ABSTRACT

THE INFLUENCE OF ADOLESCENT’S PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTAL BEHAVIORS ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT ORIENTATION IN KENYA

By: Frank Ansah

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of adolescent’s perceptions of parental behaviors on academic achievement orientation in Kenya. The analysis in this study used data collected from 630 adolescents selected from four secondary (high) schools in Kenya. A series of hierarchical linear regression revealed paternal and maternal monitoring and support were significant predictors of academic achievement orientation among Kenyan adolescents. Significant mean difference between males and females on academic achievement orientation were found. Perceptions of paternal and maternal autonomy granting behaviors were found not to be significant predictors of academic achievement orientation. This finding in a way goes to distinguish adolescents living within Sub-Saharan Africa and their counterparts from the Western societies. Parental punitiveness was also found to be a negative predictor of academic achievement orientation. The significance of these results and its implications on the parent-child relationship in Kenya are discussed further in this study.
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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my parents in Ghana for their prayers and support throughout this academic journey and to the thousands of struggling families across Sub-Saharan Africa.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Although parental behaviors and how these impact adolescent outcomes have been the focus of several studies within western societies or the developed world, research of this kind within Sub-Saharan African societies has been lacking (Mbito, 2004). Again even though parent-child relationships are fundamental aspects of family life across all societies, this relationship is also shaped in very significant ways by culture. For instance, western societies such as the United States emphasize such individualistic values as freedom, autonomy and assertiveness while collectivistic societies such as Sub-Saharan Africa are known to emphasize values such as interdependence, respect for authority and connectedness with others (Lam, 1997; Triandis, McCuster & Hui, 1990; Triandis, 1995). That is, African children learn to be interdependent, to share resources and to live within family and community authority systems with at best covert questioning of them (Weisner, 2000). Therefore, both specific aspects of parent-adolescent relationships and how the dynamics of these relationships have consequences for adolescent development are likely to be different in sub-Saharan Africa than the experiences of adolescents in western societies.

The very significant role of parental behaviors such as monitoring, support, and granting autonomy as influences on positive academic achievement of adolescents from varied ethnic and cultural groups has been reported with considerable frequency (Bean, Bush, Mckenry & Wilson, 2003; Herman, 1997; Ingoldsby, Schvaneveldt, Supple & Bush, 2003; Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Again the importance of why parents should emphasize academic achievement among their adolescent children cannot be ignored. This is because academic success to a very large extent, determines adolescents future career plans, future earnings, life style and even their social and emotional development.

For parents in Sub-Saharan African societies, this duty to foster academic excellence in their adolescents is very paramount. This is because, Africa is characterized by massive poverty and unemployment which all affects adolescent’s development. According to the UNICEF (2009) statistics on education, the gross primary school enrollment rate from 2000-2007 among males in Kenya was 75% and that of females was 76%. However, the gross secondary school enrollment rate for the same period for males
was 52% and that of females was 49%. These statistics demonstrate that, as children progress through the educational system in Kenya, the percentages of students in education systems keep falling and successively smaller percentage of young people move on to higher levels of education. This unfortunate situation in Kenya and generally throughout Sub-Saharan Africa exists because many parents, who suffer the conditions of poverty, are unable to afford their children’s school fees required to progress through the educational system. The result is that many children are either denied any form of education or must drop out of school at young ages to enter the workforce as child laborers for their own survival and assist the daily economic well-being of their families (Bass, 2004; Orme & Seipel, 2007). Thus, poverty and other factors are shattering the academic dreams and aspirations of many adolescents in Sub-Saharan Africa and forcing others to make the streets their homes.

Based on these initial ideas, the primary purpose of this study is to examine how certain parental behaviors, including parental monitoring, support, autonomy granting and punitiveness influence the academic achievement orientation of a sample of Kenyan adolescents.

In the present study, parental monitoring looked at the extent to which Kenyan adolescents perceived their parents to supervise their activities, friendship and other social behaviors. Autonomy granting looked at the degree to which Kenyan parents allowed their adolescents to make their own decisions and engage in other activities without excessive parental intrusion. Parental support also looked at the degree to which parents were perceived by their children to be warm and nurturing. Parental punitiveness, on the other hand, looked at the degree to which Kenyan parents used strict and harsh controlling behaviors on their adolescent children.

The Kenyan sample was particularly selected for this study because Kenya is one of the largest countries in Sub-Saharan Africa with diverse ethnic representations. Kenya is a country located in the eastern part of Africa bordering the Indian Ocean. It has an estimated total population of 37,953,838 and a population growth rate of 2.76% per annum. Life expectancy at birth for females in Kenya is 57 years and that of males is 56 years (Central Intelligence Agency, 2008). English and Kiswahili are the two official languages spoken in Kenya besides other indigenous languages. There are many different
ethnic groups but the Kikuyu are the largest representing 22% of the Kenyan population. 78% of the population is Christians, 10% Muslims, and 12% represents indigenous and other belief groups (Central Intelligence Agency, 2008).

STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Adolescence according to Arnett (2004) is a period of the life course between the time puberty begins and the time adulthood status is achieved. It is also the time young people take on the roles of responsibilities in their cultures. Parental behaviors and how they influence children during adolescence has been the focus of several studies within western societies (Amato & Fowler, 2002; Barber, Chadwick, & Oerter, 1992; Barber, 1997; Peterson, Bush, & Supple, 1999).

Although there are some existing studies focusing on adolescents in Sub-Saharan societies, many of them focus on adolescent reproductive health issues, sex education, HIV/AIDS, etc (Gage, 1998; Mensch, Bagah, Clark, & Binka, 1999). There is the paucity of research-based knowledge about parenting behaviors and their outcomes on children living in Sub-Saharan Africa. Beyond an interest in family life education, demographic research on adolescents, research on youth from Sub-Saharan Africa has rarely explored academic experience or schooling as a key dimension of the adolescent experience (Mensch & Lloyd, 1998).

Considering the unique cultural heritage that may shape the socialization experiences of African children, however, studies that examine specific aspects of parenting and the consequences of socialization strategies for adolescent behaviors are long overdue. The significance of this present study therefore, is to contribute to existing knowledge in the field of parenting and to the literature on how parental behaviors in Sub-Saharan Africa influence adolescent development. Given that the majority of the estimated 115 million children of school age but who are not in school, live in Sub-Saharan Africa (UNICEF, 2008), it is critically important to increase our understanding about how parents in this part of the globe socialize their children for educational attainments. Policy makers in Sub-Saharan Africa can use information gained from this research to design better intervention programs to assist families in Sub-Saharan Africa for preparing their children for academic success.
DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following terms were used in this study:

(a) Parental behaviors- referred to adolescents’ perceptions of several parental behaviors consisting of autonomy, support, monitoring, love withdrawal, positive induction and negative induction which were assessed with the parent behavior measure (PBM), a 34-item self-report instrument used in previous studies (Henry, Wilson, & Peterson, 1989; Henry & Peterson, 1995; Peterson et al., 1985). For the present study, only the measures of autonomy granting behaviors, support, monitoring and punitiveness were used to operationalize parental behaviors.

(a-1) Autonomy granting behaviors – referred to the degree to which mothers and fathers allow adolescents to make their own decisions and engage in activities without excessive parental intrusion on choices about career plans, friendship, educational goals and clothes selection.

(a-2) Support – referred to the degree to which mothers and fathers were perceived by adolescents as being accepting, warm and nurturant.

(a-3) Monitoring – referred to the extent to which adolescents perceive their mothers and fathers to supervise their activities, friendship, entertainment, and other social behaviors.

(a-4) Punitiveness – referred to the degree to which mothers and fathers use controlling behaviors of a verbal or coercive nature which is characterized as strict, harsh and arbitrary practices.

(b) Academic achievement orientation – referred to adolescents’ achievement orientation levels which was assessed focusing on efforts they exert in school, the importance of grades, the significance of education to them, and whether they consistently finish their homework on time.

(c) Collectivism – referred to societies or cultures that emphasize interdependence and connectedness within one’s group membership as being paramount in the socialization process.
(d) Individualism – referred to societies or cultures that emphasize autonomy, independence, and the priority of individual self-interest over the maintenance of group purposes in the socialization process.

(e) Sub-Saharan Africa – referred to a total of 42 countries and 6 Island nations south of the Sahara desert.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

The importance of parental behaviors in adolescents’ outcome

Adolescents, as they grow up and develop an identity, both influence and are influenced greatly by important agents of socialization such as parents, siblings, peers, teachers, and extended family members in their social environments (Bush & Peterson, 2008). For many children, the family remains the primary context for social influence and security, which fosters both positive and negative outcomes. Therefore, parents remain significant sources of influence in the lives of their children through many important roles (Bush, & Peterson, 2008; Dmitrieva, Chen, Greenberger, & Gil- Rivas, 2004).

Given the importance of parental roles in adolescents’ outcomes, the two most common approaches for classifying and studying parental behaviors (i.e., dimensional approach, typological approach) have been identified. First, the dimensional approach tends to focus on discrete parenting behaviors such as monitoring, support, autonomy granting and punitiveness whereas the typological approach involves complex collections of parenting behaviors conceptualized as styles (Barber, 1997; Darling & Steinberg, 1993).

The typological approach aggregates several main dimensions of parental behaviors into patterns or styles which were conceptualized by Baumrind (1991) as authoritative, authoritarian, neglectful, and permissive parenting. These four styles of parenting have been found to be based on certain dimensions of demandingness, communication, and responsiveness (Arnett, 2004). Parental demandingness “is the degree to which parents set down rules and expectations for behavior and require their children to comply with them” (p. 201). Parental communication often takes the form of parents’ use of reasoning and rational persuasion (induction) to influence the young (Arnett, 2004). Parental responsiveness on the other hand “is the degree to which parents are sensitive to their children’s needs and the extent to which they express love, warmth, and concern for their children” (p. 201). Some scholars however, have tended to have problems with the typological approach, and according to Barber (1997), a major issue with this aggregated approach is that, the individual contributions of each parenting
dimension cannot be single out and critically examined for effects on child/adolescent outcomes.

For the dimensional approach on the other hand, the three main aspects of parent’s behavior, namely, support, behavioral control or monitoring and autonomy have been examined by researchers (Barber & Olsen, 1997). It has also been argued that, it is only when these behavioral dimensions are studied separately that the individual effects of each or how it impacts on adolescent outcomes can be precisely determined (Bean, Bush, Mckenry & Wilson, 2003).

Dimensional parental behaviors, such as monitoring, autonomy granting, support, and punitiveness, and how they affect adolescent outcomes has been the focus of considerable research in the field of Family Science and related disciplines such as Psychology, Education and Sociology within Western societies (Bean, Bush, Mckenry & Wilson, 2003; Barber, 1997; Herman, 1997; Maccoby & Martins, 1983). For instance, Bean and his colleagues (2003) in their study of a sample of African American and European American adolescents found that the use of supportive behaviors by African American mothers towards their adolescent children resulted in the attainment of a higher self-esteem and higher academic achievement. Parental autonomy granting behaviors also were found to be a significant predictor of adolescent self-esteem in both samples, while parental monitoring also predicted adolescent self-esteem and academic achievement among the European Americans (Herman, 1997). Finally, parental monitoring refers to the processes by which parents keep track of their adolescents’ academic and social behavior. Research demonstrates that, monitoring is a strong deterrent to adolescent problem behavior during the period when teenagers increasingly spend more time with peers away from their parents. Moreover, parental monitoring of school-related activities is a significant predictor of positive school achievement (Maccoby & Martins, 1983).

Several studies examining the relationships between specific parental behaviors and child outcomes within diverse cultural groups have also found significant positive relationships involving parental support, behavioral control, and autonomy granting behaviors and such positive adolescent outcomes as positive self-concept and academic achievement (Bean et al., 2003; Bush, Peterson, Cobas, & Supple, 2002; Greenberger & Chen, 1996; Greenberger, Chen, Tally, & Dong, 2000; Lau & Cheung, 1987; Linver &
Silverberg, 1997). In a sample of European American and Asian American junior high school and college age students, Greenberger and Chen (1996) found that adolescents whose parents conveyed warm and caring attitudes also demonstrated lower levels of depressed moods. A similar result was also found for adolescents in China (Greenberger et al., 2000).

What these findings indicate is that, irrespective of where adolescents live around the world and regardless of race, parental warmth and general knowledge of their children’s activities lead to positive social competencies. This point is buttressed by other cross-cultural findings from Australia, United States, and Hong Kong, which links parental monitoring to lower adolescent involvement in a variety of problem behaviors such as anti-social behavior, school misconduct, and status violations (Feldman, Rosenthal, Mont-Reynaud, Leung, & Lau, 1999).

Another socialization approach, autonomy granting behavior by parents, involves creating an atmosphere through which adolescents attain greater independence from their families. Parental autonomy granting often involves high stakes transactions or negotiations between two parties who have somewhat different or divergent priorities. Most adolescents want their parents to trust them with increasing control over their own daily activities and decision making (i.e., grant then autonomy), but these parents also worry about whether their children are sufficiently responsible enough to manage the greater freedom they crave for (Smetana, 2002).

Vazsonyi (2003) also argued that autonomy granting in the parent-adolescent relationship is a socialization technique that frequently undergoes substantial change. Healthy autonomy results in adolescents becoming self-reliant and socially competent, and is attained with the support of parents. What this means therefore is that, parents are very significant agents of socialization in the lives of their children, with their roles in fostering children’s positive or negative development outcomes being very crucial. In contrast, parents who are overprotective and fail to grant adolescents sufficient autonomy to explore life often fail to function in a socially competent manner (Vazsonyi, 2003). Negative outcomes that may result are internalizing problems, including anxiety disorders and depression, or externalizing problems, such as deviance, and substance abuse (Vazsonyi, 2003). Autonomy granting by parents, especially in Western societies,
is a highly valued socialization strategy that prepares the young to make important developmental transitions from childhood into emerging adulthood and adulthood.

Parental punitiveness on the other hand has not been found to be a positive parenting behavior that fosters adolescent social competencies within western societies (Steinberg, 1999). In Sub-Saharan African societies however, many parents have been found to be very punitive (Efoghe, 1987). Fathers especially view any attempt or desire by adolescents to make their own choices or crave for independence as forms of rebellion and threats to their authority (Efoghe et al., 1987). As patriarchal societies, fathers, in particular, are highly respected in Sub-Saharan Africa and use a lot of punitiveness to demand obedience. Their authority cannot be challenged or questioned, especially by their adolescent children. Mothers are generally considered by both male and female children to be friendlier than fathers. Efoghe (1987) in his study of perceptions of parental punitiveness among a sample of Nigerian adolescents, for example, argued that “the father in the Nigeria home appears to be the reservoir of conjugal power” (p 848).

Unfortunately in Sub-Saharan Africa however, the study of parental behaviors that influence adolescents social competence has been largely ignored, which makes it difficult to have a common base upon which to compare the experiences of adolescents in Africa to other adolescents elsewhere. In an attempt to remedy the paucity of research in this area, a study examining parenting behaviors and the development of self-esteem among a sample of Kenyan adolescents found some interesting results (Mbito, 2004). Parental guidance (support and positive induction) were found to be strong predictors of adolescents’ self-esteem among a sample of Kenyan adolescents. Parental autonomy granting behaviors were however found to be a negative predictor of self-esteem among their sample (Mbito, Malia, Wilson, Peterson, Bush, Ngigi & Rombo, in press; Mbito, 2004). Whereas these findings from Sub-Saharan Africa partially confirm other results found from other cultures, it also brings to the fore some unique differences in parent-adolescent relationships in Sub-Saharan Africa compared to other societies.

**Parental behaviors and adolescents academic achievements**

The significant role of family and parental influences towards the academic achievement of adolescents in western societies has been well researched and
documented (Eccles, 1995; Grusec & Goodnow, 1994). Herman (1997) in his multi-ethnic sample comprising of African American and European American youth for instance found that parental support, parental monitoring and autonomy were all significantly related to academic achievement.

Most importantly, the use of monitoring by parents of their children’s behaviors across many aspects of development, including their school activities, tends to result in children who attain very good grades in school (Keith & Lichtman, 1994). Because adolescence as a stage of development is a difficult and stressful period for many young people irrespective of race and culture, the level of parental involvement and expectation is very crucial to a healthy social and academic development during this period. Contrasting with this turmoil perspective, a majority of recent studies have found the relationship between parental involvement and adolescent’s academic achievement to be very positive (Keith & Lichtman, 1994; Singh, 1995, Taylor, 1996). Grolnick and Slowiaczek (1994) also suggested that for parental involvement to achieve the desired impact it should encompass three dimensions of involvement. This includes behavioral involvement which refers to the participation of parents in their children’s school activities, personal involvement which refers to the interest shown by parents in the academic life of their children; and cognitive involvement which is an indication of whether parents expose their children to academically stimulating activities and materials.

A key finding is that a positive relationship tends to exist between measures of parents’ clear cut academic expectations for their children and measures of youthful academic achievement (Frome & Eccles 1998; Singh, Bickley, Keith, Keith, Trivette & Anderson, 1995; Wang & Wildman, 1995). Such results suggest that, when parents and their children have a very warm, cordial and supportive relationship with each other, children are more likely to identify with their parents and also try to please them by achieving academically. In a similar fashion, studies examining the different parenting styles and their impact on adolescent social adjustment also tend to demonstrate that, nurturing, monitoring, support and closely related variables that are components of the authoritative style of parenting tend to be positive predictors of adolescent academic achievement (Deslandes & Bertrand, 2005; Minke & Anderson, 2005; Peterson & Hann,
1999; Sheldon, & Epstein, 2005). However, in a cross-national study using samples of Chilean and Ecuadorian adolescents for example, Ingoldsby, Schvaneveldt, Supple and Bush (2003) reported that whereas parental monitoring, especially by fathers, predicted academic achievement among adolescents in Ecuador, parental autonomy granting was associated with lowered academic achievement which they stated was contrary to previous findings with US samples. This finding from Ecuador suggests that, within some collectivistic societies, autonomy granting may not be a valued parental behavior, a finding that may have been shared by parent-adolescent relationships within other collectivistic societies such as Kenya.

Within Sub-Saharan Africa which is largely considered to be a collectivistic society (Triandis, 1995), studies focusing on parental behaviors and how it impacts adolescents academic outcomes is unfortunately lacking. A few of the existing studies have found that, because of the existence of strong traditional gender roles for men and women, when it becomes necessary for families to make choices as to which child to educate due to poverty, the male child is always preferred to the female child (Mensch & Lloyd, 1998; Mensch, Bagah, Clark, & Binka, 1999). A recent article by Ngige, Ondigi, and Wilson (2007) sums this situation up by stating that, girls often drop out of school to search for employment to supplement family income and/or to assist with care giving for younger siblings, as well as elderly and ailing family members. In other cases, girls are given off in marriage at an early age to fetch bride wealth for their families (Wilson, & Ngige, 2005). Some female adolescents, who were fortunate to go to school, were not found to be challenged by their teachers for academic achievement and instances of physical and sexual harassment by boys and even teachers (Mensch & Lloyd, 1998; Mensch, Bagah, Clark, & Binka, 1999).

**Kenyan family structure and parenting**

Compared with the western nuclear family setup comprised of husband, wife and child or children, the traditional African concept of family is known to involve a wider group of people. The African family consists of parents, children, aunts, uncles, grand parents, grand parents and other immediate and extended relatives related by blood, marriage or adoption (Wilson & Ngige, 2003). Within Kenya, which has been described
as the cradle of humankind (Leeder, 2004) and other East African societies, families are uniquely considered to include all remembered dead relatives and even those yet to be born (Wilson & Ngige, 2003). Although the process of socializing children occurs in all societies, there are significant differences in the way it occurs due to cultural diversity. Composed of at least 43 ethnic groups, the Kenyan society has considerable complexity and family patterns are characterized by great diversity of customs and traditions regarding family formation and structure. In Kenya cultural background is extremely important in understanding families. Children are also highly valued within families and the important role women play in procreation is very highly valued and respected. A woman with more sons for instance was more highly respected within her family or community than other women who had no or fewer male children (Ngige, Ondigi & Wilson, 2007).

Parents within societies in East Africa, including Kenya, have traditionally prepared children in a variety of ways to adequately and efficiently take up adult roles within their societies. Very often, the socialization needs of adolescents within these societies were not only presented as the skills and knowledge one needs to survive in life but also greatly and importantly portrayed the cherished values and principles of their specific communities (Levine, 1994). Parents in Kenya, like other societies are primarily responsible for nurturing their children but in an extended family system characterized by communal responsibilities in child up bringing, adult members of the community irrespective of having biological ties with the adolescent child or not, have a collective responsibility to ensure that children are properly socialized with child discipline being a major concern (Ngige, Ondigi & Wilson, 2007). Kenyatta (1938) sums up this collective responsibility of adults in a community by stating that, at different periods in an East African child’s development or up bringing, he or she was traditionally educated and influenced by other community members other than the child’s immediate family members. This unique form of interaction helped the adolescent to develop other important social skills and values needed to survive in adulthood.
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Individualism versus Collectivism

The theoretical framework guiding this study is based on the concepts of individualism and collectivism. According to Arnett (2004) although all cultures tend to share similar socialization outcomes, cultures are also different in terms of their basic socialization beliefs. He argued further that a critical issue concerns whether or not a particular society values independence and self expression in socializing its young or emphasizes obedience and conformity in the socialization process. This difference in emphasis has led to the concepts of individualism and collectivism, which Triandis (1995) has described as the most significant cultural distinction. Greenfield (2000) also termed it the deep structure of cultural differences.

Within individualistic societies, people are socialized to be autonomous and independent from their in-group which could be family, tribe or ethnic group. Also, individuals are trained to give priorities to their personal goals and interests over the group’s interest and generally to behave primarily and importantly based on their attitudes rather than the norms of their groups (Triandis, 2001). People in Western societies such as the United States, Canada, Western Europe, Australia, and New Zealand are generally considered to be individualistic cultures, with the U.S. frequently considered as being the most individualistic (Suh, Diener, Oishi & Triandis, 1998).

Individuals who live in societies considered to be collectivistic, on the other hand, are generally socialized to be interdependent within their group, commonly in the form of the family, tribe or nation. Other important characteristics emphasized in collectivistic societies include giving priority to group purposes over self-interest to ensure harmony, respect for authority, regard for the elderly, and shaping ones behaviors in terms of group norms. Societies or cultures that could be classified as collectivistic include most Eastern cultures such as Japan, China, Korea, Hong-Kong, Taiwan, African countries and other traditional societies (Arnett, 2004; Bush, Supple, Cobas, & Peterson, 2002; Triandis, 1995). Much is not known about the extent to which parents within traditional cultures such as Sub-Saharan Africa emphasize fundamental collectivistic values and how this impacts on adolescent’s academic performance. This notwithstanding, it is expected that parents in Sub-Saharan Africa who emphasize collectivistic values in their adolescent
children will not ensure positive academic achievements. For instance, because collectivistic societies are quite hierarchical in structure with social interactions often strongly defined by age and gender, adolescents within such cultures are less likely to be asked by adults and even their own parents to formulate and share their opinions or to freely talk about what they are learning in school. According to Delgado-Gaitan (1994), such a situation is as a result of the fact that, the role of sharing opinions and knowledge is strictly reserved for people with higher status. Children are taught to respect elders as the sources of knowledge. Again, the kind of self expression that adolescents from the American society and other western societies commonly exhibit towards other adults (e.g., including their teachers in their classrooms) could be interpreted as a lack of proper respect within a collectivistic society like Sub-Saharan Africa. This and a culmination of other factors in Africa does not motivate adolescents to open up, ask questions in school, explore other learning alternatives outside the class room on their own and generally pursue their academic dreams and aspirations.

In writing about individualism and collectivism as concepts in describing differences in cultural orientation values, Arnett (2004) importantly reminds us that, the two concepts are not mutually exclusive. That is, not all people in individualistic societies manifest only all of the individualistic characteristics and not everyone living in collectivistic cultures subscribe exclusively to the characteristic values or principles of this approach to life. Instead, each society tries to strike a balance between these two belief systems, mainly as a result of globalization and other factors.
RESEARCH HYPOTHESES
1. There will be gender differences in academic achievement orientation among Kenyan adolescents.
   1-1 More specifically, male adolescents are expected to have higher academic achievement orientation compared with females.
2. Positive Parental behaviors will be associated with academic achievement orientation among Kenyan adolescents.
   2-1 More specifically, parental monitoring and support will be positively associated with academic outcomes.
   2-2 Parental autonomy granting behaviors will not predict positive academic achievement orientation outcomes among Kenyan adolescents.
3. Paternal parental behaviors are expected to be more strongly predictive of academic outcomes among Kenyan adolescents than are maternal parental behaviors.
   3-1 More specifically, fathers’ monitoring in comparison with mothers’ is expected to be more strongly predictive of academic outcomes among Kenyan adolescents.
   3-2 Fathers’ punitiveness in comparison with mothers is expected to be a stronger positive predictor of academic outcomes among Kenyan adolescents.
Chapter 3

Methodology

The study made use of self-reported data from a group of 630 Kenyan adolescents who ranged in age between 15-20 years ($M = 16.3$, $SD = 1.5$). This group was selected from four secondary schools in Kenya, eastern Africa.

Procedures

The Kenyan data was first collected as part of a larger cross-national study concerned with family influences on adolescent social competence. Additional samples gathered for that study were from the United States, China, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, India, Mexico, Russia, South Korea and the Czech Republic (e.g., Bush, Peterson, Cobas, & Supple, 2002; Bush, Supple, & Lash, 2005; Ingoldsby, Schvaneveldt, Supple, & Bush, 2003; Peterson, Cobas, Bush, Supple, & Wilson, 2005; Peterson, Bush, & Supple, 1999).

The survey asked Kenyan adolescents to report their perceptions of both their fathers’ and mothers’ parenting behaviors separately on a number of domains and other characteristics such as familism, academic achievement and self-efficacy. Socio-demographic information such as age, gender, ethnicity, religious affiliation, household composition, parental occupational status and parental educational background were also assessed in the questionnaire. Teachers who had been trained in accordance with a standardized protocol administered the survey to participating students in their classrooms.

For the present study, the independent variables consisting of parental autonomy granting, parental monitoring, parental support and parental punitiveness were assessed with the Parent Behavior Measure (PBM). This is a 34-item self-report instrument that measures adolescent’s perceptions of several supportive and controlling dimensions of socialization behavior that parents direct at adolescents (Henry, Wilson, & Peterson, 1989; Henry & Peterson, 1995; Peterson et al., 1985; Peterson, Bush, & Supple, 2003). Adolescent academic achievement orientation which is the dependent variable for this study, was assessed using a four item statement measuring adolescents’ efforts in school, the importance of grades and education for them, whether the young finish their homework on time and whether they like school in general.
Sample

This study is a secondary data analysis of self reported data acquired from a group of Kenyan adolescents. The sample consisted of 630 adolescents selected from four secondary schools in Kenya, Africa who ranged in age from 15-20 years old ($M=16.3$, $SD=1.5$). The gender of these participants consisted of 225 males (35.7 %) and 405 females (64.3 %). In terms of religious affiliation, Protestants (N=362) and Catholics (N=233) constituted 57.5% and 37.0% of the sample respectively. A total of 94.8% of the sample identified themselves as Black Kenyans, 1.6% as White Kenyans, 2.4% as Asian Kenyans and 1.3% identified as Europeans or others who were not citizens of Kenya. 115 of the study sample representing 21% reported their fathers had some secondary school education, 32% of fathers had some college or university education and 15% had some post graduate education. 23% of mothers had some secondary school education, 27% of mothers had some college or university education and 9% had some post graduate education.

Table 3.1 below shows the demographic information of the sample.

Table 3.1 Demographic information of participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>64.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestants</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>57.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholics</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Kenyans</td>
<td>597</td>
<td>94.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Kenyans</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Kenyans</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Instruments**

The survey asked Kenyan adolescents to report their perceptions of both their mothers’ and fathers’ parenting behaviors and other characteristics such as familism, academic achievement and self-efficacy. The extent to which they hold collectivistic values were also measured. The research participants responded to each survey question in terms of a four-point Likert scale which ranged from “Strongly Agree” (4 points) to “Strongly Disagree” (1 point). The four independent variables for this study, parental monitoring, parental punitiveness, parental support and parental autonomy as well as the main dependent variable (academic achievement orientation) were measured as follows:

Parental monitoring – The parental monitoring was measured in this sample by a 6 item subscale from the Parent Behavior Scale (Peterson, Rollins & Thomas, 1985). Chronbach’s alpha for this scale in the present study was .88.

Parental punitiveness – The parental punitive behavior scale which assesses the degree to which mothers and fathers use controlling behaviors was measured in this sample by a 10 item subscale from the Parent Behavior Scale (Peterson, Rollins & Thomas, 1985). Chronbach’s alpha for this scale in the present study was .87.

Parental support – The parental support scale which assesses the extent to which parents communicates feelings of affection, nurturance and warmth was measured with a 4 item subscale. Chronbach’s alpha of this scale in the present study is .87.

Parental autonomy granting – Parental autonomy granting behaviors which assesses the degree to which parents allow their children to freely make their own decisions and choices in life was measured with a 10 item subscale based on previous research (Douvan & Adelson, 1966; Sessa & Steinberg, 1991). Chronbach’s alpha for this scale in the present study was .86.

Academic achievement orientation – Academic achievement orientation which assesses the extent of the individual efforts adolescents put into school work like completing assigned home work on time, the importance they attach to the grades they get in school and the importance they attach to the value of education in general was measured in this sample with a 4 point items scale. Chronbach’s alpha for this scale was .56 in the present study.
Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics of the sample was first computed. Also, T-test analyses were then conducted to identify the differences between males and females on academic achievement orientation. As the main data analysis procedure, a series of hierarchical linear regression analyses were employed. A hierarchical linear regression analysis is a more advanced form of multiple linear regressions, and it is used to analyze data that comes in categories. Here, hierarchical linear regression analyses were used to examine the effects of certain parental behaviors (monitoring, punitiveness, autonomy granting, and support) on academic achievement orientation after controlling for socio-demographic variables (age, gender, & parent’s educational level).

Separate hierarchical linear multiple regression models for father’s and mother’s behaviors were conducted with demographic variables entered first followed by the independent variables and academic achievement orientation. Before performing the regression models, a multicollinearity check among independent variables was conducted to ensure multicollinearity was at an acceptable level. This was done by conducting a Bivariate correlation analysis using the Pearson Product Moment correlation method for the four independent variables (support, monitoring, autonomy granting, and punitiveness), and the controlled variables to see the direction and strength of correlation between each pair of variables. The existence of a strong correlation among the independent variables indicates the existence of multicollinearity which does not allow for an accurate estimation of the effects of the independent variables on the dependent variable. For this study, the independent variables were found to be only low to moderately correlated. This is reported in Table 3.2 below. Collinearity diagnosis using variance inflation factor (VIF) also indicated collinearity between the study variables was around 3.5 which is below 10.
Table 3.2. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analyses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>F_monitor</th>
<th>F_punit</th>
<th>F_supp</th>
<th>F_auto</th>
<th>M_monitor</th>
<th>M_punit</th>
<th>M_supp</th>
<th>M_auto</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F_monitoring</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F_punitiveness</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F_support</td>
<td>.44**</td>
<td>-.19**</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F_autonomy</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-.25**</td>
<td>.27**</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M_monitoring</td>
<td>.75**</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.23**</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M_punitiveness</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.79**</td>
<td>-.18**</td>
<td>-.19**</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M_support</td>
<td>.32**</td>
<td>-.17**</td>
<td>.69**</td>
<td>.13**</td>
<td>.38**</td>
<td>-.25**</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M_autonomy</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.13**</td>
<td>.14**</td>
<td>.76**</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-.21**</td>
<td>.22**</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Chapter 4

Results

In this section, results of independent samples t-test and hierarchical multiple linear regression analysis on the study hypotheses are presented. Results are summarized in tables which contains specifics of respective analysis.

Hypothesis 1 proposed that, there would be gender difference in academic achievement orientation among Kenyan adolescents. Specifically, male adolescents were expected to have higher academic achievement orientation compared with females. In order to test this hypothesis, an independent samples t-test analysis was conducted to assess the gender differences on academic achievement orientation among Kenyan adolescents. The overall results of the t-test indicated there was a significant mean difference between males and females on academic achievement orientation, t (542) = -3.199, P< .001. Mean ratings for males (M=16.08, SD= 1.9) were found to be higher than females (M=15.52, SD= 1.9). This finding supports earlier studies which suggested Kenyan parents and teachers at schools to be encouraging and supporting males to achieve more academically compared with their female counterparts (Mensch & Lloyd, 1998; Mensch, Bagah, Clark, & Binka, 1999).

Hypothesis 2 proposed that positive parental behaviors will be associated with positive academic achievement orientation among Kenyan adolescents. Specifically monitoring, support and punitivenesss will predict positive academic achievement orientation. In order to examine the relationship between parental behaviors and academic achievement orientation among Kenyan adolescents, separate statistical models of parental behaviors (monitoring, autonomy, punitiveness, support) and their effects on the dependent variable (academic achievement orientation) were run for mothers and fathers. Here, adolescent’s age, gender and parental educational levels were controlled for. Adolescent’s gender which was coded as (1) for males and (2) for females in the original data file had to be recoded using a new dummy code (0) for females and (1) for males in order to accurately measure the differences between males and females on academic achievement orientation.
From the standardized regression coefficients in Table 4.1 and Table 4.2 below, adolescent’s age was not a significant control variable of achievement orientation in both paternal ($\beta = 0.01$) and maternal ($\beta = 0.057$) models. Adolescent gender, however, was found to be a significant predictor of achievement orientation in both paternal ($\beta = 0.240, P < 0.001$) and maternal models ($\beta = 0.176, P < 0.05$). Father’s education ($\beta = -0.170$) and mother’s education ($\beta = -0.222$) were both found to be negative predictors of academic achievement orientation among the sample. Possible explanations for the negative regression coefficients for parental educational levels might be the existence of an elite class whose children because of their wealth are not motivated to achieve academically. Table 4.1 below shows a summary of the multiple regression analysis for the paternal model and Table 4.2 also shows that of the maternal model.

Support for the hypotheses was found within both paternal and maternal models for parental monitoring and support as seen from Table 4.1 and Table 4.2. Paternal monitoring ($\beta = 0.228, P < 0.001$), paternal support ($\beta = 0.187, P < 0.05$), maternal monitoring ($\beta = 0.137, P < 0.05$), and maternal support ($\beta = 0.236, P < 0.001$) were statistically significant predictors of academic achievement orientation among Kenyan adolescents. However paternal punitiveness ($\beta = -0.147$) and maternal punitiveness ($\beta = -0.071$) were found to be negative predictors of academic achievement orientation among the Kenyan sample. Parental autonomy granting behaviors were hypothesized not to be significantly associated with academic achievement orientation among Kenyan Adolescents. Consistent with expectation, both paternal autonomy granting ($\beta = -0.072$) and maternal autonomy granting ($\beta = 0.019$) were not found to be significant among the sample.

### Table 4.1 Paternal Model: Multiple Regression Analysis for Father’s Parenting Behaviors as Predictors of Academic Achievement Orientation (n=630)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>$b$</th>
<th>$S.E.(b)$</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sociodemographics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescent Age</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.076</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescent Gender</td>
<td>1.048</td>
<td>.240</td>
<td>.240**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.2. Maternal Model: Multiple Regression Analysis for Mother’s Behaviors as Predictors of Academic Achievement Orientation (n=630)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>S.E.b</th>
<th>β</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sociodemographics</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescent Age</td>
<td>-.078</td>
<td>.071</td>
<td>-.057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescent Gender</td>
<td>.787</td>
<td>.230</td>
<td>.176*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother’s Education</td>
<td>-.168</td>
<td>.038</td>
<td>-.222**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maternal Behaviors</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>.177</td>
<td>.041</td>
<td>.236**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring</td>
<td>.065</td>
<td>.025</td>
<td>.137*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy Granting</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>.019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punitiveness</td>
<td>.023</td>
<td>.016</td>
<td>-.071</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.3 Multiple Regression Analysis for Father’s and Mother’s Monitoring as Predictors of Academic Achievement Orientation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>$b$</th>
<th>S.E.b</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Socio-demographics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescent Age</td>
<td>-.062</td>
<td>.065</td>
<td>-.046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescent Gender</td>
<td>1.044</td>
<td>.203</td>
<td>.247**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father’s Education</td>
<td>-.032</td>
<td>.058</td>
<td>-.042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother’s Education</td>
<td>-.118</td>
<td>.060</td>
<td>-.152</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parenting Behaviors</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>F_Monitoring</td>
<td>.116</td>
<td>.030</td>
<td>.258**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M_Monitoring</td>
<td>.036</td>
<td>.032</td>
<td>.075</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$N = 630; b =$ unstandardized betas; $\beta =$ standardized beta; S.E.$\beta =$ Standardized error of unstandardized beta. * $p <= .05$, ** $p <= .001$

Table 4.4 Multiple Regression Analysis for Father’s and Mother’s Punitiveness as Predictors of Academic Achievement Orientation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>$b$</th>
<th>S.E.b</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Socio-demographics</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescent Age</td>
<td>-.180</td>
<td>.074</td>
<td>-.128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescent Gender</td>
<td>.761</td>
<td>.229</td>
<td>.174*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father’s Education</td>
<td>.014</td>
<td>.064</td>
<td>.018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother’s Education</td>
<td>-.177</td>
<td>.067</td>
<td>-.222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting Behaviors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F_Punitiveness</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.030</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M_Punitiveness</td>
<td>-.055</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td>-.161</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$N = 630; b =$ unstandardized betas; $\beta =$ standardized beta; S.E.$\beta =$ Standardized error of unstandardized beta. * $p <= .05$, ** $p <= .001$
As could be seen from Tables 4.3 and 4.4 above, father’s monitoring behaviors ($\beta = .258**$, $P < .001$) in comparison with mother’s monitoring behaviors ($\beta = -.075$) was found to be a significant predictor of academic achievement orientation among this sample, even after controlling for the socio-demographic variables. Father’s punitiveness ($\beta = .002$) and mother’s punitiveness ($\beta = -.161$) were not found to be significant among this sample. This finding therefore provides at least partial support to the hypothesis that paternal parenting behavior in relation to maternal behaviors yields positive achievement orientation outcomes.
Chapter 5
Discussion

Based on the results after testing the stated hypotheses, this research study has provided some interesting findings and ideas about parent-adolescent relationships in Kenya. Some of the results in many respects confirm what has been found in previous studies with samples from other countries, societies or cultures. It also uniquely sheds light on the nature of parent-adolescent relationships within the Kenyan society as shaped by values, perceptions, traditions or culture.

Effects of gender on academic achievement orientation

As a result of the fact that females or girl children have traditionally not been motivated and encouraged to achieve academically in Africa due to strongly held gender role attitudes (Mensch, Bagah, Clark, & Binka, 1999), this study examined the difference between males and females hypothesized about gender differences. Consistent with this speculation, significant mean difference were found in this sample, with males having a higher mean score compared to females. As a result, this finding confirms earlier studies (Mensch & Lloyd, 1998; Mensch, Bagah, Clark, & Binka, 1999) who reported that, girls in Kenya were not encouraged and challenged to achieve academically in a manner comparable to males. What this finding means is that, traditional ideas continue to exist in Kenya that make it less important to emphasize formal education for females compared to males. By extension, it also implies that parents in Kenya may not be encouraging and motivating their female adolescents towards academic achievement orientations at a level comparable to males.

Effects of parental behaviors on adolescent’s academic achievement orientation

Considering the fact that parents remain significant sources of influence in the lives of their children through many important roles (Dmitrieva, Chen, Greenberger, & Gil- Rivas, 2004), positive parental behaviors was hypothesized to predict higher achievement orientation outcomes. Specifically, parental monitoring, parental support and parental punitiveness were expected to be positive predictors of academic achievement orientation. Consistent with this expectation, Results indicated that both
monitoring and supportive behavior by mothers and fathers were significant predictors of academic achievement orientation among Kenyan adolescents.

What this result means is that, parents who are very supportive of their adolescents and effectively monitors their activities always leads to positive social competences. This finding also goes to reinforce earlier studies by Bean, Bush, McKenry and Wilson (2003) who, using a sample of European American and African American adolescents found that, the use of supportive behaviors by parents towards their children resulted in the attainment of a higher self-esteem and higher academic achievement. This point is also buttressed by Maccoby and Martins (1983) who found that effective parental monitoring of school related activities was a significant predictor of positive school achievement. The important point here is that, irrespective of where adolescents live around the world and regardless of race, parental warmth and general knowledge of their children’s activities leads to positive developmental results.

However, parental punitiveness which was measured in this sample with a 10 item sub-scale like “this parent hits me when he or she thinks I am doing something wrong”, “this parent yells at me a lot without good reason”, “this parent punishes me by hitting me”, “this parent is always finding fault with me” etc produced interesting results with the paternal and maternal models. Both maternal and paternal punitiveness were found to be negative predictors of academic achievement orientation among the Kenyan sample. Considering the patriarchal nature of Sub-Saharan African societies where fathers especially are highly respected by adolescents and use a lot of punitiveness to demand obedience (Efoghe, 1987), this result was highly expected. What this finding means is that, Kenyan parent’s who uses a lot of punitive actions does not motivate their adolescents to achieve academically. This result is also very consistent with previous studies in western societies where parental punitiveness has been found not to be a positive parenting behavior that fosters the development of adolescent social competences (Steinberg, 1999).

With Sub-Saharan Africa recognized as a collectivistic society (Triandis, 1995) where values such as respect for authority, regard for the elderly and giving priority to group interests over one’s self or personal interest are highly valued, this study hypothesized that parental autonomy granting behaviors will not predict positive
achievement orientation outcomes. As the findings of this study showed, parental autonomy granting behaviors were not found to be a significant predictor of academic achievement orientation among the Kenyan sample. This could probably be explained due to the fact that stronger group interests (family, clan, ethnic group etc) might be what is preventing Kenyan parents to encourage or foster autonomy in their adolescent children. In another related study with samples from Chile and Ecuador, while positive induction and monitoring especially by fathers predicted positive academic achievement, autonomy granting was associated with lowered academic achievement (Ingoldsby, Schvaneveldt, Supple & Bush, 2003). One might therefore conclude that whereas autonomy granting is a highly valued parental behavior in western or individualistic societies (Herman, 1997; Vazsonyi, 2003), the reverse might be true for Sub-Saharan Africa and other collectivistic societies.

**The relative importance of paternal and maternal parenting behaviors**

In as much as parents are seen as very significant people in the lives of their children universally, the role parents play within Sub-Saharan African families is shaped in significant ways by existing gender-role expectations (Wilson & Ngige, 2005). Women take care of household duties while men work outside the home and also protected the family from external insecurity (Ngige, Ondigi & Wilson, 2008). A very distinguishing feature in most traditional societies, including Sub-Saharan Africa is the inherent authority of parents and especially fathers whose actions cannot be questioned (Arnett, 2004). As Efoghe (1987) found in his study among the Igbo’s of Nigeria, fathers especially viewed any attempt or desire by adolescents to make their own choices or crave for independence as forms of rebellion and threats to their authority. This could probably be compared with the tradition of filial piety among some Asian cultures where children were fully expected to obey and respect their parents throughout their lives (Arnett et al., 2004). In accordance with this principle of inherent authority, this study hypothesized that paternal monitoring and punitiveness were expected to be more strongly predictive of academic orientation outcomes than were maternal monitoring and punitiveness. As expected, father’s monitoring was found to be more positively related to academic achievement orientation than mother’s monitoring among this Kenyan sample.
Limitations
Just like many other studies, there were several limitations with this study which should be noted and rectified in other future studies.

Firstly, a convenience sampling size of 630 Kenyan adolescents drawn from only 4 secondary schools in Nairobi is very limited in terms of geographic area representation. Again, making generalizations with this sample, as representing the views of all adolescents in Kenya and even as that of all adolescents in an ethnically diverse society such as Sub-Saharan Africa is quite problematic.

Secondly, because the items in the different scales measured the adolescent’s perceptions of their parents parenting behaviors, one cannot rule out the element of biasness in their responses to the survey questions.

A third limitation of this study was that, the instruments used in collecting the data were originally developed for use with American and European samples. Although some changes were made to suit the Kenyan sample, there are still certain doubts as to their total validity considering the fact that, significant differences exist between western societies and other traditional societies.

A final point worth mentioning is that the items that purported to measure adolescents academic achievement seemed to tilt more towards measuring ones academic achievement orientation or motivation rather than actual academic achievement levels.

Implications
In spite of the fact that, the parent-adolescent relations has long been an important aspect of the African society, researchers in Africa have made few efforts to study the dynamics of these relationships and their consequences for aspects of adolescents’ social competencies. This study was intended to advance knowledge on how adolescent’s academic achievement orientations in Kenya were predicted by specific parental behaviors.

This study may provide parents in Kenya with knowledge that may improve on the quality of their parenting skills. Specifically, greater support is provided for the use of monitoring and supportive behaviors by parents as means to motivate adolescents to
achieve academically. Fathers especially may also become more aware of their roles when it comes to encouraging and motivating their adolescent children towards positive outcomes.

Second and very importantly, Kenya continues to develop economically, technologically, socially and politically in the 21st century and beyond, much of this progress may depend on the quality of its human resource capital. Since families are the bedrocks of societies, this study may help Kenyan policy makers in designing policies and programs targeted at families. This may enable parents to be more involved in their adolescent’s life and help them achieve their true educational potentials.

This study will also help emphasize the similarities and the unique differences between adolescents living within Sub-Saharan Africa and their counterparts elsewhere in the developed or western societies across the globe. Hopefully this study and the other limited research studies on parent-adolescent relationships in Kenya will spark some level of interest and debate among family scholars to pursue more research in Kenya and other and other traditional societies.

**Recommendations for Future Studies**

This present study focused solely on four parental behaviors (support, monitoring, punitiveness, and autonomy granting) and their impact on adolescents’ academic achievement orientations which is quite limited. Other future studies could include more parental behavior and relationship variables to examine their effects. With Sub-Saharan Africa commonly considered a collectivistic society (Triandis, 1995), the extent to which adolescents value their family or group interest in relation to their own personal interest (familism) including academic achievement and how parents foster it could be examined in future studies.

Based on the findings of this current study and the other limited research, it is recommended that, future studies do a more detailed comparative analysis of parent-adolescent relations within Sub-Saharan Africa and their counterparts elsewhere in the western societies. Other studies could also further examine the theoretical distinctions between individualism and collectivism believed to exist within these societies.
Furthermore, it is also recommended that researchers’ studying the area of parenting and parent-adolescent relationships will broaden their scope to include the other 5 Islamic nations (Magrebian countries) that forms part of Africa and not just Sub-Saharan Africa alone in future studies. A study comparing these two geographic areas in Africa in terms of parenting will be interesting considering the unique cultural differences between the two geographic areas. Finally, it is my recommendation that since parent-adolescent relationships are shaped in many significant ways by the culture of each society, it is important that family scholars with interest in parental behaviors and adolescent outcomes adopt both the emic and etic approaches or traditions (Peterson, Steinmetz, & Wilson, 2005) in their quest to fully understand adolescents in diverse cultures. An emic approach tries to understand parent-adolescent relations through the norms, customs, laws, mores etc of each society where as an etic approach searches for similarities and commonalities that could be applied universally across societies or cultures (Peterson, Steinmetz, & Wilson, 2005).

Conclusion

The results of this current study have in a way highlighted some of the similarities and the unique differences between other previous studies done with samples in western societies. For instance, parental support and monitoring were found in this current study as a significant positive predictor of academic achievement orientation among Kenyan adolescents just as previous studies with samples from diverse countries such as the United States and Ecuador found out (Herman, 1997; Ingoldsby, Schvaneveldt, Supple & Bush, 2003). Again whereas parental autonomy granting behaviors results in adolescents’ developing positive social competencies within western societies (Vazsonyi, 2003), the present study found autonomy granting by parents to be a negative predictor of academic achievement orientation among Kenyan adolescents. Previous study conducted in Kenya (Mbito, 2004) also found autonomy granting to be a negative predictor of self-esteem among Kenya adolescents.

In conclusion it appears based on this study that, although parenting and parent-adolescent relationships takes place among families across the world, this process is also shaped in very significant ways by each society’s culture. Therefore, for us to understand
and appreciate very well the impact parental behaviors have on adolescent’s development of social competencies such as academic achievement which this study tried to unearth, there have to be a continuous concerted effort from researchers across all societies.
REFERENCES


Appendix A.

Demographic variables

Socio-demographic control variables of the adolescents including age, gender, year in school, parent’s marital status, living arrangement, and parent’s educational status were assessed with the following questions:

How old are you? 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 or older

Are you male or female? 1. Male 2. Female

What year are you in school? Form 1 2 3 4

Are your parents:

2. Divorced 4. Widowed 6. Other

Do you live at home? 1. Yes 2. No

What is the highest educational level of the person who functions as your father/mother?

1. Some Primary school
2. Completed primary school (through standard 8)
3. Some secondary school
4. Completed secondary school (through form 4)
5. Some training after secondary
6. P1, S1, or diploma certificate
7. Some college/university
8. Completed a university degree
9. Some post-graduate (Masters)
10. Completed a post graduate degree, including M.D., M. A., Ph.D., J.D., etc
Appendix B.

Parental Behavior Measures

Please circle the answer which indicates how much you agree or disagree with each statement. Please respond about your mother and father or the person’s who function as your parents on a daily basis.

SA=Strongly Agree (4) A=Agree (3) D=Disagree (2) SD=Strongly Disagree (1)

Parental Monitoring Scale

1. This parent knows where I am after school.
2. I tell this parent who I am going to be with when I go out.
3. When I go out, this parent knows where I am.
4. This parent knows the parents of my friends.
5. This parent knows who my friends are.
6. This parent knows how I spend my money.

Parental Punitiveness Scale

1. This parent hits me when he or she thinks I am doing something wrong.
2. This parent does not give me any peace until I do what he or she says.
3. This parent punishes me by not letting me do things I really enjoy.
4. This parent yells at me a lot without good reason.
5. This parent punishes me by not letting me do things with other teenagers.
6. This parent tells me that I will be sorry that I wasn’t better behaved.
7. This parent tells me that someday I will be punished for my behavior.
8. This parent is always finding fault with me.
9. This parent punishes me by sending me out of the room.
10. This parentpunishes me by hitting me.

**Parental Support Scale**

1. This parent has made me feel that he or she would be there if I needed him or her.
2. This parent seems to approve of me and the things that I do.
3. This parent tells me how much he or she loves me.
4. This parent says nice things about me.

**Parental Autonomy Granting Scale**

1. I feel that this parent gives me enough freedom
2. This parent allows me to choose my own friends without interfering too much.
3. This parent allows me to decide what is right and wrong without interfering too much.
4. This parent allows me to decide what clothes I should wear without interfering too much.
5. This parent allows me to choose my own dating partner without interfering too much.
6. This parent had confidence in my ability to make my own decisions.
7. This parent encourages me to help in making decisions about family matters.
8. This parent allows me to make my own decisions about career goals without interfering too much.
9. This parent allows me to make my own decisions about educational goals without interfering too much.
10. This parent lets me be my “own person” in enough situations.
Academic Achievement Orientation Scale

1. I try hard in school.

2. I usually finish my homework on time.

3. Education is so important that it’s worth it to put up with things about school that I don’t like.

4. In general, I like school.