variables that place them at risk for antisocial behavior. The two studies focused on how family environment and violence can influence bullying. However the different forms of bullying were not addressed for example taking other children's food without seeking consent. According to Luiselli, Putnam, Handler and Feinberg (2010), in their study on whole school positive behaviour: discipline effects on student problems and academic performance concluded that many students attending public schools exhibit discipline problems such as disruptive classroom behavior, vandalism, bullying and violence. In Liberia, Myers (2011), indicated that 95% women are single mothers, which Gender experts say represents a single most significant factor in national development because it clearly relates to women participation and representation. As a result of single mother families, a spillover effect is felt in almost every part of the nation because single mothers are spread across the country. Lack of quality education for children, due to financial constraints, increase of crime due to recycling environment, early introduction to social and moral corruption are but few effects of single parenting is said to have on a nation.

Family structure that an adolescent comes from whether single-parent family or both parents' family has a great influence on the social behavior of the adolescent (Odu & Paulina, 2008). The study is supported by Uwaifo (2008), in his study on the effects of family structure and parenthood on academic performance of Nigerian university students, who indicated that life in a single parent family can be traumatic and children brought up in such family structures often suffer some emotional problems such as lack of warmth, love and discipline problems, which may hinder their performance in schools. On the other hand, children raised in two parent family structures are often stable emotionally and they suffer less emotional problems thereby making them less anxious in the pursuit of their academic work. School discipline is also a major problem in Nigeria. The study is further supported by Salami and Alawode (nd), in their study on influence of single parenting on the academic achievements in secondary schools concluded that students from dual parent families regardless of sex develop good personality and they hardly have complex problems because they are secured in the love of their parents and that they are well taken care of and are socialized in the best way possible. Oluwatosin and Joseph (2011), in their study on effects of single parenthood on academic performance of secondary school students in Ekiti estate, found out that the interaction between the truancy behaviour of students from single parent homes and those from intact parent homes are significantly different from each other. This means that, there is difference between the truancy behaviour of students from single parent homes and those from intact parent homes. They further observed that type of home has significant influence on truancy behaviour of students. They recommended that Students of single parenthood should be encouraged on the three basic dimensions of self-concepts, namely; sense of belonging, sense of worth and sense of competence. They need a positive identity or an enhanced self-concept for the overall adjustment. The study focused on truancy behavior. Issues on stealing, joining gangs, cheating in the examinations, sexual harassment and use of vulgar language were not addressed.

According Kilonzo (2011, as cited by Tesha 2011), on facing negative effects of single parenthood, observed that, there are cases whereby a male child raised by his mother alone would sometimes lack maleness characters and ultimately develops female related characters, such as feeling shy. This happens just because the child lacks the presence of his father since his childhood. The study revealed that in some cases, children raised by a single parent, particularly a child raised by a single mother, may develop homosexuality type of behavior due to the fact that a child develops love affection with those people she was raised by in the family giving an example of a girl. The study further explained that experience had also indicated that some girls who have been raised in single parent families can face problems in their marriage lifetime simply because they were raised, seeing that the presence of only one parent can be appropriate. Truancy is also a problem in Tanzania. According to Nderu (2012, as cited by Temba 2012), pupils who miss classes are from pastoral communities, adding that truancy was rampant during dry seasons when Maasai children are forced by their parents to look for pasture and water for the livestock. Maasai lead nomadic life, moving from one place to another in search of pasture and water. They move along with the entire family, affecting children in school. In Kenya, there are increasing numbers of single mothers. This is because Kenyan parents do not accept daughters back in their homes once they are married, and because of the changing social and

economic environment, individual relationships have gained popularity and marriage has ceased to represent ties between social groups; rather it is an alliance between individuals. It was further noted that many women in Kenya view marriage as an option that is detrimental to their attempts to have careers, professional occupations and independent lifestyles. Autonomy is first on the agenda as many single mothers choose to have children with married or younger men who will not have total influence or authority over them. Also, the increase in single parent families in Kenya is attributed to high incidences of teenage pregnancy and premarital and extra marital sex (Womensphere, 2008). The Education Act (1980), identifies cases of student indiscipline experienced in schools as indecency, gross neglect of work, theft, lying, insubordination, bullying, drug abuse and other delinquent activities like truancy. Muola, Ndung'u and Ngesa (2009), in a study of the relationship between family functions and juvenile delinquency a case of Nakuru Municipality, Kenya found that a weak relationship between juvenile delinquency and socio-economic status was observed. The delinquency level of boys was significantly higher than that of girls. It was concluded that there is a relationship between family functions and juvenile delinquency. Interview schedules and a questionnaire were used to collect data from the respondents. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson's moment correlation and t-test. Juvenile delinquency was found to be significantly related to marital stability, family size, marital adjustment and mode of discipline. The studies reviewed indicate that single parenting influences delinquency in USA (Golden 2012, Bauer & Shear, 2010), in Nigeria (Oluwatosin & Joseph, 2011) and in Kenya (Muola, Ndung'u & Ngesa, 2009). These studies did not address influence of single parenting on student delinquency in Kakamega East District.

Research Objective

The research objective was: To establish perceptions of deputy principals, teachers, the District Education Officer and students on influence of single parenting on student involvement in bullying in Kakamega East District.

Synthesis of literature on influence of single parenting on student involvement in bullying

According to Gary and Angus (2011), discipline is emphasized repeatedly in surveys, polls, and literature about education and student achievement. Family factors that influence student behaviour in school are a child's parents as his first teachers. Parents' expectations have a definite influence on a child's attitude towards education and learning. Children who do well in school are likely to have been helped and encouraged by their parents. On the other hand, too much encouragement may be interpreted by the child as pressure, leading to stress and anxiety and ultimately to underachievement, rebellion and even failure (Bosworth, 2011). Rettner (2010), indicates that in USA, bullies are more likely than non bullies to live in families without biological parents such as living in single parent families, living with extended family members or with foster parents. The study also found bullies were at high risk for alcohol and drug abuse. It was further revealed that adolescents in single-mother/single father families were at high risk of being victims of bullying/physical violence than adolescent in two-parent families. This study is supported by Bosworth (2010), who found out that children of divorced parents are likely to fall behind their classmates in school work. According

to Waddock (2011, as cited by Bosworth 2011) indicates that learning is difficult when children are distracted by more fundamental issues, preoccupied with problems at home, children may have difficulty paying attention in class and that they often become aggressive and may have trouble making friends. He concluded that boys opt to get into fights while girls may bully other girls or act by engaging in promiscuous sex. This study focused on divorce as the cause of aggressive behavior of children. However, the study did not focus on the aggressive behavior of children raised by single parents as a result of death, separation and as a result of one parent staying away from home. Spriggs (2008) in his study on adolescent bullying involvement and perceived family, peer and school relations: commonalities and differences across race/ethnicity found out that living with two biological parents was protective against bullying involvement for White students only. Negative associations between family communication and bullying behaviors for White, Black and Hispanic adolescents suggest the importance of addressing family interactions in future bullying prevention efforts. Adolescents' family environment and interactions can affect bullying behavior through multiple mechanisms. Family violence shapes bullying behavior through the modeling of aggressive behavior and the establishment of pro-aggression norms. For example, both exposure to inter-parental conflict and adolescent physical punishment have been positively associated with bullying perpetration. Parental monitoring problems affect aggression through adolescents' unsupervised time and affiliation with deviant peers. This study is supported by Zirpoli (2010), who concluded that young children are exposed to a variety of environmental variables that place them at risk for antisocial behavior. The two studies focused on how the environment can influence aggressive behavior of the children. However, the forms of bullying were not addressed. Zirpolis (2010), study did not focus on single parenting and how it can influence student behaviour.

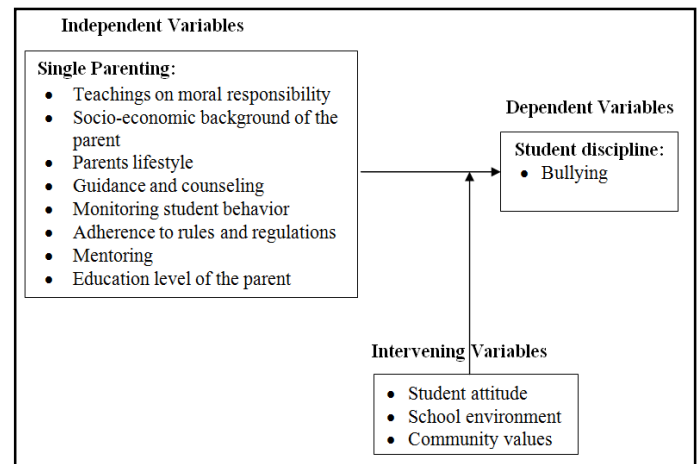
According to Lianga, Flisherb and Lombard (2007), on their study on bullying, violence and risk behaviour in South African schools student child abuse and neglect found out that male students were most at risk of both perpetration and victimization. Violent and antisocial behaviours were increased in bullies, victims and bully victims compared to controls not involved in any bullying behavior. It was concluded that bullying was common for young South Africans and that bullying behavior could act as an indication of violent antisocial and risk taking behavior. Further study by Maphosa and Shumba (2010), in their study on educators' disciplinary capabilities after the banning of corporal punishment in South African schools, found out that educators generally feel disempowered in their ability to maintain discipline in the absence of corporal punishment. The disempowering of educators has also led to feelings of abdication of the critical role of disciplining learners. They then summarized that the abdication of the outgoing role could be attributed to the rise in cases of learner's indiscipline in schools. Lianga, Flisherb and Lombard (2007), did not address forms of bullying in schools. They did not also focus on the influence of single parenting on children behavior. Maphosa and Shumba (2010), focused on discipline in general and ways of managing discipline. In a study by Nakpodia (2010), on teachers' disciplinary approaches to students' discipline problem in Nigerian secondary schools, concluded that students' discipline problems had grown into an epidemic in Nigerian schools and various disciplinary approaches are

employed by teachers to instill discipline. The study is supported by Okiemte (2011), which revealed that students' discipline was developing into an epidemic in Nigerian schools. According to him lack of adequate discipline in schools would transmit into societal chaos and destructions. The study is supported further by Imaobong and Mfonobong (2009), who found out that students' school discipline is influenced by child rearing styles adopted by their parents. The study also found out that ability to cope with school discipline by students from democratic homes is significantly higher than that of their counterparts from permissive homes but not significantly higher than those of their counterparts from authoritarian homes. These studies addressed discipline in general. According to Okwemba (2007), research indicates that bullying in Kenyan schools is high. Students in Kenyan secondary schools are experiencing higher levels of bullying than the international trend, a development researchers warn may hurt individual performance and self-esteem. Students in forms one and two suffer the highest rates of direct bullying compared to those in senior forms. This bullying took place at school in dormitories, playgrounds, corridors, and on the way to and from school, away from adult supervision. This observation is supported by Kariuki (2008), who found out that it is not a secret that bullying is prevalent in high schools in Kenya especially in boy schools. He noted that it has become so common that it's accepted by the student populace as a rite of passage while the administrators in some cases have turned a blind eye to it. He further concluded that the consequences of bullying are far reaching, ranging from lower class attendance and academic performance to increased incidences of violence and juvenile crime. Those children who bully others are more likely to become violent adults, while victims suffer from anxiety, low self esteem and depression well into adulthood. He further noted that even those not directly involved are affected, and those who witness bullying regularly suffer from a less secure learning environment, the fear that the bully may target them next and that teacher and other adults are either unable or unwilling to control bullies' behaviour. Further study by International Children's group (2010, as cited by Muindi 2010), indicated that 80% of children were forced to kneel, hit about the head, pinched, slapped and hit with a stick.

These studies did not address the influence of single parenting on student discipline with respect to influence of single parenting on bullying behaviour. From the studies reviewed, Waddock (2011, as cited by Bosworth 2011), found that learning is difficult when children are distracted by more fundamental issues, preoccupied with problems at home, children may have difficulty paying attention in class and that they often become aggressive and may have trouble making friends. Lianga, Flisherb and Lombard (2007), in their study on bullying, violence and risk behaviour in South African schools student child abuse and neglect, found out that male students were most at risk of both perpetration and victimization. Violent and antisocial behaviours were increased in bullies, victims and bully victims compared to controls not involved in any bullying behavior. Kariuki (2008), found out that it is not a secret that bullying is prevalent in high schools in Kenya especially in boy schools. He noted that it has become so common that it's accepted by the student populace as a rite of passage while the administrators in some cases have turned a blind eye to it.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework postulates that single parenting do influence bullying in schools.



Source (Researcher, 2011)

Figure 1. A Conceptual Framework showing the Influence of Single Parenting on Students involvement in Bullying in Schools

Single parent can influence student discipline positively or negatively. A single parent who teaches moral responsibility, offers guidance and counseling to his or her children, monitors student behaviour, ensures children adhere to rules and regulations and mentors him or her child discourages their children to bully others, to get involved in drug abuse and to be delinquent while a single parent who does not offer guidance and counseling, teach moral responsibility, mentor, monitor children behaviour nor ensures a child adheres to the rules and regulations encourages their children to bully others, get involved in drug abuse and to be delinquent. However, the intervening variables namely students attitude, community values and school environment moderates the influence of single parenting on students involvement in bullying. In situations where the intervening variables mitigate the single parenting influence on students' debut into antisocial behaviour, student involvement will be minimal and vice versa. The conceptual framework helped in focusing on the variables of the study in data collection on the influence of single parenting on student involvement in taking *chang'aa*, bhang, molesting other children, sexual harassment among others.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study used descriptive survey research design. The study population consisted of 10696 students, 35 deputy principals, 35 guidance and counseling teachers, 180 class teachers and one District Education Officer. The study used saturated sampling technique to select 32 Deputy principals, 32 Guidance and Counseling teachers, 140 class teachers and one District Education Officer. Simple random sampling was used to select 370 students. Data were collected by use of questionnaires and interview schedules. Face and content validity of the instruments was determined by experts in educational administration whose input was incorporated. Reliability of instruments was established through a test re-test method in 3(9.6%) of the schools that were not involved in the main study. Pearson r for the deputy principals' questionnaire was 0.84, class teachers' questionnaire was 0.79 and students'

questionnaire was 0.89. The instruments were therefore, reliable. Quantitative data from closed-ended items of the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics in form of frequency counts and percentages. Qualitative data from the open-ended items in the questionnaire and interviews was organized and analyzed in emergent themes and sub-themes.

RESULTS

Research Question

The research question responded to was: What are the perspectives of deputy principals, teachers, the District Education Officer and students on influence of single parenting on student involvement in bullying in secondary schools in Kakamega East District? The responses were as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Perceptions of the Deputy Principals, Class Teachers and the Students on Influence of Single Parenting on Student involvement in Bullying

Influence	RRES	RESPONSES							
		A		U		D		T	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Single parent families encourage their children to molest other students.	D/P	5	16	2	6	25	78	32	100
	C/T	32	23	17	12	91	65	140	100
	S	69	19	50	14	251	68	370	100
Single parent families encourage their children force peers to use vulgar language that hurt other children	D/P	4	13	0	0	28	88	32	100
	C/T	41	29	24	17	75	54	140	100
	S	68	18	53	14	249	67	370	100
Single parents force their children to make sexual comments to other students against their wishes.	D/P	4	13	0	0	28	88	32	100
	C/T	27	19	25	18	88	63	140	100
	S	68	18	53	14	249	67	370	100
Single parents encourage their children to take other children's food, drinks and snacks without consent	D/P	6	19	0	0	26	81	32	100
	C/T	41	29	19	14	80	57	140	100
	S	83	22	38	10	249	67	370	100
Single parents encourage their children to force peers to make noise when the teacher is not in class	D/P	2	6	6	19	24	75	32	100
	C/T	27	19	25	18	88	63	140	100
	S	221	60	15	4	134	36	370	100
Single parents encourage their children to kick or punch or physically hurt other peers at minimal provocation like stepping on their feet	D/P	2	6	6	19	24	75	32	100
	CT	41	29	24	17	75	54	140	100
	S	58	16	92	25	220	59	370	100
Average percentages on A, U and D	%/D		20.8		12.3			66.9	100

Key:

Res- Respondents S –Students D/P-Deputy PrincipalsC/T-Class Teachers
F -FrequencyA- AgreeU- UndecidedD- Disagree T- Total

From Table 1, twenty five (78%) disagreed, 16(5%) agreed while 2(6%) were undecided. This means that majority of the deputy principals were of the opinion that single parenting does not encourage their children to molest other students. However, 16(5%) of the deputy principals were of the view that single parent families encouraged their children to molest other students while 2(6%) were undecided. Ninety-one (65%) of the class teachers disagreed, 32(23%) agreed while 17(12%) were undecided on the view that single parenting does not encourage their children to molest other students. However, 32(23%) were of the opinion that single parent families encouraged their children to molest other students while 17(12%) were undecided. According to the students, the influence was as follows: 251(68%) disagreed, 69(19%) agreed while 50(14%) were undecided. This means that majority of the students were of the opinion that single parenting does not encourage their children to molest other students, a few were of the opinion that single parents encouraged their children to molest other children while 50(14%) were undecided. Twenty eight (88%) disagreed and 4(13%) agreed on the view that single parent families encourage their children to force other children to use vulgar language that hurt other students. This means that majority of the deputy principals were of the view

that single parent families do not encourage their children to force other children to use vulgar language that hurt other students. However, 4(13%) of the respondents were of the view that single parent families encouraged their children to force other children to use vulgar language that hurt other students. According to the class teachers, the influence was as follows: 75(54%) disagreed, 41(29%) agreed while 24(17%) were undecided. This means that majority of the class teachers were of the view that single parent families do not encourage their children to force other children to use vulgar language that hurt other students. However, 41(29%) of them were of the view that single parent families encouraged their children to force other children to use vulgar language that hurt other students while 24(17%) were undecided. According to the students, the influence was as follows: 249(67%) disagreed, 68(18%) agreed while 53(14%) were undecided. This means that majority of the students were of the opinion that single

parenting does not encourage their children to force other children to use vulgar language that hurt other students. However, 68(18%) of the respondents were of the view that single parent families encouraged their children to force other children to make sexual comments to other students against their wishes while 53(14%) were undecided. Twenty eight (88%) disagreed and 4(13%) agreed on the view that single parents force their children to make sexual comments to other children against their wishes. This means that majority of the deputy principals were of the view that single parent families do not encourage their children to force other children to make sexual comments to other students against their wishes. According to the class teachers, the influence was as follows: 88(63%) disagreed, 27(19%) agreed while 25(18%) were undecided. This means that majority of the class teachers were of the view that single parent families do not encourage their children to force other children to make sexual comments to other students against their wishes. However, 27(19%) of them were of the view that single parent families encourage their children to force other children to make sexual comments to other students against their wishes and 25(18%) were undecided. According to the students, the influence was as follows: 249(67%) disagreed, 68(18%) agreed while 53(14%)

were undecided. This means that majority of the students were of the opinion that single parent families do not encourage their children to force other children to make sexual comments to other students against their wishes. Twenty six (81%) disagreed and 6(19%) agreed by the deputy principals on the view that single parents encouraged their children to take other children's food, drinks and snacks without consent was as. This means that majority of the deputy principals were of the opinion that single parent families do not encourage their children to take other children's food, drinks and snacks without consent. However, 6(19%) were of the opinion that single parenting encouraged their children to take other children's food, drinks and snacks without consent. According to the class teachers, the influence was as follows: 80(57%) disagreed, 41(29%) agreed while 19(14%) were undecided. This means that majority of the class teachers were of the opinion that single parenting does not encourage their children to take other children's food, drinks and snacks without consent. However, 41(29%) were of the opinion that single parenting encouraged their children to take other children's food, drinks and snacks without consent while 19(14%) were undecided. According to the students, the influence was as follows: 249(67%) agreed, 83(22%) agreed while 38(10%) were undecided. Twenty four (75%) disagreed, 6(19%) agreed while 2(6%) were undecided on the view that students from single parent families tend to force peers to make noise when the teacher is not in class.

This means that majority of the deputy principals were of the view that children from single parent families do not force peers to make noise when the teacher is not in class. However, 6(19%) of the deputy principals were of the opinion that children from single parent families do force peers to make noise when the teacher is not in class while 2(6%) were undecided. According to the class teachers, the influence was as follows: 88(63%) disagreed, 27(19%) agreed while 25(18%) were undecided. This means that majority of the class teachers were of the opinion that children from single parent families' do not force peers to make noise when the teacher is not in class. However, 27(19%) of them were of the opinion that children from single parent families' do force peers to make noise when the teacher is not in class while 25(18%) were undecided. According to the students, the influence was as follows: 221(60%) agreed, 134(36%) disagreed while 15(4%) were undecided. This means that majority of the students were for the opinion that children from single parent families tend to force peers to make noise when the teacher is not in class, 134(36%) were of the opinion that students from single parent families' do not force peers to make noise when the teacher is not in class while 15(4%) were undecided. Twenty four (75%) disagreed, 6(19%) were undecided while 2(6%) agreed on the view that single parents encourage their children to kick or punch or physically hurt other people's children at minimal provocation like accidentally stepping on their feet. This means that majority of the deputy principals were of the view that single parents do not encourage their children to kick or punch or physically hurt other people's children at minimal provocation like accidentally stepping on their feet. However, 6(19%) were of the opinion that single parents encourage their children to kick or punch or physically hurt other people's children at minimal provocation like accidentally stepping on their feet while 6(19%) were undecided. According to the class teachers, the influence was as follows: 75(54%) disagreed, 42(29%) agreed while 24(17%) were undecided. This means that majority of the class teachers were of the view that single

parents do not encourage their children to kick or punch or physically hurt other people's children at minimal provocation like accidentally stepping on their feet. However, 42(29%) were of the opinion single parents encouraged their children to kick or punch or physically hurt other people's children at minimal provocation like accidentally stepping on their feet and 6(19%) were undecided. According to the students, the influence was as follows: 220(59%) disagreed while 92(25%) were undecided while 58(16%) agreed. This means that majority of the students were of the opinion that single parent does not encourage their children to kick or punch or physically hurt other people's children at minimal provocation like accidentally stepping on their feet while a few were of the opinion that single parents encouraged their children to kick or punch or physically hurt other people's children at minimal provocation like accidentally stepping on their feet. 92(25%) were undecided.

DISCUSSION

Majority of the respondents were in agreement that single parent families do not encourage their children to molest other students. During the interviews with the guidance and counseling teachers, it was revealed that single parents influence their children indirectly to molest other children as most children from single parent families feel inferior and so look for ways of surviving through daily experiences. One of the guidance and counseling teachers stated, "most children from single parent families suffer from low self esteem. This is because they lack warmth and attention from their parents. This makes them perform poorly in school as they struggle with their worth as a person and they sometimes feel neglected or abandoned. They feel they are failures in life and so they develop a mechanism to deal with anger, depression and guilt and so majority end up molesting peers". Single parents may not directly influence their children to molest other children. Conditions like hostility in the homes may make them feel neglected. This makes them direct their anger on other children. The guidance and counseling teachers' views agreed with the questionnaires findings that single parenting does not encourage student involvement in molesting peers. These findings agree with Rettner (2010), who found out that bullies were more likely than non bullies to live in families without biological parents such as living in single parent families, living in families, living with extended family members or with foster parents. Such situations may mean bullies, in some cases do not receive much attention at home.

The three respondents were in agreement that single parent families do not encourage their children to force other children to use vulgar language that hurt other students. During the interviews with the District Education Officer and the guidance and counseling teachers, it was noted that parents were the first teachers to their children and so they had the greatest influence on their behaviour. In this respect the District Education Officer said, "most single parents face frustrations and emotional stress because of the many responsibilities on their shoulders. This makes them to vent their angers on their children without noticing. This impact on their children negatively. Children are quick at picking what is negative and so also direct it to other children." Single parents may not really encourage student involvement in forcing other children to use vulgar language. When these parents are annoyed or overwhelmed with responsibilities, however, they may use vulgar language on their without noticing and because students

imitate their parents they pick everything including what is negative. One guidance and counseling teacher said, "Life in single parent homes can be traumatic. Most single parents sometimes feel lonely. When their children ask for something, they reprimand them impetuously." The interview findings from the guidance and counseling teachers agreed with the questionnaires findings that single parents do not encourage student involvement in forcing other children to use vulgar language. It can be concluded that if the parents are abusive, then their children can easily pick the bad behaviours from them. Perhaps that could be the reason why children of drunkards or smokers find nothing wrong in the habit of smoking or drinking at very young age as it's something they are used to seeing in their homes. The findings from the questionnaires and the interviews agree with the remarks of Anamikas (2012), who found out that what a child learns in the initial years are known to have lasting impression on the mind of the child which is why good parenting is an absolute necessity. Exposing the child to physical abuse can be very damaging to that child's psychology. Most children are victims of verbal abuse from their parents. Many parents are seen venting out their frustrations at their children without realizing that sought of psychological damage they are inflicting on the child. Such acts also lead the child in losing and developing inferiority complex. Majority of the students were of the opinion that single parent families do not encourage their children to force other children to make sexual comments to other students against their wishes. The three respondents were in agreement that single parent families did not encourage their children to force other children to make sexual comments to other students against their wishes. During the interviews with the guidance and counseling teachers, it emerged that single parents do not directly influence their children to force other children to make sexual comments to other students against their wishes but the conditions in their homes affect their children forcing them to be bullies. For instance one guidance and counseling teacher said, children from single parent families may find it hard to make friends. Maintaining relationship with other children may not be easy as they lack a good example in their homes. Children from intact families have positive examples and a basis to form social relationships. This makes most of them not to become bullies.

Parents value discipline. However, their lifestyle can make children to be undisciplined. The views of the guidance and counseling teachers agreed with the questionnaire findings that single parents did not encourage their children to make sexual comments to other children against their wishes. These findings are consistent with those of Waddock (2011, as cited by Bosworth 2011) that indicate that learning is difficult when children are distracted by more fundamental issues, preoccupied with problems at home, children may have difficulty paying attention in class and that they often become aggressive and may have trouble making friends. Single parent families do not encourage their children to take other children's food, drinks and snacks without consent. During the interviews, it was revealed that most of the children from single parent families could not perform well in school because of reduced income in their homes. For instance the District Education Officer said, single parent families have reduced income. Most of their children lack personal effects and so most opt to take other children's properties without their consent. It is also noted that majority are aggressive and so bully other students who attempt to defend themselves and also protect their properties. One guidance and counseling teacher

said, "most of our students steal because they lack most of the basic needs. It's the conditions in these homes that force them to steal. It's very humiliating especially for those in the boarding school to lack even the most basic items like soap for bathing. They are thus tempted to steal. It's unfortunate that most of them come from single parent families." Single parents may have reduced income. This makes them not to provide all the basic needs. This may force their children to steal. The views of the guidance and counseling teachers and the District Education Officer agree with the questionnaire findings that single parents do not encourage their children to take other children's food, drinks and snacks without consent. These findings are in line with the observations made by Kunz (2010), that living in poverty is stressful and can have many emotional effects on children, including low self esteem, increased anger and frustration and an increased risk of violent behavior. The findings agree with the study by Ashley (2009), who observed that economic status is one of the largest differences found in single and dual homes. Two parent families have more income therefore resulting in higher socio-economic status. As a result of higher socio-economic status, families with two parents typically invest more in educational resources, spend more time with their children and have larger social networks for their children to tap on than families with single and absent parents unlike parents of low economic status families who work multiple jobs to pay for basic necessities, parents in higher socio-economic status can spend more time with their families and therefore enhance communication, trust and solidarity in children.

Deputy Principals and the class teachers concurred that students from single parent families do not force peers to make noise when the teacher is not in class. However, students were of the opinion that children from single parents force peers to make noise when the teacher is not in class. Students could be basing on what goes on in their classes. During the interview one guidance and counseling teacher stated, "Parents specifically single parents and step parents were to blame for school bullying since majority of them fail to teach their children social rules. Lack of communication structures in most single parent homes may lead to bullying behaviours specifically in boys. Most children from single parent families grow up in painful situations and thus their children tend to be vengeful. Children from single parents lack attention especially those entrusted to house girls. This makes them seek attention from the authorities by causing trouble. The guidance and counseling teachers' views agreed with the questionnaire findings that children from single parent families do not force peers children to make noise. These findings are in line with the findings by Treagus (2010), who observed that children from single parent families are likely to be more aggressive and potentially get into trouble with the authorities outside of school too. This in turn will affect their academic record in terms of reputation and grades. During the interviews varied opinions were expressed for instance one Guidance and Counseling teacher said, "socio-economic status played a very important role in the children's behavior in single parent families. Most single parent families had lower income. Because of this their children were frustrated and this led to most of the children from single parent families were aggressive. These children lack attention from their parents because most of them are very busy. Getting into trouble is one way of seeking attention from the teachers. If this attention is not given in a proper way, most of them drop out of school. Single parents serve the role of both parents in the home. Some

do not know how to budget their time and this makes their children to lack affection from their parents. This contributes to anti-social behavior. The guidance and counseling teachers' views agreed with the findings of the questionnaires that single parent do not encourage their children to kick or punch or physically hurt other people's children at minimal provocation like accidentally stepping on their feet. The results are consistent with the findings of Ghana News Agency (2011) that concluded that low socioeconomic status of single parents contributed immensely to children in such homes exhibit anti-social behaviours, unnecessary aggression and being saddled with problems at school. The results also disagreed with the views of one guidance and counseling teacher who said "Children from single parent families are the ones who are usually bullied because most of them have low self esteem; they are looked down upon by other students." According to the data from the District Education Officer cases of bullying had been reported in the District. From 2006-2011, twenty eight (80%) schools in the District were involved in bullying. The students who were involved in bullying injured other students. It can be concluded that most of the students could have been brought up by single parents. The overall view based on average percentages indicates that three categories of respondents disagreed strongly on the view that single parenting influences student involvement in bullying as overall percentage for disagreed was 66.9, agreed 20.8 and undecided 12.3. However, does not mean that single parenting does not influence student involvement in bullying. It has more influence on some forms of bullying such as encouraging their children to force peers to make noise when the teacher is not in class and low influence on student involvement in: encouraging their children to molest other students, make sexual comments to other students against their wishes, taking other students children's food, drinks and snacks without consent and force peers to use vulgar language that hurt other children.

Conclusion

The overall view based on average percentages indicates that three categories of respondents disagreed highly on the view that single parenting influences student involvement in bullying as overall percentage for disagreed was 66.9, agreed 20.8 and undecided 12.3. This does not mean single parenting does not influence student involvement in bullying. It has more influence on some forms of bullying such as encouraging their children to force peers to make noise when the teacher is not in class and low influence on encouraging their children to molest other students, make sexual comments to other students against their wishes, taking other students' food, drinks and snacks without consent and force peers to use vulgar language that hurt other children.

Recommendations

In light of the findings that children from single parenting help in *chang'aa* (illicit) drinks brewing and selling, house chores and joining their parents in doing other small businesses, the study recommended that parents be advised on the importance of children attending school on daily basis. Children should not be included in hawking as it makes students drift from school and play truancy. Parents should solicit funds from sponsors, charitable organizations and bursaries from Constituency Development Funds to pay school fees. With regard to the finding that students mixed *chang'aa* (illicit

drinks) with juices, the study recommended that school administrators should ban students from carrying juices and other soft drinks to school as they mix the juices with (illicit drinks).

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