

Influence of Adult Learners' Behaviour on Primary Young Pupils' Morals in Schools of Kakamega South District Kenya

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Abstract

Introduction of Free primary Education (FPE) led to a high influx of adult men and women into primary school in January 2003. Their joining school ushered in new established attitudes, learning, feelings and conducts which were transferred to the school environment. These thus greatly influenced young pupils' moral behaviour. The purpose of this study was to establish the influence of adult learners' behaviour on young pupils' moral behaviour in primary schools of Kakamega South District, Kenya. The specific objective was to; explore the difference in moral behaviour of class six female and male pupils with adult learners. The study was based on Albert Bandura's social learning theory and Kohlberg's development moral theory. A comparative research design was adopted. The study population consisted of eight hundred adult pupils, eighty one head teachers, seven hundred and fifty teachers and one thousand four hundred and forty young learners drawn from twenty four public schools in Kakamega South District. Using simple random sampling technique, two divisions were selected for the study, Stratified random sampling technique was used to select two hundred and forty adult pupils, one hundred and ninety two teachers. Saturated sampling was used to select twenty four head teachers and forty young learners. Questionnaire and interview schedule were used to collect data. Reliability of the data collection instruments was established by carrying out a pilot study in three schools which were not included in the actual study. Face validity of the instruments was ascertained by three experts from the Department of Educational Psychology, Masinde Muliro University. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages & means. Inferential statistics such as t- test was also used. Qualitative data was transcribed put in to various categories and reported in an ongoing process as themes and sub- themes emerged. It is hoped that Ministry of Education Science and Technology, Kenya Institute of Education and Ministry of Basic Education would benefit from the study since it shades light on the policies that are put in place. The study's findings may also provide knowledge and insight to school administrators, lectures, and teacher counselors in leading pupils and students in the right direction. Besides that, study's findings have suggested further research in the area.

Keywords: adult learner, young pupils, morals

INTRODUCTION

According to the global view, in most societies, morality was above all, a social affair and a communal concern (Bennar,1993).In recent times an individualistic trend has emerged to counteract this view.Strating with the Renaissance and the Reformation in Western Europe individualism started gathering momentum in all spheres of life. This recent trend towards individualism has become more prominent in modern times and spread from Europe and America to other parts of the world. Presently, this trend has seriously challenged the old order and the established traditions which uphold the supremacy of society and social morality over and above the individualistic ethics (Lerner, 1998). Consequently, factors which influence morals have come into play in affecting behaviour. Today two key words which characterize contemporary morality are pluralism and privatization. On the one hand, moral

pluralism encouraged a common search for consensus, for a publicly accepted morality. On the other hand, pluralism might also lead to ethical relativism, implying the privatization of morality. In this case one eschews public openness and chooses individually or privately on moral issues (Bennars,1993) Given the present emphasis on privatization in the world, however, existed a growing lack of concern with morality. At the same time an increasing number of moral issues, controversial for various reasons, were said to be open questions. These were questions that were entirely left to private judgment and choice namely; questions related to sexuality, drug addiction and delinquency (Lerner,1998).Given the above international scene, children's moral identity is strongly influenced by models. They adopt values and frequently imitate the behaviour (Bucher ,2005).

The African view, states that morality was highly complex and problematic and it attempted to cope with individual and social needs, with traditional and modern values, with religious and secular world-views, with dogmatism and pluralism in one. Not surprisingly to the African children and youth morality appeared to be confusing rather than guiding human conduct. Consequently African children have adopted behaviours of others because of real or imagined pressure to do so. Children, therefore, spend an increasing amount of time in peer interaction during middle, late childhood and adolescence. For instance, in one investigation, children interacted with peers 10 percent of their day at age 2, 20 percent at age 4, and more than 40 percent between the ages of 7 and 11 (Tanner & Pawson, 2008). Peer influences have had both positive and negative effects. It is through peer interaction that African children learn the symmetrical reciprocity mode of relationships, explore the principles of fairness and justice by working through disagreements with peers, learn to be keen observers of peers interests and perspectives in order to smoothly integrate themselves into ongoing peer activities and learn to be skilled and sensitive partners in intimate relationships by forging close friendships with selected peers. In contrast, the negative influences of peers on children are: being rejected or overlooked by peers has led to loneliness or hostility. Further, such rejection and neglect by peers has led to

individual's subsequent mental health and criminal problems. Peer culture, as a corrupt influence, has undermined parental values and control and lastly, peers have introduced children to alcohol, drugs, delinquency and other forms of behaviour that adults view as maladaptive (Tanner & Pawson, 2008).

In Kenya, primary schools were expected to enroll all children of school going age of 6-13 years (Maina, 2007) Under Free Primary Education, however, anyone who wished to go to primary school was to attend; this was technically referred to as inclusive education (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and UNESCO, 2005). As a result the number of adult learners increased in primary schools. For example, in 2006, fifty four (54) adult learners most of them below fifty (50) years of age sat the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) in Nakuru District (Gatheru, 2006). In 2007 there were two hundred (200) adult learners who sat their examinations in Nairobi (Njuguna, 2007). Between 2003 to 2007, one thousand, six hundred and eighty one (1681) adult learners had been enrolled in a few sampled schools in Kakamega South District (Kakamega District Education office, 2007). This is shown in table 1.

Table 1 Enrolment of Adult Learners in Sampled Schools

YEARS	2003		2004		2005		2006		2007	
GENDER	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
TOTAL	177	130	199	213	180	161	125	110	211	175
GRAND TOTAL	307		412		341		235		386	
%	57.7	42.3	48.3	51.7	52.8	47.2	53.2	46.8	54.7	45.3

(Kakamega District Education office, 2007)

Studies conducted in coast (Taita Tavata and Kwale Districts), Eastern (Embu and Mwingi Districts, Nairobi (Nairobi district), Rift valley (Kericho and Kajiado districts), Nyanza (Gucha, Kisumu districts) established that due to increased enrolment in schools through Free Primary Education, discipline was becoming a big challenge (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology & UNESCO, 2005). It was noted that with the presence of over-age pupils in schools, some were deviants, and with the large numbers of pupils in classrooms, it was not possible to maintain discipline in schools (Ministry of Education Science and Technology & UNESCO, 2005). Matters were compounded by the fact that corporal punishment is outlawed. The worry therefore, was that some of the overage youth were negatively affecting the morals of young pupils in primary schools. Although there was already an on-going campaign to fight immorality through the mass media, school programmes and the church the adult learner in primary schools was a new dimension not

explored hence the need to investigate whether adult learners' moral behaviours influence the moral behaviour of young primary school pupils in Kakamega South District.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of adult learner's behaviour on young learners' moral behaviour in Primary schools of Kakamega South District Kenya at upper level. Specific **objective** of the study is to:- Explore the difference in moral behaviour of class six female and male pupils with adult learners. **Research Hypothesis** –There is no significant difference in moral behaviour of class six female and male pupils with adult learners. A **comparative research** design was used in the current study. Comparative research design was used to explore relationships between variables (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). The design was suitable because; it allowed a comparison of groups without having to manipulate the independent variables and it was done solely to identify variables

worthy of investigation. The design was relevant also because the researcher was interested in exploring the differences in moral behaviour of class six female and male pupils with adult learners. The study comprised of eight hundred (800) public primary school adult pupils, seven hundred and ninety eight (798) teachers and eighty one (81) head teachers drawn from twenty four (24) selected public primary schools of Municipality and Shinyalu in Kakamega South District. Simple random sampling technique was used to select two (2) divisions namely:-Shinyalu and Municipality. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select two hundred and forty (240) adult learners, one hundred and ninety two (192) teachers who teach class six females and male pupils who learn together with adults and these formed a comparison or control group. It was also used to identify male and female adult pupils. Saturated sampling technique was used to select twenty four (24) head teachers and forty eight young learners, therefore the sample size consisted of five hundred and four (504) participants. Data for the study was collected using the questionnaires and interview schedule. **The questionnaire for pupils** was administered to adult learners from sampled schools. They contained 14 items. It targeted the influence of adult pupils' behaviour on young pupils morals at upper primary school level. **Questionnaire for Teachers and Young Learners** was administered to teachers who teach class six with adult learners, they contained 19 items. They were also administered to young female and male learners who learn together with adult learners in class six. The researcher used a five point likert scale to rate young pupils morals as follows: **Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Undecided, Agree, Strongly Agree.** Young learners rated moral behaviour with the

assistance of the researcher sch. **Interview schedules** were used to enable the researcher to extract very sensitive information related to cases of pupils who are in school but have given birth and are married, incidences of sexual abuse and also clarify and elaborate the purpose of the research. It was also used to supplement on what could have been left out on using the questionnaire. It was administered to head teachers and contained both closed and open ended items. To collect data, permission was sought from the National Council for Science and Technology through the Institute of postgraduate studies, Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology. Both qualitative and quantitative data collected was sorted, coded, classified according to various categories and tabulated for analysis. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics that is means and also inferential statistics such as **T- test**. The t- test was used to test the hypothesis to enable the researcher generalize the results from the sample to the population. In the current study, the test was used to compare two groups. Alpha was set at 0.05 level of significance for computation. Qualitative data was transcribed and reported, according to various themes and sub- themes as they emerged. Finally, data analyzed was presented in tables.

RESULTS

Moral Behaviour Difference of Class Six Female and Male Pupils Learning with Adult learners

This section deals with summary of points scored by class six female and male pupils, t- test for **HO** and discussion on their moral behaviour difference.

HO There is no Significant Difference in Moral Behaviour of Class Six Female and Male Pupils Learning with adult learners

Table 2: Summary of points scored by class six female and male pupils

Section ii,iii,iv, of a Questionare	Moral statements	Females	Males	Females	Males
Factors related to physical changes	Uniform not appropriate	3.7	2.5	3.50	3.20
	Use of cosmetics	4.3	2.4		
	Sports for health and beauty	3.8	3.5		
Facts related to psychological development	Decision making	3.8	3.6	3.78	3.20
	Chat freely	4.2	4.1		
	Avoidant Behaviour	2.9	3.3		
	Boy –Girl relationships	4.1	4.4		
Facts related to social life	Part – time employment	3.4	3.5	3.27	2.93
	Sexual harassment	3.2	2.5		
	Teenage pregnancy	3.7	3.6		
Mean score		3.71	3.34	3.70	3.28
Sum of scores		37.1	33.4	11.11	9.85

Source: Field Data, 2010

Table 2 Indicates that female pupils are significantly impacted by the introduction of adult learners in schools as compared to male pupils. On overall,

female students scored 37 points which is a moderate score with a tendency towards a high score of 40 on a scale of 1 to 50.

Table 3 paired sample t- test of moral adjustment of class VI female and male pupils

	Paired Differences				T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
	Mean	Std deviation	Std error mean	95% confidence interval of the Difference				
				Upper				Lower
Gender								
Mean scores by class VI female pupils	0.420	0.35214	0.1114	0.1681	.88037	1.640	9	0.135
Mean scores by class VI male pupils								

Source: Author, 2010

Table 3 shows the results of a paired t- test of the mean scores of class VI female and male pupils on moral adjustment due to influence of adult learners. A paired sample t-test revealed that there was no significant difference in the moral adjustment scores by class VI female pupils and scores by class VI male pupils, $t(9) = 1.64$, $p = 0.14$. This indicated that the mean score by female pupils of 3.71 did not significantly vary from the mean score by male pupils of 3.34. At $P = 0.14$, there is no sufficient evidence to fail to reject the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in moral behaviour between class six female pupils with adult learners and male pupils with adult learners at 0.05 significance level.

DISCUSSION

Tanner & Pawson (2006) argued that the child’s environment will provide social experiences which once processed and cataloged will lead to the formation of moral concepts. The above explanation is in agreement with the findings of this study as regards female pupils with respect to the **H0** where on physical changes that influence young learners it was observed that female pupils (4.3) are more negatively affected on use of cosmetics than male pupils (2.4) in class six. This therefore, means that female adult learners introduce young female pupils to the use of cosmetics and regime of care that promotes their health and attractiveness of the body. This practice interferes with the moral behaviour of young female pupils at school and affects their academic goals. These findings are in disagreement with respect to adult male pupils who do not really mind much about what to wear and personal adornment, therefore, do not influence young male pupils in any way in terms of appearance.

Huit (2004) discussion on how the environment reinforces and punishes modeling, he suggested that the observer is reinforced by the model. These observations support those of this study as respects **H0** where it was also found that young female pupils (3.7) are more negatively influenced on development of feelings about the appearance of the school uniform they wear than male pupils (2.5) in class six. This results indicate that adult female pupils influence young female pupils’ feelings about the

appearance of the school uniform they wear. In our primary schools, since the introduction of free primary education, the uniform is one of the greatest source of disagreement between teachers and primary school pupils. Hence, due to their behaviour related to their uniform preferences, relationship with teachers is affected, sharp criticism, ridicule from teachers produce more antagonism. The present study found significant difference with respect to gender. This means that young primary school female pupils change dressing styles to fit in with female adult pupils who do so, than male pupils in class six.

Huit (2004) conducted his study on older children interests as regards sports and games. His results revealed that in late childhood, major emphasis is put on the sex appropriateness of games and sports children engage in. These result are in agreement with those of this study with respect to **H0** which points to the idea that in classes six it was observed that more female pupils (3.8) are conscious of their bodies than male pupils (3.5), more females than males are however, likely to engage in sports and games for health and beauty reasons rather than for fun. It was found out that male’s play competitive games more often while females engage in physical activities to reduce weight and enhance appearance which means that male’s are selective of the type of play activities to take part in compared to female’s.

Crain (2007) studied Kohlberg’s development moral theory. Level II conventional morality which revealed that a child seeks to enhance good interpersonal relationship which Kohlberg has called nice boy, nice girl orientation. Besides, loyalty becomes an important (moral) value at this stage for children moral acts are meant to please people upon which base moral decisions which can vary and affect their moral negatively or positively. Also stage four subjects make moral decisions from the perspective of society as a whole hence think as fully fledged members of society. These findings conquer with those of this study as respects **H0** which indicate that in class six both female pupils scored a mean of 3.8 and males scored a mean of 3.6. Generally it was observed that adult pupils influenced young pupils who are able to abstract and retain moral judgmental standards from modeled examples morally in a

negative or positive way. It's therefore, clear that adult learners who have attained formal operational thought make logical decisions that enhance the morals of children. However, those adult learners who have not completed the transition to the highest levels of formal operational thought experience moral problems which affect the moral behaviour of children in the course of interaction negatively.

Ashford and associates (1997) in discussion with members of the opposite sex, women try to talk about matters of interest while men opt to tell jokes or discuss politics, therefore, the prescription regarding differences is reduced to two conclusions, men are in pursuit of power, and women are in pursuit of relationships. These results are not similar to those of this study with respect to **HO** which has indicated that both the sexes were equally affected by adult learners on chatting freely and their influence is highly significant that is level of association because female pupils scored a mean of 4.2 and males scored a mean of 4.1. However in certain incidences, chatting freely was associated with health and social risk behaviours such as delinquency, unwanted pregnancy, early marriages, self harm, rebelliousness, alcohol and drug experimentation in public primary school in Kakamega South District. Therefore, since adults are in favour of open communication they are influential in day-to-day affairs of children thus enhance or lead to determinations of children's moral behaviour in school.

Aduda (2004) conducted studies on over-age pupils in Kenyan public primary schools. He found out that the presence of adult learners influence young learners morals, for they have led to increased boy-girl relationships, spread of **Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)** and promiscuity. These observations differ with those in the **HO** with respect to gender in that more male students (4.4) than female students (4.1) consented that love relationships have increased due to presence of adult learners in class six. This therefore, means that adult learners have introduced young pupils in primary schools to romantic relationships. Increased boy-girl relationships have been attributed to admission of adult pupils who are already married. For instance, a small percentage (20%) of head teachers observed that adult learners in their schools are married. Increased promiscuity as one can be re-admitted anyway after giving birth. In the course of these romantic relationships, young pupils get confused and since they are not yet mature, they become careless in their relations with adults hence find themselves flirting that's teasing each other. Consequently, problems such as teenage pregnancy, early marriages and Sexual Transmitted Diseases and HIV/AIDS arise. Sometimes before problems arise, for young learners having a boy friend or a girl friend is fun and exciting since it involves spending time

with someone in order to get to know him or her better or having feelings for each other and wanting to be more than just friends.

Tanner and associates (2006) research on access to compulsory free education revealed that the price of investing in education can be very high for example most free public education in Africa. Asia and America is even very expensive to poor families. Since they have to meet the cost of books, uniforms, transportation and even provide unofficial payments to teachers at times. In some places the cost for a primary level pupil may represent one third of the entire cash income of a typical poor family and many families especially in Africa have more than one child. In such cases it is not a surprise to learn that a child works in order to earn money to pay for his school expenses. These findings are in agreement with those studies as respects **HO** where it was depicted that in class six more male pupils (3.5) than females (3.4) participate in part time employment. These gender differences in employment are attributed to the fact that certain tasks can be performed by females and there are those that can be done by male pupils. The above results were attributed to the fact that most adult pupils come from generally low socio economic backgrounds hence many of them work and have introduced young pupils to this trend. These status were depicted in the area of study.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology & UNESCO (2005) reported that some adults nearly raped young children on their way home after school. The above results are in agreement with those of this study as respects the **HO** which indicate that in classes six more females and males conceded that female (3.2) are susceptible to sexual harassment than male (2.5) due to presence of adult learners. Sexual harassment is therefore a serious issue at elementary level of education in Kakamega South District. It occurs during any school activity within classrooms, on the way home from school, play grounds and other areas. It causes learning difficulties or the decision to drop out of a class or school. This negative moral behaviour has led to isolation, loss of self esteem and fear of personal safety among young primary school pupils. It is therefore, important for young learners to have guidelines to follow when sexual harassment occurs. Young pupils in primary schools have learned this practice from adult learners through such concepts as observational learning, imitation and modeling as Albert Bandura argued.

Adolescent Reproductive Health and Life Skills Curriculum (2000) research revealed that pregnancy is one reason why some teenagers get married, whether the parents marry or not, early pregnancy has special risks. These observations conquer with those of this study with respect to **HO** where both sexes

significantly observed that teenage pregnancy is on the increase due to the presence of adult learners in classes six. Female pupils scored a mean of 3.7 and males scored a mean of 3.6 Presence of adult learners has exacerbated cases of teenage pregnancy in upper primary school classes. This means that teenage pregnancy basing on the premise that, they can give birth and return for admission in school as per the requirement of the policy of the Ministry of Education, that once a girl has given birth she can go back to school. They therefore, emulate adult learners who have given birth and have been readmitted in school. However, a few cases drop out of school after delivering and the parents are involved in raising the baby. Most young mothers below the age of 18 years give birth to low birth weight babies who in-turn have a high mortality rate. Some risk abortions, since the pregnancy is stressful and unwanted, most of which are unsafe, considering the kind of instruments, drugs, that are used. In such circumstances most girls' education, career is retarded. On one hand the use of contraception is a major controversy in our society whether to give female pupils contraceptives or not. The most popular contraceptives are the pills and the condom most of them don't use them since they lack adequate information. Most of them engage in unprotected sex due to their cognitive and emotional immaturity as stated by Kohlberg.

Crain (2007) studied adults who are trying to establish their identity. His findings revealed that, those who fail to establish their own identity have few commitments to goals that's personal, parental, peer or goals of the larger society. They therefore, become avoidant that's avoid issues by engaging in hippne behaviour, become least adaptive, risk developing psychological disturbances, they are shallow, self focused and easily influenced by peer pressure, avoid information and they cope with problems by differing decision and action. These findings differ with those in the **HO** with respect to gender in that adult learners influence male pupils (3.3) into this negative moral behaviour than female pupils (2.9) at class six level.

CONCLUSION

There were differences with regard to moral behavior of class six female and male pupils with adult learners. For instance majority of female students feel that the uniform they wear is not appropriate and engage in use of cosmetics than male pupils. Few male pupils are exposed to cases of sexual harassment as are female pupils. A significant proportion of male pupils in upper primary are part time employees as compared to female pupils. However, both male and female pupils in classes six are significantly influenced in the following moral aspects, sports and games, intimate relationship, communication and conformity.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE FINDINGS

The Ministry of Education Science and Technology should focus on balancing the gender distribution of teachers. A proper guidance and counseling place in Kenyan primary Schools with uniform policies should be established. Guidance and Counseling services should be strengthened in primary schools. More single sex and boarding schools should be constructed. Adult learner centers should be revived to enhance adult literacy and education programmes.

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