

**THE IMPACT OF PARENTING STYLES ON PERSONALITY DIMENSIONS OF ADOLESCENTS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS: A CASE OF MOMBASA COUNTY, KENYA**

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**ABSTRACT**

The purpose of the study was to establish how authoritative parenting styles, authoritarian parenting styles, indulgent parenting styles and neglectful parenting styles influence personality dimensions of adolescents in secondary schools in Mombasa County. Descriptive research design was adopted by the study. The target population under study was all the 6,440 students in secondary schools in Mombasa County but a sample of 320 respondents was achieved. Primary data was collected through the use of structured questionnaires which were hand delivered to the respondents by the researcher. To analyze the quantitative data, frequency distribution and cross tabulations were used. The data analysis was done using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The findings revealed that indeed the main variables used namely authoritative parenting styles; authoritarian parenting styles; indulgent parenting styles and neglectful parenting styles influence personality dimensions as proven by the result of the study. The study revealed that authoritative parenting styles explained 41% of positive personality dimensions, while indulgent parenting styles explained only 28.2% of positive personality traits among adolescents in secondary schools. Therefore, parents play a highly influential role in their children's development as they influence self-efficacy, self-esteem, and identity development, which are associated with personality dimensions of students. The major conclusion of the study was that it is important for parents to adopt the authoritarian parenting style among their adolescent children since it establishes rules and guidelines, demonstrates power and creates self discipline among students which trickles down to positive personality. The study recommends for the results to be replicated among pupils in primary schools.

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Family is the first and the core pillar of every child's personality development. The quality of the relationship between children and parents is the main variable of their interaction and adjustment to each other. In addition, their emotional and psychological setting dominant within the family form the personality and behavioral characteristics of children (Sarmast, 2006). The family plays the

major role in the process of human socialization and acculturation in almost all societies. Hence, several studies such as those conducted by; Belsky and Barrendz (2002); Prizieh *et. al* (2004), have showed that one of the most effective factors on the development and formation of adolescents personality is their parent's parenting practices.

Parents play a highly influential role in their children's personality development. Baumrind (2012) in his study identified that pre-school children raised by parents with differing parenting styles varied in their degree of social competence. Parenting styles can be categorized according to the levels of parental demand such as; control, supervision & maturity demands and responsiveness and parents warmth such as; acceptance & involvement (Maccoby & Martin, 2003). Parenting styles can be categorized in three sections; authoritarian, authoritative and permissive styles (Dornbusch *et.al.*, 2007). An authoritarian parent demands obedience from the child and tries to shape and control the child's behaviors with an absolute set of standards. In contrast, a permissive parent tends to offer as much freedom as the child wants, not demanding any form of conformity as long as the child's physical safety is not at risk. An authoritative parent, on the other hand, values both the child's autonomy and open communication with the child. Moreover, an authoritative parent enforces rules and standards using commands and sanctions when necessary (Baumrind,2009).

Each of these styles has different effects on children; for instance, children with authoritative parenting style have better social-emotional development and academic performance and show higher organized and rational orientation (Hill, 2005) while at the same time, adolescents with authoritative parents consume less drugs and have a better psychological development and more scientific competence as well as neglectful behavior and physical symptoms (Stinburg *et. al*, 2004) while permissive parents have no control on their children and these children show the least amount of self confidence, curiosity and self control and have difficulty in controlling impulses, recognizing values and anti values (Bamarind, 2001). Authoritarian parents usually humiliate their children and they give no explanation about the punishment exerted, this causes impairment on children's processing messages and parent talk and they live in constant fear (Barber, 2000). This study therefore examined the relationship between parenting styles and personality development among secondary school students in Kenya.

## 1.2 Statement of the problem

A person's upbringing has a profound effect on how they see the world and how they process information. Stevenson (2008) observed that different students have different goals. This means that parenting can create a pool of informed citizens with a developed ability to think and reason and it can be used to establish students who share a common body of knowledge and who share socialization into the way things are done in a particular society. Stevenson (2008) fails to relate the parenting styles and personality development of students. This therefore created a gap that this study filled.

Recent developments in the field of parenting and family studies have led to the renewed interest in the relationship between children's personality development and parenting style. These developments have heightened the need for the study on children's personality development. Since the family is the first window of the child, parenting style and its influence on children could greatly affect their understanding, attitude and general development. Accordingly, there are several research works done on parent-child relationship and children's school achievements and personality development that are required for a successful adaptation to the society and the family such as studies conducted by Ladd & Pettit (2002). However few scholars have focused on the parenting style as an effect on the children's personality development, more so, most of the studies have focused on developed countries which have different characteristics and experiences.

Therefore this study investigated the effect of parenting styles on personality development of adolescents in Secondary schools in Mombasa County in Kenya.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

The general objective of this study was to investigate the relationship between parenting style and personality dimensions of adolescents in secondary schools

This study was guided by the following objectives

1. To establish the influence of authoritarian parenting style on personality dimensions of adolescents in public secondary schools
2. To investigate the influence of authoritative parenting style on personality dimensions of adolescents in public secondary schools
3. To establish the influence of indulgent parenting style on personality dimensions of adolescents in public secondary schools
4. To assess the influence of neglectful parenting style on personality dimensions of adolescents in public secondary schools

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Personality Dimensions**

McCrae and Costa (2002) defined personality as, dimensions of individual differences in tendencies to show consistent patterns of thoughts, feelings and actions. Personality has been studied by philosophers and psychologists for many years under the banner of individual differences. McCrae and Costa (2002) pointed out that personality dimensions can be explained by use of the five-factor model of personality dimensions. This five-factor includes; neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness.

Neuroticism is a dimension of normal personality indicating the general tendency to experience negative effects such as fear, sadness, embarrassment, anger, guilt and disgust. A high Neuroticism score indicates that a person is prone to having irrational ideas, being less able to control impulses, and coping poorly with stress. A low Neuroticism score is indicative of emotional stability. This study therefore focused on neuroticism among adolescents in secondary school.

Extraversion includes traits such as sociability, assertiveness, activity and talkativeness. Extraverts are energetic and optimistic. Introverts are reserved rather than unfriendly, independent rather than followers, even-paced rather than sluggish. This study therefore focused on extraversion among secondary school students.

Openness to Experience includes active imagination, aesthetic sensitivity, and attentiveness to inner feelings, a preference for variety, intellectual curiosity and independence of judgment.

An agreeable person is fundamentally altruistic, sympathetic to others and eager to help them, and in return believes that others will be equally helpful. The disagreeable/antagonistic person is egocentric, skeptical of others' intentions, and competitive rather than co-operative. According to Tett et al. (2001), Agreeableness is a significant predictor of performance among students. Salgado (2007) found that Agreeableness is related to training success.

Conscientiousness refers to self-control and the active process of planning, organizing and carrying out tasks (Barrick & Mount, 2003). The conscientious person is purposeful, strong-willed and determined. Conscientiousness is manifested in achievement orientation (hardworking

and persistent), dependability (responsible and careful) and orderliness (planful and organised). On the negative side, high Conscientiousness may lead to annoying fastidiousness, compulsive neatness or workaholic behaviour. Low scorers may not necessarily lack moral principles, but they are less exacting in applying them.

## **2.2 Parenting styles**

Parenting styles are beneficial in understanding complex behaviors and attitudes associated with child outcomes (Rodriguez, Donovanick, and Crowley, 2009). Parenting is parental behaviors which encompass pleasures, privileges, and profits as well as frustrations, fears, and failures. Thus, parents can find an interest and derive considerable and continuing pleasure in their relationships and activities with their children (Dawkins, 2006). There are nine parenting styles that were suggested by Baumrind (2009). These are; authoritative, demanding, traditional, authoritarian, undifferentiated, democratic, permissive, nondirective, and rejecting-neglecting. However current researchers have found out that parenting styles are often adapted by previous

Two major variables identified by Baumrind (2009) centered on parenting styles and child outcomes. One of them was the responsiveness of parents to their child's needs in a reasonable, nurturing and supportive way. It is generally agreed that parenting style influences self-efficacy, self-esteem, and identity development, which are associated with personality traits (Brown & Iyengar, 2008). In addition, the progress in children's achievement is influenced by the decision that is made by both parents and their children to cooperate or confront each other (Brown & Iyengar, 2008).

### **2.2.1 Authoritarian Parenting style**

In this authoritarian style of parenting, children are expected to follow strict rules established by the parents. Failure to follow such rules usually results in punishment. Authoritarian parents fail to explain the reasoning behind these rules. If asked to explain, the parent might simply reply, "Because I said so." These parents have high demands, but are not responsive to their children. In addition, these parents are usually obedient and status-oriented, and they always expect their orders to be obeyed without explanation (Baumrind, 2009).

Parents in the restrictive pattern of parenting are identified as authoritarian. Parents in this type attempt to sharpen, control, and evaluate the behavior and attitude of their children which is usually formulated by a higher secular authority (Baumrind, 2009). These parents are high on demandingness and low on responsiveness (Maccoby & Martin, 2003). Additionally, children and adolescents with authoritarian parents were reported as having low self-esteem and spontaneity, as well as withdrawal, antisocial, and delinquent behaviors (Coie & Dodge, 2008). Parents in this pattern value obedience as a virtue and are punitive and forceful (Baumrind, 2009).

The findings of a study conducted in Ethiopia documented that an authoritarian parenting style was the most commonly practiced parenting style since socio-political system adhered to authoritarianism in every realm of human endeavors. On the other hand, a likely reason for the findings of the studies in the last two decades which reported that an authoritative parenting style was the most predominantly employed parenting style could be, as noted by numerous researchers (Seleshi, 2008).

### **2.2.2 Authoritative parenting**

The parents with an authoritative parenting style usually establish rules and guidelines that their children are expected to follow. However, this parenting style is much more democratic and the parents are more responsive to their children and willing to listen to questions. When children fail to meet the expectations, these parents are more nurturing and forgiving rather than punishing. Baumrind (2009) suggests that these parents usually monitor and impart clear standards for their

children's conduct; they are assertive, but not intrusive and restrictive. Their disciplinary methods are always supportive, rather than punitive since they want their children to be assertive as well as socially responsible, and self-regulated as well as cooperative.

Authoritative parents have high demandingness and high or medium responsiveness (Baumrind, 2009). Moreover, authoritative parents reasonably attempt to direct their children's activities and use more warm control, positivity during communication, feelings-oriented reasoning as well as induction, and more responsiveness to children's questions (Mize & Pettit, 2007). Interestingly, adolescents with authoritative parents reported higher grades in school performance than adolescents with neglectful parents, and demonstrated stronger school orientation, school engagement, and bonding with teachers than adolescents with neglectful parents (Steinberg, Eisengart, & Cauffman, 2006). Demanding parents are medium responsive and high demanding (Baumrind, 2009). However, traditional parents exhibited a different structural role between mothers and fathers. For example, mothers are highly responsive however, relatively understanding. In contrast, fathers are highly demanding, but quite coercive and nonresponsive (Baumrind, 2009).

### **2.2.3 Indulgent parenting**

Indulgent parents who are also known as permissive parents usually have very few demands to make of their children. These parents rarely discipline their children because they have relatively low expectations of maturity and self-control. According to Baumrind (2009), permissive parents are more responsive than they are demanding. They are non-traditional and lenient, they do not require mature behavior, they allow considerable self-regulation, and they avoid confrontation. Permissive parents are generally nurturing and communicative with their children, often taking on the status of a friend more than that of a parent.

Permissive indulgent parents as explained by Barber (2000) believe that they are responsible for making sure that their children are happy. Psychologists explained that parents who practice indulgent parenting behaviors, had a rough time as children and therefore have decided that they will do everything they can to make their children happy. As a result, permissive indulgent parents tend to be highly responsive to their children's needs and desires, and display low levels of demandingness. In effect, these parents are extremely supportive, to the extent that the child winds up taking control of the situation. In many ways, this style is the opposite of the authoritarian style. Permissive indulgent parents often believe that, "Nothing is too good for my child." And they will readily go out of their way (Barber, 2000).

### **2.2.4 Neglectful parenting**

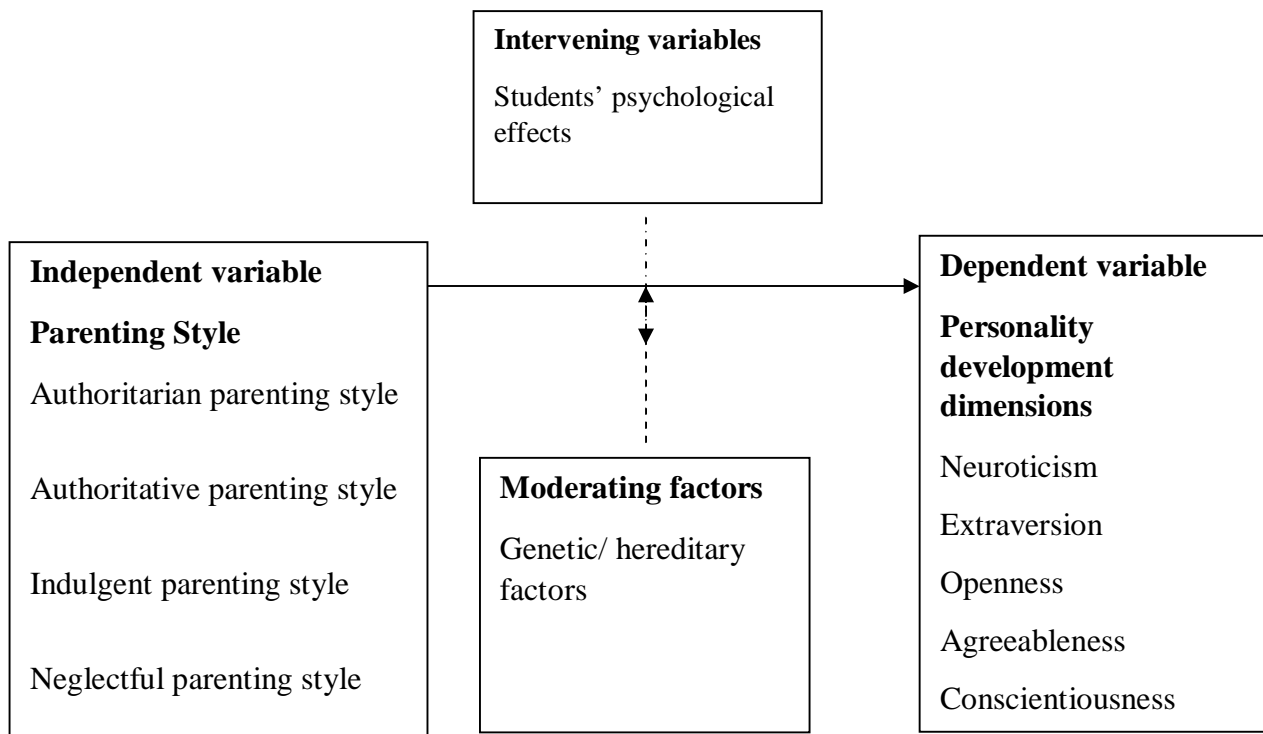
Neglectful parenting style is characterized by few demands, low responsiveness and little communication. While these parents fulfill the child's basic needs, they are generally detached from their child's life. In extreme cases, these parents may even reject or neglect the needs of their children (Baumrind, 2009). Parents who practice neglectful parenting styles are exemplified in rejecting-neglecting and non-directive parents. By contrast, non-directive parents are low demanding and medium responsive (Baumrind, 2009) while rejecting-neglecting parents are low relative to both demandingness and responsiveness and are unlikely to take part in their children's activities. Interestingly, Ehnvall, Parker, Pavlovic, and Malhi (2008) found that female depressed patients who underwent rejected or neglected parenting in their childhood had a higher chance of attempting suicide at least once during their lifetime. In contrast, males who had rejected or neglected experiences in their childhood were not as at risk of suicide attempts.

A study by Kassahun (2010) found out that the predominance of neglectful parenting style for high school aged males, since when males enter high school the parents believe that their sons can manage themselves, and thus they reduce their control as well as their close relationships.

Neglectful parenting style tend to display low levels of demandingness since they ask and expect very little of their children. For instance, they rarely assign their children chores. These parents also display low levels of responsiveness to their children. They tend to be relatively uninvolved in their children's lives. As a result, these parents tend to grant their children a very high degree of freedom to do as they wish. In addition, these parents tend not to be very communicative with their children. The child outcomes associated with the neglectful style of parenting are somewhat predictable. In general, these children tend to display poor social skills.

### 2.3 Conceptual Framework

It illustrates the relationships among dependent and independent variables. In addition the relationship with the intervening variables is also indicated.



### 3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive survey design. The study consisted a population of 6,440 students from all public schools in Mombasa County, 1610 form two students aged 15 -17 years both from Muslim sponsored secondary schools, Christian sponsored secondary schools and non-religious secondary schools. Both purposive and stratified random sampling was used. Purposeful sampling was used to select form 2 students due to the characteristic of the group while stratified random sampling was used to select the number of students. Questionnaire and interview schedules were used to collect data. Face and content validity was ascertained by test re-test method was used where responses from the two pilot tests was obtained and analyzed to establish the extent to which the research instruments bring consistent results, thus reliability. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts and percentages while and organized in tables and figures.



## 4.0 RESULTS

### 4.1 Questionnaire Return Rate.

The total number of questionnaires delivered to the respondents was 320 out of which 310 (96.5%) were returned. This rate of return was considered adequate according to Dilliman(2000). There were different groups of respondents sampled in the study. The sample was derived from students in; Muslim sponsored schools, Christian sponsored schools and Non religion sponsored schools. The response rate was as illustrated in table 4.1.

**Table 4.1 Questionnaire return rate**

| Group               | Questionnaires distributed | Questionnaires returned | Percentage   |
|---------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| Muslim Sponsored    | 70                         | 66                      | 94.3%        |
| Christian Sponsored | 56                         | 54                      | 96.4%        |
| Non-Religious       | 194                        | 190                     | 97.9%        |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>320</b>                 | <b>310</b>              | <b>96.8%</b> |

**Table 4.2 Gender distribution**

| Gender       | Distribution | Percentage  |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| Male         | 101          | 32.6%       |
| Female       | 209          | 67.4%       |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>310</b>   | <b>100%</b> |

The research question responded to was; the gender distribution of the respondents. The results of the findings showed that of all the respondents, 32.6% of the respondents were male while 67.4% were female. These results indicate that there was slightly an unequal distribution of gender. The findings of the study shows that female formed a bigger percentage than male for those who participated. The findings are summarized in table 4.2

**Table 4.3 Age of Students**

| Age (years)  | Distribution | Percentage  |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| Below 13     | 1            | 0.3%        |
| 13-15        | 54           | 17.4%       |
| 16-18        | 191          | 61.7%       |
| 19-21        | 61           | 19.7%       |
| Above 21     | 3            | 0.9%        |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>310</b>   | <b>100%</b> |

The research question responded to was; the age distribution of the respondents. The results showed that the majority of the students which makes up 191 (61.7 %) were in the age group 16-18 years while only 3 students (0.9%) were above 21 years as shown in table 4.3

### 4.4 Parenting Styles

The independent variables of this study were parenting styles. This section presents results of findings on authoritative, authoritarian, neglectful and indulgent parenting styles which are the main parenting styles.

#### 4.4.1 Authoritative Parenting Style

The study wanted to determine the frequency and descriptive analysis of the authoritative parenting styles among the respondents. The findings summarized in table 4.5 showed that majority of the students (85.2%) agreed and strongly agreed that parents directed decisions through reasoning and discipline while, 12.7 % of them said that parents did not direct decisions through reasoning and discipline.

**Table 4.5. Distribution of respondents by the extent to which “Parents directed decisions through reasoning and discipline”**

| Opinion                    | Frequency  | Percentage  |
|----------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Strongly Disagree          | 30         | 9.6%        |
| Disagree                   | 10         | 3.1%        |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 6          | 2.0%        |
| Agree                      | 97         | 31.4%       |
| Strongly agree             | 167        | 53.8%       |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>310</b> | <b>100%</b> |

#### 4.5.2 Authoritarian parenting styles

The study wanted to determine the frequency and descriptive analysis of the authoritarian parenting styles among the respondents. The findings summarized in table 4.6 showed that 60.3% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that parents felt that it was for the child’s good to conform to what they thought was right while table 4.6 showed that 24.1% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that parents expects the children to do what the parents ask without questioning.

**Table 4.6 Distribution of respondents by the extent to which “Parents felt it was for my own good to conform to what they think is right”**

| Opinion                    | Frequency  | Percentage  |
|----------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Strongly Disagree          | 48         | 15.6%       |
| Disagree                   | 67         | 22.1%       |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 6          | 2.0%        |
| Agree                      | 72         | 22.9%       |
| Strongly agree             | 117        | 37.4%       |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>310</b> | <b>100%</b> |

#### 4.5.3 Indulgent Parenting style

The study examined the frequency and descriptive analysis of the indulgent type of parenting among the students respondents. The finding summarized in table 4.7 showed that 46.7% of the respondents agreed that parents felt that children should always have their way while 68.9% disagreed that in the homes, children are allowed to make their own decisions (table 4. 7)

**Table 4.7. Frequency distribution of “Parents felt that children should have their way”**

| Opinion                    | Frequency  | Percentage  |
|----------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Strongly Disagree          | 30         | 9.6%        |
| Disagree                   | 72         | 23.2%       |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 63         | 20.4%       |
| Agree                      | 140        | 45.3%       |
| Strongly agree             | 5          | 1.5%        |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>310</b> | <b>100%</b> |



#### 4.5.4 Neglectful parenting style

The study examined the frequency and descriptive analysis of the neglectful type of parenting among both the parents and students respondents. The findings summarized in table 4.8 showed that 52.1% of the respondents strongly disagreed that there was very minimal communication in their home when growing up while 47.6% strongly disagreed that parents did not really care about what was going on in the children's life (table 4.8).

**Table 4.8 Frequency distribution of 'growing up there was very minimal communication, everyone does what they want'**

| <b>Opinion</b>             | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|----------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Strongly disagree          | 162              | 52.1              |
| Disagree                   | 117              | 37.7              |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 2                | 0.8               |
| Agree                      | 24               | 7.6               |
| Strongly agree             | 5                | 1.8               |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>310</b>       | <b>100</b>        |

## 5.0 DISCUSSION

### **Authoritative parenting style and personality dimensions of adolescents in secondary schools.**

The findings of the study showed that 41% of authoritative parenting styles was responsible in explaining low neuroticism, high extraversion, openness to experience, agreeability and high conscientiousness which together showed 59.4% of affirmative response. This finding supports the findings of Mize and Pritt (1997) who observed that adolescents with authoritative parents reported extraversion

### **Authoritarian parenting style and personality dimensions of adolescents in secondary schools**

The findings of the study showed that 45.3% of authoritarian parenting styles was responsible in explaining low neuroticism, high extraversion, openness to experience, agreeability and high conscientiousness which together showed 59.4% of affirmative response. This is in agreement with the findings of Roberts and Fraleigh (1997) that authoritarian parenting is inclined to have stronger relationship positive personality traits than indulgent and neglectful parenting styles.

The findings of the study also refuted the claim by Seleshi (1998) that authoritarian parenting style was the most common practiced parenting style since socio-political system adheres to authoritarianism in every realm of human endeavors. This is because according to this study, the mean score of respondents was 3 meaning that they neither agreed nor disagreed to having gone through or practiced authoritarian parenting style.

### **Indulgent parenting style and personality dimensions of adolescents in secondary schools**

These findings are in line with the observation by Barber (1996) that students whose parents practice indulgent parenting styles, end up being spoiled children and this has a negative effect on their personality. In fact, the study showed that only 28.2% of indulgent parenting contributed to positive personality traits. Hence, with 59.4% of affirmative responses towards positive personality dimensions, indulgent parenting style had an unpopular score of 2 (disagree).

### **Neglectful parenting style and personality dimensions of adolescents in secondary schools**

Kassahun (2010) displayed that children from neglectful parents often have self discipline difficulties and lack practice which translates to poor results in school as compares to other students. This is supported by this study where, neglectful parenting style has the least mean score of (1.71). The study however also showed that 48.4% of the positive personality traits of students could be explained by neglectful parenting style. This is a contradiction of Kassahun's (2010) observation and could be explained according to the researcher's opinion as the need for the students to create a better life and environment for themselves in future.

### **5.2 Conclusion**

From this study we can conclude that it is important for parents to adopt the authoritarian parenting style among their adolescent children. This is because as much as authoritarian parenting style establishes rules and guidelines, and demonstrates power, it is slightly dictatorial than authoritative which is important to create self discipline among students which trickles down to positive personality. From the study, we can also conclude that as much as neglectful parenting style has been discouraged, it could lead to a positive influence on personality of students.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

While this study focused on personality dimensions adolescents in secondary schools, a study is recommended to find out whether the results can be replicated among pupils in primary schools.

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