Teacher Caring: An Investigation of an All-Girl Secondary School in Western Kenya

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Doctor of Philosophy

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This dissertation titled

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ABSTRACT

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Teacher Caring: An Investigation of an All-Girl Secondary School in Western Kenya

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This qualitative case study focused on understanding how teachers and students at a girls-only secondary school in the western Province of Kenya described what they perceived to be caring teacher behavior. Further, the study also examined how students’ perceptions of teachers’ behaviors influenced their attitude towards education.

In line with the case study inquiry approach, the present study employed multiple data collection methods including in-depth individual face-to-face interviews, focus groups, participant observation, surveys and document analysis. A total of 36 girls and 10 teachers participated in the study. Girls were interviewed within a focus group setting while teachers were interviewed individually. To analyze the data, a voice-centered feminist relational method of analysis known as the Listening Guide was utilized.

The findings of the present study revealed that girls associated caring with teacher academic support, guidance, advice, responsiveness, empathy, understanding, and mothering. Teachers on the other hand, conceptualized caring as academic support, moral guidance, attentive listening, dialogue and humor, othermothering, friendship, attending to “at-risk” learners, and communally raising young responsible people. An important finding of this study is that both teachers and students projected a gendered view of caring. Male teachers viewed caring solely as a professional stance while female teachers
viewed caring as both a professional and maternal stance. Similarly, girls assigned the role of academic support to male teachers and the role of nurturance to female teachers.

Approved: ____________________________________________________________

Jaylynne N. Hutchinson

Associate Professor of Educational Studies
DEDICATION

For Mwambu, my twin brother, and the love of my life
Your passing left our family deeply sorrowful but we have found
The strength to carry on—you are fondly remembered.

For Marion and Emmanuel, I pray that life will treat you well.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

That our teaching relationship formed and shaped by love extends beyond our time in the classroom is an affirmation of love’s power.

--bell hooks

I would like to extend gratitude to my grandparents John and Norah Musundi who have shown me unwavering love and support throughout my doctoral journey. The loss of my twin brother Mwambu in October of 2005 was particularly difficult for me. Without your support and the grace of God, it would have been impossible for me to continue my graduate work. I am truly indebted to you both. Thank you for sharing your wisdom on what it means to care in schools and for showing genuine interest in my work.

I wish to thank the entire Musundi family: my parents, my brothers Sean and Sybil, aunts, Joyce, Dorothy, Esther, Joan, and uncles Matanda, Joel, Onesmus, and Biketi and all my cousins. You have all inspired me to aim for the sky and for that I thank you. A special thank you to aunt Dorothy for nursing me to good health after my bout with malaria during fieldwork.

I also wish to extend my appreciation to friends who have supported me during my write-up. I thank Dr. Victor Heh for his input and ideas about interpreting my survey results and for providing moral support when the going got tough. I also thank Mumba Mumba for listening to my constant talk about “caring” and for her moral support particularly during my oral defense. I thank Dr. Tamara Beauboeuf-Lafontant whom I consulted on numerous occasions about the use of the Listening Guide. I am truly
apologetic for inundating you with phone calls. Thank you for taking time from your busy schedule to respond to my questions.

I am grateful to my dissertation committee. I thank Dr. Claudia Hale for her support and encouragement and for helping me understand the link between communicative teacher behavior and caring. I also thank her for taking the time to help with proofreading my final draft. I thank Dr. George Johanson for his insight, encouragement and advice. I also thank Dr. Francis Godwyll for his support and encouragement. Finally, I thank my dissertation chair and advisor, Dr. Jaylynne Hutchinson for her support during this process. It was a difficult and long journey. Thank you for walking side-by-side with me and for being an attentive listener. I have learned a lot from you about what it means to be a caring educator. Thank you for your insight, encouragement, genuineness and good spirit.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract ............................................................................................................................... 3  
Dedication ........................................................................................................................... 5  
Acknowledgements ............................................................................................................. 6  
List of Tables .................................................................................................................... 11  
List of Figures ................................................................................................................... 12  
Chapter One: Introduction ................................................................................................ 13  
  Background of the Study .......................................................................................... 13  
  Statement of the Problem .......................................................................................... 16  
  Research Questions ................................................................................................... 18  
  Significance of the Study .......................................................................................... 18  
  Limitations of the Study ............................................................................................ 19  
  Definition of Terms ................................................................................................... 20  
  Organization of the Study ......................................................................................... 23  
Chapter Two: Review of The Literature ........................................................................... 25  
  Introduction ............................................................................................................... 25  
  History of Formal Education in Kenya ..................................................................... 25  
    The Colonial Period.............................................................................................. 25  
    Education in Independent Kenya ........................................................................... 31  
  Constraints of the 8-4-4 System of Education ..................................................... 38  
  Theoretical Framework ....................................................................................... 41  
  Relational Pedagogy ............................................................................................ 41  
  Care Theory ......................................................................................................... 59  
  Ubuntu: The Indigenous African Way of Caring .................................................... 72  
    Application of Theory to the Study ..................................................................... 75  
Chapter Three: Methodology ............................................................................................ 76  
  Introduction ............................................................................................................... 76  
  The Research Design ............................................................................................... 76  
  Research Site ............................................................................................................ 78
Selection of Research Participants ................................................. 80
Methods of Data Collection ............................................................. 82
Participant Observation ................................................................. 83
In-depth Interviews ........................................................................... 84
Focus Groups .................................................................................... 85
Documents Analysis ........................................................................... 87
The Questionnaire on Teacher Interaction (QTI) ............................... 88
Self as Researcher ............................................................................. 90
Data Analysis .................................................................................... 91
Summary .......................................................................................... 97

Chapter Four: Discussion of Findings ................................................ 98
Introduction ....................................................................................... 98
Girls Stories ...................................................................................... 98
Caring as Teacher Academic Support ............................................ 103
Lack of Teacher Academic Support ............................................... 109
Caring as Guidance .......................................................................... 116
Caring as Responsiveness, Empathy, Understanding and Mothering... 122

The Stories of Two Girls ................................................................. 126
Angela: Silence, Rebellion and Avoidance as Forms of Resistance ....... 131

Teachers’ Stories ............................................................................ 135
Caring is Academic Support ......................................................... 137
Moral Guidance .............................................................................. 143
Caring as Attentive Listening / Attentive Love ................................. 144
Caring is engaging in Dialogue and Humor .................................... 145
Caring as Othermothering ............................................................. 148
Caring is Friendliness ..................................................................... 155
Caring as Attending to “At Risk” Students ..................................... 158
Caring as a Community Effort to Raise Young Responsible People .... 158
When Caring Fails .......................................................................... 159
Classroom Observations ................................................................. 162
Student QTI Results ....................................................................... 164
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1  Female and Male Attendance in Kenyan Public Schools in 1953 ...................... 31
Table 2  Primary and Secondary School Enrolment Trends in Kenyan Public Schools, 1963-83 ..................................................................................................................... 33
Table 3 .............................................................................................................................. 34
Table 4  KCSE Performance by Gender in Languages, Math and Science 2000-2003.... 40
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1</td>
<td>The education and examination structure in 1966</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The year 2000 saw the six regions of the world converge at the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal to reaffirm their commitment to the World Declaration on Education for All (EFA) that had been adopted a decade earlier in Jomtien, Thailand (EFA, 2000). It was during this meeting that 183 participating nations assessed the achievements, lessons, and failures within their own education systems since the 1990 Jomtien conference. In assessing their progress, the governments of sub-Saharan African countries reported that their goal to achieve universal basic education had been met by only a few countries and that a significantly high number of children, especially girls and children from remote and rural areas as well as those from minority ethnic groups, remained out of school. Furthermore, the African governments noted that the quality of education in sub-Saharan Africa remained poor and that the curriculum in many instances was irrelevant to learners’ needs and to the social, cultural and political development of the continent.

In a new affirmation adopted in the Dakar Framework for Action, Education for All: Meeting our Collective Commitments, sub-Saharan African countries pledged to renew their commitment to education. Recognizing the importance of education in enabling the African continent to overcome its social, economic, and political problems and to be incorporated in the global economy of the 21st century, sub-Saharan nations committed to invest in quality education as well as to remove barriers that hinder children, and particularly girls and children in difficult circumstances and those
belonging to ethnic minority groups, from accessing quality education (UNESCO, 2000). Sub-Saharan African countries also committed to universalizing basic primary education and achieving gender parity in education by 2015. It was at the 2000 World Education conference in Dakar that former United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan launched the United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative (UNGEI) as a way to initiate country-level efforts geared towards improving girls’ education. Since the Dakar Framework for Action declaration in 2000, there have been new reforms in education systems across sub-Saharan Africa.

Kenya is among the countries that have experienced notable progress in its education system since the declaration of the Dakar Framework. In January of 2003, a newly elected regime instituted a new policy that introduced free primary education (FPE), leading to a significant increase in primary school enrollments (UNESCO, 2005). According to the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MOEST, 2007), the national gross enrollment ratio (GER—defined later) rose from 88.2 percent in 2002 to 102.8 percent in 2003 (105.0 percent for boys and 100.5 percent for girls). In 2004, the GER rose further to stand at 104.8 percent (108 for boys and 101.6 percent for girls). The Society for International Development (2006), which has cited similar data, indicates that the number of children in both public and primary schools increased from 6.2 million in 2002 to 7.6 million in 2005 as a result of FPE.

Accompanying this increase in enrollments has been an increase in transition rates from primary to secondary level. The Ministry of Education (MOEST, 2007) indicates
that the transition rate from primary to secondary school rose from 46 percent in 2002 to 60 percent in 2006.

The strides made so far are notable given that, prior to universalizing primary education, Kenya had a significant number of out-of-school children. The previously wide gender gap in education has also markedly reduced with more girls now attending school. It is worth pointing out, however, that the increased enrollments mask the regional and gender disparities in early childhood education as well as in primary and secondary education (Ministry of Education, 2007; Society for International Development, 2006). According to the Society for International Development (2006), children in urban slums as well as those living in poor and disadvantaged areas have benefited little from FPE because of factors such as levies, which have kept them out of school. Girls’ school enrollment has also remained lower than that of boys in some provinces (MOEST, 2004). For instance, in the past several years, the North Eastern Province, has registered the lowest gross enrollment ratio (GER) for girls at both primary and secondary levels while the Western Province has registered the highest GER (MOEST, 2004; Society for International Development, 2006). Gender disparities have also been evident in girls’ participation, retention, transition, completion, and performance rates (Ministry of Education, 2007).

The persistent regional gender disparities in favor of boys raises questions as to whether Kenya will achieve the Dakar Framework goal of eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2015. More importantly, Regional gender disparities raise concerns about what barriers might be hindering girls from successfully
completing a full course of primary and/or secondary education. Extant studies have shown that numerous factors contribute to girls’ low retention and poor performance in school, including, poverty, teenage pregnancy, forced early marriage and childbearing, domestic labor, distance to school, HIV/AIDS, and negative cultural attitudes towards the education of girls among others. Few studies, however, have attempted to examine such factors as school quality particularly as relates to teacher/student interactions (Lloyd, Mensch & Clark, 2000) and their impact on girls’ learning. Lloyd et al. (2000) and others posit that the quality of teacher/student interactions can impact retention and performance particularly if teachers engage in behaviors that discourage girls and subject the latter to socially circumscribed gender roles (Lloyd & Mensch, 1999).

Statement of the Problem

Although Kenya has made significant progress insofar as increasing girls’ enrollment in school, the current literature on education suggests that less effort has been directed towards improving the quality of schooling experiences for girls. As literature related to classroom interactions in Kenya has shown, teachers tend to have a negative attitude towards girls and often interact less favorably with the latter than they do with boys (Mensch & Lloyd, 1998).

Mensch and Lloyd’s study of primary schools in Kenya, for instance, found that teachers at both low- and high-performing schools had fewer positive interactions with girls than with boys. In their study, Mensch and Lloyd observed that teachers directed more questions towards boys than girls during classroom lectures, ridiculed and demeaned girls for giving wrong answers, and had lower expectations of girls in subjects
such as mathematics. Further, Mensch and Lloyd were surprised to find that women teachers, who are often regarded as role models for girls did not interact any differently with girls, and in fact, had a higher preference for teaching boys than their male counterparts. Noteworthy here is that similar findings have been reported in other sub-Saharan African countries such as Malawi (Davison & Kanyuka, 1992), Liberia, Guinea, and Togo (Bloch, Beoku-Betts & Tabachnick, 1998) where classroom interaction studies have been conducted.

Because of the unfavorable treatment that girls encounter in coeducational primary school settings in Kenya, it is worth finding out if girls experience different and perhaps better interactions with teachers as they transition to secondary school given that a majority of Kenyan secondary schools are non-coeducational and allow girls to learn in their own environment. It has been long assumed that the single-sex school context provides a more supportive atmosphere for girls to learn although there are no empirical studies within the Kenyan context to support this assumption. Studies in Nigeria suggest that girls in single-sex schools experience higher achievement, particularly in their learning of subjects such as mathematics, when they have contact with a larger number of female teachers (Lee & Lockheed, 1990). Similarly, studies in the West have shown that there are benefits that accrue to girls in single-sex schools and classes (Sadker & Sadker, 1994; Streitmatter, 1999; Warrington & Younger, 2001). Given this evidence in the literature, it seems important to understand the schooling experience of girls in single-sex secondary schools in Kenya. More specifically, it is important to explore the type of teacher support girls receive as they pursue their education.
Therefore, the present study focused on understanding the nature of interactions that took place between teachers and students at a girls-only secondary school in the western province of Kenya. Specifically, the study examined the ways in which teachers exhibited caring towards students at the school. The study also sought to understand the perceptions that teachers and students held about caring and how these perceptions influenced students’ attitudes towards education.

Research Questions

1. What teacher behaviors do girls at St. Antonius Girls High School in Western Kenya perceive as fostering care?
2. How do girls’ perceptions of teacher behavior influence their attitude towards education?
3. What are Kenyan teachers’ perceptions about fostering care in the school and classroom setting?
4. Assuming that students and teachers perceive that caring occurs, what does teacher caring look like?

Significance of the Study

There is an extensive body of research on caring within teaching in Western countries such as the United States, Australia, Britain and Switzerland. However, literature on caring in sub-Saharan African school contexts remains very scarce. In Kenya in particular, studies on teacher caring are, to my knowledge, non-existent. Therefore, the present study provides critical insight into how teachers and students conceptualize caring in the Kenyan school context. Besides filling the gap in the literature, these
findings also enhance teachers’ understanding of caring and its impact on learners. Further, they also provide teacher educators with insight into teachers’ classroom practice and how they can better improve the teacher education program.

The results of this study can also benefit the Kenya Ministry of Education, which formulates and implements policies in education. Although the Ministry of Education has developed a Gender and Education policy to address a broad spectrum of gender-related issues in education, the results of this study seem to suggest that some of the gender policies in education are not being implemented in schools. Hence, these findings can provide policymakers with insight into areas that need to be re-evaluated.

Limitations of the Study

The present study was limited in the following ways:

1. It was a case study that involved a small sample of students and teachers at one girls’ secondary school. As a result, these findings cannot be generalized to other girls’ secondary schools in Kenya. However, they provide insight into how some teachers and students in Kenya conceptualize caring in teaching.

2. The student participants in the present study were seniors in high school and therefore, it is likely that their views may or may not differ from those of girls in junior high school.

3. The student participants in this study were girls attending secondary school in a rural location of Kenya and their views might differ from those of girls attending schools in urban settings. Girls in urban areas are more likely to be influenced by Western values because of the media and other exposure to Western trends.
Hence, it cannot be assumed that girls attending schools in urban areas would hold similar views regarding caring.

4. The study relied primarily on Western-based literature on caring because of the scarcity of literature on caring in sub-Saharan African schools.

Definition of Terms

The following operational definitions have been used in the study:

*Academic performance* refers to students’ outcomes or achievement based on standardized test scores.

*Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL)* refers to the dry regions of Kenya that are occupied primarily by pastoralist communities.

*Caring relations* are an encounter between two or more people whereby either party empathizes, understands, and responds to the other’s conveyed need (Noddings, 2002; Teven & McCroskey, 1997).

*Case Study* refers to the qualitative examination of a single case of interest (Stake, 1995).

*Colonialism* as used in this research will refer to the European occupation of Kenya that took place from 1895 to 1963 when the country attained its independence.

*Corporal punishment* refers to “the use of physical force with the intention of causing a child to experience pain but not injury, for the purpose of correction or control of the child’s behavior” (Straus & Donnelly, 2001, p. 4).

*Education Quality* is used in this research to refer to the kind of education that enables children to achieve better learning outcomes, especially in literacy, numeracy, and essential life skills, by ensuring the availability of educational resources and
infrastructure as well as well-trained teachers. Educational quality is equitable, serving both boys and girls equally (UNESCO, 2005).

FPE refers to Free Primary Education.

*Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER)* has been operationalized to mean the number of pupils enrolled in secondary education, regardless of age, and expressed as a percentage of the population in the theoretical age group for the same level of education (UNESCO).

‘Harambee’ schools are community-funded secondary schools that sprung up in response to a decline in educational opportunities at the secondary level in Kenya after independence. These schools are categorized as low-quality because they lack sufficient educational resources, have poor infrastructure, and also have poorly trained teachers (Rharade, 1997).

*Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE)* will be used in this study to refer to a standardized national exam that Kenyan primary school pupils sit for during their 8th and final year of primary school. The exam is used to determine their placement at the secondary level.

*Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE)* will be used in this study to refer to the final exam that Kenyan secondary school students sit for to determine their placement at the collegiate level.

MOEST refers to Kenya’s Ministry of Education Science and Technology.

‘Mwalimu’ is a Swahili word meaning ‘teacher’. In the Kenyan context, a teacher is very highly respected, hence use of the term ‘Mwalimu’ also references that respect.
Perception will be used in this study to refer to opinions or views that both teachers and students have of what teacher caring behavior looks like.

Perceived teacher caring refers to the perceptions that teachers and/or students have about which teacher behaviors foster caring in the school setting.

Quality education refers to education that satisfies basic learning needs, and enriches the lives of learners and their overall experience of living (UNESCO, 2000).

Rural Schools as used in this research will refer to those economically impoverished schools located in the remote regions of Kenya. While it is not appropriate to suggest that all non-urban schools are impoverished in comparison to urban schools, rural schools typically lack the richness of resources that one expects in contemporary educational environments.

Teacher-student relations are interpersonal relations between teachers and students.

Sub-Saharan Africa refers to those African nations that lie south of the Sahara.

UNESCO refers to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

UNGEI refers to the United Nations Girls Education Initiative. The initiative was launched in Dakar, Senegal in 2000 by then United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan with the aim of narrowing the gender gap in primary and secondary education and ensuring that by 2015, all children have equal access to all levels of
education and are able to complete primary schooling (http://www.ungei.org/whatisongei/index.html).

*Universal Basic Education* is used in this research to refer to education that provides all children throughout the world, including those from the most vulnerable and marginalized groups, the basic skills in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

**Organization of the Study**

This dissertation is organized into 5 chapters. Chapter 1 is a background to the study and outlines the goals that sub-Saharan African countries including Kenya have committed to in the *Dakar Framework for Action*. Chapter 1 also outlines the progress made in the Kenyan education system with respect to bridging the gender gap as well as the challenges the country still faces in dealing with barriers to girls’ education. Finally, the chapter also lays out the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the research questions, limitations of the study, definition of terms, researcher positionality, and the organization of this study.

Chapter 2 traces the history of education in Kenya since the colonial period to the present time and illustrates how British colonial influence shaped the Kenyan educational structure. More specifically, the chapter reviews existing literature to illustrate how the British education system that was adopted during the colonial era helped to reinforce gender disparity in the education system and the repercussions this system has had on girls’ education since independence to the present time. The chapter then turns to the literature on relational theories (relational pedagogy, care theory, and *ubuntu*) to set the
theoretical context for the study. The chapter briefly explains how these theories apply to the present study.

Chapter 3 describes the research methodology that was employed in the study. First, a rationale for using a qualitative single case inquiry approach is provided followed by a description of the research site and the research participants who were involved in the study. The sampling strategy that was used to select participants is also described. The final section of the chapter discusses data collection methods as well as the strategy for analyzing the data.

Chapter 4 explores the research findings. Specifically, the chapter looks at how participants conceptualized caring. Chapter 5 discusses and analyses the findings reported in chapter 4. Chapter 6 provides conclusions, limitations and recommendations for future research.
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This section is divided into two parts: the first section examines the history of education in Kenya with specific focus on how women and girls’ education has evolved following independence to the present time; the second section examines two aspects of relational theory, namely dialogical relations and care theory. This section also explores the African concept of *ubuntu*.

*History of Formal Education in Kenya*

To understand the state of girls’ education in Kenya today, it is important to examine the development of Kenya’s education system from the pre-colonial period to the present day. The historical overview of Kenya’s education system will provide a backdrop from which to understand the current issues affecting girls’ learning in Kenya.

*The Colonial Period*

Formal education in Kenya first came about as a result of European missionary work that began at the Kenyan coast in the mid-1800s. According to Sheffield (1973), European missionaries first established a mission station at the coastal town of Rabai in 1844 through the Anglican Church Missionary Society (CMS). The CMS mission focused on converting Africans to Christianity and introduced basic literacy as a way of equipping them to read scripture.

Formal education in Kenya expanded with the advent of British colonial occupation in the late 1800s. As historical accounts have shown, Kenya came under British colonial rule in 1895 when it became part of the British East African Protectorate.
The construction of the railroad from the Kenyan coast to neighboring Uganda by the colonial government between 1895 and 1901 led to a rapid expansion of missionary occupation in Kenya. Webster (1999) has observed that other missionary stations sprouted as a result of the railroad, reaching communities that were close to trading centers and administrative posts. According to Webster (1999), the mission stations that were set up, “were concentrated in the central and western inland areas and the coastal area, and each station sponsored its own out-station ‘bush’ schools in the rural villages” (p. 50).

As the work of Christian missions progressed in Kenya, those missions went beyond merely converting Africans to Christianity. According to Sheffield (1973), the missions not only furthered religious education but also later broadened their curricula to include manual training, reading, history and humanistic education. Through this curriculum the mission schools began training Africans as interpreters, policemen, builders, messengers and domestic servants among others. However, as Africans received formal education, it became very clear that the purpose of their training was to provide skilled labor to European settlers. As Sheffield (1973) observed, “many British observers saw the missions as a means of furthering the colonial cause” (p. 10).

It was not surprising, then, that the colonial government decided to establish the Education Department in 1911 in order to coordinate efforts with European missionaries in providing an African education to the natives. According to Sheffield (1973), the colonial government’s establishment of the Department of Education was partly in recognition of missionary work and also because the government wanted to assume some
financial responsibility. As Sheffield (1973) stated, the government “made financial 
grants for every pupil who passed an exam set up by one of the Government 
departments” (p. 11).

It is important to note that the educational system in Kenya during the colonial 
period was racially stratified in such a way that Europeans and Asians were at the top of 
the hierarchy whereas Africans were at the bottom. As a result, Africans became 
disadvantaged because they received a very different kind of education from that of 
Europeans and Asians. According to Rharade (1997), “education for Africans was 
confined to religious, technical and agricultural instruction” (p. 163). Furthermore, 
Africans received the least amount of financial support for education in comparison to 
Europeans and Asians (Acedo, 2002; Webster, 1999). This inequality in colonial 
education meant that Africans could not advance professionally into white-collar jobs as 
their Europeans and Asian counterparts. According to Sheffield (1973), Africans were 
opposed to the vocational training that they received and saw this form of education as 
inferior and one that was designed to keep them in their disadvantaged position.

The late 1920s saw the emergence of the so-called independent school movement 
in Kenya, which came about as a result of African resistance to colonial education. As 
Africans boycotted mission schools, they put in place their own system of education. As 
Sheffield (1973) noted, the independent school movement resulted in a rapid expansion 
of schools that were run by Africans themselves. The rapid expansion of these schools 
captured the attention of the colonial government, which then saw a need to cooperate with 
the independent schools. In 1934, the government created so-called District Education
Boards and allowed a greater representation of Africans on these Boards. This gave Africans an opportunity to participate in running primary schools even though the government still maintained a level of control through the provision of grants-in-aids.

It is also noteworthy that colonial education was structured along gender lines. According to Chege and Sifuna (2006), Christian missionaries took advantage of the gendered communal life that existed in Kenya to completely polarize men and women by creating a “new gender order whose boundaries were elaborated further through formal education and enforced by claims of divine ordinance” (p. 19). Christian missionary education therefore produced a gendered curriculum that restricted girls to domestic-related subjects whilst giving boys the opportunity to pursue courses that would enable them to gain wage employment. Mama (cited in Chege & Sifuna, 2006) stated that:

Far from lifting African women out of domestic drudgery, the missionary education ensured that female domesticity was perfected and that women were encouraged through Christian teaching, to be subservient, and to dutifully combine traditionally feminine chores with hoeing, animal rearing and many other occupations that were traditionally masculine. (p. 27)

The gendered curriculum that Christian missionaries introduced in their schools set the foundation for what later became the norm in colonial education in Kenya. From the onset of colonialism in Kenya, British Imperialists set out to impose the English imperial ideology of female domesticity on Kenyan women. Chege and Sifuna (2006) observed that colonial administrators inculcated in African women Victorian values and ideals that were meant to serve the class of African men who were now entering colonial service.
This meant that women had to stay out of the public sphere and concentrate on their reproductive and child-rearing roles as well as performing domestic chores. As Chege and Sifuna (2006) observed, African women were “trained in social graces of Victorian fashion and etiquette, cake making, needlecraft and other domestic occupations that narrowed down to nothing but housewifery” (p. 23). Outside the home, women were restricted from accessing wage employment in urban areas. As a result, most women became confined to rural areas where they could only work as casual laborers on European-owned plantations. Often times, women were exploited on these farms and received very low pay in comparison to the wages men received. The relatively cheap labor that women provided for the colonial economy was one of the main reasons why female education in Kenya was not prioritized during the colonial period.

Undoubtedly, British gendered ideologies had serious implications for women and girls’ education in Kenya. The view that women belonged in the domestic sphere resulted in little investment in girls’ education. As Chege and Sifuna (2006) observed, it was not until 1925 that the colonial administration acknowledged the low status of girls’ education in the country and began to advocate for better opportunities for girls. Yet, even with that realization, it was not until 1949 that the colonial government set up the first African girls’ secondary school. Additionally, there was only one tertiary institution where girls could attend higher education, and that was Makerere College in neighboring Uganda. Not only did the colonial government slacken insofar as expanding educational opportunities for women and girls in Kenya, but also failed to provide a curriculum that was relevant to the needs of Kenyan women. In collaboration with Christian missionaries,
Colonial administrators embarked on a curriculum that centered on domesticating women. By offering courses in cookery, housewifery, needlework, home nursing, etc., the colonial education focused on serving its own interests by ensuring that women remained restricted to the domestic sphere. This type of education provided few incentives for women to join the labor market and, hence, be able to move away from the domestic sphere. Chege and Sifuna (2006) stated that:

Usually, girls were not sent to school, and the few that were, received an education that prepared them neither for equal competition in the job market nor for self-employment in any way that gave them adequate economic independence, dignity or self-esteem. (p. 24)

The reluctance of colonial administrators to provide educational opportunities for girls as well as their insistence on a curriculum that was only bent on domesticating women had serious implications for girls’ education. Girl’s education lagged behind that of boys since very few of them were able to attain an education. According to Chege and Sifuna (2006), only 25 percent of the African children who attended elementary school during the colonial period were girls. At the secondary level, this percentage dropped even further to between 5 and 10 percent while, at the tertiary level, only a few able to make it. Table 1 below shows enrollment rates for both girls and boys in 1953, a decade prior to Kenya’s independence.
Table 1

*Female and Male Attendance in Kenyan Public Schools in 1953*

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<th>Year 1</th>
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<td>10,115</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Year 5</th>
<th>Year 6</th>
<th>Year 7</th>
<th>Year 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intermediate</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>20,134</td>
<td>14,152</td>
<td>8,263</td>
<td>5,440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4,629</td>
<td>2,814</td>
<td>1,760</td>
<td>955</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Year 9</th>
<th>Year 10</th>
<th>Year 11</th>
<th>Year 12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Secondary</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2,072</td>
<td>946</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Year 13</th>
<th>Year 14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Post secondary</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>(Not given)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. From “Girls’ and Women’s Education in Kenya,” (p. 28) by F. N. Chege and D. N. Sifuna, 2006, Nairobi: UNESCO. Copyright 2006 by UNESCO.*

**Education in Independent Kenya**

In the years immediately following independence, Kenya saw a wave of change as new economic and political demands arose. Once Africans had assumed responsibility for the administration of the country, the need for education became imminent. Driven by the human capitalist theory, Kenyan leaders came to view education as the pathway to economic wealth (Acedo, 2002; Chege & Sifuna, 2006; Rharade, 1997). It was believed that, by investing in education, Kenya would produce a skilled workforce that would, in turn, contribute to the growth of the economy.
In 1964, the Kenyan government appointed the first Commission of Education in Independent Kenya (now commonly known as the Ominde Commission after its chairman Professor Simeon Ominde) to reform the country’s education system (Acedo, 2002; Eshiwani, 1993; Rharade, 1997). The Commission, which focused primarily on reforming secondary education, held the view that training middle grade workers would yield high socio-economic returns for the country (Eshiwani, 1993; Rharade, 1997). Upon surveying the education system, the Commission came up with a number of recommendations. According to Eshiwani (1993), the Ominde Commission’s recommendations (which were articulated in the Ominde report) were that education needed to foster nationhood and national unity. The report also recommended, among other things, that education promote social equality and bring to an end racial, ethnic, and religious discrimination. As Eshiwani (1993) stated:

The Commission noted that unless the education system served the people of Kenya without discrimination and promoted social unity regardless of color, race or creed, it would be incomplete in its endeavor to build one Kenya, one people.

(p. 27)

Another recommendation in the Ominde report was that the new Kenyan education system needed to incorporate the cultural and social values of the Kenyan people as a means of promoting national unity (Eshiwani, 1993; Sheffield, 1973).

Additionally, the Commission recommended that the education system respond to the challenge of national development and participation of the youth in development. Indeed during the first two decades after independence, education was seen as the key to
Prosperity both at the individual and the national levels. This created a public demand for education (Eshiwani, 1993) and resulted in a tremendous increase in school enrollment (Rharade, 1997). Table 2 below shows the steady increase in school enrollments at both the primary and secondary levels between 1963 and 1983.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Enrolment in primary Education</th>
<th>Enrolment in secondary education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>890,000</td>
<td>30,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>1,420,000</td>
<td>126,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>2,880,000</td>
<td>226,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>4,320,000</td>
<td>493,700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Girls’ enrollment in particular was notable. As research evidence has shown, girls’ enrollment rates rose faster than those of boys during the first two decades after independence (Chege & Sifuna, 2006; Eshiwani, 1993). According to Eshiwani (1993), the number of girls attending primary school gradually increased from 34 percent in 1963 to 45 percent in 1975. By 1979, girls accounted for 47.2 percent of the enrollments.

Similarly, girls’ enrollments at the secondary level increased steadily. However, these enrollments were not as significant as those experienced at the primary level. Table 3 below attests to the decline in the number of girls who attended secondary school during the first decade after Kenya’s independence. For example, enrollment rates for girls in Forms I to IV, i.e., freshman year to senior year, dropped from 32 percent in 1963
to 25 percent in 1967. It is also evident that the proportion of girls attending secondary school declined even further at upper secondary level.

Table 3

*Female Enrollment in Public Secondary Schools in Kenya, 1963-1979*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>% Forms I-IV</th>
<th>% Forms V-VI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>9,567</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>10,710</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>13,256</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>16,391</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>22,387</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>26,159</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>32,160</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>37,528</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>42,743</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>50,615</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>57,543</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>67,111</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>81,259</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>103,665</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>122,756</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>144,723</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>154,847</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. From Education in Kenya since independence* (p. 64), by G. S. Eshiwani, 1993, Nairobi, East African Educational Publishers.

There were numerous factors that led to the gender disparity in secondary education in Kenya. According to Eshiwani (1993), one of the main factors that led to this disparity was the limited number of girls’ secondary schools. Since secondary schooling during the colonial period and even after independence was not co-educational, boys and girls were forced to attend separate schools. The government’s focus on training African men for
leadership positions in the new administration (Chege & Sifuna, 2006) led to an expansion in boys’ schools whereas little focus was given to increasing girls’ schools. As a result, boys’ schools outnumbered those devoted to girls. Eshiwani (1993) as well as Sifuna and Chege (2006) have indicated that, in 1975, there were only 82 girls’ State-funded secondary schools compared to the 235 boys’ secondary schools of the same category.

This limited number of State-funded secondary schools saw the emergence of Harambee (self-help) schools (Eshiwani, 1993; Webster, 1999). Harambee is a Swahili slogan that was popularly used by Kenya’s first president, the late Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, to mean “let us pull together”. As the name suggests, Harambee schools were started with funds raised by the local communities themselves and did not receive any aid from the government. These schools sprang up in large numbers as parents responded to the decline in secondary school opportunities, and by 1966, Harambee schools outnumbered government schools (Acedo, 2002; Rharade, 1997). It is important to note here that girls were overrepresented at Harambee schools (Webster, 1999).

The emergence of Harambee schools became a concern to the government because of the alarming rate at which they increased (Chege & Sifuna, 2006). Since these schools did not receive any aid from the government, they provided very poor quality education. Not only did Harambee schools lack educational infrastructure, they also had poorly trained teachers. As a result, students who attended Harambee schools ended up performing poorly on national examinations in comparison to students at State-funded schools (Acedo, 2002; Eshiwani, 1993; Rharade, 1997). It is worth noting here that the
lack of facilities at these schools meant that they could not offer science subjects. Attempts by the government to suppress the growth of Harambee schools failed due to protests from parents who felt that these schools provided an option for children who could not get admission into government schools (Acedo, 2002; Chege & Sifuna, 2006; Rharade, 1997). Pressure from the public led the government to undertake the responsibility of improving Harambee schools which then resulted in an increase in secondary enrollments (Rharade, 1997).

However, the increase in enrollments was later met by the problem of unemployment, as school-leavers were unable to find jobs. Rharade (1997) and others have indicated that a majority of the school leavers were graduating without the vocational skills needed to support the Kenyan economy. According to Eshiwani (1993), the school-leavers’ problem resulted from the fact that the Ominde Commission did not make any significant structural changes to the Kenyan education system and, instead, adopted a somewhat similar system to the African education system that had existed in 1948. As such the educational system did not provide students with the relevant training to enable them to be incorporated into the labor market. Figure 1 below shows the 7-4-2-3 system of education that existed in 1966. The system consisted of seven years of primary school, four years of lower secondary school, two years of upper secondary school and three years of University.
According to Eshiwani (1993), by 1975 the government had realized that the existing educational system was doing very little to achieve the objectives proposed by the Ominde Commission. Indeed, as Rharade (1997) observed, “people began to doubt the effectiveness of an education system that had caused them to entertain hopes that were incompatible with economic realities” (p. 172). This ineffectiveness in the education system led the government to set up subsequent Commissions in an effort to further reform.
the education sector. During the 1980s, the Kenyan government came up with a new approach to education that would prepare the youth for self-reliance.

In January of 1985, the government launched the 8-4-4 system of education that provides for eight years of primary education, four years of secondary education and four years of university education. This new system of education was oriented towards technical and vocational training to equip students with scientific as well as practical knowledge. The objective of the 8-4-4 system was to ensure that school-leavers had the right attitude towards work and would not only seek white-collar jobs but would also be prepared for self-employment (Eshiwani, 1993; Rharade, 1997). With the introduction of the 8-4-4 system of education, the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) was introduced replacing the Certificate of Primary Education (CPE). The first cohort of standard eight pupils sat for the KCPE exam at the end of 1985 (Sifuna & Otiende, 1994). Since then, primary school leavers have continued to sit for the KCPE exam at the end of each year.

Constraints of the 8-4-4 System of Education

Since its introduction, the 8-4-4 system of education has faced a number of hurdles. Initially, the education system grappled with the problem of financing schools—a situation that led to schools being poorly equipped and lacking adequate, well-trained teachers to cater for the increased number of students. Lack of financial resources also meant that parents had to meet the cost of educating their children. The financial burden was particularly challenging for poor families given that secondary fees were constantly on the rise (Rharade, 1997).
The introduction of free primary education (FPE) in 2003 in an effort to universalize basic education has resulted in an increase in school enrolments. Yet this increase in enrollment has brought with it other challenges.

As Rharade (1997) has shown, the situation was particularly grim at high – achieving state schools where fees were often raised to twice or thrice the amount set by the Ministry of Education. According to Sifuna and Otiende (1994), “the stiff requirement for specific amounts of donations from parents did not take into account their different incomes. Hence some parents had considerable difficulties in finding the required amounts of money” (p. 256). Consequently, high achieving students from poor backgrounds could not afford to enroll in these schools while those from wealthy families were able to enroll in the schools despite getting poor grades on their KCPE exam (Rharade, 1997).

Along with the regional disparities that the 8-4-4 system created, it also widened the gender gap in education. The introduction of a science-oriented curriculum worsened girls’ situation (Chege & Sifuna, 2006). Most girls’ schools lacked the necessary resources and did not have qualified teachers for science and math subjects, and this reflected in girls’ poor performance in these subjects. This scenario has remained the same over the years with girls lagging behind boys in academic performance. As Table 4 shows, the only subjects that girls performed better than boys between the years 2000 and 2003 were languages.
Table 4

*KCSE Performance by Gender in Languages, Math and Science 2000-2003*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>37.4</td>
<td>32.2</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>34.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiswahili</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>47.9</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td>43.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>43.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>26.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>23.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. From “Girls’ and Women’s Education in Kenya,” (p. 67) by F. N. Chege and D. N. Sifuna, 2006, Nairobi: UNESCO. Copyright 2006 by UNESCO.*

Another disadvantage of the 8-4-4 system was the gender bias it created. As Chege and Sifuna (2006) have noted, teachers discouraged girls from pursuing science and mathematics courses, steering them towards more traditional female subjects. In addition, school textbooks continued to reinforce views that girls were incapable of doing science and technical subjects (Chege & Sifuna, 2006). Some critics have argued that this type of education, which reinforces socially constructed gender roles, shortchanges girls by subjecting them to a hidden curriculum (Lloyd, 2005; Lloyd & Mensch, 1999; Obura, 1991; Sadker & Sadker, 1994).

Although the Ministry of Education has reformed the curriculum making it more gender-responsive, by encouraging girls’ participation in science, mathematics, and technology (SMT) courses, girls continue to perform less well than boys in these subjects. It is not surprising then, that female students’ enrollment in public universities
remains lower than that of their male counterparts, and that only a small percentage of those who enroll pursue science-based courses (Society for International Development, 2006). Girls’ lack of participation in science-related courses means that they are limited in the kinds of careers they can pursue after school. Indeed, as numerous studies have shown, the education system in Kenya, like that in many other sub-Saharan African countries, restricts women and girls to low paying jobs in such areas as teaching, nursing, and secretarial work. It is these gendered barriers within the Kenyan education system that provide the premise for examining girls’ educational experiences at the secondary level.

*Theoretical Framework*

This study examines two aspects of relational theory, namely dialogical theory as advanced by such scholars as Martin Buber, Mikhail Bakhtin, Paulo Freire and Alexander Sidorkin among others and care theory as advanced by Nel Noddings. It is noteworthy here that there are numerous other scholars who have examined different aspects of relational theory and what is presented here merely examines the ideas of a few of these scholars. The study also explores the African concept of *ubuntu* which provides insight into how caring is understood within indigenous African culture.

*Relational Pedagogy*

A growing body of literature has emerged out of educational theory within the United States, that advocates for a pedagogy of relations in education. According to proponents of this theory, relational pedagogy does not lend itself to any specific definition. Bingham and Sidorkin (2004), for example, posited that there is no particular
philosophy or approach that can capture the whole concept of relational pedagogy, and that the concept refers to “a coalition of educational interests committed to engaging with modes of social change and educational reform for teachers and students” (p. 153).

Bingham and Sidorkin further noted that, while there seems to be a divergent philosophical approach to relational pedagogy, the underlying theme of the theory is that social relations should be at the center of education. Indeed, this is clearly reflected in the work of numerous proponents of relational theory, including Noddings, Martin, Biesta, Thayer-Bacon, Freire, and others, who have argued that the aim of education should be to foster human relations.

Proponents of relational theory have suggested that relational pedagogy should be the alternative to the current approach in schools. These theorists argue that, there is a need for educators to shift away from the current traditional approach to education, which relies on an authoritarian style of teaching and maintaining discipline in schools. In fact, relational theorists argue that it is this reliance on authoritarianism as a mode of managing and organizing schools that has inhibited educators from addressing the social problems that schools face today.

It is noteworthy that these concerns about the public school system are not recent claims. Radical educational theorists as far back as the early 1970s saw schools as sites that focused primarily on the reproduction of a dominant culture, which hinged on authoritarianism. However, while these radical theorists were able to identify the drawbacks in traditional educational theory, some critics have argued that they failed to provide an alternative discourse to counter those drawbacks. Moreover, these theorists
were also criticized for failing to provide a guide as to the role that education would play (Giroux & McLaren, 1989). In their critique of radical educational theorists, Giroux and McLaren (1989) wrote that:

Radical educational theorists have been so caught up in describing the reality of existing schools that they have failed to raise questions of purpose and meaning around what it is that schools should be. (p. 131)

Further, Giroux and McLaren (1989) have argued that, while radical educators focused on critiquing the moral problems that existed in schools, they did not provide “a well-defined theory of ethics and morality” that could justify their criticisms and provide a way out for educators. Additionally, these scholars have pointed out that radical educators have “underplayed the importance of redefining the actual roles that teachers might play as engaged critics and intellectuals in both the classroom and as part of a wider movement for social change” (p. 132). Arguably, the emergence of relational theory is an attempt by scholars to respond to the ethical and moral concerns within educational theory and practice that have long failed to be addressed.

While the term “relational pedagogy” appears to be a fairly new concept within the realm of educational theory, its proponents argue that the focus on relations is not anything new in academia. Bingham and Sidorkin (2004), who rightfully credits Frank Margonis for coming up with the term, posited that the idea of relations in education goes far back into the times of the Greek philosopher Aristotle. Indeed, as Teven and McCroskey (1997) alluded in their work, Aristotle’s early writings on the concept of ethos contributed to the present-day work on relations in education. Similarly, the classic
works of Martin Buber and Mikhail Bakhtin have shaped the current scholarship on relational theory. In more recent times, relational theory has emerged out of the work of feminist thinkers such as Nel Noddings, Carol Gilligan, and Jane Martin Roland who have advocated for an ethic of care in schools. In addition, non-feminist educational philosophers, such as Gadamer, Heidegger, Maragonis, and Sidorkin, have also contributed to the concept of relational theory.

What, then, do relations refer to? Bingham and Sidorkin (2004) noted that the term “relation” is an ambiguous one. According to these authors, “relation signifies the existential connections, a dynamic and functional interaction; it also signifies the logical relationships of terms” (p. 165). Further, these authors observed that, the term “relation” is understood and interpreted differently within different contexts and by different groups of people depending on their relationships with each other. Bingham and Sidorkin also noted that an underlying characteristic of any kind of relations is the connection to others.

Sidorkin (2002) described relation as the reality that is brought about as a result of plurality, or otherness of being. In other words, relation comes about because of the other’s existence. For Sidorkin, relation disallows the independent existence of the self. Hence, the self or individual exists only through relationship with others. Sidorkin (2002) best captured the notion of relational ontology metaphorically by writing that:

A relation between two people could be described as a puppeteer who directs two puppets simultaneously. He is invisible and disembodied; he can only hear through his puppets’ ears and see through their eyes. He has no voice of his own but can only speak with the voices of his puppets. He lives through the puppets,
but he is a real being. He breathes life into the puppets, creates their characters, determines their actions, and gives them dreams. (p. 96)

Sidorkin’s concept of relational ontology is drawn from the work of early 20th century thinkers such as Martin Buber and Mikhail Bakhtin who were the first philosophers to advance the notion of relational ontology. Both of these early thinkers focused specifically on the ontological concept of dialogue.

Martin Buber, who was born to a Jewish family in Austria in 1878, was well known for his writings on dialogue or the “I-Thou” philosophy. Buber’s writings on dialogue were very poetic in nature to the extent that he became known not only as a philosopher but also as a poet. Indeed some scholars who have studied Buber’s work have acknowledged that the poetic style in his writings make it difficult particularly for new readers to understand Buber. In the book *I and Thou*, translated from its original German version *Ich und Du*, Buber used the Old English second person singular pronoun *Thou* (often used in some religious texts to refer exclusively to God) to explain his theory of dialogue. By pairing the words “I” and “Thou” and “I” and “It”, Buber laid out the foundation of his dialogical ontology.

In Buber’s view, the world as it exists is twofold: the *I-Thou* or *Thou*, which is dialogical in nature and the *I-It* or *It*, which has to do with the subject-object experience. For Buber, *I-Thou* represents the world of relation whereas *I-It* represents a world without relation. The latter world, according to Buber was “set in the context of space and time” (1958, p. 100). Human beings, in Buber’s view, approached the world either from an *I-Thou* perspective or an *I-It* perspective. Buber wrote that, “there is no I taken in itself, but
only the \textit{I} of the primary word \textit{I-Thou} and the \textit{I} of the primary word \textit{I-It}. When a man says \textit{I} he refers to one of these” (p. 4). For Buber, each time human beings encounter others they either say \textit{Thou} or \textit{It}, meaning they either engage in a dialogical relation with others or they treat others as objects bound in the context of time and space. It is important to note here that Buber’s \textit{I-Thou} and \textit{I-It} concepts not only imply a relationship between human beings and others but also implied a relationship with other living and nonliving things. According to Buber, the \textit{Thou} or world of relation, is made up of three spheres namely: (a) mankind’s life with nature, (b) mankind’s life with other human beings, and (c) mankind’s life with spiritual beings. In Buber’s \textit{Between Man and Man}, Maurice Friedman, who wrote the introduction to the book, observed the following concerning the \textit{I-Thou} relationship:

\begin{quote}
I Thou is a relationship of openness, directness, mutuality, and presence. It may be between man and man [sic], but it may also take place with a tree, a cat, a fragment of mica, a work of art –all through all of these with God, the “eternal Thou” in whom the parallel lines of relations meet. (2004, p. xii)
\end{quote}

For Buber, mankind’s \textit{I-Thou} relation with others and with the world ultimately led to a relation with God or what he termed the “eternal \textit{Thou}”. In other words, each time human beings address fellow humans or nature dialogically, they are addressing God. It is clear that Buber’s religious beliefs were at the root of his existentialist ideas. Buber believed that the essence of human existence was a mutual relation between man and his fellow man as well as with God and nature. Buber’s writings were largely
influenced by his beliefs and ideas about God and spirituality. In *I and Thou*, Buber wrote that:

> To look away from the world, or to stare at it, does not help a man to reach God; but he who sees the world in Him stands in His presence...men do not find God if they stay in the world. They do not find Him if they leave the world. He who goes out with his whole being to meet his *Thou* and carries to it all being that is in the world, finds Him who cannot be sought. (1958, p. 79)

Thus, Buber believed that to encounter God, human beings had to be in relationship with others and with nature. In his closing remarks of *I and Thou*, Buber acknowledged that the *I-Thou* relationship was not always fully mutual or reciprocal. Citing the example of the *I-Thou* relationship between a genuine educator and his/her pupil, Buber wrote that, whereas the educator-pupil relation was mutual because of the “giving” and “taking” involved, such a relationship could not attain full mutuality because of its one-sided nature. Buber continued this line of argument in his book *Between Man and Man* where he posited that in the educator-pupil relation, “he (the educator) experiences the pupil being educated, but the pupil cannot experience the educating of the educator. The educator stands at both ends of the common situation, the pupil only at one end” (2002, p. 119).

While Buber’s relational ontology is important in understanding the primacy of relations to human existence, some scholars have argued that his ideas about dialogue fall short of benefiting educational theory. Certainly the theory does not clarify where the educator-pupil relation would fit. Would it still fit in the *I-Thou* world (even though it
lacks full mutuality) or would it fall back into the I-It world? It is this lack of clarity that has made Buber’s dialogical theory problematic. Some scholars, such as Sidorkin (2002), have argued that Buber’s taxonomy of relations lacks nuance because of its extreme duality. In Sidorkin’s view, it is Buber’s “deep pessimism about the achievability of dialogue (genuine I-Thou relations) in the situation of educational encounter” that makes his dialogical ontology irrelevant to educational theory. However, one can argue that Buber’s dialogical ontology, while lacking nuance, is still important to educational theory because it has laid the foundation for relational pedagogy in education.

Like Buber, Mikhail Bakhtin’s notion of dialogue is a significant contribution to educational theory. Bakhtin’s ideas were expressed through his literary critique of Dostoevsky’s work in his (Bakhtin’s) book titled Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics. Bakhtin (who had a fascination for the novelistic genre) sought to interpret meaning through the language in literary texts.

Bakhtin saw Dostoevsky’s work as a new kind of novelistic genre that not only presented a new art form but “a new artistic model of the world” as well. Bakhtin referred to this art form as polyphonic. The conclusion of Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics captures Bakhtin’s view of Dostoevsky’s new artistic novel:

We consider the creation of the polyphonic novel an enormous step forward not only in the development of novelistic prose, i.e., of all the genres developing within the orbit of the novel, but in general in the development of the artistic thinking of mankind. It seems to us that it is possible to speak directly of a special polyphonic mode of artistic thinking, which extends beyond the bounds of the
novelistic genre. This mode of thinking opens up aspects of man – above all the thinking human consciousness and the dialogical sphere of man’s existence – which cannot be artistically mastered from a monological position. (1973, p. 228)

Notably, Bakhtin’s analysis of Dostoevsky’s work, unlike that of other literary scholars, did not take on a purely linguistic approach. Hence, Bakhtin did not view his analysis of Dostoevsky’s work merely as an analysis of the language structure in the text but rather as an analysis of what he called the word. The word, in this case, refers to “language in its concrete and living totality, as opposed to language as the specific subject matter of linguistics” (Bakhtin, 1973, p. 150).

Language is essentially made “alive” only within the context of dialogical relationships. As Bakhtin (1973) asserted, “dialogical intercourse is the genuine sphere of the life of language. Language’s entire life, in whatever area it is used (in everyday life, in business, science, art, etc.), is permeated by dialogical relationships” (p. 151). For Bakhtin, this dialogical aspect of the word made it impossible to interpret Dostoevsky’s work from a purely linguistic approach. In Bakhtin’s view, the word in Dostoevsky’s poetics fell “outside the bounds of linguistics” and hence could only be analyzed from the context of metalinguistics. Metalinguistics, in this sense, meant the study of those aspects of language that could not be explained by using purely linguistic criteria.

The polyphonic novel, according to Bakhtin, consists of characters that have their own voices independent of the author’s voice. The author’s voice is like that of any other character in the novel. The author’s voice does not take precedence over the other voices. In Bakhtin’s view, neither the author nor any other voice can treat the character as an
object to be studied or analyzed. Bakhtin (1973) wrote the following concerning the character in Dostoevsky’s work:

The hero’s word about himself and about the world is every bit as valid as the usual authorial word; it is not subordinated to the objectivized image of the hero as one of his characteristics, nor does it serve as a mouthpiece for the author’s voice. It possesses an exceptional independence in the structure of the work, standing as if alongside the author’s word and in a peculiar way combining with it and with the full-valued voices of the other heroes. (p. 5)

Dostoevsky’s polyphonic novel also allows for the existence of multiple conflicting human voices that were represented by different independent subjects in the novel. In Bakhtin’s view, it was only through this multiplicity of voices that truth and meaning could actually exist. In other words, truth and meaning could not reside in any one individual voice, as is often the case in a monological worldview. Indeed, Bakhtin argued that it is the polyphonic style in Dostoevsky’s novel that made it impossible for many of Dostoevsky’s critics to fully comprehend his work. According to Bakhtin (1973), an attempt to understand Dostoevsky’s works from a monological point of view led to his writings appearing chaotic and incomprehensible. The key to understanding Dostoevsky’s novels, in Bakhtin’s view, was polyphony.

Notably, in the polyphonic truth, while different voices interact simultaneously, they never at any point merge but, rather, remain in contradiction to one another. In Bakhtin’s view, this contradiction was not necessarily a bad thing. If anything, such contradiction was seen as necessary in the production of meaning. As Sidorkin (1999)
observed with regard to Bakhtin’s polyphony, “every meaning is co-authored; every word uttered by an individual belongs in part to somebody else” (p.13).

It is important to point out here that Bakhtin’s concept of the polyphonic truth was used metaphorically to describe his theory of the dialogical self. The character in the polyphonic novel came to represent the inner man, or what Bakhtin referred to as the “man in man”. The idea that meaning was co-authored really meant that the inner being, or the self, could only be revealed in communion with others. Communion in this sense takes place when different human voices are allowed to express themselves. Like Bakhtin, Sidorkin posited that an attempt to reduce these contradicting voices into one voice would result in the demise of the self. The dialogical self as seen by Bakhtin was constantly incomplete and unfinalized.

Bakhtin’s writings, like those of Buber, have arguably had an influence on current American educational thought. Scholars, such as Sidorkin (1999) for instance, clearly share Bakhtin’s ideas of polyphony. In his assertion of the polyphonic truth, Sidorkin (1999) wrote that:

My claim is that truth about human affairs should be polyphonic, because polyphony is a fundamental human condition. We simply cannot know anything significant about ourselves by using just one brain; none of us can state any truth alone. (p. 31)

Using Bakhtin’s ideas on polyphony, Sidorkin (1999) asserted that dialogue is essential in classroom discourse. Like Bakhtin, Sidorkin viewed dialogue as something much more than just a mere form of communication. In fact, Sidorkin took on a radical
approach by arguing that dialogue must not be treated as a means to an end but, rather, as an end in itself. In other words, Sidorkin cautioned educators not to use dialogue as a means through which to achieve educational aims. Instead, the focus should be on ensuring that the aim of education is to create a dialogical/relational environment for students.

In his discussions on the dialogical in classroom discourse, Sidorkin used what he termed the three drinks theory to explicate three sequential discourses that take place in the classroom, namely the first, second, and third discourse. The first discourse is the authoritative one. Here, only a single person (the teacher) speaks while everybody else (students) listen. According to Sidorkin, this monological discourse builds the foundation for dialogue as different listeners begin to interpret meaning.

The second discourse is talking out and is characterized by students talking over or interrupting the teacher and/or the classroom conversation. Sidorkin posited that talking over is an attempt by students to enter into a dialogical relation. Talking over also shows the need for students to share their opinion with either the teacher or other students. Talking over allows students to voice their disagreements or their view on things. In essence, this discourse allows room for contradictory voices. In Sidorkin’s view, classroom discourse should allow moments when students can talk over, interrupt, question, and challenge what is taught. It is during this second discourse that the second half of meaning is produced. That meaning comes about as a result of students responding or reacting to classroom discourse. While Sidorkin encouraged teachers to
allow for talking over discourse in the classroom, he also pointed out that teachers ought to teach students how to interrupt and challenge wisely.

The third discourse is the point where students break out and engage in chatter or small talk as well as laughter. Sidorkin referred to this discourse as a reconciling discourse because it no longer centered on individual opinions but, rather, on a carefree conversation. This discourse is vital because it gives students a sense of ownership over knowledge. The three discourses of classroom dialogue that Sidorkin explicated suggest that dialogue has its moments and that teachers need to allow students to experience those dialogical moments in the classroom.

Like Sidorkin, Paulo Freire, whose work on critical pedagogy has been very significant in educational theory, was a strong advocate of dialogical ontology. In his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire argued that human beings could only exist within a dialogical realm. For Freire, dialogue was more than just a means of communication. Freire (2006) posited that the word is “more than just an instrument which makes dialogue possible” (p. 87). In Freire’s view, the word is two-dimensional and constitutes both reflection and action. In other words, when human beings speak, their words must always be accompanied by action –the kind of action that transforms the world. This transforming of the world, as a result of reflection and action, is what Freire called praxis. Freire further argued that if humans speak but do not take action to transform the world, then their speech becomes “idle chatter” –it is meaningless. On the other hand, if too much emphasis is placed on action at the expense of reflection, then it “negates the true praxis and makes dialogue impossible” (2006, p. 88). Therefore, for
dialogue to take place, human beings must be allowed to participate in transforming or naming the world. Freire (2006) described dialogue as:

The encounter between men, mediated by the world, in order to name the world. Hence, dialogue cannot occur between those who want to name the world and those who do not wish this naming –between those who deny others the right to speak their word and those whose right to speak has been denied them. (p. 88)

Arguably, Freire’s description of the dialogical concept concurs with Bakhtin’s ideas of the polyphonic truth. While Freire did not necessarily use the term “polyphony” in his writings, it is evident that his views border on the notion that true meaning can only come about where there is a multiplicity of voice. Freire further argued that one cannot impose truth on others. Indeed, Freire disputed the very idea of truth being treated as something to be merely deposited in others. For Freire, the interpretation of truth by some on behalf of others is in and of itself an act of domination. Freire (2006) wrote that:

Saying the word is not the privilege of some few persons, but the right of everyone. Consequently, no one can say a true word alone –nor can she say it for another, in a prescriptive act, which robs others. (p. 88)

Freire cautioned that dialogue must not be used by one person to dominate others but, rather, that all those who engage in dialogue should use it as an instrument to conquer the world and liberate mankind. Further, Freire noted that dialogue cannot take place where love is absent. According to Freire, it is impossible for men and women to name the world or to transform it without having a profound love for the world and for people.

Palmer echoed similar sentiments in his book *To Know As We Are Known*. Palmer (1993)
stated that, “the act of knowing is an act of love, the act of entering and embracing the reality of the other, of allowing the other to enter and embrace our own” (p. 8).

As a critical theorist whose ideologies were deeply rooted in humanism, Freire saw education as an instrument for social change and one that would counter the oppressive systems that existed in society. Freire argued that education should aim to raise the consciousness of learners so that they can engage in critical or reflective thinking. The consciousness raising, or **conscientização** that Freire (2006) often referred to in his native Portuguese, meant “learning to perceive social, political and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality” (p. 35).

As a radical educator, Freire was against repressive forms of education and criticized what he referred to as the banking concept of education. According to Freire, banking education is the kind of education where teachers played the role of the narrator while students played the role of passive listeners. This narrative character of education, according to Freire, leads students to merely receive, memorize, and repeat what they are taught by teachers, and in doing so, “negates education and knowledge as a process of inquiry” (2006, p. 72).

Furthermore, as Freire observed, banking education is oppressive in the sense that it regards students as individuals who know nothing and therefore cannot participate creatively in the construction of knowledge. With such a perception, educators then proceed to impose ideas on students while denying them the opportunity to participate in the naming of the world. Freire (2006) illustrated the disadvantage of such an approach to education by stating that:
The more students work at storing the deposits entrusted to them, the less they develop the critical consciousness which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of that world. The more completely they accept the passive role imposed on them, they more they tend simply to adapt to the world as it is and to the fragmented view of reality deposited in them. (p. 73)

Similarly, hooks (2003), whose work has been influenced by Freire’s writings, observed that this mode of education denies, “the emotional presence and wholeness of students” given that students not only seek to engage with the material but with teachers as well (p. 129). Indeed, banking education oversimplifies the process through which knowledge comes about. Freire (2006) posited that, “knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other” (p. 72). Arguably, knowledge is dynamic and in the constant process of becoming and, as such, cannot be treated as static reality. Education, as Freire saw it, is an ongoing activity that human beings engage in as they search to understand themselves and their ever-changing reality.

Banking education, according to Freire, creates a contradiction by dichotomizing the teacher-student relationship. Hence, by treating teachers, on the one hand, as the owners of knowledge and students, on the other hand, as the receptacles of that knowledge, banking education disallows mutual trust between teachers and students. Freire (2006) wrote that:

Trust is contingent on the evidence which one party provides the others of his true, concrete intentions; it cannot exist if that party’s words do not coincide with
their actions. To say one thing and do another –to take one’s own word lightly – cannot inspire trust. (p. 91)

Freire (2006) argued that a climate of mutual trust is necessary between dialoguers in order to produce “ever closer partnership in the naming of the world” (p. 91). In other words, for students to be able to participate in the creation of knowledge they must be able to trust teachers and that trust can only come about through a genuine teacher-student dialogical relationship.

In place of banking education, Freire proposed what he referred to as problem-posing education. According to Freire, problem-posing education presents students with problems that relate to the world, and the students in turn, are challenged to respond to those problems through reflection. Students’ reflections then lead teachers to reform their position on the problem being discussed. In doing so, both teachers and students participate in the creation of knowledge so that knowledge is no longer treated as the private property of teachers but, rather, the direct product of both teachers and students. Hence, problem-posing education creates new roles for both teachers and students so that each plays the role of teacher and student simultaneously. Freire (2006) best captured this concept by writing that:

Through dialogue, the teacher of the students and the students of the teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with students-teachers. The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach. (p. 80)
In essence, Freire proposed an educational approach in schools that shifts away from authoritarianism and intellectualism to a pedagogy of relations. For Freire, this shift meant rethinking the aims of education as well as redefining the role that educators play in schools.

As influential as Freire’s ideas have been to educational theory and practice, they have not gone unchallenged. For instance, Freire’s view that both teachers and students ought to simultaneously teach and learn from each other has created a huge debate amongst some of his critics who argue that the teacher’s role cannot be equated with that of students (Bartlett, 2005). However, in Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Freire noted that the arguments on “authority” were “no longer valid” because the role of educators was to promote freedom and not to inhibit it (p. 80).

Giroux and McLaren (1989) made a similar assertion and proposed that the notion of authority in education should be a “mediating referent” for radical educators to rethink “the purpose and meaning of public education and radical pedagogy” (p. 136). These authors propagated what they termed an emancipatory model of authority where educators engage in a pedagogy that empowers students not only to think critically but also to be active participants in the ongoing wider societal struggle for democracy, freedom and equality.

Like Freire, Giroux, McLaren, and others, feminist care ethicists have added their voices to the need to rethink public education by propagating an ethics of care in schools. Therefore, to examine the contribution of care theory to current educational discourse, I now turn to the work of Carol Gilligan, Nel Noddings, and Jane Roland Martin whose
writings on the “care ethic” provide a framework for understanding the need for caring in schools.

*Care Theory*

The ethics of care, which some have referred to by other terms such as “feminine ethics”, “female ethics,” and “feminist moral theory”, has its origin in feminism (Diller, 1988). According to Diller (1988), early proponents of care ethics were preoccupied with the way women responded to moral concerns in society. Diller (1988) noted that these theorists found that whenever questions about moral issues in society came up, “women resonated with the emphasis on care, nurturance, human connections and responsibility” (p. 326). For many women, the ethics of care became a paradigm on which they could lay claim; one that “they could recognize as their own” (Diller, 1988, p. 326).

The work of clinical psychologist Carol Gilligan, in particular, has demonstrated how the care ethics provides the framework within which women’s voices can be heard. In her controversial book titled *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women’s Development* first written in the early 1970s, Gilligan wrote that she authored the book in order to weave women’s voices into psychological theory and “to reframe the conversation between women and men” (p. xxvi). Gilligan was writing at a time when moral development theory within her field of psychology trivialized and ignored what was considered to be a feminist moral ethic. By writing *In a Different Voice*, Gilligan wanted to disprove the work of moral development theorists, such as Freud, Piaget, and Kohlberg, that seemed to suggest that women had a deficiency in their moral development.
Gilligan (1993) criticized the work of her associate Lawrence Kohlberg and others within the field of psychology for propagating a moral development theory that relied purely on men’s experiences to explain the human experience while failing to take into account the experiences of women. In her introductory Letter to Readers, which was the preamble to her book, Gilligan voiced the questions that were central to her work by writing that, “my questions are about voice and relationship. And my questions are about psychological processes and theory, particularly theories in which men’s experience stands for all of human experience –theories which eclipse the lives of women and shut out women’s voices” (p. xiii).

Noddings (2002), on her part, has argued that women have always had to bear “the larger burden of caregiving throughout history” (p. 53). Not only have women borne the responsibility of caring for children but for other groups as well, including the sick, the disabled and the elderly. The caregiving responsibility in Noddings view (2002), has always been expected of women in society to the extent that those who declined engaging in the work of caring were often regarded as unnatural women. Martin (1992) shared similar views when she wrote that social critics have always made “mothers feel guilty for doing what fathers have done since at least the nineteenth century. Blind to historical fact, they forget that it is not women’s exodus from the private home each day that creates a vacuum in our children’s lives. It is the exodus of both sexes” (p. 4).

Today, more and more women, particularly those in Western countries, have escaped the confines of the home to pursue professional careers. To use Martin’s words (1992), women have entered the procession of those leaving the private home for the public
world en masse. This shift, according to Noddings, has simultaneously led to a public
debate about who is going to care for children, the ill, the elderly and the disabled who are
still in need of care. Joining in the debate, Martin (1992) wrote that women cannot be the
only ones taking the blame for the plight children suffer when parents leave the home for
work in the public sphere. In fact, Martin stated categorically that the debate on caring
should not be about who we should blame for not caring but, rather, what we can do as a

The question for us as we watch the procession of people move each morning from
private house to public world is not, Who can we blame? We have to ask ourselves
here and now, What are we as a nation, a culture, a society going to do about the
children who are left behind? (p. 4)

For her part, Noddings proposed an ethics of care that is inclusive of both women
and men. In *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*, first published
in 1984, Noddings outlined a detailed description of what an ethics of care should look like.
One of the themes that resonated in this early work is that the care ethic is relationally
ontological. The notion here is that human beings can only exist in relation to others.
Noddings (1984) wrote that:

I am not naturally alone. I am naturally in relation from which I derive
nourishment and guidance...My very individuality is defined in a set of relations.
This is my basic reality. (p. 51)

Noddings’ care ethic (2002) also advances the notion that ethical caring is “thoroughly
relational” and is an encounter or connection between people. For Noddings, such an
encounter involves both the carer (the one doing the caring) and the cared-for (or one receiving the care), and is only complete when both parties contribute to the relation in certain ways.

For the carer or one-caring, their state of consciousness must be characterized by what Noddings has termed *engrossment* and *motivational displacement*. Engrossment refers to the open, receptive attitude of the carer towards the cared-for. It is a form of attentiveness where the carer really hears, sees or feels what the other (the cared-for) tries to convey. Noddings (2005) wrote that, “the engrossment or attention may last only a few moments and it may or may not be repeated in future encounters, but it is full and essential in any caring encounter” (p. 16). According to Noddings (2005), her concept of *engrossment* is best captured by Simone Weil’s notion of “attention”. Describing attention, Weil (1951) wrote that, “the soul empties itself of all its own contents in order to receive into itself the being it is looking at just as he is in all his truth” (p. 115). Such attention is embodied in a love for the other (Murdoch, 1970; Ruddick, 1995; Weil, 1951).

*Motivational displacement* on the other hand, has to do with the carer’s motive energy flowing towards the cared-for’s expressed needs. In other words, having received “what the other conveys”, the carer begins to have a desire to respond to the other’s needs (p. 16). This is a moment of reflection on the part of the carer where she/he thinks of what they can do to help the cared-for.

Just as much as the carer has a role to play in the caring relation, so does the cared-for. According to Noddings, for a caring relation to be complete, the one being cared-for
must receive, recognize and respond to care. Further, Noddings also made it clear that such recognition must not always be in the form of gratitude. Noddings (2008) wrote that:

The cared-for responds to the curer’s efforts in some way, signaling that the caring has been received…The response need not be of explicit gratitude. Often, given the age or situation of the cared-for, no such expression of gratitude can be expected, and gratitude is not necessary. Still a response of recognition is essential to a caring relation. It also serves as further information for the listening, watching carer. It helps her decide what to do next. (p. 163)

As Noddings has demonstrated, the relational aspect of the care ethic distinguishes it from a virtue ethic in the sense that the care ethic does not emphasize caring as an individual attribute but, rather, as an ethical ideal. This ethical ideal, according to Noddings (2002), constitutes “a set of memories of caring and being cared for that we regard as manifestations of our best selves and relations” (p. 13). Therefore, ethical caring enables people to draw upon their own experiences of care to respond attentively to those they encounter that might not necessarily be people they know, love, or for whom they have positive regard. As Noddings (2002) observed, “ethical caring is always aimed at establishing, restoring, or enhancing the kind of relation in which we respond freely because we want to do so” (p. 14). Contrary to ethical caring, natural caring is based on a desire to care for those we love or those for whom we have a positive regard.

In describing the relevance of care ethics in schools, Noddings (2002) pointed out that the care ethic is central to moral education. For Noddings, the aim of education
should be to produce moral people. Noddings expounded on four components of moral education, namely modeling, dialogue, practice, and confirmation. Noddings (2002) argued that educators need to model caring so that students can understand what caring looks like and be able to engage in care. However, Noddings cautioned educators not to be so preoccupied with themselves as models because in doing so, there is a danger of shifting the focus away from the cared-for (in this case, the learner). Noddings proposed instead that educators care “unselfconsciously” and direct their attention to the relation between themselves and those being cared-for.

Noddings also emphasized the importance of teachers as carers taking the time (in the absence of learners) to reflect on their roles as models. Through such reflection, argued Noddings, educators are able to re-examine the way in which they engage in caring, and whenever necessary, “modify their behavior” so that they convey the right message to students.

In her care ethic, Noddings (2002) also examined dialogue as a component of moral education. Noddings concurred with Paulo Freire about the importance of dialogue in education, arguing that, “dialogue is the most fundamental component of the care model” (p. 16). Noddings (2002) went on to explain that dialogue allows both the carer and the cared-for to be attentive to each other. The Noddings wrote that:

People in true dialogue within a caring relation do not turn their attention wholly to intellectual objects, although, of course, they may do so for brief intervals. Rather, they attend nonselectively to each other. (p. 16)
The third component of moral education within the ethic of care is practice. According to Noddings (2002), both boys and girls should be taught to engage in caregiving rather than restricting it to women and/or girls. Noddings observes that, just as women are now venturing into areas that have traditionally been associated with men, boys must also learn how to engage in caregiving.

The last component of moral education that Noddings (2002) examined is what she calls confirmation. Confirmation here has to do with bringing out the best in others even when they engage in uncaring acts. In doing so, the carer is able to “draw the cared-for’s attention to his or her better self” (p. 20). An important aspect of confirmation is that it requires the carer to know the cared-for well enough to understand what their motivation is. Noddings (2002) wrote that:

Confirmation is not a ritual act that can be performed for any person by any other person. It requires a relation. Carers have to understand their cared-fors well enough to know what it is they are trying to accomplish.

(p. 21)

Besides providing an outline of the components of moral education, Noddings also analyzed the problem that public pre-collegiate schools are currently facing and offered suggestions on how educators can reorganize the curriculum so as to ensure that it is morally and intellectually adequate for contemporary society. In Noddings’ view, schools need to be places where both girls and boys learn about caregiving so that they can, in turn, extend that care to others in society. The problem with public schools in the United States, according to Noddings, is that they are organized around a traditional liberal education
whose curriculum is limited to a narrow set of disciplines. As a result, students are restricted to these traditional disciplines and cannot venture into and develop capacities in other areas or “centers of care” in which they have a genuine interest. In addition, liberal education does not take into account the needs of society. As Noddings demonstrated, society is experiencing massive social changes such as an increase in violence, poverty, unemployment and other social ills that require individuals and the society at large to respond caringly. Yet liberal education assumes that an academic approach will suffice in addressing these societal ills.

Furthermore, liberal education falls short of taking into consideration what parents really want for their children. Noddings (2005) pointed out that most parents want their children to be happy, to find love and friendship and to be accepted by society. The question here is: How will children become caring, loving and lovable people when they have not been prepared to engage in the types of interactions that will lead to such relationships? Arguably, it is these concerns about the inadequacy of liberal education that prompted Noddings (2005) and other care ethicists (Gilligan, 1993; Martin, 1992; Held, 2006) to offer an alternative approach to traditional education.

Noddings (2002) argued that there needs to be a shift away from the current emphasis on traditional disciplines towards a curriculum that will “accommodate the multiple capacities and interests of students” (p. 99). Noddings proposed that schools incorporate a curriculum that centers on themes of love, care and friendship. Further, she noted that “all students should be engaged in a general education that guides them in caring
for self, intimate others, global others, plants, animals, and the environment, the human-
made world and ideas” (2005, p. 173).

According to Noddings (2005), the current curriculum can be reorganized in such a way that it incorporates the significant contributions that women have made in the care tradition. For Noddings, this essentially means that the liberal curriculum needs to put more value on the occupations that have been traditionally associated with women. The reason behind such an argument is that women’s contributions (while significant) have always been undermined by a male-dominated society that tends to place more value on activities traditionally associated with men. Therefore, Noddings’ alternative vision is to redesign a curriculum based on the care tradition associated with women and one that will enable students to explore their own “centers of care”.

Additionally, Noddings (2005) recommended that the liberal curriculum be organized in such a way that it ensures continuity in schools. For Noddings, such continuity is necessary particularly given that caring in education requires “strong relations of trust” that can only be built with time. The author suggested four different forms of continuity, namely:

*Continuity of purpose* – where the main aim of education would be to ensure that students are cared for and encouraged to care deeply

*Continuity of place* – where students stay in school long enough to gain a sense of belonging and also form a caring community

*Continuity of people* – where teachers stay with students for three or more years and are able to oversee the academic development of students
Continuity of curriculum – where the curriculum will offer a variety of specialized programs that encompass themes of care

While Noddings’ care ethic might prove to be useful in transforming liberal education, some critics argue that the theory has its own drawbacks. Diller (1988) for example, argued that care theory faces two major criticisms in particular; the criticism that it is a domain ethic and that it is a dangerous ethic. According to Diller (1988), care theory, as a domain ethic, seems to focus on special and nurturing relations, such as those between mothers and children and/or teachers and students. In Diller’s view (1988), such a theory is problematic because:

Historically, the domain associated with women’s territory and responsibilities, such as the family and “special relations”, were often considered peripheral, insubstantial, or perhaps worst of all, “uninteresting” for ethical theory. (p. 331)

Similarly, Diller (1988) pointed out that the danger of an ethic of care is that, in portraying the moral labor that women are engaged in, as carers, it fails to pay attention “to the conditions that exploit caring and the systematic deforming of women’s caring” (p. 333). Diller (1988) wrote that:

One danger here is that unless we consider what is actually happening, in our present economic, social and political contexts, to those who do these caring labors, we fail to talk seriously about the cost of women’s caring labors. It is easy then to perpetuate inequality and subordination by default or by not challenging the facile inference that caring is naturally “feminine work.” (p. 333)
However, Noddings’ writings do not in any way suggest that women alone should bear the burden of caring. On the contrary, Noddings argued that care should be the responsibility of both men and women. Noddings’ care ethic is in no way a “feminine ethic” that restricts itself to women’s domain. Care ethics is much broader in perspective and extends beyond the domains of mother-child and / or teacher-student relations. As Noddings’ (2005) work demonstrates, care theory provides a framework for understanding how we can care for self, for our inner circle of friends, neighbors and colleagues, for strangers and “distant others”, for our natural habitat, for “human-made objects” and for ideas. Indeed, Held (2006) argued that, “care is a value with the widest possible social implications”, and not merely a “family ethic” as its critics presume (p. 18).

Like Noddings, Martin (1992) advanced a theory of care, concern, and connection or what she called the three Cs. Martin asserts that there is a need to look at the American school system with fresh eyes. The author beckoned readers of her book, *The Schoolhome*, to join her “on the bridge” where she was “standing” so that they can see the vision that she saw for the new American school – the school with new possibilities and one that she calls the ‘Schoolhome.’

Martin’s idea of the ‘Schoolhome’ was influenced by Italian educator Maria Montessori’s model of the school as a home. Maria Montessori is renowned for her work on education in Italy, especially her involvement in setting up schools for poor children. Montessori’s *Casa dei Bambini* or the “Children’s Home”, provided a new kind of educational environment for children. Martin (1992) wrote that:
A homelike area does not transform a school or even a classroom into a home. And it was not the furniture that makes the Casa dei Bambini a children’s surrogate home. One dwells in a house. One feels safe, secure, loved, at ease—that is, “at home” –in a home, at least in the kind envisioned by Montessori.

(p. 12)

For Martin (1992), Montessori’s concept of education provides the backdrop from which to discover what the American school “can and should be”. Martin posited that the American school, what she also called the “Schoolhouse” should be converted into the “Schoolhome” or “a moral equivalent of home” so that children can feel at home in school. Indeed, Martin (1992) proposed a school that would nurture children in a similar way that a “good” home environment does. The Schoolhome that Martin (1992) proposed is one where children experience the three Cs of care, concern and connection, “such as being civil to adults and hospitable to guests, entering into the joys and sorrows of your intimates, feeling a sense of oneness with them, and responding directly to their needs” (p. 34). Martin also wrote that the Schoolhome should be a place of joy –a place where children experience laughter and happiness in the process of learning. Martin calls the Schoolhome a place of “domestic tranquility”. The Schoolhome, in Martin’s view, should provide an affectionate climate for children, and one that is intolerant of child abuse. Martin (1992) wrote that:

Although this will undoubtedly translate into daily practice differently in different circumstances, we can be sure of one thing. A school environment guided by domestic love cannot countenance violence, be it corporal punishment or
teachers’ sarcasm, the bullying of one child by others or terrorization of an entire class, the use of hostile language about whole races or the denigration of one sex. Such a place cannot tolerate the destruction of the children’s surroundings either. (p. 38)

Besides advocating for a “tranquil” Schoolhome, Martin (1992), like Noddings (2002), proposed a change in the American school curriculum. According to Martin, schools need to shift away from teaching children the same body of cultural facts that are based purely on Western/White culture and non-representative of the different races, religions, ethnicities, genders, and persons with disabilities that are represented in the American classroom. In Martin’s (1992) view, the lack of a curriculum that incorporates the experiences of other cultures in the American classroom engenders the alienation of these cultural groups. Martin (1992) posed the question: “Do we care what becomes of the women and the nonwhite men who today constitute the greater part of our population?” For Martin (1992), caring for this diverse population will mean incorporating their lived experiences, their work, their history and their perspectives into the curriculum of American schools. In this new American Schoolhome, teachers will realize that “it is important for everyone to have a knowledge of the white man’s culture as it is for the white man to have knowledge of cultures and perspectives other than his” (p. 70). Such an inclusive curriculum, asserted Martin (1992), will make everyone in the Schoolhome feel at home.
Although Western scholarship on the ethics of care as explicated above provides the framework for understanding caring relations in education, it falls short of exploring exhaustively the care construct in non-Western cultures, such as those in sub-Saharan Africa. It certainly would not suffice to explain how caring is understood in a country like Kenya.

The concept of *ubuntu*, also known as *utu* in Swahili (de Gruchy, Koopman & Strijbos, 2008; Seth, 2008), embodies a general framework for understanding caring from an African perspective. The term *ubuntu* has its origins in the Bantu languages of sub-Saharan Africa and can be translated to mean “personhood” (Battle, 2009). Others refer to *ubuntu* as humanness (Letseka, 2000; Louw, 1999; Venter, 2004). The root word –ntu, found in both “Ubuntu” and “Bantu” (people) literally means *being* or human being (Battle, 2009).

*Ubuntu* is an African philosophy “that promotes the good of society and includes humanness as an essential element of human growth” (Venter, 2004, p. 1). According to Venter (2004), one cannot speak of “authentic human existence” in the absence of *ubuntu*. Essentially, to have *ubuntu* is to be humane –to acknowledge that the other is human. Teffo (1998) wrote the following concerning the *ubuntu* philosophy:

*Ubuntu*...is a people-centered philosophy of life. It is an acknowledgement of the human status of another person. You and I are members of one and the same race, namely, the human race. The essence of man lies in the recognition of man as
man, before financial, political, and social factors are taken into consideration. Man is an end in himself and not a means. (p. 4)

At the core of the *ubuntu* philosophy is the recognition that community, as a whole, takes precedence over the individual. Unlike Western cultures that espouse individualist values (Chen, French, & Schneider, 2006; Hwa-Froelich & Vigil, 2004; Triandis, 1995), *ubuntu* promotes a sense of communalism. Venter (2004) wrote that, “in African culture, the community always comes first. The individual is born out of and into the community, therefore, will always be part of the community” (p. 149). Likewise, Mbiti (1969) observed that the cardinal point in the African view of humankind is rooted in the notion that, “I am, because we are, and since we are, therefore I am” (p. 108). Archbishop Desmond Tutu (cited by Reichbaum, 2007) expressed similar sentiments in his explanation of the *ubuntu* concept by noting that, “in our [African] culture, there is no such thing as a solitary individual. We say a person is a person through other persons. That we belong in the bundle of life.”

Within the African ethic of *ubuntu*, recognizing the other as human also means being caring and compassionate towards them. *Ubuntu* is a broad concept (Yum, 2007) encompassing various aspects of African personhood such as caring, compassion, generosity, kindness, interconnectedness, and respect. As Teffo (1996) posited:

The ideal person according to the African worldview (Weltanschauung) is one who has the virtues of sharing and compassion. The individual has a social commitment to share with others what he has. The ideal person will be judged in terms of his relationship with others, for example, his record in terms of kindness
and good character, generosity, hard work, discipline, honour [sic] and respect, and living in harmony. (p. 103)

Furthermore, “the philosophy of *ubuntu* helps with good human relationships, and to increase human value, trust and dignity” (Venter, 2004, p. 151). It is noteworthy that *ubuntu*, like the Western ethic of care, is not an innate virtue but, rather, a quality that is acquired through socialization (Letseka, 2000). In indigenous African societies, for example, children were raised to embrace and value *communalism* (Sifuna & Otiende, 1994). Bennaars (1993) wrote that Africa’s indigenous past, “was characterized by an atmosphere of communal care and concern, reflecting the explicit intention, both collective and individual, to make children come of age, to encourage them to be adults, to educate them” (p. 69).

While *ubuntu* remains a valuable philosophy that enriches the African way of life, some argue that the values it espouses are gradually slipping away due to modernization in Africa. Bennaars (1993), for example, wrote that care and concern within education have been replaced by a problematic pedagogy –one that is opportunistic –and the “result of (too) rapid socio-cultural, political-economic changes” (p. 70). According to Bennaars (1993), this problematic pedagogy has placed the African child in great need of care, concern, and guidance.

Given that *ubuntu* propagates care and concern for others in society, it provides a framework within which educators in sub-Saharan Africa can construct and engage in a communal form of caring in schools. Because *ubuntu* illuminates traditional African
beliefs surrounding the way people should relate with each another, it remains a relevant philosophy in African education and one that can challenge educators to care for children.

Application of Theory to the Study

Relational pedagogy, care theory, and ubuntu were relevant to this study in that they provided a framework for understanding teacher caring at St. Antonius. Through the lenses of both relational pedagogy and care ethics, I was able to gain an understanding of what caring relations look like in general terms. The concept of ubuntu, on the hand, helped provide insight into an African perspective of caring both within the larger society and more narrowly within schools.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the research methodology that was employed in the execution of this study. The chapter outlines a number of methodological procedures namely the research design, site selection, selection of subjects, data collection and data analysis.

The Research Design

The present study employed a qualitative single case study approach. Qualitative single case studies focus on understanding the particularity and complexity of a single case (Stake, 1995). In other words, the emphasis is placed primarily on understanding what specifically can be learned from the single case being studied. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) described a case study as a “specific, unique and bounded system” (p. 436). Further, Denzin and Lincoln noted that the case has a patterned behavior and that it is coherent and sequential. In citing examples of what a case might be, Denzin & Lincoln (2000) asserted that:

A case may be simple or complex. It may be a child, or a classroom of children, or an incident such as mobilization of professionals to study a childhood condition. It is one among others. In any given study, we will concentrate on the one. (p. 436)

It should be pointed out here that there does not seem to be a consensus in social science research as far as the definition of the case study is concerned. Denzin and Lincoln (2000), for instance, view case study research as focusing on both what is
particular (unique) and what is common (typical), while other social science researchers have argued that the case study focuses on what is typical of other cases (Best & Kahn, 2006). For those social science researchers who see the *case* as being typical of other *cases*, their emphasis tends to be on generalizing findings (Best & Kahn, 2006; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

In this case study, I focused on understanding the particularity of the single case at hand because of the potential lessons that could be drawn from it. As Denzin and Lincoln (2000) observed, the primary criterion for selecting a particular case is the opportunity to learn. Hence, the emphasis in this study was not on making generalizations to other cases but to understand, in depth, how teachers and students at St. Antonius constructed the concept of caring.

Qualitative case study research often employs multiple data collection techniques, such as interviews, direct observation, document analysis, and surveys (Best & Kahn, 2006; Marshall & Rossman, 1999). The use of these multiple techniques is often referred to as “triangulation” (Denzin & Lincoln 2000; Patton, 2002). Triangulation of data collection methods is considered an important aspect of qualitative research because it enables researchers to understand phenomena in depth (Patton, 2002). Furthermore, it helps clarify meaning and adds credibility to qualitative case study research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

Denzin and Lincoln have argued that there is not one particular methodological approach that is privileged over another and that the use of multiple data collection methods allows for the world to be viewed from different perspectives. Therefore,
triangulating data collection methods in this case study enabled me to make sense of the perceptions that teachers and students at St. Antonius Girls High School held regarding teacher caring.

Research Site

This study was conducted at a girls-only secondary school located in a farming community about 8 miles from the town of Kitale in Trans-Nzoia District. Trans-Nzoia District is located in Kenya’s Western Province. To protect the anonymity of the school, I will refer to it using a pseudonym. St. Antonius Girls High School is a four-year public institution that is based on the 8-4-4 system of education. The school was originally a coeducational rural Catholic secondary school that began in the early years after Kenya’s independence in 1963. However, in 1993, with the help of the Catholic Diocese of Kitale (which donated land), St. Antonius created a girls’ section, which was then named St. Antonius Girls High School. The Boys’ section was renamed St. Antonius Boys High School. The two schools are within close proximity—separated by only a fence.

Through my conversations with one of the oldest teachers at the school, I learned that there were two main issues that influenced the decision for St. Antonius Secondary School to separate boys and girls:

1. Girls were performing poorly and not continuing on to the University and this raised a lot of concern in the community. It was believed that separating girls from boys would enable the former to perform better. At the time, there were only two girls-only schools in the District, one of which performed very well at the national level.
2. Parents became very concerned about the safety of girls following the tragedy that happened at St. Kizito Mixed Secondary School in the Eastern Province of Kenya in 1991 where 70 girls were raped and 17 others were burnt to death in their dormitories by their male counterparts.

Since its inception in 1993, St. Antonius Girls has transformed itself from a relatively low-performing rural boarding school to one that now ranks among the top five girls’ secondary schools in the District. In recent years, the school has become highly selective, admitting girls based primarily on their academic merit.

St. Antonius Girls serves approximately 600 girls from diverse cultural, religious and economic backgrounds. The school has a total of 34 employees, including a school principal, 27 teachers, 2 administrative support staff, 2 security guards, 1 school nurse, and a cook. The school is sponsored in part by the Kitale Catholic Diocese and the Kenya government through the Constituency Development Fund (CDF). The Constituency Development Fund (CDF) was established in 2003 through an act of parliament with the aim of combating poverty at the grassroots level. Through the fund, an estimated 2.5 percent of the annual national revenue is evenly distributed to all 210 constituencies in the country for various development projects including education (Kenya Government, 2003).

The school has an administrative block, 1 science laboratory, 1 computer laboratory, and 12 classrooms. Each stream consists of 3 classes that range from Form 1 to 4. Each class has an average of 50 students. The age of the girls ranges from 14 to 18 years.
While St. Antonius admits girls from diverse religious backgrounds, it adheres to a strict Catholic tradition that requires all the girls to attend mass at least twice during the week. Mass is conducted early in the morning between 6:45 am and 7:30 am. Girls have to walk about half a mile from the school to the chapel. When going for mass, girls have to be accompanied by teachers since they are not allowed out of the school compound without supervision. Attending mass gives girls an opportunity to intermingle with residents from the area, including students from neighboring schools.

Catholic values shape the way girls at St. Antonius conduct themselves. Besides praying during mass and at the morning assembly, girls also say prayers at mealtimes and just before sitting for an exam. There is a high level of discipline at St. Antonius. The students are very quiet and orderly during lessons. A guest visiting the school will scarcely hear noise or commotion in the classroom as most students busy themselves with academic work and other learning activities.

Selection of Research Participants

Participants selected for this study consisted of 36 girls and 10 teachers (5 males and 5 females). A number of sampling techniques were used to select participants. A purposeful sampling strategy was used to identify two Form 3 classes and two Form 4 classes (the U.S. equivalent of 11th and 12th grade) to participate in the study. According to Patton (1990), purposeful sampling allows researchers to select information-rich cases that would provide an in-depth understanding of the topic under study. Students in the classes selected were considered to be information-rich as they had been at the school for
a considerable amount of time. It was presumed that these students had developed an opinion about their teachers during their duration at the school.

To identify those girls who were willing to participate in the study, I made an announcement in each of the four classes, and explained the nature of the study in detail. I also informed the girls that to participate in the study they would need to sign an assent form and also have their parents sign a written consent form. Girls who volunteered to participate in the study were provided with copies of the two forms (see appendix A and B). It was agreed that the girls would seek their parents’ consent during the Visiting Day weekend when parents came to visit. Girls were also informed that the study was voluntary and that they were free to withdraw from it at anytime without penalty. In addition, they were assured that any information they shared would be kept confidential.

The girls recruited for the present study were between the ages of 15 and 17 years. This cohort of students provided the researcher with a varied sample in terms of age, class/grade, and duration at the school. The diversity in the sample of participants also helped ensure that different perspectives were represented (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

Like the student participants, teachers were selected using purposeful sampling. Since every instructor would have perceptions of their interpersonal relationship with students, it was presumed that all the teachers at the school had the potential to be information-rich cases. Therefore, random purposeful sampling enabled me to select a small number of teachers for the study. As Patton (1990) pointed out, random purposeful sampling entails the random selection of a “limited number of cases from a larger purposeful sample” (p. 182).
Another sampling strategy that proved useful in the selection of teachers was opportunistic sampling. Opportunistic sampling has to do with the researcher “following new leads during fieldwork” (Patton, 1990, p. 182). Therefore, I took advantage of some of the leads provided by students during interviews to sample teachers who were identified as caring. To ease the recruiting process, I established rapport with teachers during the initial stages of the study. I went about this by spending lots of time in the staffroom conversing with teachers and getting to know them better. There were many instances when I ate lunch with the teachers and held informal conversations with them. In doing so, I got to know important information about them, such as the subjects they taught and what times they were usually in and out of class. To ensure that my sample was varied, I selected teacher participants across age, gender, number of years in the teaching profession, number of years at the school, and subject(s) taught.

Methods of Data Collection

A number of data collection techniques were employed in this study, namely: participant observation, open-ended individual face-to-face interviews, focus groups, surveys, and document analysis. The advantage of utilizing these multiple techniques in the study was to help compensate for the limitations of each method when used on its own (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Furthermore, triangulating the data collection methods also helped counter bias in the study (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Interviews were useful in providing an understanding of the views and opinions that students and teachers had regarding teacher caring behavior at St. Antonius Girls High School. Participant
Participant Observation

Participant observation was employed in the early stages of the study. According to Marshall and Rossman (1999), “observation entails the systematic noting and recording of events, behaviors, and artifacts (objects) in the social setting chosen for study” (p. 107). In order to engage in observation of classrooms, I randomly approached individual teachers and asked them to allow me to visit their classrooms. I also explained to these teachers why I wanted to observe them and made it clear that I would be as unobtrusive as possible during their lessons. A total of 10 teachers were involved in the study. These teachers consisted of three Mathematics instructors, two Swahili instructors, one English instructor, one Chemistry instructor, one Biology instructor, one Christian Religious Education (C.R.E) instructor, and one Geography instructor.

Instructors were observed for two consecutive weeks. During the first week of observation, I went into classrooms without any observational guide and, instead, relied on a more “holistic description of events and behaviors” witnessed in these classrooms (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 107). I also assumed the role of observer as participant and hence did not participate in any of the class activities. For the most part, I sat at the back of the classroom and took field notes. By the end of the first week of observations, I had identified recurring themes in my field notes, which enabled me to put together a simple observation guide for use in the second round of observations. The guide is attached in appendix H.
The advantage of employing the participant observation technique in the present study is that it was an unobtrusive way to gather data. In addition, this technique provided the opportunity for me to refine my interview protocol for both teachers and students. The technique also enabled me to verify the data collected. Denzin & Lincoln (2000), point out that, “true objectivity has been held to be the result of agreement between participants and observers as to what is really going on in a given situation” (p. 676). Therefore, to ensure validity of the data gathered, I sought to elicit feedback from teachers and students using in-depth interviews.

In-depth Interviews

Two kinds of interviews were employed in this study: individual face-to-face interviews and focus group interviews. I scheduled a convenient time to conduct individual face-to-face interviews with each of the 10 teacher participants selected for this study. The interviews, which were conducted in English, took place within a two-week period beginning in the sixth week of the school term. All the interviews were audio-recorded and then transcribed. Teachers were informed ahead of time that they would be audio-recorded.

There are various approaches to conducting qualitative interviews. According to Patton (2002), “there are three basic approaches to collecting qualitative data through open-ended interviews” (p. 342). These approaches are informal conversational interview, the general interview guide approach and the standardized open-ended interview. In the present study, both the informal conversational interview approach and the general interview guide approach were employed.
The informal conversational interview is an open-ended interview approach that relies on the natural flow of interaction between the interviewer and the respondent (Patton, 2002). This interview approach was particularly useful at the beginning of the focus group interviews as it enabled me to establish rapport with participants. As Bogdan and Biklen (2003) observed, using a “more free-flowing exploratory interview” at the beginning of the study is important given that the researcher’s “purpose at that point is to get a general understanding of a range of perspectives on a topic” (p. 96). Once rapport had been established, I adopted the interview guide approach where I relied on a list of topics as a guide to conducting interviews with participants.

Focus Groups

Focus groups were conducted beginning the 7th week of the school term. A total of 36 girls volunteered to participate in the group interviews. The girls were divided into four groups of 9 students each. Two of the groups consisted of girls just beginning their 3rd year of high school while the other two consisted of girls beginning their 4th and final year of high school. Typically, the interviews were conducted after school hours when the girls had completed their last lesson of the day. On some days, however, the interviews were conducted during P.E. lesson when instructors did not show up or after a club meeting. The interviews often lasted anywhere between 45 minutes and an hour. All of the focus group sessions were tape-recorded and later transcribed.

Focus group interviews were used as a technique to stimulate responses from girls about their classroom experience as well as their interpersonal relations with teachers (Patton, 2002). Since all focus group participants were girls, this technique provided the
opportunity for them to share their schooling experiences with each other. Speaking in a
group setting also allowed the girls to find their voices and to speak in ways they would
otherwise not speak.

Interviews were conducted in English although participants were allowed to respond in both English and Swahili. The focus groups were semi-structured beginning first with an informal conversation to gather background information and establish rapport with the girls. This proved to be an important way of helping to minimize reactivity to the presence of the researcher (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Once rapport had been established, I employed a more structured approach to interviewing by using my interview guide. As a novice researcher, interviewing this large group of students sometimes proved to be quite challenging. In some instances, interviewees tended to digress from the topic quite easily as most people in these types of settings do (Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Hence, the interview guide became a vital tool for ensuring that I kept participants focused on the topic at hand (Patton, 2002).

It is worth noting that the focus group interviews were conducted more than once. This was mainly because sometimes the girls had to leave the interview setting in order to go and have their meals or to return to class. This required me to reschedule another time when we could meet for further conversation. Once the focus group interviews had been completed, I identified 2 girls from each group for subsequent individual face-to-face interviews. These students were selected based on the varied perspectives they brought to the study. In total, 8 girls were individually interviewed. Follow-up individual face-to-face interviews were important in allowing the girls to speak their thoughts and feelings
in a more private setting given that focus groups tend to “interfere with individual expression” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 652). Individual interviews also helped provide clarification and to enrich the study.

The advantage of focus groups in the present study was that they provided a relaxed atmosphere for girls to share their everyday schooling experiences. The social setting in which the interviews took place allowed the girls to communicate their attitudes, experiences, and beliefs (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). In addition, the group interview setting provided a context within which girls could form their own opinions about teacher caring by listening to their peers (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Another advantage of focus group interviews is that they enabled me to collect “large amounts of data quickly” and “across a larger number of subjects” (p. 110).

**Documents Analysis**

Like participant observation, document analysis was also employed earlier on in the study. This technique entailed an examination of such documents as the school rules, old newspaper clippings on notice boards around campus, posters in the staffroom, the duty roster, photographs of students on the staffroom wall. The advantage of employing document analysis in this study is that it is an unobtrusive method that allowed me to gather data without disturbing that setting in any way (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Another advantage was that, in most instances, these documents were easily accessible since they were displayed in public places. Hence, I did not need special permission to examine them. The review of documents was essential in understanding the school code
of conduct, the school mission, the daily routine of teachers and students as well as the aims and objectives of the school.

The Questionnaire on Teacher Interaction (QTI)

Wubbels, Créton and Hooymers’ (1985) Questionnaire on Teacher Interactions (QTI) was used to measure girls’ perceptions of their teachers’ interpersonal behavior as well as teachers’ self-perception of their interpersonal behavior with students. The scale consisted of 48-items with responses ranging from Never (0) to Always (4). The in-between responses (that is, 1 to 3) were interpreted as rarely, sometimes and usually respectively. The addition of these terms was a slight deviation from Wubbles et al.’s (2006) original scale. I added the descriptors for points 1, 2, and 3, reasoning that these labels would help students better distinguish among the response options.

Eight aspects of teacher interpersonal behavior were measured on the QTI namely: leadership, friendliness/helpfulness, understanding, giving students responsibility, uncertainty, dissatisfaction, admonishing, and strictness. Hence, students were asked to rate the frequency with which their teachers engaged in these behaviors (e.g., “This teacher explains things clearly”; “This teacher is friendly”; “This teacher is strict”). The QTI scale has been used in numerous studies in the Netherlands, in the US, Australia and other nations and has been found to be satisfactory in reliability and validity (den Brok, Fisher, Brekelmans, Rickards, Wubbels, Levy & Waldrip, 2003; Wubbels, Brekelmans, den Brok & Tartwijk, 2006). In the present study the QTI was utilized to provide supplementary data but not to measure hypotheses. Specifically, the
scale was used so as to discover what specific interpersonal behaviors teachers were perceived to be displaying.

The QTI was administered to all 36 girls who participated in the focus groups. Girls in each of the 4 groups were randomly assigned a subject whose teacher they would evaluate. In order to have at least 5 subject teachers evaluated, one of the focus groups with 4th year students evaluated 2 teachers. Prior to commencing the survey, girls were instructed not to write their names on the instrument as a way to protect their identity. In place of their names, girls wrote the subject of the teacher they were evaluating. The girls were then asked to reflect on and rate the interpersonal behaviors of the teacher who taught that subject. In total, 5 subject teachers who taught Math, Swahili, English, Chemistry, and Biology were evaluated. I should note that, during the survey, girls expressed difficulty understanding some of the items on the scale. I took time to explain the meaning of at least five items that were found to be problematic namely: 1) The teacher talks enthusiastically about his/her subject; 2) The teacher seems uncertain; 3) The teacher is hesitant; 4) The teacher puts us down; 5) The teacher is lenient.

As with the student participants, all 10 teachers in this study were surveyed. A teacher version of the QTI was administered (see appendix E) to teachers once the interviews had been completed. Teachers were asked to rate the frequency with which they engaged in specific interpersonal behaviors (e.g., “I talk enthusiastically about my subject”; “I am uncertain”; “I explain things clearly”). To protect teachers’ anonymity, number codes were used in place of their names. Unlike students, none of the teachers expressed any concerns about the wording on the scale.
Self as Researcher

I first developed an interest in exploring teacher/student relationships in schools after reading Paulo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* at the onset of my graduate work in education. For me, reading Freire’s work was an awakening of sorts. I began to understand for the first time what my own education had been like, especially at the primary and secondary levels. I attended the public school system in Kenya at a time when rote learning was very pervasive in schools. Most of the teachers I encountered during those years rarely encouraged us to think critically about the concepts and ideas we learned in the classroom. Instead, they engaged in what Freire referred to as the “banking” concept of education where instructors teach while students passively memorize the content.

Because we never learned how to think critically in those early years, the teacher became the ultimate source of knowledge. In fact I do not recall instances where we challenged some of the ideas we were learning. In those days, it seemed as if what we learned from teachers was the “absolute truth.” Teachers were held in such high regard that none of us would have attempted to question the ideas they presented in the classroom. In any event, we never quite saw ourselves as contributors to the construction of knowledge. For the most part, we were in the classroom to listen and learn from those who knew best.

Since those years, I have learned to think critically about ideas and concepts that are presented to me. I no longer take things at face value. I also remain very keen on exploring the teacher/student relational dynamic in the classroom and how it might
impact the way students learn. I strongly believe that “banking” education is oppressive to learners and inhibits them from exploring with knowledge. My view is that, if teachers really “care” for learners, they must allow the latter to engage in a dialogic discourse that will enable them to make their own discoveries about ideas and about the world.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data in a way that would reflect how girls and teachers at St. Antonius conceptualized caring, I employed the Listening Guide method of analysis. The Listening Guide is a feminist, voice-centered, relational method within the field of psychology that seeks to interpret the narratives that women and girls tell about their lived experiences. The Guide was developed in 1988 by Lyn Brown and Carol Gilligan in collaboration with their associates at Harvard University. In their book, Meeting at the Crossroads, Brown and Gilligan (1992) wrote that the Listening Guide came about as a result of their research on women and girls’ psychological development.

These researchers noted that they discovered differences in the way in which women and men spoke about themselves and their experiences in relationships. While men projected a sense of self that was disconnected from relationship, women seemed to voice a self that was connected to others. Furthermore, women also described a relational struggle in which they gave up their own voices in order to maintain relationships with other people. For Brown, Gilligan and their colleagues, this paradox in women’s voices in which they spoke about being in relationship on the one hand, and dissociating from relationship on the other, reflected a “different” way of speaking. Hence, the Listening Guide became an avenue for these researchers to hear women’s distinct voices.
Writing from the perspective that psychological theory was dominated by male voices that failed to recognize the different ways in which women spoke, Brown and Gilligan (1992) posited that their feminist, voice-centered approach to analyzing interview data allowed them to relocate women’s voices to the center of psychological theory and research.

As a method of psychological analysis, the *Listening Guide* regards voice, resonance and relationship as pathways into a person’s psyche (Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg & Bertsch, 2003, p. 157). In other words, the *Guide* operates from the stance that the resonance or rhythm in a person’s tone of voice can reveal the way they feel and think about themselves and others with whom they are in relationship. For women in particular, this resonance can be reflected in their silences and in their struggles to speak about relationships in which they have conflict. Therefore, utilizing the *Listening Guide* can be a way for voice-centered researchers to pick up on these resonances and to discover what girls really think or feel about themselves and others.

Unlike other qualitative data analysis techniques, the *Listening Guide* focuses on “listening” and “hearing” from the data so as to tune into the polyphonic voices “embedded in a person’s expressed experience” (Gilligan et al., 2003, p. 157). The term “listening” is used in the analysis of the data because this voice-centered approach “transforms the act of reading into an act of listening, as the reader takes in different voices and follows their movement through the interview” (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p. 25).
The *Listening Guide* consists of four cycles of listenings where the researcher reads through transcripts while simultaneously listening to audiotapes of interviews. Each reading cycle is guided by a question that seeks to locate the voice of the narrator in a relational context. The questions that guide the readings are as follows:

1. Who is speaking?
2. In what body?
3. Telling what story about relationship?
4. In what societal and cultural frameworks? (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p. 21)

During the first reading, the researcher listens to the distinct voice that is speaking. Like a literary critic would treat a novel, the researcher listens to the plot of the story; the researcher listens for the who, what, when, where and why of the narrative so as to “get a sense of what is happening, to follow the unfolding events, to listen to the drama” (Gilligan & Brown, 1992, p. 27). To hear the speaker, the researcher focuses on:

Recurring words, and images, central metaphors, emotional resonances, contradictions or inconsistencies in style, revisions and absences in the story as well as shifts in the sound of the voice and in narrative position: the use of first-, second-, or third-person narration. (Gilligan & Brown, 1992, p. 27)

The first reading also requires that researchers reflect on themselves as persons in a position of power and authority, who thereby have the privilege and responsibility of interpreting the lives of those under study. Such a reflection is meant to move researchers away from the potential abuse of power and towards thinking about the thoughts and
feelings they have regarding the person to whose voice they are listening (Brown & Gilligan, 1992).

During the second readings, the researcher tries to locate the narrator’s “self” by following the “I” statements in the narrator’s speech. The goal of this step is to hear how the narrator speaks about herself/himself. This reading, also allows the researcher to hear the variation or resonance in the narrator’s voice. Brown and Gilligan (1992) wrote that this second reading brings both the researcher and the narrator into a relational experience in which the researcher responds to the thoughts and feelings of the narrator. By listening to the narrator’s story, the researcher is able to learn not only about the narrator but also about herself as a woman and the common relational experience that women share.

In this cycle of readings, the researcher constructs what is referred to as an “I poem” by first underlining phrases that consist of the first-person singular pronoun “I” along with the accompanying verb and other important words. The sequence of these phrases as they occur in transcripts has to be maintained. Once, the “I” phrases have been selected, they are typed out one line after another just as would be the case in a poem. According to Gilligan et al. (2003), the purpose of constructing the “I poem” is twofold:

First, it is intended to press the researcher to listen to the participant’s first-person voice—to pick up its distinctive cadences and rhythms—second, to hear how this person speaks about him- or herself. This step is a crucial component of a relational method in that tuning into another person’s voice and listening to what this person knows of her- or himself before talking about him or her is a way of
coming into relationship that works against distancing ourselves from that person in an objective way. (p. 162)

In the third reading cycle, the researcher focuses on how the narrator speaks about relationships. In other words, what is the narrator’s experience within the relational context? This reading is attuned to what Gilligan et al. (2003) referred to as contrapuntal voices. The concept of contrapuntal voices is borrowed from a musical style of composition known as counterpoint, where two or more independent melodic lines are employed simultaneously. These melodic lines “move in some form of relationship with each other” (Gilligan et al., 2003, p. 165). Therefore, in the third reading, the researcher listens for the counterpoint or multiple layers of meaning within the narrator’s story. These different layers of meanings are representative of the different voices that emerge as the narrator speaks. Some of the voices could be in conflict with each other while others could be complementary.

It is worth noting that the third listening of transcripts focuses on identifying that aspect of the text that responds to the research questions guiding the study. In this case the researcher has to read through the text two or more times each time focusing on a particular contrapuntal voice. As Gilligan et al. (2003) pointed out, this listening, “takes into account that a person expresses his or her experience in a multiplicity of voices or ways” (p. 165). Each time a contrapuntal voice is identified, the researcher underlines that voice using different colored pencils. This way the researcher is able to distinguish the different voices emerging out of the text. At the same time, the researcher is also able to establish how these contrapuntal voices work in relation to one another.
In the fourth and final reading, the researcher attunes her/himself to cultural norms and values and their impact on the lived experience of the narrator. In this case, the researcher might examine the particular ways that cultural norms and values constrain or silence the voice of the narrator. As Gilligan et al. (1992) observed, the researcher listens in the interview, “for signs of self-silencing or capitulation to debilitating cultural norms and values –times when a person buries her feelings and thoughts and manifests confusion, uncertainty, and dissociation, which are the marks of psychological resistance.” (p. 30). Additionally, Gilligan et al. (1992), pointed out that this reading listens “for signs of political resistance, times when people struggle against abusive relationships and fight for relationships in which it is possible for them to disagree openly with others, to feel and speak a full range of emotions” (p. 30).

During the fourth and final reading, the researcher also synthesizes what she/he has learned as a result of each of the four listenings. Using the underlinings, notes, and summaries of each reading, the researcher composes an essay that captures the composite picture of the narrator’s experience. A number of questions can be used to guide the researcher through this process: “What have you learned about this [research] question through this process and how have you come to know this? What is the evidence on which you are basing your interpretations?” (Gilligan et al., 2003, p. 168). It is important to note that the Listening Guide lends itself to individual interpretation of women and girls’ stories because of the multiple layers of meaning embedded in these stories. Since it is a relational method involving both the narrator and the researcher, the guide brings
necessary subjectivity to texts while leaving room for other interpretations (Tolman, 1994).

The Listening Guide has been adopted by numerous researchers to discover how adolescent girls narrate stories about their relationships with their mothers (Taylor, Gilligan & Sullivan, 1995), sexuality (Madden, 2000; Nagy, Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2008; Tolman, 2002), schooling experience (Woodcock, 2005), and health care (Pinto, 2004). The guide has also been used in other studies to analyze women’s narratives about their work life (Balan, 2005; Paliadelis & Cruickshank, 2008) to explore the ways in which Black women resist the social pressure to conform to “the strong Black woman” discourse (Beaubeuf-Lafontant, 2009) and to examine how boys arrive at moral choices (Gilligan, 1992). In the present study, the Listening Guide method has been utilized to give voice to Kenyan secondary schoolgirls whose voices like those of many other minority women remain unheard in social science research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

Summary
This chapter examined the methodology, which included the research design, the data collection methods namely: in-depth individual interviews, surveys, document analysis and participant observation as well as the sampling strategy. Further, the chapter also explored the Listening Guide method which was used in the data analysis.
CHAPTER FOUR: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter is organized into two sections. Using the Listening Guide method, I have examined how girls at St. Antonius Girls High School narrated their stories about their interpersonal relationships with teachers and how those relationships led them to perceive their teachers as either caring or uncaring. I begin the section by synthesizing the data from all four focus groups, after which I proceed to examine the stories of two girls, Annabelle and Angela (pseudonyms), whom I interviewed individually. I have chosen to highlight the stories of these two girls because, aside from sharing their perspective on caring, they also spoke about how they resisted teachers they perceived as uncaring.

In the second section of this chapter, I examine the ways in which teachers conceptualized caring. I also explore teacher behaviors that did not communicate caring and the challenges teachers faced in their efforts to care. Further, I share my classroom observations. I then examine teachers’ results of the Questionnaire on Teacher Interactions (QTI). To protect teachers’ and students’ identity, I have used pseudonyms in place of their real names.

Girls Stories

I began the focus group interviews by asking each girl to share briefly her schooling experience. Girls talked about their favorite subjects, their aspirations for the future, and what it was like to be a student at St. Antonius. To understand girls’ self-concept, I asked them the question: “What is it that motivates you as a student?” This
question generated a number of responses from the girls. In one of the 3rd year groups, four girls told the following stories:

*Malaika:* What motivates me the most is my Dad, Mom, my sisters and my best friend and also my ambition [pause] what I want to be, because I really think about myself, and what I want to be. But when I fail a paper [pause], I just feel [pause], “I want to be this [pause], and how come I can get such a grade?” So I try as much as I can to get whatever I want because whatever my ambition is I must be and my friend tells me to work for my ambition.

Malaika began her story by recounting that she drew her greatest motivation from her family, her best friend, and herself. Mid-way through her narrative, I began to hear her telling a very different story, a story about the disappointment she felt when she failed exams. Paying close attention to her narrative, I located three distinct voices: one voice projected *ambition*, another *dissatisfaction*, and yet another *determination*. Clearly, Malaika was very ambitious. She wanted to excel in her academic career. But at the same time, she was also struggling with learning. There were times when she did not perform well on exams and this left her feeling disappointed. In a way, failing compelled Malaika to work hard because she realized that the only way she would achieve her ambition was to perform well.
Like Malaika, Amani drew motivation from her family and herself. She had older brothers who had all successfully completed high school and were a great source of motivation to her:

*Amani:* What motivates me mainly is my brothers. Yeah. Most of them achieved good grades in form 4 and they tell me that I can be the best in our entire family. They usually tell me that I am university material and even me, myself, I encourage myself, “I, Amani, I can do better.” I can go very far [pause] even not to a university in Kenya. I can go abroad to study there. When I look at my ambition to be an electrical engineer, I usually tell myself, “Here, I have to work hard even if this exam has really harassed me”. I usually tell myself that I am going to work very hard in the exam because of my ambition. I have to work hard so I can get to where I want to be.

Because she constantly heard positive messages from her brothers, Amani had learned to believe in herself. She believed, like they did, that she had the capacity to perform extremely well in her academics and that she could gain admission to any university at home or abroad. For Amani, the sky was the limit. Nothing could hold her back. With dreams of becoming an electrical engineer someday, Amani kept motivating herself to work hard.

Lyn’s story is somewhat similar to the stories that Malaika and Amani narrated in that she too drew motivation from her parents and herself. For Lyn, her parents meant a
great deal to her. It was because of them that she had gotten a chance to go to school and she was determined to show them her gratitude by succeeding academically:

*Lyn:* As for me, my motivation is mostly my parents and myself since if it wasn’t for my parents, I wouldn’t be here at school reading, and the only gift I can give to them is to pass. And at times if I see that I have failed and someone in the same class as me has gotten an A and let’s say I have something like a B or something, I feel no, I should not be performing this way. So I motivate myself. I tell myself, “Lynn you can do it. You can move to somewhere else.” As in, I know I can make it; if the person in class has made it to that goal, so can I. So I just tell myself I can do it.

Besides the motivation from her parents, Lyn was also motivated by her classmates’ academic performance. Seeing other girls get good grades made her believe that she too could “do it” if she worked hard.

*Marion,* on the other hand, motivated herself simply by thinking about the future. Although she was aware that life would be tougher for her generation because of high standards of living, she still believed that, if she worked hard, she would get a good job and be able to live “a good life”:

*Marion:* As for me, when I remember about my future that motivates me because I just imagine the economy of this country at this time of our parents and I know that for our generation, the living standards will be so high and so I have to work hard to pass my examination for me to get a good job to enable myself to live a good life.
The stories of these four girls and those of the other girls who participated in the focus groups demonstrated that girls found parents, siblings and friends to be their greatest source of motivation. Familial support in particular provided a strong foundation for the girls to develop self-confidence and self-determination. Surprisingly, while girls noted that they drew support from family and friends, most of them hardly mentioned teachers as their source of motivation. I was taken aback by these findings particularly because these girls were at a boarding school. My assumption was that they would have relied on teachers for moral support given that they spend most of the time around their teachers.

Moving beyond my introductory questions, I narrowed my focus on how girls described their relationships with teachers. Specifically, I listened for descriptions of teacher caring behavior in line with one of the research questions guiding this study: “What teacher behaviors do girls at St. Antonius Girls High School in Western Kenya perceive as fostering care?” In these listenings, I also paid attention to the ways girls put up resistance when they encountered school conventions that restrained them from expressing their true authentic self. Listening in this way helped me gain insight into how girls conceptualize caring and also how they adapt survival strategies to help them cope with strains in their relationships with teachers. I identified three distinct ways in which girls spoke about caring namely: caring as academic support, caring as guidance, and caring as motherliness.
Caring as Teacher Academic Support

In their caring discourse, virtually all the girls in this study spoke about teacher academic support as an important aspect of caring. For these girls, academic support from teachers took various forms including teachers’ willingness to repeat difficult concepts, giving students individual attention during lessons, providing extra help after school hours, using multiple, concrete examples when teaching abstract concepts particularly in mathematics, and employing a teaching approach that accommodates students’ diverse learning styles.

When asked the question, “Describe a teacher whom you perceive as caring”, one group of 4th year students discussed the different approaches that some of their teachers employ in the classroom and how those approaches have led them to perceive these teachers as caring. Sifa shared the following story about a teacher she perceived as caring:

Sifa: For me, Mr. Luvai, who teaches Chemistry, is caring because when we were in Form 2, he taught us about the “Solvay Process” and when he returned the following day and asked about it, the students told him that they had not understood. He did not get tired and did not proceed with the lesson he had planned for that day. Instead, he made sure he had explained the previous lesson all over again until everyone understood. Mr. Luvai is the most caring teacher.

Following the third-person pronoun “he” statements in Sifa’s voice allowed me to hear how she described her Chemistry teacher’s approach in the classroom. In this
exchange, Sifa noted that her teacher’s caring was reflected in his willingness to revisit concepts he had covered in previous lessons “until everyone had understood.”

Thelma, another girl in the group, seemed to share similar views about teacher caring. She began her story by identifying her math teacher as a caring instructor. When asked why she thought the math teacher was caring, she responded by asserting that he “teaches us well.” Urged to be more specific, Thelma narrated the following story:

He repeats maybe where you’ve not understood…He can take his time to repeat and…he can also give us some questions to try and if you still cannot get you can go to him for consultations and…he shows you. Now you’ll get to know the subject.

Like Thelma, Wachia also felt that the math teacher exhibited caring:

Wachia: I think Mr. Okumu is the best because when he teaches, you understand more. He uses examples and he makes sure everybody has understood before he moves on. He usually asks us if we have a question and [pause] before we move to the next topic. He usually gives us an assignment and then we have to take our exercise books to him one by one as opposed to collecting them.

Wachia was very enthusiastic about the math teacher. She described him as “the best.” In a very clear way, she told the rest of the group why she held him in such high regard. According to Wachia, Mr. Okumu was a good instructor because he enhanced his students’ learning by using relevant examples when explaining concepts, and by allowing them the opportunity to ask questions prior to moving on to another topic. Clearly, Wachia’s narrative highlighted the importance she attached to teacher clarity. According
to Chesebro and McCroskey (1998b), teacher clarity refers to an instructor’s ability to “effectively stimulate the desired meaning of course content and processes in the minds of students through the use of appropriately-structured verbal and nonverbal messages” (p. 448). By recounting that “when he teaches, you understand more,” Wachia underscored her math teacher’s ability to maximize students’ understanding of the course content (Chesebro & McCroskey, 1998b). It appears to me that Wachia associated her teacher’s clarity with caring behavior (Teven & Monte, 2008). Further, she linked the teacher’s in-class evaluation of individual students’ work to caring.

As with Thelma and Wachia, many of the girls commended the math teacher for the work he was doing. The girls told me that he was the best mathematics teacher in the entire school. It became clear, listening to their stories, that most of the girls had a positive regard or liking (Frymier, 1992; McCroskey & McCroskey, 1986; McCroskey & Wheless, 1976) for their math teacher. Priscilla in particular spoke very affectionately of the math teacher. She told me repeatedly that she “loved” him:

*Priscilla:* Okay, I am Priscilla (pseudonym) from Form 4W. I love our math teacher. He is called Mr. Okumu (pseudonym). Furthermore he is our class teacher. I love him because he usually gives us extra work.

*Interviewer:* Extra work?

*Priscilla:* Yeah. He has sacrificed for our lives because he comes even at night to teach us when the other teachers have gone home. Again he encourages us when we fail the exams even he prepares the exam timetables for us so we can succeed
in our exams. Furthermore, especially our KCSE exam he is the one who advised us to form discussion groups. I love him so much.

Priscilla’s repeated use of the word “love,” in reference to her math teacher demonstrated just how fond she was of him. She felt that he went “above and beyond” what was expected of him as an instructor to help her class excel in mathematics. During this exchange, she recounted how he “sacrificed for our lives” by teaching during and after school hours “when the other teachers have gone home.” It was interesting to hear Priscilla link her fondness of the math teacher to the “extra work” he assigned her class. Usually, students feel pressured or stressed out when they perceive heavy workloads (Kember, 2004). However, it seems that, in Priscilla’s case, she found the “extra work” from her math teacher to be very valuable. As a senior in her last year of high school, she was concerned about how she would perform on her final (KCSE) exam and as a result, embraced her teacher’s efforts to keep the class on-task. The fact that the math teacher motivated Priscilla’s class to study hard, and to stay on-task, made her confident that she would ultimately do well in the final.

Although most girls in this group told positive stories about their math teacher, some felt differently. Makena, for example, projected a sense of ambivalence towards the math teacher. Hesitant to label him as “caring”, she recounted how he often caned her class when they failed mathematics:

<em>Interviewer: </em>Do you all feel the same way about your math teacher?

<em>Makena: </em>Yeah [reluctantly]. Although sometimes this teacher, Mr. Okumu (pseudonym), we can feel he really hates us because sometimes he really gets out
of hand. When you fail, he can really handle you [pause], but we really feel annoyed, but sometimes we hate him, but above all we come to realize he just wants good for us.

Interviewer: What do you mean when you say, “He can really handle you?”

Makena: You know, when we fail exams, obviously sometimes, there is punishment.

Interviewer: What kind of punishment?

Makena: Caning

Interviewer: I thought caning is banned in Kenya?

Makena: No! [Speaking with a firm voice]…In this school they really cane us

Interviewer: Do you think that teachers should cane you when you fail?

Makena: Yeah. They should cane us…they should cane us.

Interviewer: Why do you think that?

Makena: Because there are some people who, when they’re caned, they actually work hard because of the fear of being caned another time. But some people like me, when I am caned, I really feel discouraged.

Clearly, Makena felt a sense of ambivalence towards the math teacher. Although she acknowledged that he was caring, she also felt anger and resentment towards him for caning her and the other girls whenever they failed math. Caning conveyed a precarious message to Makena. It made her feel that the math teacher detested underachievers, and that he was justified in punishing them. It was clear to me that Makena had internalized this message. When confronted with the question: “Do you think teachers should cane
you when you fail?” she responded by saying, “They should cane us…they should cane us.” I was startled by Makena’s response. It seemed to me that she was keeping up an “appearance” (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2009) by outwardly relaying a message that was in complete contrast to her feelings. When I expressed my surprise about what she was telling me, Makena’s “underground” (Brown & Gilligan, 1992) – her “deep down inside” (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2009) – finally began to surface. Abandoning a discourse she had learned to internalize so well, Makena went on to voice her “true” feelings, admitting to me that caning “builds a lot of hatred”:

Makena: As for me, I don’t support the point of caning. I always think that the teacher can call the student who has failed and encourage her, then show her the best way that she can do some revision and do some improvement in her work, but caning according to me, it builds a lot of hatred.

Interviewer: So where did this idea come from? The thought that you should be caned in order to learn? Were you caned in primary?

Makena: Yeah. We were caned in primary school. In fact, more thoroughly than here.

Interviewer: So, do you think the idea came from primary school?

Makena: Yeah

Revealing to Makena that I, too, attended high school in Kenya, and had an insider’s perspective on what it was like to be caned by teachers, seemed to have empowered her to project outwardly what she really felt on the inside. With clarity in her voice, Makena...
recounted that she was opposed to corporal punishment and that she thought teachers needed to engage struggling learners in supportive dialogue rather than caning them.

Shifting focus back to the question of caring, Makena reverted to describing the math teacher as caring because “he moves around class to see what you’re doing, and if you’re going wrong, he will correct you” and “He is very concerned; he provides us papers, like quizzes we can do them weekly.” As the interview came to a close, it was Makena who credited the math teacher with being “the best teacher because he gives us the positive attitude towards math.” In her concluding remarks, Makena proudly remarked that, “In fact, our class leads in mathematics.”

Lack of Teacher Academic Support

In the same way that the girls told stories about experiencing care and support in the classroom, they also narrated classroom experiences where they did not encounter caring. In the following account, I focus on the experiences of a group of 3rd year students that I interviewed. Unlike their 4th year counterparts who told positive stories about their experience in the math classroom, this particular group of girls shared a completely different narrative regarding their experience in the math class.

When asked to name their favorite subjects, none of the girls mentioned mathematics as a subject they liked. Instead, the girls referred to Languages and Humanities as their favorite subjects. Asked directly if they liked mathematics, most girls gave a negative response and noted that they did not like their math teacher:

Joy: Okay, me, the main thing that makes me not like this teacher is the way she’s choosy. She likes discriminating; those people who know math better, they are
discriminated from those who don’t know. She may come; she takes revision papers and gives to those who know, and you’re just left there hanging.

_Beauty:_ Mine is basically from Rita’s [classmate] experience. One day she [referring to her classmate Rita] asked a question, then Ms. Harriet was like: “Even that you do not know?” Now she is discouraging some of us who may not have understood that concept. Now when she says like that, there are some people who might laugh or do sarcastic things.

_Zuri:_ I don’t like this teacher because she can take a full lesson to only teach one sum and then, sometimes if she is not sure about the answer, you’ll see her move out of the class. I don’t know if she goes for consultation, and then, when she comes back, it’s like she has forgotten what she was told. Again she goes back to the staffroom.

_Edith:_ For me, I just don’t like the teacher because she normally moves with those who have understood, and when you’re weak in math, she’ll not come to where you are. She’ll just be like: “Yes, so-and-so” [mimicking the teacher referring to a high-achieving student]. But even if you’re weak [pause] for example, she can come to class, and give us a sum to calculate and if you’re unable to calculate the sum, and you raise your hand for assistance, she won’t come to where you are. She goes to that student that usually does well in the class… it happened to me recently. I just kept quiet.

_Interviewer:_ So how did that make you feel?
Edith: You know, you can’t even work hard. You just sit there. But if it is another teacher, they explain well and you can understand. Because she [referring to the math teacher Ms. Harriet] often goes for consultation, and also when she says: “Am I correct?” [Sounding sarcastic], now she asks us. We expect to know from her, but she asks us, so you wonder who is supposed to know again.

Listening attentively to girls’ stories allowed me to hear the reasons behind their dislike of the math teacher. Joy, who was the first to make a contribution to the discussion, began her story by telling the group that she disliked the math teacher because she was “choosy” and showed favoritism by giving revision papers only to “those who know math” while the rest of the students were “just left hanging there.” Speaking in this way, Joy revealed the neglect and alienation she felt in the math class. The little attention that she and the other struggling students received from their teacher pushed her to the margins, making her feel like an “outsider” in the class. The neglect Joy experienced in the math classroom consequently led her to feel frustrated and discouraged from pursuing mathematics.

For her part, Beauty recounted that she once witnessed the math teacher ridiculing her friend, Rita, in front of the entire class for asking a question and that the experience left her discouraged from ever wanting to ask questions in the math class. Pointing out that the other students “might laugh or do sarcastic things,” Beauty revealed the self-consciousness she felt around her peers. Like most girls at this stage of adolescence, she was afraid of finding herself in a situation in which she would be embarrassed in front of her peers. Resolving not to ask questions in the math class was Beauty’s way of guarding
herself from embarrassment. It was also a silent “protest” against the “ill-treatment” Rita received at the hands of Ms. Harriet. Self-silencing allowed Beauty to show her disapproval of Ms. Harriet’s behavior and to reaffirm her loyalty to Rita. While Beauty’s silent “protest” on behalf of her friend Rita might have placed her at risk of performing poorly in the math class, it was also beneficial to her in some ways. Brown and Gilligan (1992) noted that, “when girls act on behalf of others, seemingly at the expense of themselves, they gain in socially desirable ways” (p. 177). It could well be that Beauty’s show of support and loyalty helped strengthen her friendship with Rita.

In explaining her dislike of the math teacher, Zuri pointed to the sense of distrust she felt towards her. It was apparent to me, as I listened to her story, that she questioned the teacher’s competency in mathematics. I was struck by how skeptical Zuri was towards the math teacher, particularly when I followed her third-person singular pronoun “she” statements. I have chosen to highlight Zuri’s “I poem” below in order to demonstrate the uncertainty with which she perceived the math teacher:

- I don’t like the teacher
- She can take a full lesson only to teach one sum
- If she is not sure about the answer
- She goes for consultation
- She comes back
- She has forgotten what she was told
- She goes back to the staffroom.
Speaking with a voice that had seemingly grown impatient and cynical, Zuri complained about how the teacher took “a full lesson only to teach one sum.” The teacher’s unexplained movements in and out of the classroom during the lesson disrupted Zuri’s learning and led her to presume that the math teacher was unfamiliar with the course content. From Zuri’s perspective, it seemed as if the teacher was relying on her colleagues in the staffroom to walk her through certain concepts. Seeing her math teacher in this negative light led Zuri to conclude that the teacher was confused, uncertain, disorganized, and unprepared for her lessons. Edith, who also participated in this discussion, seemed to corroborate Zuri’s story. She, like Zuri, also had doubts about the math teacher’s competency. Irritated that the teacher seemed unfamiliar with the course content, Edith remarked rather cynically that, “you wonder who is supposed to know again.” Like many of the other girls in the group, Edith also felt alienated by the teacher and was not motivated to learn math.

As demonstrated in their stories, the girls in this group had a negative perception of their math teacher. They felt that the teacher engaged in a variety of behaviors that made it difficult for them to learn. Most of the girls seemed uncertain about what they were learning in the math classroom, and as a result, were skeptical of the teacher’s competency in mathematics. It seemed that these girls perceived their math teacher as uncaring because she appeared to be incompetent. These findings support Banfield, Richmond and McCroskey’s (2006) assertion that students will perceive teachers as less credible when they engage in incompetent behaviors and that they will likely perceive these teachers as uncaring.
As much as girls in this group talked about their negative experiences in the math classroom, they also recounted the positive experiences they had with other math teachers. When asked, if there was a math teacher they had a preference for, girls responded affirmatively:

*Edith:* Mr. Tumbo. He came and taught us one Saturday and we understood completely to the roots.

*Neema:* Mr. Okumu. One day he came to teach us and then we understood better than Ms. Harriet.

*Beauty:* When Mr. Okumu teaches mostly we concentrate. He loves mathematics and he was trained completely to do mathematics. Someone like Ms. Harriet I think she knows Chemistry more [pause] coz if you look at the whole school, we are the only class that she teaches math. Yeah. So Mr. Okumu is committed to teaching math not like Ms. Harriet.

*Rose:* And then, Mr. Okumu, if you approach him to show you a sum, he’ll tell you to do the sum there and then when you reach the place where you’re stuck, and then when you reach that place, it is when he will show you the sum

*Phyllis:* For me, I like Mr. Okumu because if you do a quiz he will come and revise with you and show you the answers, but Ms. Harriet, she will come and select students to do the sum on the blackboard. Even though others have not understood, she does not explain.

*Helen:* As for Ms. Harriet, we mark our own books. She has never looked at our exercise books. She goes by the majority [pause]…it encourages laziness because
maybe my desk-mate has gotten the sum right…I just copy her work or maybe I will just hear what is being said and copy it into my book. Also, if we ask Ms. Harriet a question, she feels like we’re tiring her. She’ll say: “Eeh, now I have to repeat?” But Mr. Okumu does not get tired even if it’s ten times he will repeat until he is sure everyone has understood.

Of the two preferred math teachers mentioned in the group, Mr. Okumu stood out as the favorite. Based on the girls’ stories, it appeared that Mr. Okumu was well liked because he demonstrated an ability to teach mathematical concepts in depth and in a way that was comprehensible. What struck me as I listened to girls’ stories was the way in which they were able to make clear distinctions between their teachers’ classroom pedagogies. Beauty, for instance, thought that Mr. Okumu had strong knowledge content and was much more devoted to mathematics than Ms. Harriet. Phyllis, on the other hand, felt that Mr. Okumu was much more helpful with exam revision than Ms. Harriet. Clearly, the girls’ perceptions of their teachers were linked to their teachers’ behaviors.

Noteworthy here is that, of all the four focus groups that participated in this study, only one group spoke positively regarding their experiences in math classrooms. The rest of the groups stated that they found math to be the most problematic subject of all primarily because of the approach teachers employed in the classroom. As a result, these girls’ perceptions of their math teachers were predominantly negative. Many felt they did not receive the type of academic support they needed from math teachers to pursue the subject. It was this perceived lack of academic support that led girls to view these teachers as uncaring.
Caring as Guidance

The term “guidance” has been defined in the Oxford Dictionary of English (2005) as, “advice or information aimed at resolving a problem or difficulty, especially as given by someone in authority.” In the stories they narrated, girls related teacher caring with the guidance they received from teachers to enable them overcome the problems with which they were dealing. During my second interview with a group of 3rd year students, one girl, named Chepkemei, put it this way when I asked her to describe a caring teacher:

*Chepkemei*: A caring teacher is the one who comforts you let’s say when you’re in problems. She or he is not only concerned with academics…she is concerned with both the academic and social…like for example, he or she may ask you whether you have lost any items in the dormitory. He or she wants you to live a comfortable life in school

*Interviewer*: Based on your description of teacher caring, would you say that your teachers are caring?

*Chepkemei*: Some are caring. Some teachers are caring like Ms. Nyokabi (pseudonym). When she comes for the dorm discussions she always encourages people that, “Don’t steal other people’s things.”

In this exchange, Chepkemei defined a caring teacher as one who attends to both the academic and social aspects of students’ lives, who seeks to put students at ease when they are faced with personal problems, and who ensures that students “live a comfortable life in school.” When asked specifically if she thought teachers at the school were caring, Chepkemei responded with confidence in her voice saying, “some are caring [pause]
some teachers are caring like Ms. Nyokabi.” With such clarity, Chepkemei described Ms. Nyokabi, the dorm mistress, as caring because of the guidance and advice that the latter provided to help deter theft in the dorms.

Like Chepkemei, the other girls in the group also made reference to guidance as an expression of teacher caring. Acknowledging the crucial stage in their development as adolescents, the girls spoke about the importance of teachers helping them cope with puberty. For many of the girls, the adolescence stage proved to be a challenging time in their lives, and schooling made it even more difficult to navigate the transition into womanhood. As a result the girls expressed the need for teacher support to cope with this transition. In particular, the girls felt they needed the support of their teachers to help them deal with the formation of their own identities. Hilda, one of the girls in this focus group, shared her story of grappling with an identity crisis and how her Swahili teacher’s advice and counsel played a vital role in helping her develop her own identity:

*Hilda:* Okay, I am Hilda. We have a teacher called Ms. Patricia (pseudonym). She is our Kiswahili teacher. She is caring because she offers guiding and counseling whether you have a problem, whether big or small, she can be able to find a suitable solution for you and makes you enjoy your school life. I love her.

*Interviewer:* You love her?

*Hilda:* Yes. I love her.

*Interviewer:* You said she solves problems. Can you tell me a little bit about that? What problem did you have that she helped solve?

*Hilda:* Okay, it was about a peer problem.
Interviewer: With friends?

Hilda: Yeah. She helped me find suitable friends…the ones who cannot influence my behavior…the ones who can’t make me change my identity you know. Stuff like that.

As reflected in this excerpt, Hilda perceived the Swahili teacher as caring because of the good advice the teacher provided to help her establish meaningful peer relationships in the course of her identity formation. As an adolescent who felt vulnerable to the influence of “bad” friends and who wanted to retain her “good girl” identity, Hilda chose to follow her teacher’s advice by developing friendships with peers who would not negatively influence her behavior.

Much like Hilda, the other girls who participated in this study expressed their concern about grappling with identity formation. For example, one evening as I interviewed a group of 4th year students, the issue of body image formation came up once again. This issue surfaced when I asked the girls about whether or not they felt at ease around female teachers. I specifically brought up this question because of an observation I had made during my numerous visits to the staffroom. It appeared to me that the girls always seemed nervous whenever they went into the staffroom to consult with teachers:

Interviewer: Do you feel free around your teachers?

Angela: Some

Interviewer: Are there some who make you uneasy?

Betty: Some

Auma: Obviously
Angela: Yeah

Interviewer: Like in what way?

Group: [Silence]

Unknown voice in the background: Some are harsh

Interviewer: For example, when you go into the staff room, do you feel comfortable?

Unknown voice: No

Interviewer: Why is that?

Ruth: We don’t enter the staff room

Interviewer: But wouldn’t you go there if you wanted to see a teacher?

Group: [Silence]

Ruth: You have to call the teacher outside [seems uncomfortable with the conversation]

Interviewer: If you don’t want to name a teacher that’s okay. You can just describe to me what it is about that teacher that makes you uncomfortable…

Auma: Maybe, I want to say something. Okay, in this school you know we are a girls’ school and we have to be concerned about something like our hair, you know. So, aahmmm…some madams in this school…they’re uncomfortable [giggling] when we put certain hairstyles. They say that we are creating something like competition. You’re like competing with them

Interviewer: Do they say that? Competition?
Auma: Yeah, they do. So we feel uneasy, and you know, in school, you just have to learn everything, even grooming so you feel low.

Interviewer: What kind of hairstyles are you talking about? Are you talking about like relaxing your hair?

Auma: Okay, yeah. Relaxing, setting, yeah…and then if you have long hair they come inspecting your head…they think it’s human hair [synthetic/ artificial hair] and so some of us get scared and just decide to trim it off.

Betty: In addition to that they say that they don’t want complicated hairstyles so we ask ourselves, “How complicated is complicated?” [Laughing]

Group: [Loud laughter]

Interviewer: Do you get the same reaction from the male teachers?

Betty: No, they are comfortable.

Auma: But sometimes they’re pushed to come and inspect even the lip-gloss.

Interviewer: Really? [The whole group laughing]

Auma: Yeah

During this session, many of the girls seemed reluctant to talk about their interactions with women teachers and either gave brief responses or simply remained silent. To allay their fears and to ease the tension that had gripped the interview, I informed the girls that they were at liberty not to name any teachers in particular if that made them more comfortable. In response, one of the girls reluctantly spoke up. Seemingly hesitant, Auma began telling her story by saying, “Maybe I want to say something,” a clear indication that she was somewhat uncertain about whether or not she
wanted to speak. Once she had mastered enough courage, Auma elaborated on the rivalry that existed between the girls and women teachers. She told me during this interview that women teachers at the school often accused the girls of imitating their hairstyles and makeup and, as a result, subjected the girls to a thorough inspection of their bodies to ensure that none of them wore synthetic hair or makeup. Auma added that, to avoid being victimized by teachers, she often kept her hair short.

Although she yielded to the pressure from women teachers to keep her hair short, Auma felt disappointed that these teachers did not provide the girls with guidance and advice on how to deal with self-image issues. Concerned about her physical appearance, Auma noted that she and the other girls expected to “learn” about good grooming at school and were puzzled when women teachers constantly confronted them about their appearance. She went on to admit that this situation made her feel “low” and uneasy. When asked if teachers explained to the girls why they could not wear certain hairstyles or makeup while at school, the girls pointed out that no explanation was ever given:

*Angela:* No, they don’t explain

*Auma:* We can’t even tell because some it may be out of concern [pause] because a teacher like Ms. Patricia she’s not bothered about such things. In fact she tells us: “Ensure you are smart…make yourself look beautiful.” But others we just don’t understand them. Yeah.

*Interviewer:* Do you think you should be allowed to wear make-up?

*Group:* Yeah

*Betty:* Yeah, as long as you look presentable
Angela: And you do your responsibilities

As young adolescent women who were grappling with body image formation, these girls were preoccupied with their physical appearance (Choate, 2007) and coveted the guidance and support of their female teachers to help them learn about good grooming. When that support was not forthcoming, the girls ended up having a low self-esteem, feeling confused, uneasy, fearful and distrustful of their teachers. It is no wonder that these girls were not enthusiastic about discussing their relationship with women teachers. Because adolescent girls tend to be dissatisfied with their bodies and overall physical appearance (Choate, 2007), it is important for female teachers in particular to communicate positive messages to girls concerning their bodies especially since girls look up to these teachers to help them understand their own bodies.

Caring as Responsiveness, Empathy, Understanding and Mothering

One of the areas that I was very keen to hear about with respect to how girls described their relationships with teachers and other adults at the school was the treatment they received when they sought the support of these adults when coping with menstrual-related symptoms. I felt that it was important to understand this aspect of girls’ lives, especially since menstruation is one of the factors that contributes to absenteeism and drop outs among girls in Eastern Africa (UNICEF, 2006).

During an interview session with a group of 4th year girls, I asked them whether or not teachers and other adults at the school provided them with care and support when they experienced menstruation. My question was met with bursts of laughter, but when all was said and done, most of the girls shied away from talking about their menstrual
experiences. Lucy and Antoinette were the only ones in the group who offered to share their stories:

_Lucy_: Laughter. Okay, you know sometimes earlier we still didn’t have a school nurse so when may be your stomach hurts too much and the school does not have the type of medicine, they tell you why didn’t you tell your parents earlier so that you could go to hospital. When we complained, then at least they bought another medicine for us to use, and you’re given some time to rest in the dormitory maybe from morning to lunchtime then later you go back to class.

_Group_: [Laughter]

_Interviewer_: Is that how everyone is treated?

_Group_: [Loud laughter]

_Antoinette_: I don’t think it’s everyone [laughter]. I think it’s her alone. Because there was a time I went to the dispensary and I was told just to go to class and sit. You know, they’ll wait until something becomes so severe, very severe, really really in pain is when you’re allowed to go home.

_Interviewer_: So, the nurse sent you away?

_Antoinette_: Yeah

_Interviewer_: Is the nurse male or female?

_Antoinette_: She’s female. And that’s uncaring because she’s a woman and has ever undergone this. So she should act with motherly care [she spoke with added emphasis]. At least feel the pain we’re feeling, you know? Just care about it and
she knows this thing is severe. She can allow someone to go and rest for some time.

*Interviewer:* So, how does that kind of treatment from the nurse make you feel?

*Antoinette:* You feel bad. Some people are allowed to go and sleep, but others go out of rudeness. She’s feeling pain and cannot stand sitting in class, but when you’re told to go to class and you don’t want trouble with the school, definitely if the Principal finds you in the dormitory you’ll be in trouble. You just decide to go to class. You just cry, sleep on the desk and when the teacher comes to class, they don’t want to see you sleeping.

Lucy and Antoinette had conflicting views about the way women adults at the school treated them during their menses. While Lucy felt that the school attended to girls’ needs adequately, Antoinette seemed to have quite a different take on the issue. Telling a story about an experience she once had at the dispensary, Antoinette revealed how she was sent away without receiving any medical attention even though she was in severe pain. It was an experience that left her angry and disappointed because she expected the nurse to be more empathic towards her because “she’s a woman and has undergone this [menstrual experience].”

In telling her narrative, Antoinette conceptualized caring as mothering. She expected the nurse to treat her like her own mother would have done in a similar situation. “Motherly care,” in Antoinette’s view, was characterized by responsiveness, empathy, and understanding. Linking caring to maternal care, Antoinette seemed to suggest that adult women ought to have the capacity to care for girls because of their
shared life experience. Antoinette’s narrative shows how very easily pubertal girls fall out of relationship with adult women especially when they do not feel cared for. At the same time, it also depicts the dilemma these girls find themselves in when they fail to gain the support of the school administration and teachers to help them navigate the challenges of menstruation.
The following are portraits of two girls: Annabelle and Angela who participated in the focus group interviews and whom I later interviewed individually. I have highlighted these girls’ stories because they provided narratives about how they put up “psychological resistance” (Brown & Gilligan, 1992) to cope with teachers they perceived as uncaring. Annabelle’s story demonstrates how she used silence, withdrawal, and passivity to resist her math teacher and, consequently, her learning of mathematics. Angela’s story, on the other hand, illustrates how she used multiple strategies, such as silence, avoidance, and rebellion, to resist her physical education instructor and other teachers whom she perceived to be strict and admonishing. I have focused on these girls’ strategies of resistance because, as Taylor, Gilligan and Sullivan (1995) wrote in their book *Between Voice and Silence*:

> Girls use both voice and silence as strategies in navigating the multiple and sometimes contradictory conventions they learn at home and at school. Each strategy has its advantages and, when the pendulum of voice or silence swings too far in either direction, each poses a risk. (p. 67)

As the following accounts will demonstrate, both Annabelle and Angela adapted ways of resisting teachers that, in the end, posed a risk to their learning.

**Annabelle: Silence, Withdrawal and Passivity as Forms of Resistance**

Annabelle (pseudonym) had just turned 16 when we met. She was beginning her third year of high school. She was the second-born in a family of three children. Her older brother was attending a local university, while her younger sister was in primary
school. Annabelle felt fortunate that her parents had worked so hard to ensure that she and her siblings got an education. During this interview, she recalled how her parents, who were small-scale rural farmers in Kitale, made numerous sacrifices to ensure that their children got an education. Attending St. Antonius Girls High School was a great accomplishment for Annabelle. Her high performance on the primary school leaver’s exam back in 2006 not only helped her secure a place at St. Antonius but also enabled her to earn a bursary from the school for her education. Annabelle noted that her parents, particularly her father, continued to be a great source of motivation for her:

For me, what motivates me the most is my parents, especially my father because when my brother got an A, my father used to tell us, “If your brother, your real brother can get this grade, who are you not to get it? Is it that the books you are reading are different from those that the top student in your class is using?” So when I fail, I just remember those words. That’s what motivates me.

Annabelle’s father had high expectations for her. He made her believe that she could perform just as well as the top students in her class. Although Annabelle drew motivation from her father, it was clear listening to her narrative that she was struggling with schooling, particularly her learning of mathematics. She admitted to me during our exchange that she did not like her math teacher because of the negative remarks he often made in class:

I don’t like the math teacher. When the teacher comes to class, he never sounds friendly. He is ever giving bad comments like “you’ve not combed your hair.” Even at times he says, “how are you sitting like a cow?” such things. When he
comes, you don’t concentrate because you know if your eyes meet him he will
give a comment.

As this excerpt shows, Annabelle was quite apprehensive around her math teacher. She
avoided making eye contact with him whenever he came to class for fear that he would
make a “bad” comment. Constant worry about the potential to be ridiculed by the math
teacher interrupted Annabel’s learning. Although physically present in the class, she paid
little attention during the lesson. When asked if her fear of the math teacher affected her
liking for the subject, Annabelle responded:

Yes. Even I used to say that better I sleep than concentrate. Even I started fearing
him so much because, whenever he comes, I just feel like why should I
concentrate? I just sleep. I don’t even care. I don’t even like practicing it.

To better understand Annabelle’s attitude towards mathematics, I paid particular attention
to her “I” statements. The following is Annabelle’s I poem:

- I used to say that better I sleep than concentrate
- I started fearing him so much
- I just feel like why should I concentrate
- I just sleep
- I don’t even care
- I don’t even like practicing it

As the above I poem reflects, Annabelle had no motivation to learn mathematics. If
anything, she had grown indifferent towards the subject. She resorted to sleeping in class
during the lesson and made little effort to practice her sums. For Annabelle, sleeping in
class allowed her to escape the math teacher’s ridicule. She felt that, as long as she remained silent and invisible in the classroom, she would not be subject to the teacher’s victimization. Although Annabelle’s strategies of silence, passivity, and withdrawal allowed her to “take cover” during the math lesson, they also had negative consequences for her learning. As a result of her resistance, she became disconnected from her math teacher and was unable to seek his help, even when it was evident that she needed it:

  Like for me, when he is insulting like that when I have a problem like I have the difficulty in answering a particular question, I will not go to consult him because I will say this teacher is like this and like that. I better just sit there.

Taylor, Gilligan and Sullivan (1995) found that girls who use silence as a strategy to stay in school can find themselves psychologically isolated or disconnected “from their own feelings and from relationships with others” (p. 68). This was the dilemma in which Annabelle found herself. She remained psychologically disconnected from the math teacher despite the fact that she needed to socially connect with him in order to learn.

  In a way, Annabelle’s story was one of hopelessness. She did not feel that she had the capacity to regain control of her learning of math. She admitted in this interview that she had given up on math and was focusing on doing well in other subjects:

  For me, like in math, when he says like that [referring to the teacher using insults], I just sit there and say, “Math is always like that. I can’t do it.” I will just pass the other subjects but not math because I lose interest.

  Annabelle’s story captures what Herbert Kohl referred to as “willed not-learning.” In his book *I won’t Learn from You*, Kohl (1994) wrote that, “willed not-learning consists
of a conscious and chosen refusal to assent to learn” (p. 27). Students’ refusal to learn, according to Kohl (1994), is often a resistance of an oppressive education. In the case of Annabelle, her refusal to learn mathematics was a silent resistance of her math teacher’s verbally aggressive behavior. Because she could not stand up to him, and challenge his behavior in the classroom, she resorted to a subtle form of defiance.

I should point out that, although Annabelle admitted that she had given up on mathematics, she also remarked that if she had a better math teacher, her attitude would be more positive. Evidently, Annabelle felt that her math teacher did not exhibit caring behavior because of his negative communication. When asked to describe a caring teacher, she asserted that:

I think a teacher who, when you do something wrong, she or he corrects you and is ready to show you the correct way and is not abusing you.

Annabelle’s constant reference to her math teacher’s negative communicative behavior illustrates how profoundly her teacher’s verbal aggression affected her. Her references also support previous studies that associate students’ perceptions of teacher verbal aggression with student affect towards the instructor and course content (Klein, 2006; Myers, 2000; Teven, 2007a; Wubbels & Levy, 1993). It is worth noting that, while Annabelle demonstrated a dislike for her math teacher, she did not feel that way about most of the other teachers. She told me at the end of this interview that she thought most of the teachers at the school were caring. She also pointed out that the constant changing of math teachers in her class made it difficult for the girls to establish good relationships with these teachers. This arguably confirms Noddings’ (2005) theory that, for caring and
trusting relationships to be forged between teachers and students, there has to be “continuity in the teacher-student relation” (p. 69). When asked if having a “better” math teacher would positively influence her attitude towards the subject, Annabelle responded affirmatively. While her positive response gave me the sense that she was still willing to learn mathematics if her ideal instructor came along, I wondered what might happen to her if her wish did not come true, given that she was only a year away from graduating from high school.

*Angela: Silence, Rebellion and Avoidance as Forms of Resistance*

Angela was a 17 year old high school senior when we met. When I interviewed her, she had just begun her fourth and final year of school. She was very outspoken during the focus group discussions and, for the most part, entertained everyone with her humor. Her forthrightness, eloquence, and delightful personality drew me to her and led me to select her for an individual face-to-face interview.

I began the interview by asking Angela what type of relationship she had with teachers. Specifically, I asked her if she felt free enough to engage teachers in conversations or greetings when outside the classroom. In response, she narrated the following story:

But it is hard in this school to get someone [pause] like a student greeting a teacher because it’s like every time you’re on the move, not wasting any time. Everywhere running running. Even you can’t get the time. You just pass a teacher and you go your way. And it is a school rule to run. Be fast in everything you do. That kind of thing. No wasting of time.
Speaking in rather general terms, Angela remarked that it was rare for students to greet teachers because of the hectic school schedule by which they were expected to abide. She also noted that running was a school rule, and as such, they had to “be fast in everything.” Hearing Angela speak helped me make sense of what I had observed around the school campus. Indeed, each day when I arrived on campus to interview the girls, I noticed that they were constantly running. On any given day, I would see girls hurrying off to class, to the dining hall, to club meetings, and to other activities.

It took me by surprise to hear Angela say that she and the other girls rarely greeted their teachers. In Kenya, as elsewhere in Africa, this kind of behavior would ordinarily be considered disrespectful since greetings signify good moral behavior and respect for those in authority (Otiso, 2006). In some respects, Angela’s story justified her actions and those of the other girls. It was clear from her narrative that the school environment did not promote sociable interactions between students and teachers. It seemed that there was more emphasis placed on the academic aspect of schooling than on teacher/student interpersonal relationships.

During the second reading of Angela’s transcript, I paid special attention to the way in which she described her interpersonal relationships with teachers. For the most part, Angela’s story focused primarily on the negative interactions she had with teachers, perhaps because this was an area that greatly concerned her. For example, when I asked her if she felt comfortable around teachers, she responded with a somewhat uneasy feeling in her voice:
Angela: Some you can’t greet because you get scared of them. They might beat. Like Mr. Musa (pseudonym), during the games, he can really beat you if you don’t have games kits.

Speaking in this way, Angela revealed the intense fear she felt whenever she was around some of her teachers. It was a fear that stemmed from both experiencing as well as witnessing corporal punishment at the school. Angela was particularly apprehensive of the physical education (PE) instructor, Mr. Musa, because of the severe punishment he often meted out to students. Afraid of attracting undue attention to herself, and fearful of imminent punishment from the instructor, Angela maintained an invisible presence during PE time by silencing her voice. During this exchange Angela admitted that she steered clear of Mr. Musa at PE time in order to avoid being caned. While Angela’s resistance through silence and avoidance helped her evade corporal punishment, it also disconnected her from an interpersonal relationship with her PE instructor. Her sense of unease also meant that she experienced little enjoyment during the PE lesson.

Besides her apprehension of corporal punishment, Angela was also concerned about teachers’ communication behavior at the school. During the interview, she remarked that some teachers constantly resorted to verbal threats as a way of deterring indiscipline:

Angela: Some teachers they never encourage or advise. They’re always on threats...“If you do this I will do you what to you!” [Mimicking a teacher’s threatening voice while laughing]. Yeah, always on threats even I have never heard them advising someone [still laughing].
As I listened intently to Angela’s story, I was struck by the humor and straightforwardness that she displayed as she told her narrative. Undoubtedly, the interview provided her a private space away from the scrutinizing gaze of her teachers. In the midst of all the laughter, Angela proved to be insightful. She told me during this exchange that teacher verbal aggression was an ineffective way of dealing with student misconduct. In fact, according to her, it only made students like herself rebellious towards teachers:

*Interviewer:* Do you think teachers use threats to make you do things?

*Angela:* Yeah. You know you need to be encouraged to do something. Even being advised: “You must do this and not that” [speaking in a polite tone] but not being threatened all the way. You become a hard-core. And you know when you become a hard-core it is very bad.

*Interviewer:* So you become rebellious?

*Angela:* Yeah

It was interesting to note that, while Angela spoke about her potential to be rebellious towards verbally aggressive teachers, she was also cognizant of the fact that rebelling against teachers was “very bad” behavior. Perhaps her admission that rebelling was “very bad” was also a subtle way of showing that she preferred to retain her “good-girl” identity. When asked if she thought her parents treated her any differently, Angela asserted that:

*Angela:* You see like your mother, she won’t be threatening you all the way. Like a girl she’ll be advising you, “You know my girl, do this not that” [speaking in a
polite tone] but, “When I find you with a boy I will do what to you!” [Mimicking a harsh tone], you see it is not bringing the concept clearly.

Speaking in very general terms about how mothers talk to girls, Angela gave me insight into her perception of good communication behavior. As I paid attention to the distinction Angela made between “good” motherly advice and harsh teacher talk, I became very aware of how a teacher’s tone of voice can sometimes put girls off.

In this interview, Angela played the role of “advocate” for herself and for the other girls. She spoke assertively about how she thought teachers should treat the girls. Like Annabelle, Angela felt that teachers’ communication behavior influenced the way in which students behaved towards teachers. While Angela came across as a courageous young adolescent woman who was able to speak out on behalf of herself and others, and to resist the control of her teachers whenever necessary, she also revealed a vulnerable self by admitting that she felt “scared” of teachers who caned students. It was clear that Angela portrayed multiple self-identities when in relationship with teachers. In some instances, she played the hardcore “rebel” who was eager to defend herself while, in others, she recoiled into an “apprehensive” personality who silenced her voice and avoided teachers in order to stay out of trouble.

Teachers’ Stories

To understand teachers’ perceptions of caring teacher behavior, I held individual face-to-face interviews with 6 teachers. Three of the teachers were female while the other three were males. I interviewed each of the teachers at least twice. The interviews lasted for one hour and thirty minutes each. The interviews were held at a location of the
teachers’ own choosing and at a convenient time. For the most part, the interviews were conducted on the school campus. There was only one teacher whom I interviewed on campus as well as at her home.

Each interview began with me asking teachers about their personal history, how long they had been teaching, and why they joined the teaching profession. Next, I proceeded to center our conversation on the subject of teacher caring and asked teachers such questions as: How do you define caring? In what ways do you demonstrate caring towards students? How do students respond to your caring efforts? Is it your responsibility to care? Why or why not?

Similar to the student interview data, I analyzed the teacher interview data using the Listening Guide method. I read the interview transcripts of each teacher repeatedly listening first for the storyline then a second time for their descriptions of themselves. During the third and fourth readings, I paid attention to how they described their relationships with students and their socio-cultural context respectively. It was interesting to note that of all the 6 teachers interviewed, only 2 teachers acknowledged that teaching was their career of choice. For the other teachers, attending teacher training college and eventually joining the teaching profession was a choice they made simply because they were unable to access a career in their field of choice. All in all, the teachers expressed that they had become accustomed to their work life as educators. They also acknowledged that, although teaching was not their ideal career, it ensured them job security at a time when the country was facing high inflation and unemployment rates.
Virtually all of the teachers in this study described themselves as caring. I found this surprising given that some of the students I interviewed did not perceive some of the teachers in the study as caring. Listening to their stories allowed me to identify the different ways that they conceptualized the caring construct namely: caring as academic support; caring as moral guidance; caring as attentive listening; caring as dialogue and humor; caring as othermothering; caring as friendship; caring as attending to at-risk students; and caring as a community effort to raise young responsible people.

*Caring is Academic Support*

When asked to describe caring, a number of teachers spoke about the academic support they provided to students. Siranga, a male Physics teacher who taught Form three students, told me the following with respect to his caring efforts:

*Siranga*: I consider myself to be a caring teacher. I usually take care of the needs of both my fast and slow learners. I am concerned about their [academic] needs.

Similarly, another male teacher, known as Okumu, who taught mathematics, spoke of embodying a caring rooted in the academic support of his students:

*Interview*: Do you consider yourself to be a caring teacher?

*Okumu*: It depends on what you mean by a caring teacher.

*Interview*: What is your definition of caring?

*Okumu*: No, no, no. I will tell you what my caring means. My context of caring is I am concerned about the academic performance of my students. But I must admit [pause] I am very poor in as far as those on emotional issues now are concerned [pause] very poor.
During this exchange, I was struck by Okumu’s candid admission that he was “very poor” at addressing students’ emotional needs. When asked if he thought it was important to address such needs, Okumu told me rather bluntly that, “I have decided not to consider those.” Taken aback by his response, I asked him directly whom he thought should address these issues:

*Interviewer:* But students have other needs beyond those that are academic. Who should address those? This is a boarding school and these students live here?

*Okumu:* Yeah. You have highlighted my major problem. As a math teacher I have that major problem of getting these girls to get good grades. Even when we have the parents’ meeting, always the parents will ask, “What is happening with the marks?” So I tend to take all my energies on math. And I have always realized that the seriousness of math requires that I don’t joke around with the students [firm voice]. So the compassionate part of me, I take it to the other departments. The other teachers can solve that one if students have compassionate needs let them go their Kiswahili teacher. They’re able to talk to them in Kiswahili.

Underscoring his concern for girls’ poor performance and the need to focus “all my energies on math,” Okumu recounted that the Swahili teachers, who happened to be women, were better suited than he was to address his students’ “compassionate needs.”

Attuning to Okumu’s story, I located multiple layers of meaning. From the onset of our conversation, Okumu expressed concern about girls’ poor performance in mathematics. Noting that he was under immense pressure from parents to improve students’ achievement, Okumu succinctly explained that he tended to focus all of his “energies” on
math because he wanted the girls to “get good grades.” Underlying his performance-oriented narrative was also a story about the complexity of the course content and how it required that he not “joke around with the students.” By labeling math as a “serious” subject, Okumu seemed to convey, albeit unknowingly, a message that all too often discourages girls from pursuing math and other science-related subjects. Furthermore, delegating girls’ emotional concerns onto his female colleagues, and consequently invoking their ability to “solve” these issues, was Okumu’s way of “normalizing” (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2009) what was clearly a gendered construction of caring—one that viewed women as natural caretakers of others in society. The problem with this traditional view of caring as inherently feminine is that it often leads to the exploitation of women’s caring labor (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2009; Diller, 1988; Gilligan, 1992; Noddings, 2005; Ruddick, 1995; Vogt, 2002). In Okumu’s case, it allowed him to pile onto his female colleagues, “work” for which he lacked enthusiasm.

Despite his narrowly defined view of caring as academic support, Okumu remained firm in his convictions that he was a caring teacher. He told me later in the interview that he was always on the school campus assisting students with their work long after his colleagues had left for the day. This account seemed to corroborate what some of the students had told me during the focus group interviews. Okumu felt that his involvement in numerous school activities made him a familiar face to students on campus:
Okumu: I participate in very many of the school activities I think that way [pause] so I have almost become synonymous with the school. If I miss, the students will notice the teacher is not there.

Harriet, a female teacher who taught both mathematics and chemistry, described caring in a much broader sense than Okumu. She told me during her interview that “a caring teacher” had to be responsive to both the academic and social concerns of students:

Harriet: A caring teacher [pause], be concerned about students’ performance, applaud those who are doing well. The weak ones encourage them and at the same time, life is not about academics, academics. We need to acknowledge that we have other lives apart from academics. There is the social bit of it. These children come with issues from home and there is no way you can block those out of their minds. So if students have issues like you find a child is not lively and all that, you need to find out what is it that is troubling her.

Although teachers in this study were concerned about students’ academic achievement, it seemed that this concern was a double-edged sword in and of itself. The quest to ensure that students passed examinations led most teachers to engage in teacher-centered discourse in the classroom. Some of the teachers I interviewed, particularly those who taught math and science, candidly admitted that they did not employ a child-centered pedagogy in their classrooms despite having participated in an in-service training known as SMASSE (Strengthening of Mathematics and Science in Secondary Education), which was meant to equip them with learner-centered teaching skills. Luvai, a male Chemistry teacher in his mid-30s and who had been at the school for 6 years, felt that the SMASSE
approach was difficult to implement in the classroom because of the pressure teachers faced to complete the syllabus:

*Luvai:* Teachers here are trained in SMASSE. It stands for Strengthening of Math and Science in Secondary Education. In SMASSE, the classroom approach is from the known to the unknown concepts. Teachers come to the learner’s level. They encourage group discussions and experiments. They also encourage students’ active participation in the classroom. The teacher is supposed to be there only to direct classroom activity.

*Interviewer:* But is this approach being utilized in the classroom?

*Luvai:* It depends on individual teachers. SMASSE is mostly for science and math teachers. It’s not for other subject teachers. The contradiction of the SMASSE program is that teachers are faced with a syllabus to cover and therefore they cannot use this child-centered approach. With this approach, the teacher will take too long. They may not be able to cover the syllabus. You know, the school administration sets the target of when the syllabus should be completed so following the SMASSE approach may create problems for a teacher later on.

Another teacher, Okumu, recounted that teachers lacked enthusiasm for the SMASSE Program:

*Okumu:* The aim of the SMASSE is to introduce a child-centered approach. But it has been poorly received by the teachers. They don’t like it. If you went to the staffroom and told science teachers, “This April, and August holiday, we’re going
to St. Teresa’s [a neighboring girls’ school] for SMASSE, they will be disappointed.

When asked why teachers did not like the SMASSE Program, Okumu remarked that most teachers were skeptical about the quality of training they received:

_Interviewer:_ Why is it that they don’t like it?

_Okumu:_ One, I think the quality of training. It is actually a good thing in terms of the post-service training. I looked at it. It is a good thing but now the problem is the trainers [pause] the quality. You know, they happen to be just teachers who were taken for the National Teachers Training and then they came back with all their problems. They are supposed to be just facilitators. SMASSE is supposed to bring science and math teachers together to discuss about a certain issue. But now when we go there we want them to [pause] now you’re a teacher and you want again to be taught. Now that is a problem. Actually, we don’t apply those things that we are taught. Partly because of our education system [pause] since it’s exam-oriented coz SMASSE is knowledge-based. If you teach a student through the SMASSE way, you’re teaching them to gain knowledge.

_Interviewer:_ Do you think that teachers at St. Antonius are child-centered?

_Okumu:_ No, they’re not. We’re not because of the education system. The education system is exam-based.

As explicitly noted in the above excerpt, both Luvai and Okumu felt that they were confronted with a “contradictory” education system, one that prepared them to engage in “student-centered” teaching, and yet continued to emphasize outcome-based learning.
Caught in the dilemma between being effective teachers and “surviving” the system, these teachers eventually found themselves teaching to the test rather than encouraging active student participation in their classrooms. For these teachers, caring became defined in terms of the efforts they directed towards helping students pass examinations.

*Moral Guidance*

Moral guidance was also perceived by teachers as an expression of caring. Achieng, a female English teacher in her early 40s and whose teaching career spanned 17 years, told me about how her teaching of English encompassed a moral element:

Teaching English is not just about language. There are practical things that students need [pause] things that impact them [pause] their careers [pause] their etiquette. Teaching English has to do with shaping students in terms of how they relate with others. You know, most of what we are is reflected in language…in how we communicate with others.

When asked if she was a caring teacher, Achieng responded:

I think so. I am sensitive to what they [students] feel and think, but I am also sensitive to how they should be brought up. When they’re wrong, I have to *tell* them. Someone who cares about you shouldn’t pamper you. Just correct you if you’re wrong. A child is a child. They need correction.

While clearly cognizant of the attentive nature of caring (Noddings, 1992), Achieng argued that part of caring also had to do with being forthright with children and “telling” them “when they’re wrong”. In this exchange, Achieng also remarked that caring was not synonymous with “pampering” a child. Convinced that children need guidance, Achieng
was adamant in her emphasis that the latter must be “corrected” when they make mistakes.

Like Achieng, Patricia, a Swahili teacher and also the Head of the Guidance and Counseling department spoke of a caring embodied in moral guidance. Clearly distinct in her narrative was the view that moral guidance is a collective rather than individual responsibility within the school community:

When it comes to correcting them [students], we need to correct them as a society. I don’t need to correct only the child I am teaching. I can correct even that which I don’t teach in another class. So, I believe it is a communal affair. It is not just an individual’s affair.

It is worth noting here that none of the male teachers in this study pointed to moral guidance as an aspect of caring. However, when explicitly asked to describe the aim of education in Kenya, virtually all of the male teachers noted that education had a moral endeavor.

*Caring as Attentive Listening / Attentive Love*

For some of the teachers, caring also meant listening attentively and responding to the needs that students conveyed. Sally, a Swahili teacher in her late 30s, described caring as both guidance and attentive listening:

*Sally*: Caring, to me, means listening to students when they have a problem and taking action whenever necessary and within my power. It also means giving them direction on what to do.
Luvai, a male chemistry teacher in his mid-30s, described caring in general terms as, “having the interest of others at heart.” Speaking more specifically about his own ways of caring, Luvai noted that he had his students’ welfare at heart and often took the time to listen to their concerns at any given time during the course of the school day and after school hours:

*Interviewer:* What does caring mean to you?

*Luvai:* Care means having the interest of others at heart. At any point here in school, I will stop and listen to students’ issues during and after school hours. I always keep an open mind. I am open to criticism and I don’t hold grudges with students. I always try to get students out of trouble. I mean [pause] I have their welfare at heart. I also try to correct them early enough.

While Luvai did not articulate the term *ubuntu* in his narrative, it was clear that he constructed caring from a humanist point of view. Concern for the “other” led him to listen attentively to what the “other”, that is, his students, conveyed to him.

*Caring is engaging in Dialogue and Humor*

Teacher caring in the current study also meant engaging in dialogue with students. For instance, Luvai noted that he often engaged in “open discussions” with students both inside and outside of the classroom as a way of demonstrating care:

*Interviewer:* Would you describe yourself as a caring teacher?

*Luvai:* I can say, yes, I am, when I am not or vice versa. One way of knowing is how students approach you with questions. I usually have open discussions with students both in class and in the field. I normally tell them that when we’re out of
class [pause], we’re out of class. I am not formal when we’re out in the field [i.e. during sports activities].

It was interesting to note that Luvai saw caring as a perception. He was very reluctant to label himself as a “caring teacher” and noted that the way students behaved towards him was the prime indicator of whether or not he was caring. For Luvai, students’ willingness to ask questions was, as he put it, “one way of knowing” that they perceived his caring efforts. While keenly aware of the degree of formality that he had to maintain in the classroom as an instructor, Luvai also felt that it was important to adapt a somewhat laid-back attitude in his interactions with students, particularly when outside the classroom.

In his construction of caring as dialogue, Luvai also spoke about how he employed humor in the classroom in order to judge his students’ understanding of the course content and to enhance closeness:

I usually socialize and joke with students in order to get what they know. To come to their level, I joke around with them. Sometimes I mention places that might excite them and the like.

Although Luvai weaved the notion of “closeness” into his narrative of care, he told a very different story when he began speaking about the challenge of caring as a male instructor. Seemingly cognizant of the dictates of society about how African men ought to interact with girls, Luvai narrated a very cautionary tale about the “social distance” that male teachers should exercise in their efforts to “care” for girls:
Dealing with students of the opposite sex should be within certain parameters
[pause] because there are implications for doing certain things.

As if to demonstrate the risk of caring as a male instructor, Luvai cited instances of
caring that could easily be misconstrued:

If you are staying on campus, do you let students freely approach you in your
home? There is a very thin line in terms of how far one can go in caring. Placing
your hands on a student’s shoulder may make the student feel you’ve come to her
level but it’s not right. It may be interpreted differently by other students. You
have to make sure there’s a balance. In the African culture, we’re taught to keep a
distance. We’re not encouraged to be close to girls. For a male teacher, closeness
will be interpreted differently.

Although Luvai was very aware of how a teacher’s touch could be reassuring to a student
in need of care, he also understood the cultural implications of such an action. Explaining
that it was “not right” for male teachers to physically touch girls, and that “it may be
interpreted differently by other students”, Luvai implicitly alluded to the larger society’s
concerns about the likelihood of inappropriate touching. In a very significant way,
Luvai’s narrative demonstrated how social norms demarcate what is culturally
appropriate caring behavior for male teachers within African culture. Luvai’s account
parallels the narratives of other male teachers in studies that have examined caring in
teaching (Hansen & Mulholland, 2005; King, 1998; Vogt, 2002). For example, in Vogt’s
study (2002), some teachers expressed concern that physical contact with students could
lead to potential allegations of sexual abuse and that male teachers needed to be more careful in their handling of children.

Caring as Othermothering

*Othermothering* can be conceptualized as the maternal care that Black women exhibit towards blood children of other women within the community (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002; Case, 1997; Collins, 1991; Foster, 1993; James & Busia, 1993; Taylor, Gilligan & Sullivan, 1995). While the *othermothering* tradition is often associated with African American culture dating back to the days of slavery (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 1999), it is worth pointing out here that this practice is also very evident within indigenous African culture. It is likely that African slave women brought with them the *othermothering* tradition to the Americas. In the current study, *othermothering* was perceived as a form of caring by some of the female teachers I interviewed. Patricia, who identified herself as a mother, spoke about her love for children:

I also love children. I am a family person [laughter]. I love children. Yeah. So every time when I am assisting them, I think of them as my children. I love children.

Because of her love for children, Patricia extended her “mothering” to her students. She told me that, “I think of them [students] as my children.” Speaking in this way, Patricia demonstrated how the work of mothering her own biological children influenced her thinking about caring for children in general. As Sara Ruddick wrote in *Maternal Thinking*, the ways mothers think about protecting, nurturing, and training children arises from their experience of motherhood.
In her caring narrative, Patricia demonstrated that she embraced motherhood as a critical part of her caring pedagogy. What was striking about Patricia’s “maternal sensibility” (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002) was the fact that it informed her caring beyond the boundaries of school. She still worried about her students, even during the school holidays as the following excerpt demonstrates:

**Interviewer:** Could you cite specific instances where you demonstrated caring?

**Patricia:** Like aahhh, there was a kid whose mother just took off from their home in December, and they don’t even know where she went. I just heard about it from somebody when we were still at home [for the holidays], and I think the first thing I did when we came back was to call this girl and assure her that all is well [pause], that we are there for her; if she has something that she would have told the mother, she can come to me. I will listen, and where I can help, I will help her. And I think she really appreciated, and we are getting on along well. Aahhh, there is also a student who has been having a problem, and she has been unable to tell the mother. She told me the mother is very harsh, and I told her: “I am now your mother here; tell me.” And I think I assisted her. She had a medical problem; she was treated, and I think she is well. She confided in me, and I think I went about it, and she was treated. Yeah. Sometimes, also once in a while when I see a kid is not cheerful, I just try to find out what is happening, especially in my class [pause], in the classes I teach.

Clearly, Patricia’s maternal sensibilities compelled her to respond to the two girls she narrated about in this account. In each instance, she felt that these girls needed an
othermother to attend to their needs in the “absence” of their own mothers. In the case of
the girl whose mother disappeared over the Christmas holidays, Patricia availed herself to
her and reassured the girl that she [Patricia] would listen just like a mother would. In the
other instance, where the student was too afraid to confide in her own mother about a
medical problem, Patricia listened attentively to her and helped her get the medical
attention she needed.

By saying to her students, “I am now your mother here, tell me,” Patricia made
herself receptive to what they had to convey and, in doing so, was able to hear what these
girls’ mothers were not hearing. Patricia’s “open receptivity” towards her students and
her responsiveness to their expressed needs embody Noddings’ (2005) concept of
engrossment or what others (Murdoch, 1970; Ruddick, 1995; Weil, 1951) have called
“attentive love.” This is also synonymous with African humanism or ubuntu.

In some respects, Patricia’s role as a mother never came to an end. For her,
“mothering” was continuous work that extended from the home and into the classroom.
Like other women in studies that have examined motherhood (Francis-Connolly, 1998),
Patricia embraced mothering as a lifelong occupation.

Patricia’s othermothering illustrates the significant role that other adult women
play in the lives of adolescent girls, particularly in instances where the latter feel uneasy
to converse with their own mothers about important issues (Taylor et al., 1995). At the
same time, Patricia’s othermothering also demonstrates that girls will confide in adult
women whom they can trust and whom they perceive as understanding and less
admonishing.
Another female teacher whose caring embodied *othermothering* was Sally. Sally’s “mothering” of students was linked to her own adolescent experience. When we first started conversing about caring for girls, she recalled the sense of voicelessness she once felt as an adolescent and as a young woman. Remarking that she was unable to speak to her own mother about her sexuality and about relationships, Sally revealed how cultural taboos surrounding issues of sexuality kept her from speaking about relationships:

*Sally:* Even me, I was never able to discuss my boyfriend until I went to University. And still even when I was getting married, I could not face my own mother and tell her, “Now I am getting married” because [pause], like the issue of relationships never came up in our home.

Sally’s account regarding her inability to speak about relationships struck a chord with me. Her story mirrored my own experience growing up in Kenya. Like her, I had witnessed first-hand my mother’s self-silencing. In fact, I had seen this self-silencing play out in the lives of most, if not all, of the women in our family as they went about forging relationships with men. So it was not surprising to hear Sally admit that the question of relationships “never came up in our home.” As I listened to Sally speak, I began to hear how this culture of silence and secrecy denied her the opportunity to learn from her mother about her changing pubertal body:

*Sally:* Most of the issues in the African culture are never discussed because it is taboo even to mention some of the things and mothers, you know, they’re not supposed to tell you some of the things even just concerning menses. When we were having menses, we had to learn it the hard way [chuckle]. Luckily enough
for these girls, there are teachers in school who mention it. For us most of the times, it was surprise! [Laughter].

Sally’s remembrance of her own adolescent experience, her dissociation from a mother who did not speak to her about her changing pubescent body, and her disconnection from a body she did not fully understand appear to have been essential (Brown & Gilligan, 1992) in her wanting to give voice to her students. As an adult woman who was now all too familiar with what it was like not to know one’s self during girlhood, Sally felt that her students needed to hear from an older woman about issues surrounding puberty and sexuality just as much as they needed to speak about them. Well aware that her students could not speak about relationships with their own mothers, and knowing how such self-silencing can complicate girls’ lives, Sally made her classroom a space where girls could “veer off topic” and speak about relationships:

Sally: I don’t want to say that I grew up that long ago [laughter], but I think I can relate my situation with these girls as I look at it. Where, you know, you don’t talk about relationships. Sometimes when we’re in class, we veer off from the lesson and they’re able to tell me, “You know, if my parents know that I have a boyfriend, they’ll kill me” [laughter]. So it’s not something they talk about. When they get into a relationship, maybe they’re not able to know how to handle it, so it affects their learning. They’re not able to handle it.

By availing herself as the older woman with whom the girls could speak and hear from regarding their sexuality, Sally became a confidant to her students. They freely disclosed
to her personal issues that they normally kept hidden from their parents and other teachers:

*Sally:* In my situation, I think most of my students always feel like I left school the other day [laughter]. Sometimes when I talk their language, they’re free to tell me, so sometimes we share, and I tell them how to go about situations in their relationships. Some of them are free with their parents, but some of them are not. It is the same with teachers. You find that some teachers are so academic [laughter], seriously academic so that it is strictly Biology and nothing else. But with me, I have been lucky to attend some of these counseling courses, so I am able to counsel them. Like now, we are free. Some girls at least trust me enough. They share with me and sometimes I tell them the situation has not changed.

Evidently, Sally became the *othermother* to her students through the relationships she forged with them. In other words, she became the woman other than their mother, “from whom they would seek support” as they transcended the threshold of adolescence (Taylor, Gilligan & Sullivan, 1995, p. 118).

It is worth pointing out that, although female teachers alluded to *othermothering* as an aspect of caring, none of them were explicitly asked during the interviews if their roles as mothers or parents influenced the way in which they cared for girls. Although Sally and Patricia were the only teachers who explicitly linked their caring to parenting, all the other teachers in the study alluded, albeit implicitly, to the *in loco parentis* role they played in the lives of their students. At the same time, these teachers expressed
frustration that parents did not play their role in supporting their children’s learning and instead “heaped” their responsibility on teachers:

Okumu: Our parents are the people letting us down. If my kid drops from position 1 to 2, I will come to school. I want to [pause]…the teachers and in front of the kid… the kid to be told why she had dropped and that is one position. I am telling you these parents bring their kids here and go. They only come during what we call Academic Days. And that one is once in year. These parents will come this year and then wait for the next year. How do you expect us to take care of your kids and [pause]…they [parents] are failing us. We are trying to help them and they’re not helping us. Because I have always told parents, “If your kid knew that you’re going to pop in this school any time and you must get a good report, this kid is going to be good.” You will get some parents who are very serious in following up, but for others, it is a formality. Some parents are very concerned but unfortunately now those are in the minority in this school.

Patricia: I can chip in as a teacher and also play the parental role, but not going overboard and doing everything for the parents.

Sally: Parents have abdicated their role and left everything to teachers.

Harriet: The parents, because we are with these children most of the times of their lives, it is like parents have forsaken their roles as parents. So that at the end of the day, we’re supposed to be teachers, we’re supposed to be policewomen we’re supposed to be [pause] …you know, [pause]…because the parents have forsaken their roles.
While teachers seemed to think that parenting was an inherent characteristic of teaching, they also voiced the fact that it was not their sole responsibility to “parent” students. Most teachers felt that supporting students through their academic careers needed to be a concerted effort between them and parents. The fact that this collaboration was not taking place seemed to make teachers feel exploited. This may explain why most teachers did not readily equate their caring with parenting.

Equating teaching with mothering or parenting has been found to be problematic in other studies. For example, in her study of caring, Vogt (2002) asserted that:

Both the definition of caring as mothering and caring as parenting are highly exclusive. In the first place, they exclude men by insisting on the maternal instincts of women, based on the concept of essential motherhood rather than social parenthood. Furthermore, teaching as mothering and parenting implies that non-parent teachers are lacking professionally relevant experience and skills. (p. 261)

Unlike the teachers in Vogt’s study (2002), none of the teachers in the current study perceived parenting or mothering as being incompatible with the professional work of teaching.

*Caring is Friendliness*

For some of the teachers, caring for students embodied friendliness. For example, when I asked Patricia to describe her relationship with students, she told me repeatedly that she and her students had a “friendly” relationship:
Patricia: Hmmm [pause] I think we are friends [laughter]. That is simply how I can put it. We are friends. I think I am friendly but firm. They know when I mean business it is business. But, I am also very understanding. I believe because many of them talk to me about their own personal issues. I can just say I think I am friendly. They are also my friends.

Although Patricia interacted with her students in a friendly fashion, she was also firm with them whenever it was necessary. There were moments when she interacted casually with them and other times when she asserted her authority. For Patricia, being friendly and understanding allowed her to establish close bonds with her students. Patricia’s friendly demeanor also enabled her students to confide in her. Interestingly, friendship was also a strategy that Patricia employed to attend to problem students. In the excerpt below, Patricia revealed how she and her problem students talked openly with each other in ways that allowed her to counsel and advise them:

Interviewer: What kind of relationship do you have with problem students?

Patricia: Surprisingly, the problematic students that I teach are closer to me than even the good students. I don’t know how it comes about, but they happen to be more close to me and I think I am able to correct them even better because we talk one-on-one and they are very open to me. Even when they are problematic.

Interviewer: Are these students known to be problematic to other instructors as well?

Patricia: I think I have a good example of one student who was problematic to all other instructors and even to me. She was not even attending some of my lessons.
But surprisingly, when I called the father and the mother, the mother said: “When she talks at home, she says you’re the best teacher according to her.” And we talked to that girl and she is now so reformed in my class. In fact, the other day I was praising her and telling her: “If you continue like that you’re going to do well”. She is changing and she is appreciating that, though I called her parents, I did it for her own good because I cared about her. Yeah.

Interviewer: How would you describe your relationship with the good students?

Patricia: The good students we just have a mutual relationship. They are good friends. We don’t have any problem. But I find that I interact more with the problematic. I don’t know. Maybe it’s because of the department [Guiding and Counseling] that I am in.

It was interesting to note that Patricia had a much “closer” relationship with her problem students compared to the type of relationship she had with her “good” students. Although she told a story of “not knowing” how this “close” relationship between her and her problem students came about, what seemed apparent was that the positive interactions she had with these students resulted in them feeling “closer” to her.

Patricia’s emphasis on friendship as an important quality in the teacher/student relationship emerged once again when I asked her what type of relationship teachers should have with students:

Hmmm [pause] I think they should have a relationship that is friendly. I think we need to be friends first. We become friends first that is when I can be able to teach well. That is when they can be able to listen to me and understand well. Yeah.
Caring as Attending to “At Risk” Students

Another way that some teachers cared was attending to students who were “at risk” of failing. Patricia, for example, directed her care towards struggling learners:

Patricia: Personally the subject I teach [Swahili]. I want to say I always thank God that weak students –those who are termed weak in the school –always do well in my subject and I think it is because I always care about the weak because I was also not very bright in school, and I always try to imagine if my teachers didn’t help me, I would not be where I am.

Patricia’s concern for struggling learners was tied to her own schooling experience. Having once been a weak learner, she knew what it was like to have supportive teachers around and resolved to make a difference by caring for those students she felt were “at risk” of failing.

Caring as a Community Effort to Raise Young Responsible People

Some teachers viewed caring as a community effort to raise young, responsible people. This notion of care as communal was exemplified in Patricia’s story:

I think I believe in the African proverb which says, “It takes a village to raise a child” because, as a community, the children belong to the community. They don’t belong to an individual. Although nowadays, we’re drifting away from that but still it forces us still to take care of other people’s children, especially as teachers. When the children are in boarding schools especially. We have to take care of them not only academically but, also, in all aspects of life. We have to see that they are growing up to be responsible people, not just being successful in
academics. Sometimes, even when it comes to sickness or any other thing, we have to help them and this is in school.

It seemed apparent to me as I listened to Patricia, that her cultural beliefs influenced her view of caring in teaching. She firmly believed in the old African adage that it took a village to raise a child. Although aware of the apparent slippage of communal caring in the Kenyan culture, she remained convinced that teachers had the obligation to care for “other people’s children.” In fact, for Patricia, caring was a moral imperative. Teachers simply could not opt out of it. They had to care. They had to ensure that young people grew up to be responsible members of society. In many ways, Patricia’s description of caring as communal captured the quintessential African notion of ubuntu. Her narrative, unlike that of most other teachers in this study, depicted the ideal way of caring within African culture.

When Caring Fails

Whereas teachers’ narratives were replete with examples of how they cared for students, some of their actions raised questions about their caring sensibilities. For instance, I observed teachers on numerous occasions resorting to corporal punishment whenever students misbehaved. This went on despite the fact that corporal punishment is outlawed in Kenyan schools. When asked why they caned students, most teachers explained that their main aim was to deter student misconduct. Patricia recounted that she sometimes had to inflict “a little pain” to get students to understand the gravity of their behavior:
Interviewer: Rather than caning, why not just talk to students?

Patricia: I think, as I said, I don’t believe so much in caning, but the caning also helps because they are some of the mistakes done and some of the students, until you inflict some pain is when they realize that actually it was wrong. Not always that you talk to them and they [pause]…they get corrected. Talking is not always the solution. Sometimes they need that pain [pause]…a little pain [soft voice] so that they know that it was actually serious and especially for the African child.

Similarly, Achieng, the English teacher, employed corporal punishment to curb persistent student misconduct:

I usually try to point out mistakes to them [students] in a manner that they can see [pause] and if I have said something one too many times, sometimes I have to punish them. For example, punctuality has been emphasized as a school rule, so if a student makes it a habit to be late, then I have to punish her.

Interviewer: In what way do you punish them?

Achieng: I may ask a child to kneel down, or go and do some manual work.

Sometimes I cane them.

Nyokabi, a female geography teacher who described herself as “quite caring,” openly admitted that she “severely punished” problem students in order to instill moral values in them:

Nyokabi: You may have a case where you get a student with a problem. When you try to dig out, she tries to take you [pause] you know, she doesn’t tell you the truth. So what do you do with such a student? You must severely punish her so
that she may tell you the truth and then out of telling you the truth you will have corrected her. In fact, in most cases, like yesterday, I had a case [pause] in most cases your student tries to cheat you. I become so serious [speaking in a stern voice]. I punish a student so severely and the minute she accepts that she was trying to lie to me, I stop and I tell her that is a case forgotten. I try to encourage or let me say inculcate that virtue of honesty in them.

Nyokabi’s account left me feeling somewhat ambivalent. I found myself silently pondering whether such punishment could really inculcate the “virtue of honesty” in a child. Listening to her narrative, I cast my mind back to Immanuel Kant’s book, *Kant on Education*, in which he wrote that:

> If you punish a child for being naughty, and reward him for being good, he will do right merely for the sake of the reward; and when he goes out into the world and finds that goodness is not always rewarded, nor wickedness always punished, he will grow into a man who only thinks about how he may get on in the world and does right or wrong according as he finds either of advantage to himself.

*(1899, p. 83)*

Since Kant’s early writings on punishment, numerous scholars have expressed their opposition to the use of corporal punishment. McCord (1996), for instance, posited that, “punishments are effective only in teaching children not to misbehave ‘in full view’ of the punisher” (p 832). Greydanus, Pratt, Spates et al. (2003), on the other hand, argued that corporal punishment sends a message to children that it is alright to inflict pain on others:
The use of corporal punishment in schools promotes a very precarious message: that violence is an acceptable phenomenon in our society. It sanctions the notion that it is meritorious to be violent toward our children, thereby devaluing them in society’s eyes. (p. 389)

Other studies have linked corporal punishment with delinquent behavior in children, depression, and possible violence towards others later in life (Strauss & Yodanis, 1996). In a study of children in South Africa, corporal punishment was associated with feelings of sadness, anger, fear, humiliation, embarrassment, aggression, and withdrawal (Save the Children Sweden, 2005). In the present study, students noted that corporal punishment made them feel apprehensive and resentful of teachers. Reflecting on the negative psychological effects that corporal punishment has on children, I came to the conclusion that, in hitting children, teachers like Nyokabi, Patricia and Achieng were failing to communicate caring to their students.

Classroom Observations

In order to understand the nature of classroom interactions between teachers and students, I observed 10 teachers during their lessons. This sample of teachers consisted of 5 men and 5 women. Of the 5 male teachers, 2 taught mathematics while the other 3 taught Chemistry, Biology and Christian Religious Education (C.R.E) respectively. The female teacher sample consisted of 2 Swahili teachers, and 3 other teachers who taught Geography, English and Mathematics. It should be noted that 6 of the teachers who were observed also participated in individual face-to-face interviews. The remaining 4 teachers were not interviewed because they had busy schedules and could not make the time.
As with previous studies that have examined classroom interactions in Kenya (Abd-Kadir & Hardman, 2007; Ackers, 2001; Pontefract & Hardman, 2005), this study found that most teachers used the lecture method as a primary mode of instruction. In each class I visited, teachers stood at the front of the class and either dictated notes or wrote on the chalkboard while students copied the notes in silence. Based on what I observed, most teachers encouraged rote learning. In most classes, teachers rarely probed students on their views about the concepts they were learning. Discussions where students were allowed to offer different opinions were few and far between. Furthermore, there were few occasions when teachers encouraged students to ask questions. In instances where teachers asked questions, it was a very common practice for students to respond in a chorus. It seemed that this was a practice they were accustomed to as no efforts were made on the part of teachers to discourage it. In fact, in some cases, teachers elicited choral responses based on the cues they communicated to students. Direct repetition was also common in the teacher discourse. In most instances, teachers encouraged students to repeat words or phrases they were learning. Similar to Abd-Kadir and Hardman’s (2007) findings, the teachers in this study rarely used follow-up questions to determine how well students had understood concepts. Because choral responses were common, individual students rarely got feedback from teachers. Most of those who got feedback were those who sat at the front or middle of the classroom.

While most teachers in this study engaged in a teacher-led discourse, some tried to incorporate a student-centered approach in their classrooms. For instance, some teachers moved around the classroom during the lesson and took time to examine
students’ work. I should note, however, that because of the overcrowding in the classes, teachers were limited to the front and middle area of the classroom. The average class size at St. Antonius was 46. This made getting to the back of the class virtually impossible in some cases. Besides moving around the classroom, some teachers also adapted positive interpersonal behaviors while teaching. In at least 4 classes, teachers made eye contact with students, called students by name, smiled, joked, used hand gestures, and praised students. In two of the classes observed, teachers encouraged group activity and discussion during the last half of the lesson.

The interpersonal behaviors that some of the teachers in this study displayed in their classrooms no doubt reflected caring. Previous studies in communication instruction research (Teven, 2001; Teven & Hansen, 2004) have shown that teachers who engage in verbal and nonverbal communication behaviors such as moving around the classroom, using humor, calling students by name, using gestures, and making eye contact with students are perceived as caring.

*Student QTI Results*

On their QTI responses, girls rated all the teachers as being high on “leadership”, “helpful/friendliness”, “understanding” and “strict” behaviors and low on “giving students responsibility and freedom”, “uncertain”, and “admonishing” behaviors. The low teacher scores on “giving students responsibility and freedom” corroborated my observation. Rarely did teachers give students any autonomy in the classroom. The high score on “strict” corroborated my observation as well as teachers’ own admission of their behaviors. What surprised me about the QTI results was girls’ positive evaluation of math
teachers. These evaluations seemed inconsistent with what girls told me during the focus groups. For example, a majority of the girls rated math teachers high on “helpful/friendly” and low on “admonishing” behaviors despite stating during the group interviews that most of the math teachers were unfriendly and admonishing. I attribute these inconsistencies to two factors. One factor is that it is likely that girls might have had difficulty understanding some of the wording on the scale. Another factor is that cultural beliefs might have influenced the way girls responded. Children in Kenya are raised to hold teachers in high regard (Johnson & Miller, 2002), and as such, it might be somewhat problematic for students to make comments that are negative concerning their teachers. For example, responding to such items as “This teacher gets angry quickly”; “It is easy to make a fool out of this teacher” and “It is easy to pick a fight with this teacher” all go against Kenyan cultural norms, and as such, would make students hesitant to respond. Perhaps future research could be conducted to determine how much of an influence culture might have on the way Kenyan students respond on the QTI scale. Further, it might also be useful to translate the scale into Swahili, especially if it is to be used in rural areas in Kenya.

**Teacher QTI Results**

To obtain teachers’ opinions concerning their interpersonal behavior with students, the QTI was administered to 10 teachers teaching various, subjects including English, Math, Swahili, Christian Religious Education (C.R.E), Geography, Physics, Biology and Chemistry. Teachers perceived themselves to have high leadership qualities. All 10 teachers either responded “usually” or “always” to the item “I am a good leader”. A majority (8 out of 10) claimed to act confidently always, whereas 5 out of 10 always
hold their students’ attention. Teachers also perceived themselves to be friendly, helpful and understanding. On the items “I am friendly” and “If students have something to say I will listen”, 9 out of 10 teachers responded either “usually” or “always”.

The results of the teachers’ QTI scale showed that teachers perceived themselves as engaging in positive interpersonal teacher behaviors. These results seemed consistent with teachers’ caring narratives. However, it should be noted that teachers’ perceptions of themselves did not necessarily reflect students’ views of them. For example, while math teachers evaluated themselves positively, some students perceived them as less caring. It is important to note that this scale was not used with the pre-understanding that the items on it would measure teacher caring behaviors since such behaviors are not always identifiable. However, the items on the scale correlate with some of the constructs of care theory and, hence, proved to be useful in enabling me to compare the perceptions that students and teachers had regarding interpersonal teacher behavior that is associated with caring. The complete surveys for both students and teachers are attached under appendix D and E respectively.

Summary

This chapter has explored the stories girls and teachers at St. Antonius Girls High School in Western Kenya told regarding their perceptions of teacher caring. The chapter also illuminates teacher behaviors that girls perceived as less caring and the forms of resistance that some of the girls put up to cope with these behaviors. The Listening Guide method was used to analyze participants’ stories. The QTI scores for both teachers and students were also examined to determine how girls perceived teachers’ interpersonal behaviors and how teachers themselves perceived their interpersonal behaviors with students.
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The aim of this study was to understand how students and teachers at St. Antonius Girls High School in the Western Province of Kenya perceived teacher caring behavior. Further, the study sought to understand how girls’ perceptions of their teachers’ interpersonal behaviors influenced their attitude towards education. Because the voices of Kenyan girls are largely absent in the literature on caring in schools, the Listening Guide method was utilized to give voice to the girls in the present study. Likewise, the method allowed teachers’ voices to be heard. Given that this case study consisted of a small sample of teachers and students, the results are not representative of views of all schoolgirls and teachers in Kenyan public schools. Nonetheless, they provide insight into the perceptions some teachers and students have regarding caring.

To discuss the findings of the present study, Chapter 5 will re-examine the ways in which girls and teachers conceptualized the concept of caring. This section will also explore how the findings of the study support and expand upon the existing literature on caring and relational pedagogy.

Girls and Conceptualizing Caring

The girls in this study seemed very perceptive of their teachers’ behaviors. They were well aware of the type of behaviors their teachers exhibited both inside and outside of the classroom. Because girls interacted with teachers on a daily basis, these interactions shaped the way they thought about caring and uncaring teacher behavior. Similar to previous studies (Seaton, 2007; Wentzel, 1997), the girls in this study spoke with clarity about what they perceived as teacher behaviors that demonstrated caring and
behaviors that did not. When asked to describe teacher behaviors that exemplified caring, they were able to pinpoint specific examples of these behaviors. It appeared that girls perceived caring teachers as those who acted in their best interests whether it was with respect to their academics or their personal wellbeing. In essence, girls’ perceptions of caring teachers was linked to their cognitive and emotional needs.

*Girls’ Cognitive Needs*

Girls in this study were very ambitious and had high aspirations of transitioning to college upon completion of their high school career. Amani talked about her dream of becoming an engineer and how she had the potential of gaining admission to any university at home or abroad. Malaika shared her ambition of one day becoming whatever she could be. In their own ways, all the girls in this study wanted to achieve their dreams, and they saw education as a vehicle through which those dreams could be achieved. As a result, they coveted their teachers’ support to help them succeed in their academics. They understood that teacher support was a key determinant in their achievement. For these girls, teachers that provided academic support were considered to be competent and therefore up to the challenge where student academic success was concerned.

As I listened to girls’ stories regarding academic support, I was struck by how conversant they were with teacher behaviors that reflected competency in the classroom. Consistent with the extant literature, the girls in this study associated teacher competency with a strong mastery of content, clarity, certainty, teachers’ willingness to respond to students’ questions, teachers’ willingness to revisit difficult concepts, teachers’
exploration of concepts in depth and teachers’ willingness to provide extra help. These girls felt that teachers who exhibited competency in the classroom cared about them and wanted them to excel in their academics. On the contrary, they felt that teachers who did not exhibit competent behaviors and who engaged in behaviors they deemed to be offensive (Banfield, Richmond, & McCroskey, 2006; Kearney, Plax, Hays, Ivey, 1991), such as favoritism, ridiculing of students, verbal abuse, and sarcasm, were less caring. It should be noted that these views are consistent with those found in other studies that have explored teacher caring (Myers, 2001; Teven, 2001, 2007b).

The fact that the girls in this study were able to make clear distinctions between what reflected teacher competency to them and what did not reveals that girls, to some degree, are knowledgeable about teacher classroom practices that are beneficial to their learning and those that place them at a disadvantage. It is likely that girls’ perceptive ability might be related to their age and development as adolescents. It is unclear if younger students could make such distinctions in their descriptions of caring.

In this study, girls were able to link specific teacher behaviors to their achievement. For instance, some of Mr. Okumu’s students whom I interviewed were convinced that his dedication to mathematics, his strong mastery of content, his willingness to explain difficult concepts when asked, and his willingness to provide extra help after school hours all contributed to their high achievement. On the other hand, students from Ms. Harriet’s math class felt that her perceived uncertainty with the course content, reluctance to respond to students’ questions, favoritism, ridiculing of students, and disorganization during the lesson compromised their learning of the subject. Beauty,
one of Ms. Harriet’s students, admitted that she was reluctant to ask questions in class after witnessing an incident in which Ms. Harriet ridiculed her friend Rita in front of the entire class. I also recall the story of Edith who felt alienated by Ms. Harriet’s favoritism. For these students, their teacher’s behavior and instructional style undermined their learning and placed them at risk of failing.

Girls in this study wanted teachers to engage in competent behavior in the classroom. Based on the stories they told, it seemed that teachers, particularly those who taught mathematics, did not always exhibit competent behavior. Teachers like Mr. Okumu were the exception rather than the rule. It was not surprising, then, that most girls in this study perceived him as a caring teacher. The fact that Mr. Okumu’s caring influenced students’ perceptions of him and of the course content illustrates the importance of teacher caring, particularly in subjects such as mathematics where girls tend to have learning anxiety, and where they are likely to register low achievement thereby limiting their academic and career choices.

_Girls’ Social and Emotional Needs_

Besides needing their teachers’ academic support, the girls in this study also wished for guidance, counsel, and advice from teachers to help them deal with the challenges of adolescence. Because they were at a critical juncture in their lives where their bodies were changing in a drastic way, and where they were beginning to develop a new self-identity as young women, these girls yearned for teachers, particularly women, to help them make the transition. Girls, like Hilda, welcomed their teachers’ support to identify peers who would not steer them away from their “good-girl” identity. Makena
desired teachers and adults who would empathize with her as she dealt with her period. Chepkemei valued teachers who advised her and the other girls in her dorm on how to cope with the challenges of boarding life. Auma, Betty, and Angela all wanted to "look beautiful" without worrying about female teachers confronting them about their looks. Contrary to what their teachers thought, these girls believed that wearing makeup and being stylish would not interfere with their learning as long as they carried out their "responsibilities."

As reflected in their stories, girls in this study coveted the support of their teachers to help them identify a "strong sense of self" (Seaton, 2007). Having reached the "crossroads of adolescence" (Brown & Gilligan, 1992), these girls were beginning to discover self, and to negotiate their place in society (Seaton, 2007). As young women, they were in need of meaningful relationships particularly with women teachers to help them transition through the adolescent experience. Girls’ search for their sense of self became central in their construction of caring. They identified caring female teachers as those who helped them develop a strong self-concept and who encouraged them to explore their own identities. For these girls, teachers like Patricia who encouraged them to "be smart" and to beautify themselves were viewed as caring.

Paradoxically, while girls wished for positive connections with teachers, they seemed to have a relational conflict with some of their teachers. This relational conflict was projected in the hesitance and silences I heard in the stories they told about their interactions with women teachers. Brown and Gilligan (1992) have explained this paradox in their work, noting that girls tend to dissociate themselves from relationships
with adult women as they reach adolescence. Such dissociation, according to Brown and Gilligan, leads girls to disconnect from themselves and from their own voice so that they are unable to speak up about what they really think and feel.

Like girls in previous studies who experienced a loss of voice (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Seaton, 2007), the girls in this study also experienced a falling out of voice and relationship. The tension and rivalry that existed between them and their women teachers made it difficult for them to seek guidance and support from these teachers. Girls like Auma, who were curious to learn about good grooming, found themselves grappling with body image issues on their own rather than dealing with hostility from women teachers. Auma’s choice to trim her hair when deep down inside she preferred to keep it long reflected her struggle to maintain “relationship” with teachers while disconnecting from her own feelings.

For the girls in this study, falling out of relationship with teachers meant, “disembodying” from their own voices. Although they were familiar with the tensions that plagued their relationships with these teachers, they shied away from speaking out, unwilling to risk a further loss of relationship. Further loss of relationship would have meant having a much more unpleasant learning experience. Girls’ loss of voice and relationship alienated them from the very women they wanted to “learn” from. Their loss of voice and relationship became a loss of understanding because knowing themselves and knowing about pubescence was in part dependent on relationship with adult women.
Girls and Gendered Connotations of Caring

What was intriguing as I listened to girls tell their stories was the fact that they constructed caring based on gendered norms of femininity and masculinity. Girls seemed to ascribe the paternal role of “authority” to male teachers and the maternal role of “nurturer” to women teachers. Because girls viewed teachers through a gendered lens, they had different expectations of these teachers. Male teachers were solely expected to provide academic support while women teachers were expected to provide both academic support and “motherly care.” “Motherliness” was equated with being responsive, understanding and empathic. For girls in this study, women teachers’ role as “nurturer” took precedence over their professional role as educators. As a result, they were predisposed to identifying “caring” women teachers as those who exhibited qualities traditionally associated with “good” mothering. Hence, women teachers who did not fit into the construct of a “good” mother were perceived as less caring.

Girls’ gendered view of caring seemed to mirror patriarchal values espoused by the larger Kenyan society. It is likely that their socialization at home and in the community shaped the way these girls thought about caring. McKie, Bowlby, and Gregory (2001), note that the home is a site where gender-appropriate norms are played out and where the gendered notion of caring is reinforced. According to McKie et al. (2001), “much of the activity that takes place within the home is still either conducted by women or seen as the responsibility of women and much of this activity is concerned with caring for others” (p. 236).
Given the gendered nature of caring within the home and family setting, it is possible that girls in this study generated meanings about caring, based on what they saw their own mothers doing, and on the activities and tasks they themselves performed while at home. Because they did not encounter messages within the school setting that could counteract their view about the roles men and women play in the caring of children, these girls found themselves depicting care in very gendered and patriarchal terms.

Girls’ view that male and female teachers enact caring in strictly gendered terms was an oversimplification of what it meant to care. These girls were young, naïve and had a limited set of life experiences to draw upon in describing caring in teaching. It is also possible that as young women living in a rural part of Kenya, they were not exposed to other modes of caring that challenge socially constructed norms of femininity. An urban setting where patriarchal notions are more likely to be challenged and interrogated would perhaps have given these girls a different view of caring.

Regardless of their naïveté, girls’ gendered construction of caring is problematic in that it leads to an assumption on their part that all women ought to be “motherly” and that the only way women care is through maternal work. Yet, in reality, not all women are responsive and attentive mothers (Ruddick, 1995) and not all women who care engage in nurturance. Some women choose not to identify with the maternal (Case, 1997; Vogt, 2002) and prefer to be recognized for their professional aspect of caring. Still, there are other women who are not mothers or have no experience of mothering and can therefore not be expected to care in a “motherly” way.
Teachers and Conceptualizing Caring

Teachers conceptualized caring in a variety of ways. In their narratives, teachers described caring as academic support, moral guidance, attentive listening, dialogue and humor, othermothering, friendliness, attending to “at risk” learners and collectively raising young responsible people. Notably, these varied understandings of what it meant to be a “caring teacher,” were based on traditional gendered norms of masculinity and femininity. Male teachers, for the most part, viewed caring from a professional standpoint. They felt that as educators, their care resided in the academic support they provided to learners. Luvai was the only male teacher in this study who seemed to articulate a different and perhaps less gendered view of caring. He saw casual conversation, humor and attentive listening as other ways of executing care.

Unlike their male counterparts, women teachers thought of caring as a professional as well as maternal stance. When asked to describe what it meant to care, they identified behaviors often associated with effective teaching and mothering. Virtually all the women teachers recounted that caring encompassed nurturing learners’ intellectual and emotional wellbeing. Others observed that the work of caring involved raising young people to be morally responsible members of society. Women teachers’ conceptualization of caring seemed to correspond with what Ruddick (1995) called “maternal practice.” In her book, *Maternal Thinking*, Sara Ruddick noted that maternal practice constitutes the commitment of women and others engaged in maternal work to meet children’s “demands” for protection, as well as intellectual, and emotional growth.
Further, she posits that a third demand that women face, is to raise their children in ways that are socially acceptable.

While women teachers embraced mothering in their work as educators, they did not view caring as “feminine” work. Consistent with Gilligan (1993) and Noddings’ (2005) “ethic of care,” women teachers viewed caring as a moral choice. They felt that all teachers, whether male or female, had the moral responsibility to care for the overall wellbeing of learners. Male teachers on the other hand, seemed to think that caring was a task associated with women. Mr. Okumu, one of the math teachers, told me in very concrete terms that emotional caregiving was women’s responsibility.

Like the students in this sample, teachers’ gendered conceptualization of caring was consistent with patriarchal cultural values about the roles of men and women within Kenyan society. Male teachers perceived themselves as authoritative and non-emotional, while female teachers perceived themselves as nurturing and cooperative. Because male teachers in this study lacked a “language of emotion,” their description of caring was limited. It could be argued that cultural prescriptions on how men should interact with children, particularly girls, inhibited the ways in which these teachers could think about and express notions of caring. Previous studies (Hansen & Mulholland, 2005; King, 1998), have shown that male teachers, particularly those who teach young children, are often viewed with suspicion because of societal concerns about pedophilia, and as such are limited in the degree to which they can safely enact caring. Unlike their male counterparts, women teachers seemed to have a broader repertoire of the care ethic, perhaps because as women and as mothers, they were expected to pay attention to ways
of caring. It is also likely that these women engaged in conversations about “maternal work” (Ruddick, 1995) and that these conversations informed their thinking.

The Burden of Caring

While teachers at St. Antonius described themselves as caring, they also admitted that caring was burdensome. A number of factors seemed to contribute to these teachers’ stresses. Most of the classes at St. Antonius were overcrowded, often consisting of more than 40 students at a time. Because classrooms were packed with students, there was hardly room for teachers to move around in class. This made for very difficult teaching. Teachers could not give students the individual attention they needed. For the most part, teachers found themselves confined to the front of the classroom. Teachers also admitted that the pressure to complete the syllabus within the stipulated time left little room for them to engage in caring behaviors.

The issue of teacher remuneration was another factor that added to teachers’ stress. Most teachers felt they did not earn a living wage teaching and had to search for alternative remuneration outside the teaching vocation. As a result, teachers hardly stayed back to assist students when the day ended. Some even left in between lessons to attend to their own “business.” I should note here that when this study was conducted, teachers in Kenya had staged a two-week boycott to dispute a salary offer from the government. Although the teachers at St. Antonius continued with lessons as usual during that two-week period, it was clear to me that they were frustrated by the government’s reluctance to increase their pay. These tensions between teachers and the government certainly affected their capacity to care for girls.
Teachers were also discouraged from caring because of the individualistic culture at the school. Some teachers saw no point of going the extra mile because there was no collaborative effort amongst the faculty to care for learners. Teachers like Sally were particularly frustrated that the school principal did not show care and concern for staff despite the fact that they were devoted to their work. The fact that the principal did not model caring may have been one reason why some of the teachers did not engage in caring behavior. Indeed during my time at St. Antonius, I rarely saw the principal interacting casually with teachers. Often times, she showed up during the morning assembly then left to attend to other administrative tasks once assembly was over. There were a number of instances when the principal visited the staffroom to meet with teachers. However, these visits for the most part were brief and professional in nature.

Another factor that demoralized teachers from caring was parents’ lack of involvement in their children’s education. Many of the teachers I spoke to complained about having to shoulder the burden of caring for students without the cooperation of parents. Some of the teachers also complained that students had too many problems because of tensions at home and they simply could not address all these issues.

Relating Findings to the Literature

The results of this study reveal that care ethics, relational pedagogy and ubuntu are relevant theories for understanding how teachers and students within the Kenyan girls-only secondary school perceive the concept of caring. Because the findings of this study support the extant literature in varied ways, I will explore this link to the literature
first by examining girls’ views of caring within the larger theoretical framework then proceed to examine teachers’ views.

**Girls and Care Ethics**

Just as Seaton (2007) found in her study, the girls in the present study demonstrated “clarity, poignancy and maturity” in their description of teacher behaviors (p.10). These girls were very perceptive of what care looked like and what it did not look like. In line with Noddings’ (2005) ethics of care, girls perceived care when teachers enacted caring behaviors they could recognize. Notably, the girls in this study identified teacher caring behaviors in similar ways, as did students in previous US-based studies. They felt that caring teachers were empathetic, understanding, responsive, motherly, competent, and able to provide guidance and advice to students.

Similar to previous studies (Myers, 2001; Teven & McCroskey, 1997; Teven, 2007), girls in this study had a positive regard for teachers they perceived as caring and a negative regard for teachers they perceived as less caring. It was very clear in stories girls told that caring was an essential aspect of teaching and learning. Most girls noted during the focus groups that caring shaped their attitude towards teachers and towards the subjects teachers taught.

While girls demonstrated a capacity to discern caring when they encountered it, they also expressed feelings of ambivalence. Makena, for example, found it difficult to reconcile “caring” with corporal punishment. Although she had encountered care in the way her math teacher taught the subject, she questioned his constant use of the cane and admitted that caning “brings a lot of hatred.” Makena’s sense of ambivalence shows how
girls in this study received a “mixed” message about what it meant to care. Further, it also shows how the “mixed” message they received left them uncertain about their teachers’ capacity to care.

Like girls in Taylor et al.’s (1995) Understanding Adolescence study, the girls in this study told stories of dissociation from teachers. Telling stories of self-silencing, avoidance, passivity, withdrawal and rebellion, girls revealed the ways in which they put up resistance in order to evade punishment and relational conflict with teachers. Further, girls also told of how they gave up relationship with teachers so as to maintain “relationships” (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Taylor et al., 1995) with their peers.

The paradox in girls’ giving up of relationships (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Taylor et al., 1995), was that it placed them at risk of failing in school. Girls like Annabelle, Beauty and Edith who showed their disapproval of their math teacher’s behavior by employing silence in the classroom, found themselves struggling to learn mathematics. Annabelle in particular could not seek clarity from the math teacher despite the fact that she encountered math problems she could not solve.

Besides the risk of failing, girls’ use of silence as a strategy of navigating challenging classroom environments, led to isolation and estrangement. Taylor et al. (1995) posit that girls’ self-silencing can dissociate them from “important psychological and relational needs” (p. 68). They also note that girls who engage in self-silencing often go unnoticed in school contexts. Evidently, while silence enabled girls in this study to rebel against teacher “misbehaviors” (Kearney et al., 1991) in a rather subtle way, it also had negative implications for their learning and adolescent development.
Girls in this study disengaged from relationships with teachers, primarily because they did not perceive care. Yet, while they gave up these relationships, it was clear in their narratives that they yearned for authentic relations with teachers particularly women teachers. In their study, Taylor et al. (1995) note that girls voiced “a tremendous need for an experience of connection in which they feel safe and can speak the truths of their lives without fear that they will lose relationship or endanger their place in school” (p. 69). Likewise, the girls in this study wished for relationships similar to those that girls’ in Taylor et al.’s (1995) study described.

*Teachers and Care Theory*

Data on teachers’ description of caring confirmed Gilligan (1993) and Noddings’ (2005) theory that the care ethic resonates more with women than it does men. Indeed women teachers in this study projected a more nuanced understanding of caring than did their male counterparts. Furthermore, these teachers’ description of caring was based on the belief that care was a moral obligation rather than a virtue. On the contrary, it appeared that male teachers viewed caring as an innate virtue in women.

As with the women in Brown and Gilligan’s (1992) study, the women teachers in this study told stories that resonated with girls. For some of the women teachers, speaking about caring prompted them to reflect on their own girlhood experiences that they had long “silenced or forgotten” (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p. 216). Sally re-sounded her own adolescent experience, recalling how she was unable to speak to her own mother about pubescence and sexuality and how the “culture of silence” surrounding issues related to womanhood left her voiceless and dissociated from her changing pubertal body. For
Sally, it was this experience of loss of voice and self during adolescence that led her to connect with the girls she was teaching.

Consistent with the care ethics, teachers’ description of caring was rooted in “attentive love” (Ruddick, 1995) or what Noddings (2005) called “engrossment”. According to Noddings (2005), engrossment or attention entails being fully receptive and really hearing, seeing or feeling what the other tries to convey. Attentive listening characterized most women teachers’ narratives about caring. Teachers like Patricia described instances in which they listened attentively to girls and responded to their expressed needs in ways the latter could recognize.

The teachers in this study also viewed caring as an interpersonal relationship. In the stories they told, they used terms like friendship, dialogue, and talk to capture the caring construct. These teachers were well aware that a carer concerns herself/himself with the cares or concerns of the “Other” (in this case the learner). Consistent with relational ontology (Buber, 1958; Bakhtin, 1973) and the African philosophy of ubuntu, teachers viewed caring for the “Other” as imperative to the survival of self and community. Patricia spoke about the importance of caring for “other people’s children” while Luvai spoke about having the interests of others at heart. In essence, these teachers embraced the notion that caring was a relation between the “carer” and the “cared-for” (Noddings, 2005).

While the views of teachers in this study support Noddings’ (2005) notion of caring as a relation, the gendered discourse evoked in many of their stories is no doubt problematic. Male teachers’ assumption that women teachers are inherently caring and
possess the qualities to nurture learners’ emotional wellbeing not only excludes them from the important task of caring, but also loads onto women teachers a disproportionately larger responsibility to care for learners and in doing so, exploits their ‘caring labor’. Another problematic of emphasizing the gendered nature of caring, is that it sends the message to girls, that their primary role in society is motherhood, and that they will be recognized for their mothering qualities more than anything else. Further, it also reinforces in girls the message that women must shoulder all the caring needs of others in society (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2009). I argue here, as many have done (Cushman, 2005; Martin, 1992; Noddings, 2005; Vogt, 2002; Zhang, 2007), that this notion of care has to be challenged.

As Martin (1992) notes in her book, *The Schoolhome*, the work of Care, Concern and Connection in schools has to be “everyone’s business” (p. 203). That is to say, both male and female teachers have to engage in caring for the whole-child. The kind of care that Martin (1992) and others have envisioned (Gilligan, 1993; Held, 2006; Noddings, 2005) for the schoolhouse is not one rooted in women’s maternal work. Rather, it is rooted in a moral ethic that addresses the cognitive, emotional, spiritual, psychological and physical wellbeing of learners.
CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Introduction

As earlier noted, the present study employed a qualitative case study inquiry approach to explore teachers’ and students’ perceptions of caring at a girls-only secondary school in western Kenya. Further the study also sought to understand how teachers enacted caring and how girls’ perceptions of their teachers’ behaviors influenced their attitude towards education. Because there have been no studies to explore how “caring” is constructed in the Kenyan school context, it was the goal of this study to shed light on this very important subject. Previous studies on teacher-student interactions in Kenya indicate that primary school teachers treat girls unfavorably and tend to have a preference for teaching boys (Mensch & Lloyd, 1998). Hence, this study sought to find out if teachers at the secondary level treat girls any differently.

To understand the ways in which participants conceptualized caring, the study employed a feminist voice-centered relational method of analysis known as the Listening Guide. The aim of employing the Listening Guide was to “hear” the distinct ways in which participants, particularly women and girls, spoke about their relational experiences within the school setting. The Listening Guide is distinct from conventional qualitative methods of analysis in that it focuses on “hearing” the voices of interviewees rather than identifying emergent themes in their narratives. The four-step process of the Listening Guide allowed me to hear how participants described themselves, their relational context and their cultural and social landscape.
Conclusions

Unlike previous studies on caring in teaching which found that teachers’ conceptualization of caring was not gendered (Vogt, 2002), the findings of the present study indicate that the concept of “teacher caring” was constructed in gendered terms. Male teachers associated caring with academic support while women teachers associated caring with both academic and emotional support. Like teachers, the girls who participated in this study also constructed a gendered caring discourse, assigning the role of academic support to male teachers and nurturance to women teachers. This gendered perception of caring was problematic because it led women teachers to attend to girls’ emotional needs without the support of their male counterparts. It also resulted in girls expecting emotional care primarily from women teachers.

While all the teachers in this study articulated an ethic of care, not all of them actually engaged in caring behavior. Those who exhibited caring demonstrated competency in the classroom and provided girls with guidance and advice as they grappled with pubescence. On the other hand, those who did not exhibit caring engaged in offensive and incompetent classroom behavior (Kearney et al., 1991) and did not provide girls with the support they needed to cope with body image issues. Women teachers in particular seemed hostile to girls and constantly sought to enforce social conventions of femininity that restricted the way girls could dress themselves while in school. The relational conflict between girls and teachers who did not exhibit “caring” led to girls employing a variety of resistance strategies including self-silencing, passivity,
withdrawal and rebellion. It is likely that these resistance strategies placed girls at risk of failing in their academics.

Based on teachers’ descriptions of caring, it is clear that they idealized the notion of caring as an important aspect of the teaching vocation whether or not they themselves engaged in caring behavior. The teachers in this study were teaching under difficult circumstances. They were grappling with large classrooms, had limited resources and were under immense pressure from both the school administration and parents to produce high student scores. Furthermore, they were also frustrated with the low remuneration they were earning and often had to seek alternative employment to supplement their income. The fact that the school principal did not show care and concern to teachers also compounded the situation making it rather challenging for teachers to exhibit caring. Hence, there should be caution in interpreting the results of this study. Merely concluding that teachers in the single-sex girls’ secondary school in Kenya do not exhibit caring would be overlooking the factors that contributed to these teachers’ lack of caring. It is probable that the teachers in this study would have been more consistent in their caring efforts if they had been in a school environment that cultivated a caring culture and one in which they themselves felt cared for. In her study of primary school teachers in England, Acker (1995) not only found that teachers cared deeply for pupils, but that they worked in a school environment that promoted a caring, collegial and collaborative culture. Acker’s study suggests that teachers are more likely to care for learners if they work in a school context that promotes a caring culture.
Implications of the Study

Teachers and students in the present study displayed an understanding of caring that reflected cultural, religious and personal values. Yet, while these participants demonstrated familiarity with the concept of caring, it seemed that teacher caring was not consistently enacted within the classroom and school setting. The fact that girls put up “protective walls” to counter teacher misbehaviors, speaks to the relational tensions that sometimes permeated the teacher/student interactions at St. Antonius. Therefore, the results of this study raise questions about how teachers might be better prepared to care for girls in schools. Hence, these findings have implications for teachers, teacher education programs, schools, and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.

Recommendations for Teachers

The research on adolescent girls’ perceptions of their relationships with teachers (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Seaton, 2007; Taylor, Gilligan & Sullivan, 1995) indicates that girls desire teachers who will listen attentively to their needs and concerns, and who will show them support, and treat them with a level of respect. These studies also show that girls wish for greater support from women teachers and other adult women in school contexts as they grapple with the challenges of adolescence. As with the extant research, the present study supports this hypothesis. Teachers need to be more attentive to adolescent girls’ social and emotional needs.

Adolescence is a critical time in girls’ lives. It is a time when they are coming of age and becoming young women. Adolescence is also a time when girls are preoccupied with their physical appearance (Choate, 2007), are self-conscious about their changing
bodies, and are sensitive to the way others, particularly their peers view them. Therefore, teachers need to be more sensitive to the changes girls undergo when they reach puberty. A good example of how teachers might show sensitivity towards girls is to refrain from engaging in verbally aggressive behaviors that attack girls’ self-concept (Teven, 2001). Insults, sarcasm, ridicule, and other embarrassing comments can make girls shy away from participating in the classroom and consequently put them at risk of failing in their academics. Therefore, teachers need to communicate to girls in a language that is respectful and one that will encourage dialogue.

Other ways that teachers can show sensitivity to girls’ adolescent needs, is to ensure that the latter receive the care and support they need to cope with menstrual periods. Girls in boarding schools face a particularly precarious situation when they reach menarche, because they are away from home and unable to seek the support of their mothers or other adult women with whom they are in close relationship. Hence, women teachers can play the role of the *othermother* by providing guidance and counseling to girls as they deal with menses. Girls should be well informed on the menstrual experience and how they can manage it while going about their schooling. It is also important that male teachers partner with their female counterparts in supporting girls through this experience. Male teachers can do this by being more empathic and understanding towards the latter. Besides providing emotional support, teachers should ensure that medical attention is made available for girls dealing with painful menstrual cramps and other symptoms that accompany menses. This would help reduce the incidences of girls missing class and make it easier for them to concentrate during lessons.
Teachers also need to pay attention to the subtle cues (Seaton, 2007) girls communicate inside and outside the classroom. Girls who are silent, passive and withdrawn may be subtly communicating the need for help. By reaching out to girls and offering a listening ear, teachers may provide girls the space they need to speak about what they are feeling or what they are going through. In listening attentively, teachers may also be able to identify subject areas that girls find difficult and this could be a starting point for helping girls succeed in school.

Given that girls tend to fall out of relationships with their mothers when they reach adolescence (Taylor et al., 1995), the role women teachers play in girls’ lives can be critical to their development. Women teachers can become the adult women that girls confide in, when they cannot speak to their own mothers about important issues. At adolescence, girls grapple with numerous challenges and as such it is important for them to have adults that they can trust with information.

As far as the approach in the classroom goes, teachers have to take the time to prepare for their lessons. Being unprepared and disorganized can give students the wrong impression and lead them to believe that teachers are incompetent and incapable of teaching the course material. Certainty, clarity, enthusiasm, and strong mastery of content all send a message to students about a teachers’ credibility. Hence, it is important that teachers project competency when teaching.

Implications for Teacher Education

Teacher education programs in Kenya need to prepare student teachers to engage in positive interpersonal behaviors that communicate caring. Given the nuances in caring
behaviors, the suggestion here is not for teacher educators to train students in specific ‘caring’ behaviors. Rather, student teachers should be made aware of teacher behaviors that learners associate with caring, and those that learners are likely to perceive as uncaring. According to Teven (2007a), teachers “stand to benefit from being made aware of the types of behaviors that undermine the students’ perception of caring” (p. 395). The assumption here is that such an awareness could lead teachers to avoid engaging in behaviors that students may perceive as uncaring.

It is also important for teacher education programs to expose student teachers to literature on caring (Goldstein & Lake, 2000). I am not necessarily suggesting that teacher education programs design a curriculum based on the Western ethic of care. What I am suggesting is a curriculum based on an African ethic of care. In her book, Sankofa: *African Thought and Education*, Elleni Tedla advocated for what she calls an Africana-centered education that is “firmly anchored in indigenous African thought and education while it judiciously borrows ideas and technologies from other peoples of the world” (p. 209). I join Tedla (1995) in asserting that it is time for Africa to return to the roots and take back those values that are positive and can be beneficial to the continent. Caring is a core African value that has been passed down to the people of Africa for generations. African oral and written literature is replete with stories, mythologies, riddles, proverbs, poems, and songs, about the importance of caring for the community and for children. We have to make such genres meaningful again. Teacher education programs could consider incorporating some of this literature in its curriculum for the purpose of challenging students to reflect on what it means to care within the African context.
Further, literature on African indigenous education as well as literature on *ubuntu* could be other sources that teacher educators can utilize in their classrooms to enhance their students’ understanding of the authentic African way of caring and teaching.

It will also be important for student teachers to be trained in a variety of teaching methods that are child-centered. The current reliance on rote learning undermines students’ ability to think critically and to challenge new ideas. Freire (2006) observed that education should aim at raising the critical consciousness of learners so that they too can participate in the construction of knowledge and be prepared to transform the world. Therefore, it is essential that teacher educators train student teachers to embrace a classroom discourse that allows for dialogue, discussion and critical thought.

Aside from the question of classroom pedagogy, the teacher education program also has to outline the ways in which male teachers can safely enact caring. New guidelines recently introduced by the Teachers Service Commission (the body responsible for hiring teachers) warn teachers against touching students in a sexual nature or engaging in other behaviors that may be sexually suggestive (Daily Nation, 2010). However, while such guidelines provide boundaries for teachers insofar as what they cannot do when interacting with students, they do not address the question of what teacher behaviors might be appropriate. Male teachers need to be aware of the ways they can attend to the emotional needs of students without necessarily “crossing the line.” Otherwise, they will continue to be excluded from the work of caring, leaving a huge burden on women teachers.
Teacher education programs can begin by training male teachers on the importance of being empathic, understanding and responsive in their interactions with girls. Empathy, understanding, and responsiveness are caring qualities (McCroskey, 1992) that male teachers can enact in a safe way. For example, if a female student approaches a male teacher with a need he feels he cannot address because of concern that others might misconstrue his actions as inappropriate, the least he can do is listen attentively to the student then direct her to a female colleague who might be able to address the issue. The key here is that the brief encounter that this teacher has with the student reflects care.

I should point out that the issue of male teachers’ caring is a complex one. Caring happens within a cultural context and I would be hesitant to recommend that teacher education programs alone determine how male teachers should care in schools. Like Cushman (2005) who suggests in her study of male primary school teachers that schools, society and the media need to collaborate in raising consciousness about how masculinity and femininity are constructed within schools and the larger society, I feel that there needs to be a national discourse that will allow the larger Kenyan society to share views and opinions on what they think should be the way forward with respect to how male and female teachers should care in schools. Such a discourse would certainly help inform how teacher education programs prepare male and female teachers to care in schools.

Implications for Schools

Schools should be organized in such a way that they aim to care for both learners and teachers. Noddings (2005) argued that, “the main aim of education should be to
produce competent, caring, loving, and lovable people” (p. 174). For schools to produce learners who care and love others, they have to be places that nurture the three Cs of care, concern and connection; where children feel safe, secure and loved (Martin, 1992). They also have to be places where no child is subjected to corporal punishment or verbal abuse because of misbehaving or failing on a test.

Caring in schools has to begin at the top of the hierarchy of school leadership. Heads of schools have to show that they care for their teaching staff. They have to model caring by demonstrating empathy, understanding and responsiveness towards teachers. Head teachers also need to encourage activities that will draw teachers together from time to time so that they can establish strong bonds of friendship and collegiality with each other. One way that schools could encourage a sense of collectivism amongst the teaching faculty is to organize outings and retreats where teachers can rejuvenate and reconnect with one another. Such outings can also be opportunities for teachers to reflect on their work, and to offer each other moral support.

Another way that schools could promote caring is to reward teachers for the work they do. An end of term appreciation event where teachers are rewarded for exemplary teaching can be a way to encourage teachers to care for students. Caring for learners can be exhausting for teachers. As some studies have shown, the teaching profession brings with it emotional stress and burnout (Acker, 1995; Teven, 2007a). Therefore, teachers need to feel appreciated so that they can keep on caring for learners.

Nurturing caring in schools also means that head teachers have to encourage teachers to care. They have to communicate to teachers the necessity of exhibiting caring
in the classroom. Along with such encouragement, schools should ensure that they provide teachers with an environment in which they can care. Pressure on teachers to teach to the test is among the reasons teachers are sometimes unable to enact caring. Therefore, schools have to shift away from an over-emphasis on outcome-based learning and encourage teachers to pursue a student-centered pedagogy in the classroom. Teachers should also be encouraged to be creative during lessons and incorporate a variety of teaching methods so as to motivate learners and to accommodate diverse learning styles. Rather than rely on the lecture method and rote memorization, teachers can employ a dialogic classroom approach where students actively participate in discussions and engage in critical thinking. In addition, teachers could also improvise visual aids in the classroom in order to make learning interesting.

**Implications for the Ministry of Education**

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST) must develop a better system of monitoring and evaluating practicing teachers to ensure that the latter incorporate student-centered approaches in the classroom. Particular focus must be paid to teaching and learning in science, mathematics, and technology (SMT) classrooms. The fact that math and science teachers in this sample did not put into practice their in-service SMASSE training, demonstrates the need for a better evaluation system for teachers. Multiple data sources of evaluation including student performance and progress, peer evaluations, student evaluations, teacher self-evaluations and evaluations by experts in teachers’ specific fields could help provide a more accurate picture of teachers’ classroom pedagogy (Stronge & Tucker, 2003).
To ensure student-centered teaching, the Ministry of Education also has to allocate funds that can be directed towards meeting the cost of cheap, locally made visual aids such as charts, maps, posters, pictures, and other supplies, that teachers could use to enhance learning.

Future Research

Because the present study was limited to exploring experiences of teachers and students at one girls’ school, findings say little about what happens in single-sex schools across Kenya. Future research could consider conducting a larger, longitudinal study on teacher caring in Kenyan secondary schools. Findings of such a study would provide a much broader picture of how Kenyan secondary school teachers enact caring. I also suggest that future researchers interested in understanding caring in Kenyan schools consider exploring the link between teacher caring and student outcomes. Presently, it is unclear how teachers’ interpersonal behaviors in the Kenyan secondary classroom influence student achievement. Such a study might shed light on the impact of teacher interpersonal behaviors on student learning and perhaps provide insight into why girls in Kenya continue to lag behind their male counterparts.

Another potential area of study would be to explore student teachers’ perceptions of caring. Understanding how student teachers conceptualize caring long before they begin field placement can enable teacher educators to challenge as well as broaden these students’ perspectives on caring especially in instances where the latter may have a limited view of how to care in the school and classroom setting. In their study of pre-service elementary teachers’ understanding of caring, Goldstein and Lake (2000) found
that these teachers held “partial and under-developed” views of caring, which proved problematic for them when they finally went into field placement. Certainly, these findings demonstrate how important it is for student teachers to undergo training that will challenge and expand their perspectives on caring.

Yet another area worth investigating would be a study on how teachers and students at boys-only schools conceptualize caring. To my knowledge, no such studies currently exist and as such it is unclear how teachers care for boys. The way teachers care to a certain extent influences how students think about caring in teaching. There may be a possible link between male teachers’ perceptions of caring and the kind of caring they experienced as learners.

I would like to conclude by expressing my gratitude to the teachers and girls at St. Antonius for letting me into their lives and giving me the opportunity to explore the concept of caring in the Kenyan classroom. My life has been greatly enriched by the stories they so generously shared with me and it is my hope that future research in Kenya will further explore this very important subject of caring in schools.
REFERENCES


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APPENDIX A: OHIO UNIVERSITY CONSENT FORM

Parental Consent Form

**Title of Research:** Teacher Caring: An Investigation of an all-girl rural secondary school in Western Kenya

**Principal Investigator:** Ms. Sela M. Musundi

**Department:** Educational Studies

Your child is being asked to participate in a dissertation research conducted by Sela Musundi, a Ph. D. student at Ohio University in the United States. For you to be able to decide whether you want your child to participate in this project, you should understand what the project is about, as well as the possible risks and benefits in order to make an informed decision. This process is known as informed consent. This form describes the purpose, procedures, possible benefits, and risks. It also explains how your child’s personal information will be used and protected. Once you have read this form and your questions about the study are answered, you will be asked to sign it. This will allow your child’s participation in this study. You should receive a copy of this document to take with you.

**Explanation Of Study**

This study will be examining the way teachers at St. Joseph’s Girls High School interact with students. The purpose of the study is to find out how teachers at the school demonstrate caring towards students. The study will also be examining the perceptions that students have regarding teacher caring behavior. Teacher caring involves an interpersonal relationship between teachers and students whereby the teacher is attentive enough to really hear, see or feel what the student is conveying to him/her and to respond in a way that makes that student feel cared for.

During the study, your child will be asked to participate in a survey where a questionnaire will be distributed to her so that she can fill in her responses. The questionnaire will consist of 48 short questions to determine what your child thinks about her teacher’s behavior. Your child will be given an hour to complete the questions and submit the questionnaire back to me. Please note that during the survey, your child will be informed not to write her name on the questionnaire so as to protect her identity. Following the survey, your child will be asked to participate in a group interview a week later. The group interview will consist of 9 students with myself as the moderator. The interview will last for approximately 45 minutes and will require your child to share her opinion regarding how teachers interact with her and what she perceives to be teacher caring behavior. Your child’s teachers will not be present during the interview. Besides the survey and the interviews, I may also visit your child’s classroom as well as observe your
child at extra-curricular activities in order to observe her day-to-day schooling experience. I may need to speak with your child even after the survey and interviews are completed just to make sure that I have clearly understood her views and opinions. I may be at your child’s school for a period of three months during this entire study.

**Risks and Discomforts**

Since this study will require your child to evaluate her teachers’ behavior, it is likely that she may feel uncomfortable discussing her teachers’ behavior for fear of being reprimanded. However, I do not plan to disclose any information that your child provides me to her teachers, administrators or the Principal. All the information she provides will be kept confidential. It is important to note that your child’s participation in the group interviews may pose a minimal risk of inadequate confidentiality since there will be other students participating as well. However, I will ensure that I caution all participants not to relay any of the information discussed to others that did not participate including teachers.

**Benefits**

By participating in the study, your child will have an opportunity to voice her thoughts and feelings about teacher caring behavior at the school. There is also a potential that the information your child shares could be important in helping enhance gender policies in education which in turn could improve the environment in which Kenyan girls learn.

**Confidentiality and Records**

To ensure that the information you share with me is kept confidential, I will store audio-recordings of interviews, survey responses and any other study-related material in a secure location in my home. Pseudonyms will be used in place of your actual names to protect your identity. Once transcription of tapes has been completed and data transferred onto my personal computer, I will safely discard the audio-recordings. I will also secure my computer using a password.
Compensation

Your child will receive gifts in the form of stationary for participating in this study.

Contact Information

If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact Sela Musundi by email at sm239602@ohio.edu or by phone at 0723-022-988. You can also contact my Dissertation Committee Chair, Dr. Jaylynne Hutchinson, at hutchinj@ohio.edu or by phone at +1740-593-9827.

If you have any questions regarding your child’s rights as a research participant, please contact Jo Ellen Sherow, Director of Research Compliance, Ohio University, Sherow@ohio.edu, +1(740) 593-0664.

By signing below, you are agreeing that:

- you have read this consent form (or it has been read to you) and have been given the opportunity to ask questions
- known risks to your child have been explained to your satisfaction.
- you understand Ohio University has no policy or plan to pay for any injuries your child might receive as a result of participating in this research protocol
- your child’s participation in this research is given voluntarily
- your child may change his / her mind and stop participation at any time without penalty or loss of any benefits to which he/she may otherwise be entitled.

Signature_________________________________________ Date ____________

Printed Name _______________________________________

Version Date: [02/17/09]
APPENDIX B: OHIO UNIVERSITY CONSENT FORM

Student Assent Form

Title of Research: Teacher Caring: An Investigation of an all-girl rural secondary school in Western Kenya

Principal Investigator: Ms. Sela M. Musundi

Department: Educational Studies

You are being asked to participate in a dissertation research conducted by Sela Musundi, a Ph. D. student at Ohio University in the Unites States. For you to be able to decide whether you want to participate in this project, you should understand what the project is about, as well as the possible risks and benefits in order to make an informed decision. This process is known as informed consent. This form describes the purpose, procedures, possible benefits, and risks. It also explains how your personal information will be used and protected. Once you have read this form and your questions about the study are answered, you will be asked to sign it. This will allow your participation in this study. You should receive a copy of this document to take with you.

Explanation Of Study

This study will be examining the way teachers at St. Joseph’s Girls High School interact with students. The purpose of the study is to find out how teachers at the school demonstrate caring towards students. The study will also be examining the perceptions that students have regarding teacher caring behavior. Teacher caring involves an interpersonal relationship between teachers and students whereby the teacher is attentive enough to really hear, see or feel what the student is conveying to him/ her and to respond in a way that makes that student feel cared for.

During the study, you will be asked to participate in a survey where a questionnaire will be distributed to you so that you can fill in your responses. The questionnaire will consist of 48 short questions to determine what you think about your teacher’s behavior. You will be given an hour to complete the questions and submit the questionnaire back to me. Please note that during the survey, you will be informed not to write your name on the questionnaire so as to protect your identity. Following the survey, you will be asked to participate in a group interview a week later. The group interview will consist of 9 students with myself as the moderator. The interview will last for approximately 45 minutes and will require you to share your opinion regarding how teachers interact with you and what you perceive to be teacher caring behavior. Your teachers will not be present during the interview. Besides the survey and the interviews, I may also visit your classroom and be present at your extra-curricular activities in order to observe your day-
to-day schooling experience. I may need to speak with you even after the survey and interviews are completed just to make sure that I have clearly understood your views and opinions on teacher caring. I may be at your school for a period of three months during this entire study.

Risks and Discomforts

Since this study will require you to evaluate your teachers’ behavior, it is likely that you may feel uncomfortable discussing your teachers’ behavior for fear of being reprimanded. However, I do not plan to disclose any information that you provide me to your teachers, administrators or the Principal. All the information you provide will be kept confidential. It is important to note that your participation in the group interviews may pose a minimal risk of inadequate confidentiality since there will be other students participating as well. However, I will ensure that I caution all participants not to relay any of the information discussed to others that did not participate including teachers.

Benefits

This study will give you an opportunity to voice your thoughts and feeling regarding your teachers’ caring behavior. Because the interview will be conducted within a group setting, it will allow you the opportunity to sit with other girls and to share your experiences regarding interactions with teachers. Hearing other girls share their experiences could prompt you to reflect on what you yourself have experienced in your interactions with teachers. Another benefit of participating in this study is that your views could potentially help enhance gender policies in education, which in turn could improve the environment in which girls learn.

Confidentiality and Records

To ensure that the information you share with me is kept confidential, I will store audio-recordings of interviews, survey responses and any other study-related material in a secure location in my home. Pseudonyms will be used in place of your actual names to protect your identity. Once transcription of tapes has been completed and data transferred onto my personal computer, I will safely discard the audio-recordings. I will also secure my computer using a password.
Compensation

You will receive gifts in the form of stationary for participating in this study.

Contact Information

If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact Sela Musundi by email at sm239602@ohio.edu or by phone at 0723-022-988. You can also contact my Dissertation Committee Chair, Dr. Jaylynne Hutchinson, at hutchinj@ohio.edu or by phone at +1740-593-9827.

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By signing below, you are agreeing that:
- you have read this consent form (or it has been read to you) and have been given the opportunity to ask questions
- known risks to you have been explained to your satisfaction.
- you understand Ohio University has no policy or plan to pay for any injuries you might receive as a result of participating in this research protocol
- you participation in this research is given voluntarily
- you may change your mind and stop participation at any time without penalty or loss of any benefits to which you may otherwise be entitled.

Signature__________________________________________ Date___________

Printed Name__________________________________________
APPENDIX C: OHIO UNIVERSITY CONSENT FORM

Teacher Consent Form

Title of Research: Teacher Caring: An Investigation of an all-girl rural secondary school in Western Kenya

Principal Investigator: Ms. Sela M. Musundi

Department: Educational Studies

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Explanation of Study

This study will be examining the way teachers at St. Joseph’s Girls High School interact with students. The purpose of the study is to find out how teachers at the school demonstrate caring towards students. The study will also be examining the perceptions that students have regarding teacher caring behavior. Teacher caring involves an interpersonal relationship between teachers and students whereby the teacher is attentive enough to really hear, see or feel what the student is conveying to him/her and to respond in a way that makes that student feel cared for.

During the study, you will be asked to participate in a survey requiring you to fill out a questionnaire consisting of 48 short questions to determine what you think about your interpersonal behavior with students. As a means of protecting your identity, you will not be required to write your name on the questionnaire. In addition to the survey, you will be asked to participate in an hour-long individual face-to-face interview where you will discuss in depth a wide range of issues concerning teacher caring. Besides the survey and interview, I may also visit your classroom in order to observe your interactions with students. Please note that I may need to speak with you even after the survey and interviews are completed just to make sure that I have clearly understood your views and
opinions on teacher caring. I may be at your school for a period of three months during this entire study.

*Risks and Discomforts*

Since this study will require you to talk about your teaching experience at St. Joseph’s Girls High School, it is likely that you may feel uncomfortable discussing some issues related to the school, particularly those that have to do with how the school administration treats you and other faculty. In addition, you may also be uncomfortable having to describe your own behavior and attitude towards students. Please note that the information you relay to me will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will only be used for research purposes.

*Benefits*

Participating in this study may provide an opportunity for you to reflect on the way you care for your students. In addition, the information you share could help add to the existing research on girls’ education in Kenya. It could also potentially influence educational policies related to teacher education.

*Confidentiality and Records*

To ensure that the information you share with me is kept confidential, I will store audio-recordings of interviews, survey responses and any other study-related material in a secure location in my home. Pseudonyms will be used in place of your actual names to protect your identity. Once transcription of tapes has been completed and data transferred onto my personal computer, I will safely discard the audio-recordings. I will also secure my computer using a password.

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Contact Information

If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact Sela Musundi by email at sm239602@ohio.edu or by phone at 0723-022-988. You can also contact my Dissertation Committee Chair, Dr. Jaylynne Hutchinson, at hutchinj@ohio.edu or by phone at +1740-593-9827.

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact Jo Ellen Sherow, Director of Research Compliance, Ohio University, by email at Sherow@ohio.edu, or phone at +1(740) 593-0664.

By signing below, you are agreeing that:
- you have read this consent form (or it has been read to you) and have been given the opportunity to ask questions
- known risks to you have been explained to your satisfaction.
- you understand Ohio University has no policy or plan to pay for any injuries you might receive as a result of participating in this research protocol
- you are 18 years of age or older
- your participation in this research is given voluntarily
- you may change your mind and stop participation at any time without penalty or loss of any benefits to which he/she may otherwise be entitled.

Signature_________________________________________ Date________________

Printed Name________________________________________

Version Date: [02/17/09]  
APPENDIX D: STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE
STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire asks you to describe the behaviour of your teacher. This is NOT a test. Your opinion is what is wanted.

On the next few pages you'll find 48 sentences about the teacher. For each sentence circle the number corresponding to your responses. For example:

Never  Always

This teacher expresses himself clearly  0  1  2  3  4

If you think that your teacher always expresses himself/herself clearly, circle the 4. If you think your teacher never expresses himself/herself clearly, circle the 0. You also can choose the numbers 1, 2 and 3 which are in between. If you want to change your answer cross it out and circle a new number. Please use both sides of the questionnaire. Thank you for your cooperation.

Please remember to write your code name below. Do not write your real name on this questionnaire.

Student code name: ______________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentence</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. This teacher talks enthusiastically about her/his subject.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4 (Lea)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. This teacher trusts us.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4 (Und)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. This teacher seems uncertain.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4 (Unc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. This teacher gets angry unexpectedly.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4 (Adm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. This teacher explains things clearly.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4 (Lea)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. If we don't agree with this teacher we can talk about it.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4 (Und)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. This teacher is hesitant.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4 (Unc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. This teacher gets angry quickly.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4 (Adm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. This teacher holds our attention.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4 (Lea)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. This teacher is willing to explain things again.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4 (Und)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. This teacher acts as if she/he does not know what to do.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4 (Unc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. This teacher is too quick to correct us when we break a rule.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4 (Adm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. This teacher knows everything that goes on in the classroom.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4 (Lea)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. If we have something to say this teacher will listen.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4 (Und)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
15. This teacher lets us boss her/him around.  
16. This teacher is impatient.  
17. This teacher is a good leader.  
18. This teacher realizes when we don't understand.  
19. This teacher is not sure what to do when we fool around.  
20. It is easy to pick a fight with this teacher.  
21. This teacher acts confidently.  
22. This teacher is patient.  
23. It's easy to make a fool out of this teacher.  
24. This teacher is sarcastic.  
25. This teacher helps us with our work.  
26. We can decide some things in this teacher's class.  
27. This teacher thinks we cheat.  
28. This teacher is strict.  
29. This teacher is friendly.  
30. We can influence this teacher.  
31. This teacher thinks we don't know anything.  
32. We have to be silent in this teacher's class.  
33. This teacher is someone we can depend on.  
34. This teacher lets us fool around in class.  
35. This teacher puts us down.  
36. This teacher's tests are hard.  
37. This teacher has a sense of humor.  
38. This teacher lets us get away with a lot in class.  
39. This teacher thinks we can't do things well.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40. This teacher's standards are very high.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. This teacher can take a joke.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42. This teacher gives us a lot of free time in class.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43. This teacher seems dissatisfied.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44. This teacher is severe when marking papers.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45. This teacher's class is pleasant.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46. This teacher is lenient.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47. This teacher is suspicious.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48. We are afraid of this teacher.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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For Teacher's Use Only

This page is a supplement to a publication entitled *Teacher and Student Relationships in Science and mathematics classes* authored by Theo Wubbers and published by the Key Centre for School Science and Mathematics Education.
APPENDIX E: TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire asks you to describe your interpersonal behaviour with students. Your opinion is what is wanted.

On the next few pages you'll find 48 sentences about your interpersonal behaviour. For each sentence circle the number corresponding to your responses. For example:

Never          Always

This teacher expresses himself clearly 0  1  2  3  4

If you think that you always express yourself clearly, circle the 4. If you think you never express yourself clearly, circle the 0. You also can choose the numbers 1, 2 and 3 which are in between. If you want to change your answer cross it out and circle a new number. Please use both sides of the questionnaire.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Please remember to write your code name below. Do not write your real name on this questionnaire.

Code name: _____________

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I talk enthusiastically about my subject.</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I trust my students.</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I seem uncertain.</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I get angry unexpectedly.</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I explain things clearly.</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. If my students don't agree with me we can talk about it.</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I am hesitant.</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I get angry quickly.</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I hold my students' attention.</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I am willing to explain things again.</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I act as if she/he does not know what to do.</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I am too quick to correct students when they break a rule.</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I know everything that goes on in the classroom.</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
14. If students have something to say I will listen. 0 1 2 3 4 (Und)
15. I let students boss me around. 0 1 2 3 4 (Unc)
16. I am impatient. 0 1 2 3 4 (Adm)
17. I am a good leader. 0 1 2 3 4 (Lea)
18. I realize when students don't understand. 0 1 2 3 4 (Und)
19. I am not sure what to do when students fool around. 0 1 2 3 4 (Unc)
20. It is easy for students to pick a fight with me. 0 1 2 3 4 (Adm)
21. I act confidently. 0 1 2 3 4 (Lea)
22. I am patient. 0 1 2 3 4 (Und)
23. It's easy for students to make a fool out of me. 0 1 2 3 4 (Unc)
24. I am sarcastic. 0 1 2 3 4 (Adm)
25. I help students with their work. 0 1 2 3 4 (HFr)
26. Students can decide some things in my class. 0 1 2 3 4 (SRe)
27. I thinks my students cheat. 0 1 2 3 4 (Dis)
28. I am strict. 0 1 2 3 4 (Str)
29. I am friendly. 0 1 2 3 4 (HFr)
30. My students can influence me. 0 1 2 3 4 (SRe)
31. I think my students don't know anything. 0 1 2 3 4 (Dis)
32. Students have to be silent in my class. 0 1 2 3 4 (Str)
33. I am someone students can depend on. 0 1 2 3 4 (HFr)
34. I let students fool around in my class. 0 1 2 3 4 (SRe)
35. I put my students down. 0 1 2 3 4 (Dis)
36. My tests are hard. 0 1 2 3 4 (Str)
37. I have a sense of humor. 0 1 2 3 4 (HFr)
38. I let students get away with a lot in my class. 0 1 2 3 4 (SRe)
39. I think my students can’t do things well. 0 1 2 3 4 (Dis)
40. My standards are very high. 0 1 2 3 4 (Str)
41. I can take a joke. 0 1 2 3 4 (HFr)
42. I give students a lot of free time in class. 0 1 2 3 4 (SRe)
43. I seem dissatisfied. 0 1 2 3 4 (Dis)
44. I am severe when marking papers. 0 1 2 3 4 (Str)
45. My class is pleasant. 0 1 2 3 4 (HFr)
46. I am lenient. 0 1 2 3 4 (SRe)
47. I am suspicious. 0 1 2 3 4 (Dis)
48. My students are afraid of me. 0 1 2 3 4 (Str)

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APPENDIX F: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Student Focus Group Interview Protocol

1) What subject(s) do you like most?

2) What is your relationship like with teachers who teach your favorite subject(s)?

3) What is your relationship like with teachers who teach subject that you dislike?

4) What teacher behaviors do you perceive as caring?

5) What teacher behaviors do you perceive as uncaring?

6) Describe your behavior toward teachers you perceive to be caring

7) Describe your behavior toward teachers you perceive to be uncaring

8) What motivates you as student?

9) Do you think all your teachers serve as good role models for you?

10) Do you think your teachers’ behaviors influence your attitude towards them and the subjects they teach?
APPENDIX G: TEACHER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Semi-Structured Teacher Interview Protocol

1) Do you believe you are a caring teacher?
2) What is your perception of caring?
3) What has influenced your perception about caring?
4) In what particular ways do you demonstrate caring towards students?
5) How important is it to you as a teacher to demonstrate care to students?
6) Do you think you are effective in your attempts to care for students?
7) Do you think students recognize your efforts to care for them?
8) What are some of the challenges that you face in your attempts to extend caring towards students?
9) As a teacher, what do you think your responsibilities are towards students?
10) Is teacher caring a concept that has been emphasized in the course of your pre-service and / or in-service training?
11) Does your pedagogical style change with each subject you teach?
12) Are your interactions with good students different from those with problem students?
13) In your opinion, what is the aim of education?
14) Do you think education in Kenya is meeting its aims and objectives?
APPENDIX H: CLASSROOM OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

Classroom Observation Checklist

Name of Instructor: _________________________  
Class: ____________________________________  
Date: _____________________________________  
Time: _____________________________________  
Subject Taught: _____________________________

**Teaching Style**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employs varied styles of teaching besides the lecture method (e.g. group activities, discussions; use of visual aids)</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articulates concepts clearly</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingly answers students’ questions</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourages students to ask questions</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revisits material previously covered in class</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides individual students with feedback</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Teacher Interpersonal behavior**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calls students by name</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moves around the classroom</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides a warm learning environment</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses praise</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses hand gestures when teaching</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jokes and smiles with students</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makes eye contact with students</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments:**