

**IMPACT OF PARENTING STYLES ON CHILDREN'S ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE
IN MILIMANI PRESCHOOL IN WESTLANDS DIVISION, NAIROBI PROVINCE
KENYA**

BY

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DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been submitted for an award of degree in any other institution.



Eunice Gatera Ochenge

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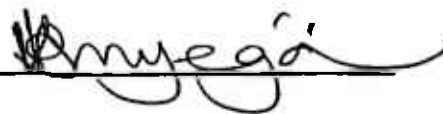


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DEDICATION

To My husband, Masaki Ocheng; children: Kathambi, Nyabwabu, Morai and Mugambi; sons- in law: Mwangi and Mandela; grandchildren: Mogambi Jaden Ethan, Nyabwororo Stephanie Rehema and Morwoti David Fadhili, together with those who will follow thereafter. This study is for you. You have enabled me to relive and revisit childhood and behold its wonders, meanings and challenges with new understanding. I love you all.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

UNCRC- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Children.

UNESCO- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Rep. of Kenya- Republic of Kenya.

N.C.C. Nairobi City Council.

F.P.E. Free Primary Education.

ABSTRACT

The study focused on the four parenting styles: democratic, dictatorial, indulgent and uninvolved/ neglectful, with need to establish their impact on preschoolers' academic performance. Each style is unique in terms of the characteristics which are exhibited through parent-child interaction dimensions at home. Since children come to school from different parenting styles backgrounds, psychosocially and psychologically they differ and therefore, handle class tasks differently. It is during child upbringing that children acquire characters, behaviors and attitudes that influence their reactions towards situations and people around them. What children do at home and school depends largely on how they have been raised by their parents. Children are a reflection of their home and upbringing backgrounds. This is best revealed through their mode of interaction with others within and outside immediate family environment; and also by how they relate and respond to those around them. This study therefore, highlights the importance of parenting in raising upright children by use of profitable parenting styles. For this study, the preschoolers from Milimani preschool, their teachers and parents provided data that helped establish the impact of parenting styles on children's academic performance. This school was purposefully sampled due to its geographical location. It has children from upper, middle and low social economic status, a factor that is likely to produce the four parenting styles backgrounds that were needed for this study indiscriminatively. Through the study's instruments; the questionnaire, intervention module, interview schedules and documentary analysis, findings indicated that indeed children coming from different parenting styles backgrounds perform differently. The study analysis showed that children who enjoy a democratic parenting background have a higher chance of better performance and those children whose parents are uninvolved generally score the lowest. The indulgent parents bring up more average-performing preschoolers whereas the authoritarian parents, whose style of parenting is highly demanding and directive but not responsive, tend to raise children who under the circumstances, are made to produce good results. Results indicate that children under authoritarian parents were in above and average performance categories only, with none in the below average group. Since success in education is measured in terms of how well a child performs from one level or grade to another, it is important as parents, to know the characteristics of the four parenting styles and understand their impact on preschool children's class performance and life in general.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Problem

The responsibility of raising children is vested in the family as stipulated under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Children (UNCRC, 1989). The family is the most important part of the child's "social network" because all the members of a family constitute the child's first environment, and, are most significant people in the life of the child during the early formative years (Hurlock, 2003). The Convention on the Rights of a Child (1989) further recognizes the importance of children growing up in a family environment in an atmosphere of love, happiness and understanding so as to attain full and harmonious development of their personality. This is attainable through the practice of particular parenting styles whose characteristics are found in specific parent-child interaction dimensions (Maccoby and Martin, 1983). This is an indication that a family, which is the custodian of the parenting style is in a position to give support, love, direction, guidance and other basic needs that promote holistic development of children.

In the world today, the families in which parents mould and modify their children's behavior and characters do not function in isolation from the environmental, cultural, social and economic settings and events about and around them (Hetherington and Parke, 1999). There are many conditions in the family setting that affect the family relationships, the most important of which are the social economic status of the family (the occupations of the father and the mother), outsiders in the home, whether guests or members of extended family, among others.

These settings and events have a strong impact on the general characteristics of parent-child interactions, which are often defined in terms of measures of parental warmth, involvement and control dimensions (Maccoby and Martin, 1983). These dimensions have distinct parental characteristics which clearly reveal the nature of parent-child interaction relationship that exists between parents and their children during their upbringing, and which in turn influences the life of the child physically, psychologically and psychosocially (Papalia, Olds & Fieldman, 1999). This implies that parents, as they bring up and interact with their children during formative years make strong impact on their attitudes, characters and behaviors which are key to successful learning.

Parenting styles carry different meanings in different parts of the world (Steinberg, Dornbush & Brown, 1992). For instance, whereas in America and Europe the concept of authoritarianism may imply many negative dictatorial beliefs, attitudes and behavior, the African and Chinese and many other Asian authoritarian style of parenting is characterized by the concepts of 'training' and 'caring' and 'governing' (Chao, 1994). These concepts emphasize their roles in teaching or educating children, focusing particularly on children's performance in school because parents believe that education is key to success (Chao, 1994). Even in many African cultures, control and strictness may not exist in that form literary, but it could take a form of exercise of power by parents over their child as a form of obligation to nurture and give direction to the child (Darling, 1999).

The traditional African system of child rearing provided practical and theoretical training for the children. It was basically value-based learning with emphasis on principles of life and

harmonious living. Its characteristics of being value driven, problem solving and locally relevant among others, reflect the principles of traditional education and training (Mwaura, 2004). These characteristics were inherent in the traditional system and were disseminated in the different parenting styles. This trend has not changed as child rearing practices are basically passed on from one generation to another.

Parents who are highly supportive, loving and involved with their children tend to have a cordial and close relationship with them (Cobb, 2001). This remains the most cherished and important aspect in children's lives for holistic development to take place (Furman and Bushmaster, 1995). This is because the way children turn up later in life is influenced during the first six years of life (Cobb, 2001). A child who is ready for schooling has a combination of positive characteristics such as being socially and emotionally healthy, confident and friendly, having good peer relationships, tackling challenging tasks and persisting with them, having good language skills and communicating well and, listening to instructions and being attentive (Landry, Smith, Swank, Assel & Vellet, 2001). These characteristics are inculcated at family level. As such, what parents do, with and for their children, is key in the latter's present and future lives.

Dimensions of parent-child interaction are distinct in their nature (Maccoby and Martin, 1983). As Maccoby notes, they include warmth, parental involvement and control dimensions. The warmth dimension refers to the environmental aspect of parent-child interaction (Landry, Smith, Miller- Loncar & Swank, 1997). It includes parents' responsiveness to a child's need, praise for good behavior and expression of positive

emotions towards and around the child. To Maccoby and Martin, it is one of the cornerstones parents can use to build independence, self control and assertiveness in children as they prepare them for life. In addition to that, parental warmth and acceptance towards children during early childhood foster confidence and autonomy in them (Cobb, 2001). Thus, the family's input towards the development of children and their learning and stimulation of their abilities to achieve success in school and in social lives can be realized through this positive parent-child interaction dimension (Maccoby and Martin, 1983). These conditions become life skills that are key in the life of an individual (Papalia, *et al.*, 1999).

Parental involvement is that characteristic which focuses on the amount of time parents spend in interaction with their children and the degree to which their attitudes are child-centered (Maccoby and Martin, 1983). This concept is further developed by Bray and Hetherington (1993) when they write that children generally perform better in life and in school, and have fewer emotional and behavioral problems when they spend their early childhood in a family atmosphere where the parents are loving, supportive and enjoy being with their children. It is in the family that children receive guidance and help in learning skills like motor, verbal and social, which are needed for school adjustment (Hurlock, 2003). At the same time, it is within the family environment that children get guidance in the development of socially approved patterns of behavior and character which influence their learning capacities (Cobb, 2001). Parents therefore, are required to facilitate holistic development of their children through positive parent-child interactive involvement within and outside the family environment. This implies that children must be given first priority above the parents' obligations, duties and responsibilities so that their needs are fully met.

Parental control is that aspect of interaction dimension in which the parents' expectations of their children's behavior is very high. Parents train their children to meet these expectations through enforcement of rules (Maccoby and Martin, 1983). This dimension is more complex than warmth because neither of the extreme points on the dimension is desirable as noted by Maccoby and Martin, (1983). For instance, if parents exert too little control they are likely to end up with a child who is 'out of control' and on the other hand, if parents exert too much control, they may prevent children from developing self control and individuality. The concern for this study is to find out how families whose parents exert parental control influence the performance of their children in school.

Positive parent- child interaction is the only means through which one may raise an enriched and empowered awesome child (Liew, 2003). Children learn from what they experience and parents teach best through their actions. This is because children value what one does with them, than what is done for them. This is what works best for them. Moreover, many parents have some beliefs about qualities they would like to see their children develop (Cobb, 2001). As such, these beliefs influence their choice of childrearing methods that are likely to encourage the development of those preferred qualities. However, as Cobb (2001) notes, their influence on the growing and developing child can either be increased or decreased depending on parent-child interaction dimensions of involvement. The choice to this remains with the parent who must make a deliberate choice on what kind of parent-child interaction dimension is ideal for their young children.

The general characteristics of parent-child interaction depends largely on how the parents were themselves parented, instructed and acculturated (Blanton, 2005). To Blanton, these characteristics are therefore tied up to peoples' cultural values that define the rhythms of family life and roles of family members. For instance, in many African cultures, the most popular parenting styles are those which encourage children to show more of prosocial behavior which is defined as positive social behavior and it includes obedience, sharing, helping and comforting (Berndt, 1997). This is more of parental control dimension rather than warmth and parental involvement. It is more culture-centered than it is child-centered and therefore promotes more cultural values than it does in fostering self independence, self discipline, self control among other positive behaviors, character and attitude that are necessary for learning.

It is often in the families that children acquire behaviors that define their character. These, added to their experiences at home, impact on their attitudes, skills and behavior (Hart, Ladd and Burleson, 1990). A child will develop significant intellectual, emotional and social abilities in the early years as he/she interacts with others, beginning with the parents (Cobb, 2001). Consequently, children will learn to live and accept love, confidence, security, empathy, self control, curiosity, persistence and other related qualities as they interact with others in the family environment which is their first world outside the womb (Njenga and Kabiru, 2001). In this case, parents are custodians of these favorable conditions which are developed through parenting skills.

Learning outcomes depend mostly on growth and development aspects namely, the physical, cognitive and psychosocial. These are intertwined throughout one's life and each affects the other, and, the most influential factor to these aspects is the family from which each child gets a unique start in life (Papalia, *et al*, 1999). They further asserts that although family may mean something different in different societies, it is there where a child's personality is mostly shaped through parent-child interaction. The quality of early childhood education received by the child may therefore depend on nature of parent-child interaction. The challenge is on how to get the necessary information or knowledge to the parents and to convince them that they can make a lasting impact on their children's life by simply using positive parent-child interactive involvement.

Success in education is measured in terms of a child's academic performance. This begins from the moment a child is enrolled in a preschool class. Education is the single most important means to successful living (UNESCO, 2003). Therefore, when parents invest their time in their children's educational endeavors, they are laying strong foundations for future gains for them. As first tutors and instructors of their children at home, parents are endowed with ability to instill in their young children values and attitudes that foster the children's quest for learning and this takes place through parent-child interactive involvement (Baumrind, 1989). Parental child-rearing practices determine the behavioral tendencies and character of a child. These two are important components of effective learning and they greatly influence how a child is able to cope with learning tasks away from home either positively or negatively (Cobb, 2001). This implies that parents are in a position to shape the

future of their children by facilitating the cordial parent-child relationship that engages parental involvement.

Parenting styles characteristics and their impact on children's lives are similar globally, and Kenyans are not exceptional. As a multi-racial and multi-ethnic state, people's parent-child interaction dimensions may differ from one group to another due to diversities of cultures among other factors (Mwaura, 2004). Children coming from these many parenting-style backgrounds experience different physical and emotional environmental factors which may impact on the child's behavior and attitude towards life (Wong, 1998). In a bid to ensure that there is equality and equity in providing quality education for all Kenyan children, the Government has made great strides in terms of curriculum development and provision of materials and human resources countrywide. This is in accordance with Early Childhood Development Service Standard Guidelines for Kenya (Rep. of Kenya, 2000) and National Early Childhood Development Policy Framework (Rep. of Kenya, 2006). The challenge remains with what parents do with their children at home as they prepare them for life.

As it is in every multi-racial city, families from all over the world and all walks of life work and reside in Nairobi, Kenya. These families take their children to local schools within Nairobi's precincts. Nairobi City Council (N.C.C.) in conjunction with the Ministry of Education and other related ministries providing services for the welfare of preschool children runs Early Childhood Development Education centers throughout Nairobi Province to ensure inclusiveness (Rep. of Kenya, 2006). However, the preschool children are raised differently, a factor that determines their behavior, character, attitude, among other attributes.

It means therefore, that the preschool children in both public and private schools come from different parenting style backgrounds. It was against this background that there was need to establish the relationship between parenting styles and the preschool children's academic performance in Milimani Preschool in Westlands Division, Nairobi, Kenya. Because of its geographical location, the school has children from high, middle and low socioeconomic backgrounds, a factor to consider as different parenting styles are likely to be used in child upbringing.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In a general classroom set up, children depict variabilities due to their uniqueness in individual differences (Eggen and Kauchak, 1994). This may include variabilities in: intelligence, socioeconomic status of the family, culture, gender, and learning styles among others. These variables interact with one another to create classroom dynamics and as McGilly (1994) suggests, these are among the range of influences which impact either positively or negatively on children's learning. While some of the variables are inherent, there are those that must be imparted in the children during nurturance (Cobb, 2001). Among them are the psychosocial needs that would encourage among other things; initiative in children, industry, stimulation of self-identity and self-esteem, enable them develop trust as well as promote exploration and discovery skills among children (Hetherington, *et al.*, 1999). These needs positively affect children's development. They are imparted into the children by the parents through parenting styles.

From the researcher's experience and observations made, children in a classroom exhibit diverse attitudes and behaviors as they engage in learning activities. While a group of learners may show enthusiasm when carrying out their work, there are those few who must be persuaded by the teacher in order to get involved and respond accordingly, and even when they are persuaded, they still do not do their work freely and willingly as it should be. This is an indication that there is an obstacle between the child and his or her reaction and response to learning activities. This could be reduced by means of positive parent- child interaction dimensions, which are expressed through particular parenting styles.

As much as teachers in the classroom may use various strategies to enhance learning, parents on the other hand are modeling certain characteristics which children learn vicariously (Cobb, 2001). The big question is: What kind of environment, physically and psychologically do they create at home for their children? Since these children come from different family backgrounds whose parents use different parenting styles, is there a link between the four parenting styles and the child's ability to cope with learning tasks? This study was to establish the relationship between parenting styles and Milimani Preschool children's academic performance in Nairobi, Kenya.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This study was about establishing whether there is a relationship between characteristics of parenting styles and preschool children's academic performance in Milimani Preschool.

1.4 Research Objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

- 1 Investigate the academic performance of Milimani Preschool children whose parents used democratic parenting style.
- 2 Determine how Milimani Preschool children whose parents used authoritarian parenting style performed academically.
- 3 Find out how Milimani Preschool children whose parents used indulgent/ permissive parenting style performed in class.
- 4 Examine the class performance of Milimani Preschool children whose parents used neglectful/ uninvolved parenting style.
- 5 Establish the differences in class performance among the Milimani Preschool children from the four different parenting styles: democratic, authoritarian, indulgent and neglectful.

1.5 Research Questions

The study questions were:

- 1 What is the academic performance of the Milimani Preschool children whose parents use democratic parenting styles?
- 2 How do Milimani Preschool children whose parents use authoritarian parenting style perform in class?
- 3 How is the class performance of Milimani Preschool children whose parents use indulgent parenting style?

- 4 How do Milimani Preschool children whose parents use neglectful parenting style perform in class?
- 5 What are the differences in class performance of Milimani Preschool children from the four different parenting styles: democratic, authoritarian, indulgent and neglectful?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is a pointer to the fact that how learners relate with others at school and their reaction to learning tasks can be an indication of the nature of parent- child interaction at home. The findings of this study therefore, unveil tangible information that may enlighten the parents to abandon the negative acquired methods of parent-child interaction, which are full of demands and only satisfy their interests and embrace parenting characteristics that are more profitable to their growing children and their success in life. Furthermore, the literature in Early Childhood Development Education, ECDE, and the children's academic performance in preschool may enlighten the parents/ guardians and other stakeholders, ECDE curriculum developers and policy makers, the preschool administration and any other ECDE service provider about the importance of positive parent-child interactive relationship.

1.7 Limitations of the study

As a case study, this research's findings can only be applied to similar situations as to Milimani Preschool. Again, the performance of the children may be due to other extraneous variables which were beyond the researcher's controls. Such variables may include children's intelligence which may be beyond what the teacher or parents can do. Others include

teachers' abilities and characteristics, school administration's involvement, parents' socioeconomic status and education background, role of education officials like QASO's, TAC tutors, locality of the school, good feeding programs in the preschools, level of children's socialization, better preschool facilities like equipment, furniture, teaching and learning resources, sanitation facilities and others. For this study however, all the children were subjected to the same learning conditions and environment and were taught in the same classroom by the same teachers and were instructed using the same learning and teaching resources.

1.8 Delimitations of the study

The study was conducted in a public preschool (Milimani) in Westlands Division, Nairobi Kenya. This school had diversity of parents in terms of socio-economic status, a key condition to consider in that different parenting styles were likely to emerge. In addition to this, children's catchment areas include the affluent Kilimani/ Milimani neighborhood, Kibera and Kawangware informal settlement areas, Racecourse and Santak middle class areas along Ngong road and Jamhuri estate. Two teachers are trained while the third is currently in training at The Nairobi West Dicece College.

1.9 Basic Assumptions

The study assumed that:

First, cordial parent-child interaction promotes a young child's initiative in the learning process and therefore improves on his/her academic performance during the early years of schooling. Secondly, since we are living in a fast-changing world, the aspects of parent-child interactions that favor societies' cultural expectations only and not necessarily the needs and

interests of a growing and developing child should not be over emphasized at the expense of those that foster his/ her holistic development. Thirdly, the characteristics of parent-child interactions can be improved due to an increase in parental awareness about the importance of parents' involvement in their children's school activities and lives in general. Finally, parental involvement in the educational program of their children may motivate the children and create an environment- physical, psychological and psychosocial, that is conducive for their effective learning and thus perform well in class.

1.10 Definitions of key terms

The key terms in this study are:

Performance	The level of children's academic achievement and social interactions.
Parenting Style	Variations in parenting characteristics that defines parenting skills which are used in the society to bring up the children.
Preschool	Learning day care centre where children of ages 5-6 who have not attained compulsory primary school-going age go to learn.
Preschoolers	5-6 year-olds who have not attained the compulsory primary school going age.

1.11 Organization of the study.

The study is organized into five chapters. The first one is devoted to the introduction of the study. It highlights the background to the problem at hand, statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, research questions, research objectives, the basic assumptions of the study, significance of the study, limitations of the study and delimitations of the study. It also addresses operational definitions of key terms. It ends with the organization of the study. The second chapter is concerned with the review of the related literature that is within the subject area of the problem. It focuses on what other scholars and researchers have found and said about parenting styles and children's academic performance at preschool age. The theoretical and conceptual frameworks are also outlined here. The third chapter outlines the research methodology under: research design, research population, sampling techniques, research instruments, reliability and validity, data collection procedures and data analysis procedures. The fourth chapter presents the analysis of the study findings with discussions organized around the categories of parenting styles and the five research questions. Chapter five gives the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The section is divided into four parts each examining a particular aspect of the study; namely literature on: Child upbringing and performance, parenting styles and children's performance, theoretical framework and conceptual framework.

2.2 Child Upbringing and Performance

There is a growing concern in the global scene about child-rearing practices today (Dietrich, Landry, Smith & Swank, 2006). Blanton (2005) portrays parenting as part of culture that is mostly learnt from the way the parents were parented, a practice passed on from one generation to another- just a vicious circle. People live with these things in their lives and as Blanton (2005) puts it, families must choose to transcend their childhood experiences and embrace new methods of raising their children and allow quality parent- child interaction indiscriminatively.

According to The National Forum Report, NEESFLP, (1998), in the US Department of Education, each child is unique and has specific needs and qualities and characteristics which parents are best placed to identify. This report continues to note that even in situations where high quality public child care is provided, research indicates that the parents make an irreplaceable contribution to the child's development and their active involvement in the child's programs outside the home greatly increase the likelihood of the child's success in later life.

Cobb (2001) agrees with this when she emphasizes that positive and useful parental characteristics can build desirable traits through interactive training. This implies that parental deprivation where children are separated from their parents and are either institutionalized or taken in by relatives has detrimental effects on the children's learning even where such deprivation can be counteracted by providing satisfactory parent substitutes (Landry, Smith, Miller-Loncar and Swank, 1997). However, in many instances a satisfactory substitute is not always available.

Dietrich, *et al.*, (2006) argues that for effective learning during early childhood to take place, the parenting style is a key factor. He however points out that there are other factors like social support network from other family members and friends. However, that which parents do remains central (Landry, *et al.*, 1997). They have primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of the child and their basic concern is the best interest of the child (UNCRC, 1989) and The Children's Act (Rep. of Kenya, 2001). Parents who devote their time and attention and sacrifice personal interests and activities for their children produce a child-centered home in which the child is treated as the most important member of the family. Thus, the parents together with other members of the family constitute the child's first environment and are the most significant people during the early formative years (Hurlock, 2003). This makes the contribution of the family to the development of children and their learning very important in the early years of preschool children.

In a study carried out in China by Chao, (1994), it was observed that differences between child upbringing practices and behavioral outcomes can be better understood in the context of one's

cultures value. Accordingly, Chao continues to affirm that parenting styles cannot be separated in any way from one's cultural context. Cobb (2001) argues that although parenting practices have been found to differ with ethnicity, attitudes and practices among parents from different cultures show considerable overlap as tools for socialization. Blanton (2005) agrees when he asserts that culture represents a wealth of experiences, behavior, skills, tradition, ideas, values, rules, norms and symbols that are learnt in life and perceived as good and workable. Thus, children will believe what they are told by their parents or guardians to be true as they grow up. This makes the home environment the best and most ideal place in which to inculcate desirable characters and qualities in children as they are being raised up as suggested by Cobb, (2001). This means parents have a major role to play in the early years of their preschoolers.

Grusec and Goodman (1994), support Blanton when describing child upbringing as the purposeful effort to nurture the upcoming generation to get hold of the cultural traits of the society, so that the child is gradually able to find his/her place in the society. They continue to assert that upbringing begins from the moment the child is born, and that it entails early childhood training by means of social cultural interactions from the home environment. Vygotsky (1978), in his views focuses the role of culture in determining the child's pattern of development when he notes that every function in the child's social cultural development appears twice; first on the social level and later on the individual level. He argues that the social level which is the first, is between people and the personal level which follows the first level takes place inside the child. This may suggest that culture can be used as a medium through which learners are trained to acquire positive learning behavior.

According to Bradley, Caldwell and Rock, (1998), when learners are positively acculturated, they acquire values, attitudes, life skills and knowledge among others as ‘cultural tools’ for their survival. For this, Vygotsky, (1978), again suggests that this question on intelligence development can be regarded as a result of social process, whereby a social person, for this case the child, works alongside others, notably parents or guardians and other caretakers, as he/she observes them and eventually acquires his or her skills. These are the skills of their culture, the “tools” that have helped them to understand things more easily than they might have otherwise done. For Vygotsky, (1978), acquisition of this new knowledge is fundamentally a social process, which takes place under the tutelage of a mother as a more skilled person at that particular activity. He calls these new discoveries “culture tools” for learning. They get passed to children in their social contexts. For instance a young learner can watch an older or more skilled person doing a certain task like tying shoe laces, and he or she will use similar apparatus to do the same until the task is completed well. That young learner will use the acquired “tool” (wisdom) and tie the shoe lace. That “tool” has been acquired in a social context.

Landry, *et al.*, (1997) assert that in exercising their parental rights, and carrying out their duties and responsibilities, parents tend to keep in mind their cultural attributes and put emphasis only on those they think are relevant to them as a people. Hurlock (2003) agrees with Landry, *et al.*, (1997) and Bradley, *et al.*, (1998), that the methods parents employ in child training will depend partly on their own upbringing and partly on what they have found from personal experiences or the experiences of others. Hurlock further notes that our young learners can be intellectually ‘handicapped’ about the best or right way to complete tasks or think through problems because

the “cultural tools” are inadequate. Thus, parental attitudes, practices and cultures have an impact on the characteristics, attitudes and behavior of young children.

Kochanska (1993) asserts that child upbringing entails purposeful effort to training children to acquire desirable and acceptable characteristics for holistic growth and development. This agrees with Baumrind (1989), when she argues that when good values and virtues are acquired during formative years; they impact strongly and positively in the future life of a person. They both provide explanations as how good parent- child relationship and the manner in which a child is raised up significantly influence learning capabilities. Liew (2003) agrees with them by saying that as always, when it comes to parenting, it all depends on how well informed, prepared and responsible the parents are. As children gradually grow and develop, parents struggle to make the right decisions in bringing them up as they want to raise human beings who enjoy life, think well of themselves and fulfill their goals. In addition to that, parents may want their children to learn to live harmoniously with other people and be able to form and maintain close, constructive relationships (Papalia, Olds & Fieldman, 1999). To accomplish these, parents have to use training and discipline as tools for socialization, which include methods of molding children’s character and of teaching them to exercise self control and engage in acceptable behavior (Grusec and Goodman, 1994). The forms of discipline and training, according to Grusec and Goodman are given based on the quality of interaction between parent and child.

Landry, Smith and Swank, (2006), explain that child upbringing practices and training a child to develop positive attitudes towards learning activities can constitute conditions necessary for academic excellence. They further explain that this excellence comes as a result of child-

participatory learning activities. They further suggest that a child's ability to handle learning tasks well may be an outcome of a strong foundation laid down by parents at home through warm and supportive parent-child interaction. Parents are therefore, a very important influence because they provide the child with the earliest environment for learning, and the way parents treat their children may affect their cognitive potential (Papalia, *et al.*, 1999). According to these scholars, parents who tend to be more critical and coercive of their children are likely to bring up children who give up easily, make errors and develop learning problems. Therefore, how a learner behaves at school can be an indication of the home background, family structure and relationship.

Liew (2003), emphasizes that the family is a natural and primary educator of the child. This is strongly supported by Blanton (2005), when he argues that the period of up to 8 years of age is very important for emotional, intellectual and social development and that good interventions at this stage have strong and lasting impact on the welfare of the child in future life. This idea is supported by Cobb (2001), when she presents raising children as a task that is carried out throughout a parent's life. She argues that raising children who are intellectual performers is one of the challenging tasks of all time, more so for today's parents whose duties and responsibilities seem more complex than ever before. Parents are required to provide constant guidance to their children even when they are under constant pressure from prevailing political, economic and social problems, among others. The more sensitive parents become concerning how much support their children need from them, the more finely tuned their help becomes, and the better performance the children will attain (Vygotsky, 1978).

Shonkoff and Philips (2000), and Marmont and Wilkinson (1999), note that early experiences including bonding and attachment, development of security and trust through consistent care, freedom to interact with surrounding, predictability, success, responsiveness, exposure to opportunities for cognitive and emotional development and other nurturing interactions are related to long term developmental outcomes. They concur that, children who have had stable, nurturing care in early life show more resilience to trauma events which occur in subsequent years. Liew (2003) agrees with this when she asserts that no one can replace a parent as a child's nurturer not even a care giver or the preschool teacher as they cannot take over the responsibility of one's child entire development during preschool years. In support of Liew's views, Hurlock (2003) emphasizes the fact that there is no satisfactory parents' substitute for parental deprivation. It becomes necessary to find out whether the differences in child raising impacts on how they perform. The researcher used how parents interact with their children to find out how they perform.

Similar studies focusing on early childhood services have highlighted the long term outcomes associated with connectedness of families and individuals. For instance, Wong (1998) and Leeder (1998) suggest that young children whose families score high on social connectedness are less likely to become socially alienated in later life. Another instance is a four-year study carried out by Hayden, De Gioia & Hadley (2003) in Australia, and based on early childhood services and focusing on family partnership, which provided insightful information about the importance of children's holistic needs being met and their ability to perform well in school. Parents may be warm, responsive and child-centered in their approach to their children or they may be rejecting, unresponsive and essentially uninvolved with their children and become more

focused on their own needs and interests. On the other hand, parents may be demanding on their children, restricting their behavior or they may be permissive, allowing the child to do as he/ she wishes (Baumrind, 1991). This present study picked children's academic performance and tied it to the way they have been parented.

Much can be learnt and documented as a result of observing, studying, pondering over and discussing the kinds of parenting characteristics that foster positive behavior and attitude in children in order to engage freely and willingly in learning activities (Cobb, 2001). There are many pathways to the development of positive as well as negative behaviors, characters and attitudes in children; and parents have to try and adapt those positive childrearing methods that promote holistic development. This can only take place where there exist parental warmth and involvement dimensions of parent-child interaction and positive parenting styles (Baumrind, 1989).

2.3 Parenting Styles and Children's Performance

Baumrind (1991) asserts that the construct of parenting style is used to capture normal variation in parents' attempts to control and socialize their children. Papalia, *et al.*, (1999), notes that as children gradually grow and develop and become their own persons, their upbringing can be a baffling complex challenge. Thus, parents must deal with small, young people who have minds and strong wills of their own but who still have a lot to learn about behaviors and character that work well in a modern civilized society. To Baumrind (1991), there are four distinguished parenting styles namely democratic, authoritarian, indulgent and neglectful. Each of the parenting styles reflects different naturally occurring patterns of parental values, practices and

behaviors and a distinct balance of responsiveness and demandingness. Parental responsiveness is being sensitive, supportive and involved, while demandedness is defined as the degree to which parents hold high expectations for their children's behavior and supervise their activity. Thus, each parenting style has its unique characteristics which are likely to manifest through the child's behavior and character.

Baumrind (1991) continues to declare that parenting styles can influence learners' behavior and attitude towards life and learning. For instance, in authoritative also known as democratic parenting whereby parents are both responsive and demanding, provide strong model for children through guidance, value autonomy and self-discipline and insist on important rules, norms and values but are willing to listen, explain and also negotiate. According to Baumrind (1991), these parents practice democratic style and give choices based on a child's ability. In this style of parenting, they attempt to direct the child in a rational, issue-oriented manner by explaining the reasons for setting up rules. Baumrind (1991) affirms that parents are warm, nurturing, loving, involved and responsive. In addition they show pleasure and support of child's constructive behavior and they recognize the child's individuality. They are loving, consistent, demanding, firm in maintaining standards and willing to impose limited judicious punishment when necessary within the context of a warm supportive relationship. Where discipline is necessary, parents encourage open dialogue and give reasons when disciplining. This implies that they explain the reasoning behind their stands and encourage verbal give-and-take situations. In Baumrind's description of democratic parenting, this style blends respect for a child's individuality with an effort to instill social values. These parents have confidence in their ability to guide children but also respect the children's independent decisions, interests, opinions and

personalities. The researcher picked on such parenting styles and searches on the kind of performance children from such depicted.

In authoritarian parenting style, Baumrind (1991) asserts that the emphasis is on obedience, respect for authority and traditional values. Thus parents provide model for children through control mechanism. In other words, authoritarian style which is also referred to as dictatorial parenting style emphasizes control and obedience above all else. They exhort the child to follow rules without explanation, restrict the child's autonomy and reserve the decision-making for themselves only. They are highly demanding and directive but not responsive. In connection to Baumrind's assertion, Iannelli (2001), suggests that children with authoritarian parents usually do not learn to think for themselves and understand why the parent is requiring certain behaviors. In addition to that, the parents show little warmth or positive involvement. They do not solicit or consider child's desire or opinions. Thus, parents' word is final whether it is acceptable to the child or not and there is very little or no room for any dialogue. The results of such form of interaction are negative and tend to produce rebellious children (Katz and McLellan, 1997). This may deter the child's learning prowess and hinder their academic progress. In a nutshell, authoritarian parents value control and unquestionable obedience. Papalia, *et al.*, (1999) suggest that they also try to make children conform to a set standard of conduct and punish them arbitrarily and forcefully for violating it. Papalia and others continue to argue that the parents in this group are more detached and less warm than parents from other parenting styles and their children tend to be more discontented, withdrawn and distrustful. The current researcher's concern is whether children from such parenting style are average achievers, underachievers or above average achievers.

Baumrind (1991) continues to assert that Indulgent Parenting, also known as *permissive parenting* or *nondirective parenting* is characterized by warmth and nurturance but little supervision. According to Baumrind, it glorifies and values free self expression of impulses or self regulation and desires. She argues that parents using this parenting style do not communicate rules clearly or enforce them and that they are more responsive than demanding. They ignore or accept bad behavior and they discipline inconsistently. They yield to coercion and whining, and make few demands for mature, independent behavior. Papalia, *et al.*, (1999) note that indulgent or permissive parents consider themselves as resources rather than models. They make few demands and allow the children to monitor their own activities as much as possible. When these parents are required to make rules, they explain the reasons behind them. Though they consult with their children about policy decisions, they rarely punish the children when they fail to comply to such. Papalia and others further describe them as warm, uncontrolling and undemanding and notes that their preschool children tend to be immature, the least self controlled and least exploratory. At preschool level how do such children perform?

Baumrind (1991) describes neglectful parenting style or *uninvolved parenting* as a parenting style in which there is little warmth, nurturing or supervision. In addition to that, this is the kind of parenting that is indifferent and neglectful and in which parents focus on their own needs rather than on the needs of the children. Maccoby and Martin (1983) argue that the neglectful, also known as uninvolved can do whatever is necessary to minimize the costs in time and effort of interaction with the child. Thus children bring themselves up and parents are low in both demandingness and responsiveness. The parents are self centered, generally unresponsive and pursue self gratification at the expense of their children's welfare. Hetherington and Clingempeel

(1992) also suggest that neglectful parents fail to monitor children's activities whereabouts or companions. In this parenting style, parents are seemingly rejecting, unresponsive and essentially uninvolved with their children and are more focused with their needs and wishes (Maccoby and Martin, 1983). This makes the present researcher to find out whether such children perform well or not.

Darling (1999) argues that parenting is a complex activity that includes many specific behaviors that work individually and together to influence a child's learning outcome. Parental warmth is important in the process of socialization. When a parent is loving and warm, the child is likely to want to maintain the parents' approval and to be distressed at any prospect of losing the parents' love (Baumrind, 1991). If the parent is cold and rejecting however, the threat of withdrawal of love is unlikely to be an effective mechanism of socialization. Moreover, from such a parent, the child has nothing to lose. Parents exert their own authority in a way that consistently enforces their standards. They do that through control dimensions of parent- child interaction in a home or family environment. The concern of the researcher was to try and link different parenting styles with how children perform.

Parental commitment is a cornerstone of the child's school success according to Hargreaves (1984). To Hargreaves, when parents are interested in their children's schooling and are supportive of their endeavors and act in partnership with teachers, their children will achieve more in school. A positive attitude in the home towards education is therefore linked to better or improved performance by the child. Hetherington and Parke (1999) suggest that warmth and nurturance are likely to be associated with parental responsiveness to the child's needs. He

continues to note that loving parents make children feel good about them and this makes them dispel anxiety and they are able to build their sense of security and self esteem.

According to Hetherington and Parke, children with such responsive and loving parents are more likely to learn and accept and internalize parental standards than children of rejecting parents, and in addition to that, it makes it easier for the children to learn the social rules that the parents are attempting to teach. A report in the Commission of the Family compiled in the US Department of Education, 1998, highlights reasons why parental involvement may not be adequately provided. They consider low parents' education attainment, less secure housing tenure for the family, low economic power, lack of confidence and skills among others. The report suggests that these reasons inhibit parents from effective involvement in their children's education (NEESTLP, 1998). The challenge here is on how children become socialized in a manner that enables them to eventually regulate their own behavior and character and to choose responsible alternatives while at home and school.

Baumrind (1989) supports Hargreaves (1984) in declaring that parents are capable of creating early stimulation to learn in their young children if proper parenting styles were applied. She reiterates that children derive their character as human being chiefly through learning from their family backgrounds as they interact with their parents. Blanton (2005) adds that challenges of raising children who are intellectually performers should spur parents and enhance determination within them to be more committed to do their very best in raising their children with all essentials that they need both for learning and life after school. He suggests that this can only be possible where there exists good parent- child relationship. He further says, through interaction

with their children, parents can become more involved in helping their children to improve their work, both at school and home by instilling in them those values, attitudes and life skills that promote independence and co-operation. In concurring with that, Thompson (1998), notes that parental involvement plays a crucial role in the development of both social and cognitive competence in children. In contrast to that, children from uninvolved or neglectful parents tend, not only to be socially incompetent, irresponsible, immature and alienated from their families, but also to show disruptions in cognitive development, achievement and school performance (Baumrind, 1991). The concern of the present study is on how such children perform in various activity areas.

According to a research carried out in Embu district, Kenya by Njenga and Kabiru (2001), lifestyles have changed not only in the said district but in Kenya and the world at large. The research interviews with children, parents and teachers revealed a host of factors within the families, schools, the communities and general environment that affect children's performance. In this current study, the relationship between parenting styles and children's performance was undertaken and investigated by use of diversified instruments: interviews, questionnaire, documentary analysis and employing a personal participatory module. Bornstein and Tamis-Lemoda (1989) and Rogoff (1990) assert that children's development of intellectual and social skills needed for later success in school may be best supported by a parenting characteristic that is known as responsive parenting. Rogoff (1990) agrees that responsiveness plays an important role in providing strong foundation for children to develop optimally. This is supported by Vygotsky (1978), when he argues that responsive behaviors promote joint engagement and reciprocity. The concern of this study is to find out whether children's performance is related to their parenting backgrounds.

Whilst commenting on parenting styles, Landry, Smith and Swank (2006) add that, whenever these styles are combined with behaviors that are cognitively responsive to the child's needs, they provide the range of support necessary for multiple aspects of a child's learning. This supports Maccoby and Martin (1983) who assert that when parents accept and appreciate a child's response promptly, it facilitates the child's development of mechanisms to cope with stress and novelty in his / her environment. With repeated positive experiences, a trust and bond develops between the child and parent that promotes the child's continued engagement in learning activities (Landry, *et al.*, 2006).

2.4 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by social learning theory which stipulates that learning processes take place through observation of modeled behavior and listening, and taking instructions. Its emphasis is on the way through which the learning occurs and that is; observation and listening to models. Bandura (1977) asserts that learning takes place through modeling behavior that can be observed and accompanied by rewards and punishments. Rogoff (1990) agrees with this approach and supports the concept of children as apprentices to older or more experienced persons. And like an apprentice, a child learns from experienced peers and adults through observation, coaching and practice.

Since the child and the parent are part of a broader social cultural context, it may suggest that children's behavior in the classroom may have been influenced by the consistency in parenting styles within the home environment. In this case, they imitate what has been modeled by their parents through observation and listening to and taking instructions. Thus, children's acquisition

of cognitive skills may be facilitated by interaction with parents in the course of their upbringing. The interactions take place in a social (home) environment, where learning takes place by means of observation and listening to models. There are however environmental factors which include role played by parents, older siblings, teachers and peers. They too impact strongly on children's behavior and character. These are foundations for effective learning which in turn influence the children's academic performance.

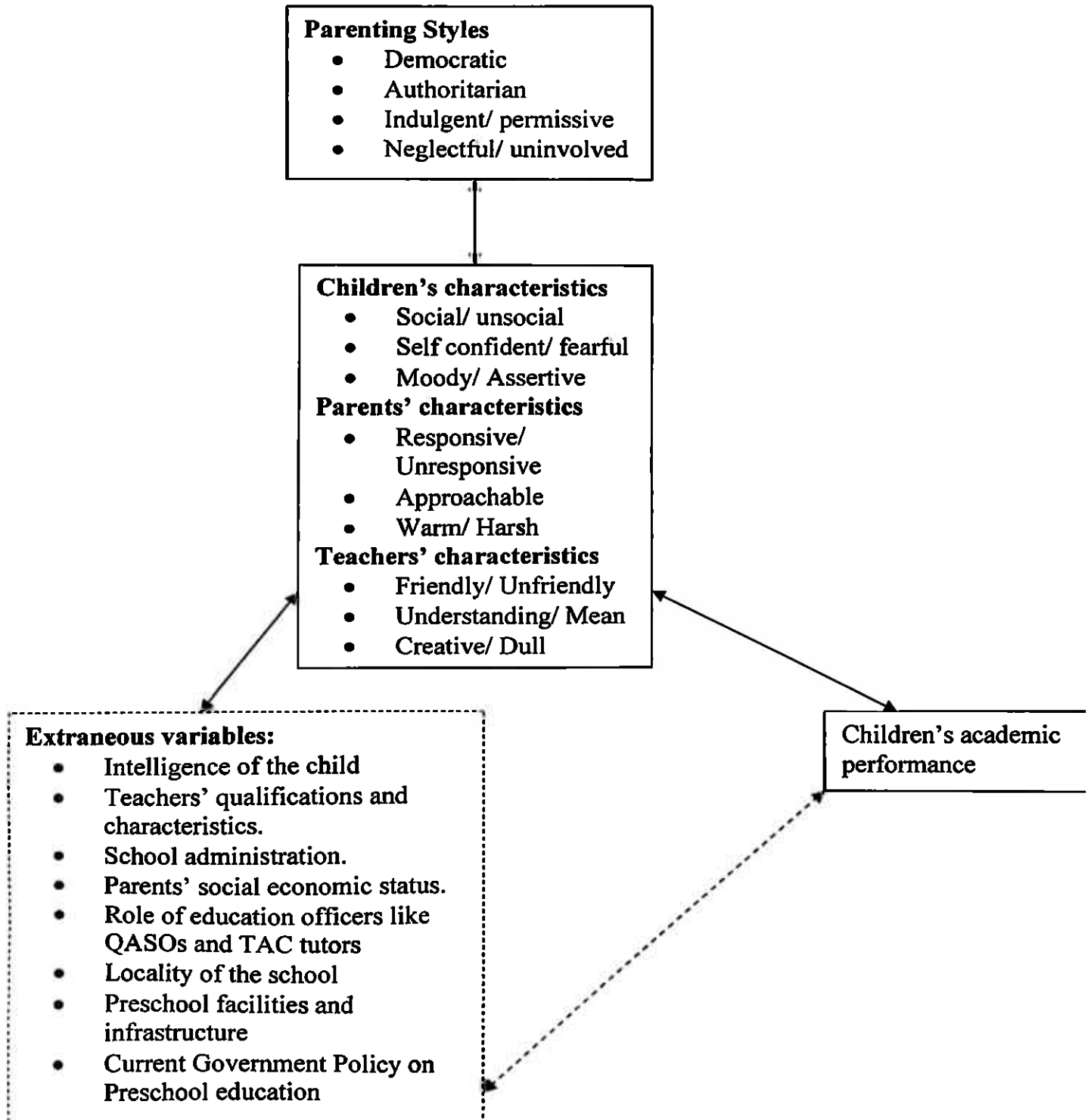
2.5 Conceptual framework

The study's conceptual framework as depicted in Figure 1 (page 33), shows the impact of the four different parenting styles on preschoolers' behavior factors or characteristics which influence how a child responds to learning activities. The child's personal factors such as beliefs and attitudes can be positively or negatively influenced by a particular parenting style. The characteristics of each parenting style reveal the type of parental support a child gets from the parents at home. The framework indicates that parenting is a skill that requires the parents to ensure that the child's underlying strengths and talents are identified and nurtured through positive parental involvement in the child's life in and out of the home environment (Hetherington and Clingempeel, 1992; and Maccoby and Martin, 1983).

The four parenting styles (democratic, authoritarian, indulgent and neglectful) have different and distinctive parent-child interaction characteristics in terms of their parental warmth, responsiveness and demandingness towards the children. Each style therefore, impacts on the child's growth and developmental aspects differently according to the parent-child interaction characteristics used on the children as they grow up in a family. A child's character, attitude and

behavior are among the determinants of effective learning; and therefore impact on one's performance either positively or negatively. There may be a relationship between the four parenting styles and the way preschool children perform in class due to the influence of the parental characteristics on the children's psychological and psychosocial domains.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework on Parenting Styles Their Impact on Children’s Characteristics and Academic Performance.



CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter gives a description of the methods used in carrying out the research study. It was organized under: research design, the target population, sampling, research instruments, reliability and validity, data collection and data analysis techniques/ procedures.

3.2 Research Design

The investigation was a case study. According to Borg and Gall (1989) a case study research design allows in-depth investigation of an individual, group, institution or phenomenon and the case under the study was viewed as an example of a class of events or a group of individuals.

3.3 The Target Population

The target population of the study was the preschool children, preschool teachers and the parents of the preschoolers of Milimani Preschool which is an integral part of a public primary school in Westlands Division in Nairobi, Kenya. Due to quality infrastructure in terms of physical resources as well as human resources coupled with the location of the school, there are quality services rendered to the children at affordable rates. This tends to make the school attract parents from all social economic backgrounds who use different parenting styles to bring up their children.

3.4 Sampling and Sample Size

Milimani Preschool in Westlands Division was purposively sampled due to its geographical position. This preschool attracts parents from upper, middle and low socioeconomic status who use different parenting styles. For instance, the existent preschool class catered for children from the affluent Kilimani/ Milimani neighborhood, children from the low income earners of Kawangware and Kibera informal settlement areas and the remaining come from the middle class areas of Racecourse, Santak and Jamhuri estates along Ngong Road (school register).

For this study, the sample included; all the thirty nine (39) preschool children who attended Milimani Primary school Pre-unit class, which is in Westlands division, Nairobi Kenya. These were 4-5year-olds who were being prepared for primary education; all the three (3) preschool class teachers who provided services to these children. They had day to day experiences with their preschoolers' attitude and behaviour towards learning and their current academic assessment status. They also had accounts of how much parents showed interest in their children's academic work as revealed through the parental availability and support towards their children. All the thirty nine (39) parents/ guardians of the preschool learners who were the custodians of the characteristics of parenting styles. The parents were stratifiedly sampled as either; the fathers', mothers' or guardians participation was considered sufficient.

3.5 Research Instruments

The study collected data by using the instruments namely; the participatory module whereby the researcher prepared a work schedule for 3 months in three activity areas (Appendix 1). The activity areas included: mathematics, language and social studies. These were randomly selected

since the teaching approach in all activity areas was thematic. The researcher undertook to carry out a teaching/ learning exercise in person. The reason for doing this was to make an effort to understand the participants through one to one interaction and to involve all of them in person. The researcher gave an initial test to the children to determine their existing performance. At the end of the 3 months children were again tested on the work covered in the activity areas taught. This also served as a control for comparison of the children's performance in reference to their parenting styles backgrounds.

Questionnaire for teachers which contained questions whose answers revealed the measure of parental involvement children enjoyed from their parents with regard to learning activities (Appendix II). In addition to that, the data revealed how children were performing at the time of the study. Thus, the questionnaire contained items to elicit responses on parental involvement and children's performance which was eventually used to identify children's parenting styles backgrounds in regard to their performance.

The interview schedules for parents/ guardian (Appendix III), highlighted their involvement in their children's learning activities and the kind of support they provided while the children's schedule (Appendix IV), sought to reveal the kind of interaction they had with their parents while at home to depict the children's parenting styles background. The documentary analysis form (Appendix V) was used to get data from children's class work and homework books. The researcher searched for information about parental involvement by scrutinizing how often the parents checked and signed their children's school work.

3.6 Validity

After preparing various instruments, they were subjected to expert judgement to ascertain their validity. For this study, the instruments were given to my two University of Nairobi supervisors who are experts in this field to ascertain their validity. This was in accordance with Borg and Gall (1989), who recommends use of an expert to ascertain content validity of an instrument. At the same time, the researcher used triangulation of methods to identify and categorise parenting styles backgrounds. All the research instruments; Intervention module, Questionnaire, Interview schedules and Documentary analysis form were put to use.

3.7 Reliability

Borg and Gall (1989) recommend pretesting of research instruments as a way of ensuring reliability of a study's instruments before the main study can be carried out. This involved administration of the research instruments to a selected sample of respondents not in the study. For this study, the questionnaire was given to a trainee preschool teacher on attachment to fill in the information. After two weeks, the same questionnaire, worded differently carrying the same meaning was again given to the same trainee teacher to fill in the required information. The responses were the same as the first ones. The documentary analysis form was given to a class one teacher to scrutinize books for her class one children. Another teacher, this time a Class two (2) teacher used the documentary analyses form to scrutinise the books for the same Class one (1) children and the responses were the same. One of the preschool teachers interviewed eleven (11) parents from the previous years' preschool class. They gave reasonable and meaningful responses in accordance with questions asked. From responses garnered, the research questions set were answered adequately. The pre-testing data collected was assessed to find out whether

the instruments were credible. This exercise was intended to test whether the instruments were working or not. The responses were analysed and were found to be reliable and thus, confirmed the clarity of the study instruments.

3.8 Procedure for Data Collection

First, a research permit was obtained from the Ministry of Education. After this, the researcher accessed the school for the administration of the research instruments. All the instruments were administered simultaneously as soon as the teaching module commenced. It was necessary for them to run concurrently as a means of achieving time efficiency.

The researcher collected data through a personal participatory module ^{which} was planned and carried out by the researcher in person. This involved preparation and carrying out of a teaching schedule covering at least three activity areas: language, mathematics and social studies for a period of three (3) months. During this session, the researcher set and administered both initial and end of session tests from work covered in the activity areas taught and also interacted with the preschool children, their teachers and parents. These initial and end of session tests were all marked, each activity area out of a possible 100 marks from which mean scores per activity area were calculated for each category of performance. The results therefore gave a possible total score of 300 from which the children's percentage mean scores were obtained and used to grade each child in their performance categories according to their mean score.

Questionnaire was distributed to the preschool teachers of Milimani preschool. The preschool teachers filled in the required information as instructed. This was done concurrently with the

personal ~~participatory~~ teaching module in order to save on time. The responses were to show individual child's parental involvement in respect to learning activities and also to reveal how much parents availed themselves for their children in and out of school. Teachers were in a position to tell the different parental characteristics and children's performance they had noticed in the course of their teaching.

Oral administration of interview schedules for preschool children and their parents commenced as soon as the researcher began the teaching module. The interview took 20 minutes per session. The interviews were to be carried out in the course of researcher's teaching module session in order to save on time. The researcher listened to respondents' answers and took notes. The information helped to find out how much interaction took place between the parent and child. In addition to that, it was to show the quality and quantity of time and help accorded to individual children by their parents.

Documentary analysis form was used to extract information about parents' involvement in child's work. This was carried out during the researcher's teaching session. The information was obtained from scrutiny of the children's class and homework books in an effort to establish how often the parent checked the child's work and any other relevant information which featured. This form was also used to find out how often the parent/guardian made enquiries, comments or responded to the teachers through the children's school diaries. The focus was to find out how different parents responded to involvement expected of them by the teachers.

3.9 Data Analysis

The researcher read through the responses from the study's instruments with regard to their answering research questions, in order to identify issues and organise them into categorical themes. The responses came from thirty nine (39) preschool children, three (3) preschool teachers and thirty nine (39) parents/ guardians of the preschoolers.

From the two tests (initial and end of session tests) in the three (3) activity areas, the children's different percentage means were calculated to determine how children from each parenting style performed. Each activity area was marked out of a possible 100 marks to give a possible total of 300 marks. The total marks for each child were obtained from the three activity areas in which they were tested and used to calculate their percentage mean score. The results were used to categorize them in their respective above average, average and below average performance groups per activity area. The children's names were then listed down in their respective parenting style backgrounds each with his/her marks against their names. The marks for the total number of children in a specific performance category and for each parenting style background were used to calculate the total percentage mean score for that particular group of children. The percentage mean score was then used for comparison to that of other children in other parenting backgrounds. The performance categories were done based on the school's criteria whereby; the above average marks range from 90 and above per activity area, average marks range from between 50-89 marks and the below average ranges from 50 marks and below. The researcher compared the children's mean score from the initial tests with their mean scores from end of session tests and determined the consistency and progress made in their performance in the tests

and related the same to their parenting style background. In addition to that, it served as a control for comparison of data collected using the other instruments.

The researcher collected the completed questionnaires from the teachers and read through them and identified the related emerging themes and information from the responses with regards to parental involvement and the children's performance. The emerging themes were organised systematically into categorical themes indicating the level of parental involvement in reference to the children's performance. How parents were involved and responsive towards their children's activities in school was determined from considering how much time and attention they devoted to their preschool children. Teachers indicated how this took place by focussing on the availability of parents either voluntarily or whenever required for consultation. From the categorical themes that were organized, the researcher developed a summary report for interpretation and the report helped to establish the children's parenting styles background in relation to their academic performance. Parental involvement and responsiveness are key factors to consider when identifying and categorising parenting styles.

From the two interview schedules, one with the preschool children and the other with their parents, the researcher classified the responses into categorical themes in regard to parental control, parental involvement and parental responsiveness in children's school and home life. Once again, this was determined by the quality and quantity of time parents accorded their children, and the nature of parent child interactive relationship between them. The information from these categorical themes showed the kind of parent- child interactive relationship each child was experiencing at home. The researcher used the information to develop a summary report that

showed what type of parenting style background each child experienced at home and related that to their performance in the two tests done.

From the documentary analyses form, the researcher summarized the key findings concerning the number of times that a parent had signed the child's work books namely homework and class work books as well as the child's school diary. The parents' use of the child's school diary revealed how they responded or communicated with the teacher concerning the child's welfare while at school and at home. This exercise was carried out from the beginning to the end of the teaching module. The parents were doing this without being pressurised, influenced, persuaded or requested by the teachers. The frequency with which a parent signed the child's books was tabulated in terms of percentages of the total number of times a parent was required to carry out these responsibilities. It helped to establish the kind of support the child enjoyed from the parents while at home and school. This is a key factor that distinguishes some parenting styles from others. The findings were used to classify the children into their respective parental backgrounds in order to establish whether they influenced their performance or not.

The study used triangulation of research methods to identify and categorise parents into their respective parenting styles. From data obtained through all the study instruments, the researcher analysed and compiled the patterns of parental values, practices and behaviours as well as their kind of responsiveness and demandingness towards the children: all of which are reflections of the four parenting styles. Thus, parental characteristics were revealed through the analysis of the nature of parent-child interaction dimension which each child was enjoying from parents. These dimensions were expressed through parental warmth, involvement and control mechanism

owards the child. Parents/ guardians were therefore categorised into the four parenting styles, which in turn made it possible to put the preschool children into their respective parental backgrounds.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of data obtained from the analysis of the study findings and discussions organized around the five research questions: What is the academic performance of Milimani preschool children whose parents use democratic parenting style? How do Milimani preschool children whose parents use authoritarian parenting style perform in class? How is the class performance of Milimani preschool children whose parents use indulgent parenting style? How do Milimani preschool children whose parents use neglectful parenting style perform in class? What are the differences in class performance of Milimani preschool children from the four parenting styles: democratic, authoritarian, indulgent and neglectful? The analysis was specifically done to provide information that would show if there exists any relationship between parenting styles and the preschool children's academic performance.

4.1 Categories of parenting styles

In this study, how parents were involved in their children's lives, their responsiveness and expectations of their children's behavior at home and school were determined from the findings made during the study, the responses from interviews with parents and children, the teachers' responses and the scrutiny of children's class and home work books. The scrutiny was done to find out how often parents signed, and made comments in them about their children's work without anybody asking them to. It also revealed how much time and attention the parents accorded their children while at home and school.

The findings were summarized and organized into categorical themes and used to classify the parents and their children into respective parenting styles and backgrounds respectively.

Table 4.1 shows the number of parents in the four categories of parenting styles in Milimani Preschool.

Table 4.1. Categories of Parenting Styles and the Number of Preschool Children Belonging to Each Group

Parenting style	No. Of children
Democratic	12
Authoritarian	5
Indulgent	12
Neglectful	10

From table 4.1, children were categorized into their respective parenting styles backgrounds as follows; Democratic style had 12, Authoritarian had 5, Indulgent had 12 and Neglectful had 10 children respectively. It was however, not easy to arrive at the analysis as demonstrated by the table 4.1 above, but by use of triangulation of the research methods (personal participatory module, questionnaires, interview schedules and documentary analysis forms), the findings were analyzed and organized to show parental characteristics of every parent and the child's name written against it.

Characteristics of parenting styles are manifested through parent-child interaction dimensions which are warmth, parental involvement and control based on the views of Maccoby and Martin, (1983). The dimensions are characterized by unique parenting skills which have distinctive degrees of responsiveness and demand. This is in terms of being sensitive, supportive and involved, and the degree to which parents hold high expectations for their children's behaviors and the manner in which they supervise their activities. Baumrind (1991) uses the parenting skills described in these dimensions to classify the parenting styles into four groups: democratic, authoritarian, indulgent and neglectful. Their characteristics are distinct and observable, and the parents' actions and reactions can be interpreted to clearly tell what kind of parenting style they exercise at home.

Democratic parenting is characterized by warmth, involvement and support towards the child and it encourages the child's independence. In authoritarian parenting, the parents show little warmth and involvement. Parents are harsh, rigid, unresponsive and use power assertive methods of control when they interact and relate to their children. Indulgent parents hide impatience and anger. They give inconsistent discipline and at the same time do not communicate rules clearly. Furthermore, they do not enforce those rules. They also tend to yield to coercion and whining. Finally, neglectful parenting is characterized by uninvolved, parent-centeredness, self gratification at the child's expense and above all, parents do not monitor the child's activities.

4.2. Findings on Research Question Number 1: How is the Academic Performance of the Milimani Preschool Children whose Parents use Democratic Parenting Style?

The question on the democratic parenting style sought to find out whether the children who have been brought up in families whose parents use this style perform the same way or differently from those children who are raised in families where parents use other parenting styles. The characteristics of democratic parenting style are manifested through parental involvement and responsiveness. These are those characteristics that focus on the amount of time parents spend in interaction with their children both in and outside their environment and the degree to which their attitudes are child-centered. These are the key characteristics of democratic parenting style

Table 4.2(a) shows the initial test percentage mean scores for preschool children who were brought up under the democratic parenting style.

Table 4.2(a). The Percentage Mean Score Analysis of the Children Brought up Under the Democratic Parenting Style in Initial tests Performance.

Performance	No. Children	Activity area performance			Mean score
		Language	Maths	S. studies	
Above average	8	94	98	96	96
Average	2	78	85	70	77.7
Below average	2	49	48	50	49

From Table 4.2(a), out of 12 children brought up under the democratic parenting background, 8 were above average, with a mean score of 96. The number of children in average and below average was tied at 2 with a mean score of 77.7 for the average and 49 for below average performances respectively. The initial test was carried out at the beginning of a new term in a new class, precisely the second week of study. The children were still going through the transition process. Based on the views of Mc Gilly (1994), it was assumed that other variables like socioeconomic status of the family, culture, learning styles, gender, intelligence and a child's being gifted could have played a role in this outcome.

Deliberations with the teachers established that the initial test mean scores could not give a conclusive judgment about the impact of democratic parenting style on preschooler's class performance until an end of term test was carried out at the end of the session. It was also observed that the preschoolers were still adjusting to their new status in their preschool class at the time of the initial test. It was also noted that, parents in this group were more cooperative in terms of donations of learning materials in realia form like food stuff (seeds and cereals), for learning and nature corners. Even during their children's trip to the animal orphanage which was organized by the school administration, these parents were easier to convince to pay for the trip cost. Another tendency noted was that a good number of parents from this group checked and signed their children's books regularly as compared to those from authoritarian, indulgent and neglectful groups. Notably, two of these democratic parents would call the teachers occasionally to inquire about their children's home work if the children went home without any assignment for more than two consecutive days. In the views of Baumrind (1991), democratic parents are

loving, consistent, demanding, firm in maintaining standards and willing to impose punishment when necessary within the context of a warm supportive parent-child interactive relationship. These conditions may be the reason why more children from this background attained the above average performance.

When the preschool class teachers and parents' meeting was called, 7 parents from the democratic group were in attendance and as noted, this was the highest number from one parenting style in that meeting. From the attendance record of the meeting, it was evident that authoritarian, indulgent, and neglectful parenting styles had one (1), three (3) and one (1) parents in attendance respectively. Such class meetings are called at the beginning of every new term for the stakeholders to strategize on how to improve their children's performance. They also review the previous term's class and children's performance and many a times they make new deliberations for the new term. Therefore these were very important meetings which no parent should have missed. As Cobb, (2001) suggests, parental involvement and their responsiveness towards their children's lives at home and school is known through the amount of time support and attention they accord them. One of the ways to do that is for parents to avail themselves for meetings with the teachers whenever they are required for consultations.

The democratic parents' children also socialized more freely with others as it was found out. This may have developed through parent-child interactive relationship which offers parental support and love and as Landry (2001) suggests, a child who is ready for schooling has a combination of positive characteristics such as being socially and emotionally healthy. These do not develop naturally but out of a relationship between the child and the parents or guardians. In

addition to that, as Baumrind (1991) points out, parental warmth is important in the process of socialization and when a parent is warm, the child is most likely to want to maintain the parents' approval and be distressed when a parents' love is threatened.

Table 4.2(b) shows the results of the end of session test for preschool children who were brought up under democratic parenting style.

Table 4.2(b). The Percentage Mean Score Analysis of the Children Brought up Under the Democratic Parenting Style in The End of Session Test Performance.

Performance	No. Children	Activity area performance			Mean score
		Language	Maths	S. studies	
Above average	8	95	98	98	97
Average	1	85	80	75	80
Below average	-	-	-	-	-

From Table 4.2 (b) the results of the end of session test showed a slight difference in terms of performance except in this test, no child attained below average performance. For instance, 8 of the children were above average with mean score of 97%. The number of average children dropped to 1 with a mean score of 80%. There were no children who were below average. At the time of this test, three children from the democratic parenting background did not seat it as they were absent. This outcome disapproves the teacher's argument that the initial test performance

was the way it was because of its timing. Since the two results are not very different apart, the performance can be attributed to supportive parenting accorded to the children through parental involvement and responsiveness. Based on Hetherington and Clingempeel (1992), parenting is a skill that requires the parents to ensure that the child's potentials are identified and nurtured through positive parental involvement in the child's life in and out of the home environment.

A conversation held with the preschool teachers revealed that these parents who are democratic in their parenting were more committed to working with them towards helping the preschoolers. It was noted for instance, that they were quick to respond and act to the teachers' remarks and comments in the children's school diaries. They also often made inquiries about their children's work and performance and progress in the diaries. In the views of Liew (2003), when parents are involved and supportive in their preschool children's learning activities, it acts as a catalyst that motivates them to work harder and better in order to achieve good performance. Hetherington *et al.*, (1999) also suggest that warmth and nurturance are likely to be associated with parental responsiveness to the child's needs and that loving parents make children feel good about themselves and are able to build a sense of security and self esteem. These conditions make it easier for children to engage in learning activities and thus excel in their performance.

Another noticeable characteristic showed that children who are brought up under the democratic parenting style are more independent when carrying out class activities either in groups or individually. For instance, during free activity time, they could do picture reading and play with wooden blocks without being distracted from one activity to another for a reasonable period of time ranging from 8-10minutes. Also notably, they were easier for the teacher to engage in turn-

taking activities like tyre-racing, ball games and skipping with ropes which require sharing of playing materials. It was also evident that they made better group leaders than other children who were raised under indulgent, authoritarian or neglectful parenting styles. Baumrind (1991) affirms that democratic parenting style blends a child's individuality with an effort to instill social values and among such values are sharing, team work, team spirit, cooperation among others.

It was also noted that the children brought up under democratic style were able to take instructions faster and without much coercion from the teachers than those children whose parenting style backgrounds were different. In the views of Landry, Smith and Swank (2006), the conditions necessary for academic excellence can be fostered through positive child upbringing practices coupled with bringing up a child to develop positive attitudes toward learning and life in general. They further suggest that children's ability to engage well in learning activities may be an outcome of a strong foundation laid down by the parents at home and this can only take place where there is warm and supportive parent-child interaction. The results of initial and end of session tests imply that democratic parenting style has conditions that foster good performance in class.

It was also noted that children of democratic parents were better in terms of cleanliness and tidiness. During health inspection exercises carried out every morning during assembly by the teachers, majority of the children whose clothing, body, hair and nails were neat and clean, came from democratic parenting style background. As Liew (2003) suggests, the family environment is a natural learning place and parents are the primary educators of their children and therefore

how a learner behaves at school can be an indication of home background family structure and the nature of parent-child relationship. Blanton (2005) is supportive of Liew's argument when he asserts that this period of up to eight years of age is very important for emotional, cognitive and social development of a child. He further suggests that good interventions through positive parent-child interactive involvement at this stage have strong and lasting impact on the welfare of the child both in present and future life.

It was also evident from interview schedules and documentary analyses that democratic parents also believe in team work and working in partnership with the teachers for better performance of the children. For instance, four parents often made enquiries about their children's progress and asking whether there was any help they could extend to the children while at home. One of the parents went further and asked which supplementary books were useful so that he could make provision for them for the child to be using while at home. Evidently, a child coming from such a background where parents are interested and supportive in terms of the child's schooling is expected to attain a good or improved performance. Such parenting characteristics enhance positive behavior and attitudes in children in order for them to engage freely and willingly in school activities (Cobb, 2001). From these two test results, it is evident that children raised under democratic parenting style enjoy conditions at home that are stimulative towards learning.

4.3. Findings on Research Question Number 2: How do Milimani Preschool Children Whose Parents use Authoritarian Parenting Style Perform in Class?

Table 4.3(a) shows the mean score results of the initial test for children whose parents use the authoritarian parenting style.

Table 4.3(a). The Percentage Mean Score Analysis of Children Brought up Under the Authoritarian Parenting Style in Initial Test Performance.

Performance	No. Children	Activity area performance			Mean score
		Language	Maths	S. studies	
Above average	2	96	96	96	96
Average	3	80	88	74	80.6
Below average	-	-	-	-	-

From Table 4.3 (a), the number of above average children has decreased to 2 with a mean score of 96%, while there is an increase in the number of children in the average group to 3 with their mean score at 80.6%. No below average performance was recorded in this test. In the classroom situation, it was noted that children whose parents used authoritarian parenting style exhibited mixed behaviors and characteristics in their work as well as their relationship with other children and the teachers. From the way they behaved, it was noted that they were a little selfish and also

inward looking. They were noted to be overprotective of their possessions. When given tasks by the teachers, they were among those who often completed their work in good time. Two children were very neat in their work although not always right. In addition to that, most children in this group also feared losing any item that they brought to school. One particular boy could refuse to go home whenever something got lost or if another child spoilt his books accidentally, as he feared what the father's actions could be. At one time, this boy forgot his lunch box in the class and the following day he came without lunch or snack as punishment. Information gathered from the class teacher indicated that the presence of his father at school could make him scared and uneasy as he feared what the father's actions would be. Papalia (1999) notes that such parents are more detached from their children and less warm than other parents and that their children tend to be more discontented, withdrawn and distrustful. These conditions do not stimulate learning as suggested by Cobb (2001).

As it was noted, some parents/guardians in this category were rather uncooperative with teachers. Whenever they were requested to give simple items to their children to bring to school for learning purposes, one easily noticed their reluctance in complying. For instance, one parent refused to give the child a potato to facilitate a lesson in creative activities. One other parent told the teacher to stop bothering them with demands because according to them, free primary education (FPE) meant the Government was to supply everything the child needed in school. Scrutiny of children's books showed that only two parents from this group were keen on checking and signing of their children's class and homework books. This detachment according to Papalia (1999), and little or no parental involvement in the life of a child (Baumrind, 1989), is detrimental to a child's good performance.

Children growing up under this environment live their lives for their parents, because of its control mechanism (Baumrind, 1991). Most of the time, children in this group are unhappy, aimless, fearful, anxious and look withdrawn. They are vulnerable to stress and frustrations. Based on the views of Katz and McLellan (1997), the results of this kind of relationship with parents are negative, poor and tend to produce rebellious children. These conditions affect the children psychologically, physically, intellectually and psychosocially and as such, they cannot concentrate well in class. There are however other variables like intelligence, gender and learning styles of individual children that could enable some of them attain high performance (McGilly, 1994). Other variables are social-economic status of the family where some children are more privileged than others and their parents can afford to buy play materials, storybooks, picture books and toys. These stimulate early learning as suggested by Liew (2005). Children raised under authoritarian background do not enjoy most of these privileges.

Notably, children brought up under authoritarian parenting style sought for the teacher's attention and sympathy more often than those children from democratic and indulgent parenting backgrounds. They often appeared to be unsettled in their groups- learning and social, and, were found to be moving from one group to another without a good reason. One particular boy whose performance was above average in both the initial and end of session tests was always in a hurry to complete assignments after which he would seat and wait for the next assignment to be given by the teachers. He evidently lacked initiative to even ask the teacher whether his work was good and acceptable or not. At this age normally, children were noted to be very active and curious. It is therefore expected that during the class activities, children are engaged in the learning activities until they change to the next activity area. Papalia (1999) explains this by saying that,

because they lack parental warmth and attachment, children tend to be more discontented and withdrawn during their early childhood years.

Another characteristic noted was that children from authoritarian parenting background had tendency to be 'bossy' and taking advantage of those who are physically weaker. One boy who was older than the rest in that class (he was 2 years older than the others), was a bully. Whenever he would hurt another child, he would turn the story around to implicate his victim and would usually be the first to report to the teachers. He then blamed whatever mistake he had done on others for cover up. Such behavior and attitude may influence the child's learning and become hindrances to better or improved performance. Explanations by Kochanska (1993) and Baumrind (1989) suggest that good parent-child relationship and the manner in which the child is raised up have a significant influence on the child's learning capacities. Children growing up under authoritarian parenting style miss out on repeated positive experience which are provided through parent-child interactive involvement which Landry, Smith & Swank, (2006), allege that it enhances development of a trust and bond between the child and parent which in turn promotes the child's involvement in learning activities. Authoritarian parenting does not foster such a trust and bond.

Table 4.3 (b) shows the mean score results of the end of session test for children whose parents use authoritarian/dictatorial parenting style.

Table 4.3(b). The Percentage Mean Score Results Analysis of Children Brought up Under Authoritarian Parenting Style in the End of Session Test Performance.

Performance	No. Children	Activity area performance			Mean score
		Language	Maths	S. studies	
Above average	3	95	95	96	95.3
Average	2	78	82	72	77
Below average	-	-	-	-	-

From Table 4.3(b), the number of children increased by one to have a total of 3 in the above average performance while it reduced to 2 in the average performance group. The mean score for the 3 children in the above average group was 95.3%, while the 2 children who were average attained 77% as their mean score. The results indicate that authoritarian parenting style may impact on the learners' performance the same way, whether at the beginning or at the end of the sessions. This is as shown by the test results which did not show much difference in the number of those children in above average and average groups. The characteristics affect a child's learning ability negatively and hence becomes a hindrance to his/her academic progress as seen in suggestions made by Iannelli (2001). This is expected where other inherent variables like child intelligence and giftedness do not have a significant contribution.

It was also established that children who are brought up under authoritarian parenting style put in a lot of effort to get good marks for fear of being punished at home. One characteristic that encourages this is that the parents' word is final whether it is acceptable to the child or not and it has very little or no room for dialogue. One child would be very stressed if she failed to get a star- which was the best award given to a child, drawn in her activity book. The child would therefore panic fearing for a harsh reprimand from the parents. The registered improvement in performance could have been out of this fear of punishment from parents for not attaining good marks. As Papalia *et al.*, (1999) notes, authoritarian parents value control and unquestionable obedience and they try to make the children conform to a set standard of conduct and punish the children arbitrary and forcefully for violating it.

In an effort to find out why these parents chose to bring up their children under very strict rules, one parent, during the interview schedule said, "It is the only way I can develop the qualities I want to see in my son." This parent considered himself as successful and he attributed his success to his father's "good" discipline. This is what he desired to see in his own son. In the views of Blanton (2005), generally, parents' characteristics of parent-child interaction depend largely on the manner in which the parents were brought up, the manner in which they were instructed and disciplined, and how they were acculturated. It promotes parental control dimension that has little or no room for warmth and parental involvement. When asked how he instilled these qualities in the child, he said, "dialogue is necessary but space for discipline ought to be maintained." Another one quoted the Bible to justify his caning actions as a form of discipline by use of a rod. To an authoritarian parent, this is one way of 'training', 'guiding', 'caring' and 'governing' a child in order to do well in school and life (Chao, 1994).

Another argument by parents who used authoritarian parenting style was that they were only exercising their powers, duties and responsibilities over their children as a form of an obligation to nurture and give them direction in life. Based on the views of Blanton (2005) this parenting style could be tied up to people's cultural values that define the roles of family members. However, since it is more of control than parental involvement, children tend to perform not so well in class (Baumrind, 1991). A girl who was brought up under authoritarian parenting style seemed to be in a state of withdrawal from the moment she got into classroom until she went home on a daily basis she showed little effort to mingle with other children. This continued for a while and in addition to that she was also fearful of the teachers. She never used to talk much in the classroom and had very few friends outside the classroom environment with whom she could freely interact. She never used to finish her class assignments in time and was at the same time introverted.

A meeting with her parents revealed the kind of life this little girl was living at home. Although the father dropped her off to school every morning and her mother picked her up every evening, she was being put under a lot of pressure to perform well such that her mother had engaged another preschool teacher to 'coach' her while at home every evening. Their expectations of her performance were too high and her mother put her under immense pressure to attain them by all means. As it is in their parenting style characteristics, authoritarian parents value control and unquestionable obedience and as Papalia *et al.*, (1991) suggests, they make children conform to a set of standard of conduct and if they violate it, they are punished. Children growing under such conditions may not realize their potential.

During the meeting between the girl's parents and the teachers, the parents were advised to change their way of parenting and adopt more child-friendly approaches which were developmentally appropriate for the child. After one week, this girl was different from the previously unhappy, fearful and withdrawn child to a cheerful, social and confident child. Hargreaves (1984) sheds light on this kind of attitudinal and behavioral change in the girl toward learning when he says that parental commitment to support their children in school activities results in better or improved performance by the child. Baumrind (1989) also supports this by asserting that parents are in a position of creating early stimulation to learn in their children when they apply proper parenting styles as they raise those children. Blanton (2005) further states that through parent-child interaction, parents can become more involved in helping their children to improve their work both at school and home by instilling in them those values, attitudes and life skills that promote independence, self control and cooperation. These values, attitudes and life skills are not adequately provided where authoritarian parenting style is applied.

4.4. Findings on Research Question number 3: How is the class performance of Milimani Preschool Children whose Parents used Indulgent Parenting Style?

Table 4.4(a) shows the mean score results of initial test for children whose parents used the indulgent parenting style.

Table 4.4(a). The Percentage Mean Score Analysis of the Children Brought up under the Indulgent Parenting Style in Initial Performance.

Performance	Children	Activity area performance (%)			% Mean score
		Language	Maths	S. studies	
Above average	-	-	-	-	-
Average	8	76	84	72	77.3
Below average	4	40	48	46	45

From Table 4.4(a), 8 of the children who grew up under this parenting style were average in performance in the initial test. Their mean score was 77.3%. No child from this background attained above average marks. Four children were in below average group and their mean score was 45%. Parents who naturally are first tutors and instructors of their children at home are empowered to instill in their young children those values and attitudes that promote the children’s desire for learning through parent-child interaction as suggested by Baumrind (1989). In the classroom, the 8 children whose parents used indulgent parenting style were mostly non-

compliant when it came to listening to and following the teachers' instructions to carry out learning activities. For instance, there was a very bright boy in class, but because he was not afraid of his parents' actions towards his non-participatory actions in class, he never rose to the top position in class. Notably, his books were among those that were rarely checked. Papalia *et al.*, (1999) suggests that indulgent parents make few demands and allow children to monitor their own activities as much as possible.

It was also established that parents who use indulgent parenting style like delegating their parental responsibilities or duties to their eldest children, as evidenced through interviews with the affected children which revealed that their elder siblings supervised the homework. But in Furman and Bushmaster (1995)'s views, it is only the kind of parent-child relationship that offers support, love and is responsive to a child that can promote holistic development. And as Liew (2003), puts it, any parent who may wish to raise an empowered child must ensure cordial and positive parent-child interaction exists all the time, both at home and in school. Papalia *et al.*, (1999) however describes indulgent parents as warm, uncontrolling and undemanding and notes that their preschool children tend to be immature, the least controlled and least exploratory. This tendency extends to school life.

According to UNESCO (2003), education is the single most important means to successful living. Thus, parents investing in the education of their children lay a strong foundation for their future. This can only happen successfully where there is supportive, loving and responsive parent-child interaction and as Dietrich (2006) puts it, effective learning during early childhood takes place where parenting style is positive and social support from family members especially

parents is supported. Parents have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of their children, not just by considering themselves as resources but also being models as suggested by Baumrind (1991) indulgent parenting style runs short of modeling the much needed support.

From interview schedules with parents, those who were in indulgent category were found to be somehow lenient when dealing with their children's misconducts. This came out clearly through their responses as they answered the open – ended questions. One parent tried to cover up for the son's failure to complete homework assignments by suggesting that the boy was still young and had many years ahead and that whatever the son missed out in preschool would be recovered in the successive years. This reaction from a parent goes against Bornstein *et al.*, (1998) who posit that children's development of intellectual and social skills needed for latter success in school may best be supported by a parenting style that is known as responsive parenting during the child's formative years. If parents do not take their parenting roles carefully, many bright children who would have otherwise excelled in school may be slowed down by the effects of indulgent/ permissive parenting style on a child's character, behavior and attitudes (Landry, *et al.*, 1997).

Table 4.4 (b) shows the mean score results of the end of session test for children whose parents used indulgent/ permissive parenting style.

Table 4.4(b). The Percentage Mean Score Results Analyses of Children Brought up Under the Indulgent Parenting Style in End of Session Test Performance.

Performance	Children	Activity area performance (%)			% Mean score
		Language	Maths	S. studies	
Above average	2	96	95	96	95.6
Average	9	76	84	72	77.3
Below average	1	49	48	50	49

From table 4.4(b), 9 of the children attained average performance with mean score of 77.3%. This was followed by the 2 children who scored above average with a mean score of 95.6% Only 1 child attained below average with a mean score of 49%. This was the lowest mean score in this test. From the two tables, 4.4 (a) and 4.4 (b), the number of average performances in this preschool is likely to remain high in families where parents use indulgent parenting style, if there are no other variables which are the likely cause of this outcome. This is shown by the children's performances in both the initial and End of session tests which place the average performance above others. Parents however, must provide guidance to their children through communication of clear instructions and rules as well as modeling good behavior that can be observed, according to Bandura (1977). This is what lacks in this parenting style.

To enforce these rules, the parents must reward or punish the acceptable and unacceptable children's responses respectively. Above all however, preschool children require parents to provide direction and help in order to develop and grow holistically (Bandura, 1977). This is a noble parental duty and responsibility that cannot be substituted by any other person. Parental commitment is one of the cornerstones of the child's school success and in the views shared by Hargreaves (1984), when parents are interested in their children's learning and are supportive and are in partnership with teachers, their children will achieve more in school and therefore their basic concern should be the interest of the child (UNCRC, 1989).

There was one parent from indulgent parenting background whose child would come to school loaded with all sorts of playing material with or without the parents' knowledge and approval. The parents also bought books, pencils, crayons and colors in the dozens and brought them to the teacher for safe custody just in case the son happened to forget any of the items at home. And he did forget quite often and lost many of them and kept bothering the teachers for the spare items, severally interrupting the learning activities. Many a times, the parents came to enquire about the lost items and search through the 'lost items box'. The problem however did not lie with the school as this boy had not developed the life skills needed and that are key in the life of an individual both at home and school. Papalia (1999) comments about indulgent parents and says that they tend to consider themselves resources not models. Their parent-child interaction is not positive and cannot therefore facilitate effective learning. Although the parents were warm toward their only son, their parental responsiveness was not toward the child's need and praise for good behavior but was driven by a strong desire to make him happy at any cost. Although they expressed positive emotions toward and around the child, they failed in helping him to build

independence, self control, assertiveness, self discipline and other life skills that are important for life (Cobb, 2001).

The interview schedule with the parent showed that this boy was an only surviving child of the parents, the twin brother having died shortly after birth and hence the kind of attention and treatment he was getting from his parents. However, the parents although loving, were not supportive in a positive manner and were rather uninvolved in their child's learning activities. Documentary analyses forms revealed that this child's books were inconsistently signed with no comments at all. Observations showed that this boy never missed out on any class trip. In fact, from the available records, he was the first child to pay for the animal orphanage trip that had been organized by the school. Evidently, from class performance mark lists, this boy scored very low marks. As a matter of fact, he was the last in the initial test and second from last in the end of session test. As Maccoby and Martin (1983) suggest, parental involvement is a characteristic which must focus on the amount of time parents will spend in interaction with their child and how much their attitudes are child centered. A child's positive characteristics such as being confident, socially healthy, friendly, having good language skills, listening to instructions and all others, are all inculcated within the family environment. As Landry *et al.*, (2001) argue, what parents do with, and for their children are key in the latter's present and future life. Cobb (2001) shares her views on parent-child interaction by asserting that children value what parents do with them more than what they do for them.

4.5. Findings on Research Question Number 4: How do Milimani Preschool Children Whose Parents use Neglectful Parenting Style Perform in Class?

Table 4.5(a) shows the mean score analysis of children brought up under neglectful parenting style in initial test performance.

Table 4.5(a). The Percentage Mean Score Analyses of The Children Brought up Under the Neglectful Parenting Style in The Initial Test Performance.

Performance	Children	Activity area performance (%)			% Mean score
		Language	Maths	S. studies	
Above average	2	98	98	96	97.3
Average	3	75	81	78	78
Below average	5	40	45	40	41.6

From table 4.5(a), this parenting style had the highest number of children, 5, whose performance was below average. Their mean score was 41.6%. The average group was second in that order with 3 children whose mean score was 78%. The above average children were 2 having attained a mean score of 97.3%. Interviews with both parents and children revealed that children who were raised up under neglectful parenting background did not enjoy a cordial relationship with their parents. In behavior, these children were noted to be more aggressive than others. Evidently, they bullied those around them and reacted roughly to those around them as well as

showing some form of violence during play time. Their general appearance was also not impressive in terms of cleanliness and tidiness. Notable, one particular boy came to school every day without any snack or lunch and the sister in another class did the same. Surprisingly however, the boy was always above average in class performance but the sister was mostly last in her class. When asked about what their parents did for a living, they disclosed that their father worked in a leading supermarket while the mother ran a salon business. These parents had the means to provide for their children's needs at school but they acted on the contrary. They were therefore, simply neglectful. Maccoby and Martin (1983) argue that neglectful parents are seemingly rejecting, unresponsive and essentially uninvolved with their children and are more focused on their own needs and wishes.

Another behavior manifested by the children growing under this style was being irresponsible and having a tendency of taking other children's things. They would occasionally turn moody at the slightest provocation. Scrutiny of their class and homework books showed little or no evidence of parents checking their work. The books were not signed often, and neither were there any comments made in them. Monthly class meetings attendance records showed that many of the indulgent parents never attended any parents/teachers meetings. Actually on the last day of school, six (6) of them did not come in person to collect their children's folders or files where the child's term work is normally put. Instead, four (4) of them sent their neighboring close friends and the remaining two (2) sent their close relatives. The child's work includes drawn and colored pictures, models, potato prints, among others. Normally it is on this last day of the term when teachers discuss the child's class performance with the parents hence making it a very important opportunity that must not be missed out. Delegating this to a friend or a relative is far below the

expectations of a parent who is committed to helping his/her child to excel in life. In the views of Blanton (2005), the challenges of raising children who are intellectual performers should spur parents to desire to be more committed to do their best in raising children with all essentials they need both for learning and life after school. However, it all depends on how prepared and responsible the parents are as they bring up their children.

Children coming from neglectful parenting style environment may not be able to completely realize their potential. In Cobb's (2001) view, even in situations where high quality public child care is provided, the parents' contributions through their active involvement is paramount and cannot be replaced; and that positive and useful parenting characteristics can build desirable traits through interactive training. From this study, the results indicate that effective learning in early childhood takes place where the parenting style is positive and child-friendly. Going by the findings of the study, parenting styles therefore, may indeed influence learners' behavior and attitudes towards life and learning.

Another boy who was raised up under neglectful parenting style was found to be suffering from low self esteem most of the time. This was revealed from the way he behaved. He would be quiet while in class even when other children were involved in news telling, storytelling and singing. He was noted to be often moody and he did not participate in the ongoing learning activities willingly. Another observable character that he exhibited was that of being noncompliant and no matter how much pressure and coercion the teacher exerted, this child acted the same way and was therefore branded 'a naughty boy.' Interview with him revealed that the parents had failed to provide the much needed parental support which according to Dietrich (2006), is key for

effective learning during early childhood. This support can only be found in families where positive parenting style is practiced and as Cobb (2001) argues, parents' active involvement in the child's programs in and out of the home greatly increases the likelihood of the child's success in later life.

Documentary analyses of his class and home work books showed no comments or signature from his parents which implied they were never checked. It was also noted that he never used to do these assignments as expected. During a meeting with his parents, it was established from the discussion that both parents had little time for this child due to their socioeconomic status. The mother was the family's main bread winner while his father did manual jobs having lost his salaried employment. Both parents therefore, did not provide those positive and useful parental characteristics that can build desirable traits through parent-child interactive training (Landry, 1997).

The boy's parents took the advice given positively and undertook to change their manner of parenting for the sake of helping their son. It did not take long for the teachers to note a remarkable change in attitude in this boy toward his school work. Before the said meeting took place, this child had difficulties in reading alphabetical letters and sounds and could not recognize numbers. It only took him a week and he was able to do that quite well. This shows that parents have the primary responsibility for the training of their children to acquire desirable and acceptable characteristics for desirable growth and development (Kochanska, 1993) and as Baumrind (1989) suggests, good values and virtues are acquired during formative years through parent-child interactive training and that they impact strongly and positively in the future life of

the child. According to Kochanska and Baumrind therefore, cordial or positive parent-child relationship and the manner in which a child is raised significantly influences a child's learning capabilities.

Table 4.5(b) shows the mean score analysis of children brought up under neglectful parenting style in the end of session test performance.

Table 4.5(b). The Percentage Mean Score Analyses of the Children Brought up Under Neglectful Parenting style in The End of Session Test Performance.

Performance	Children	Activity area performance (%)			% Mean score
		Language	Maths	S. studies	
Above average	2	96	96	96	96
Average	3	88	84	76	82.6
Below average	5	46	48	48	47.3

From table 4.5(b), the performance was a replica of the initial test as the number of children in each level of performance was exactly the same as in the end of session test. There were 2 (two), 3 (three) and 5 (five) children in the above average, average and below average respectively although not the same children. The mean scores attained were however slightly different. In the above average group, the mean score was 96% while the mean score for average and below average was 82.6% and 47.3% respectively. Interviews with the parents and children showed that

parents who used neglectful parenting style were simply self-centered. In response to why they were unavailable, two parents responded that their busy schedules at their work places took all their time. But in Cobb (2001) view, raising children who are intellectual performers is one of the most challenging tasks of all time, more so for today's parents whose duties and responsibilities seem more complex than ever before. To this end, parents must provide constant guidance, direction and care to their children through responsive parenting, even when they are burdened by constant pressure from prevailing social economic problems (Bandura, 1977). Hetherington and Clingempeel (1992) comment about neglectful parents and note that they fail to monitor their children's activities, whereabouts or companions.

Interviews with parents revealed that ignorance on parenting styles made some of them to bring up their children the way they did. For instance, during a lower primary meeting between parents and teachers, the head teacher asked the researcher to briefly speak to the parents who included those of preschool children. After the speech, one parent who previously was "too busy for her son" embraced the importance of responsive parenting. Her change in attitude towards her young son bore fruit because the boy started improving in the way he handled his learning activities. His work became neater and by the time the end of session test was done, he had made remarkable progress in the way he engaged in ongoing class activities. Her actions fit well with the views of Bray and Hetherington (1993), when they argue that children generally perform better in life and in school and have fewer emotional and behavioral problems when they spend their early childhood in a family atmosphere where parents are loving, supportive and enjoy being with their children. In this regard, parents have a responsibility to bring up their children in a positive way (Cobb, 2001).

A boy who was brought up under neglectful parenting style did not manifest the moody characteristics common with children under this parenting background but had the habit of taking other children's things and being noncompliant to teachers' instructions. It was also noticed that he was always on the defensive even when he was on the wrong. From the interview schedule held with him, he was found to have been brought up in a single parent set up where the mother was 'too busy' looking for the family's provision. Maccoby and Martin (1983) suggest that neglectful parents can do whatever is necessary to minimize the costs in time and effort of interaction with their children and thus, they are seemingly unresponsive and uninvolved with them. Scrutiny of his class and homework books revealed that no one was keen to check on his work save for the teachers. His work was untidy although at the time of this study, he could read letters and sounds, count numbers and write them down notwithstanding his bad handwriting. Scrutiny of his class work showed he was a bright boy who could have excelled much more in performance had he been raised up in a family where values and attitudes that foster the child's quest for learning are instilled through parent-child interactive involvement (Baumrind, 1989).

Evidently, children from the neglectful parenting background generally came to school poorly dressed more often than those from authoritarian, indulgent and democratic parenting style. Their clothes were rather untidy and stained and at times, mismatched. For instance, there were two boys whose socks would be different as one sock would be older or cleaner than the other. Notably, these children's books were not properly covered with either a brown sugar paper or a plain white paper as required by the school. Observation showed that most neglectful parents covered their children's books with newspaper materials. Also notably, these children sought

attention from the teachers more often than children from democratic parenting backgrounds. They had a habit of reporting even the very minor incidences to the teachers which to some extent was becoming disruptive. One particular girl would go as far as telling the teacher that a friend had 'begged' for food from her in the middle of an activity.

Another tendency showed by children from neglectful parenting background was carrying packed lunch that was poorly prepared. Although it is a common practice for children from low social economic status to carry the last night leftovers, the quality and quantity may be slightly different from family to family. More often than not, they never used to eat it especially if by lunch time it had changed flavor and color. Thus, the children would empty the food into bins and stay hungry or share with those willing friends whose food looked and tasted more appealing. According to the views of Hurlock (2003), the methods which parents choose to use in bringing up their children depends partly on their personal experiences and attitudes. Liew (2003) adds to that by suggesting that parenting depends more on how well informed the parents are, how prepared they are for this task of parenting and their readiness to take up parental responsibilities that go with that role. The characteristics described in this study portray this kind of parenting as that which is indifferent and neglectful therefore, parents who use it to bring up their children are more focused on their own needs rather than those of their children (Maccoby and Martin, 1983).

4.6. Findings on Research Question Number 5: What are The Differences in Class Performance of Milimani Preschool Children From the Four Different Parenting Styles; Democratic, Authoritarian, Indulgent and Neglectful?

This question sought to establish whether or not the parenting styles employed had impact on a child's academic performance. This was necessary because each parenting style has characteristics that are different and unique and these characteristics affect children differently psychologically, physically and psychosocially. Baumrind (1991) suggests that each style reflects naturally occurring patterns of parental values, practices and behaviors which in turn influences the child's acquired behaviors, character and attitudes.

Table 4.6(a) shows the mean score analysis of the initial test results of children from the four parenting styles.

Table 4.6(a). The Percentage Mean Score Analysis of The Initial Test Results of Children From The Four Parenting Backgrounds.

Parenting style	Performance	Children	Activity area performance (%)			% Mean score
			Language	Maths	S. studies	
Democratic	Ab. Average	8	96	96	96	96
	Average	2	88	84	76	82.6
	B. Average	2	46	48	48	47.3
Authoritarian	Ab. Average	2	96	96	96	96
	Average	3	80	88	74	86
	B. Average	-	-	-	-	-
Indulgent	Ab. Average	-	-	-	-	-
	Average	8	76	84	72	77.3
	B. Average	4	40	48	46	45
Neglectful	Ab. Average	2	98	98	96	97.3
	Average	3	75	81	78	78
	B. Average	5	40	45	40	41.6

From Table 4.6(a) overleaf, the highest number of children, the 8 (eight) who were above average came from democratic parenting style background. Their mean score was 96%. Indulgent parenting style did not have any child in the above average group. Authoritarian and neglectful parenting styles tied at 2 children in the category of above average performance with mean score of 96% and 97.3% respectively. There were no children in above average group coming from indulgent parenting style background.

In average performance category, indulgent parenting style background had 8 children with 77.3% as their mean score registering the highest number in this category. Authoritarian and neglectful parenting came second in the category of average performance having tied at 3 children. Their mean scores were 86% and 78% respectively. The least number of children in this group were from democratic background which had 2 children with a mean score of 82.6%.

In below average performance, neglectful parenting style had the highest number, 5 children with a mean score of 41.6%. This was followed by indulgent parenting with 4 children with a mean score of 45%. Democratic parenting had 2 children in the below average grouping with a mean score of 47.3%, while the authoritarian style had no child in this category.

From these results in Table 4.6(a), it is evidently clear that parenting is a complex activity and in Darling (1999) views, it includes many specific characteristics that work individually and together to influence children's academic outcomes. Day to day interactions with children from different parenting styles as they engaged in ongoing learning activities in the classroom and outdoor showed that indeed their parenting styles backgrounds had influenced their behavior and

attitude towards life and learning. Children's actions and reactions in the manner in which they related with others in the classroom were reflective of their upbringing background (Baumrind 1991).

Table 4.6(b) shows the percentage analyses of the results of the end of session test for children from the four parenting backgrounds.

Table 4.6(b). The Percentage Mean Score Analyses of The End of Session Test Results for Children Brought up Under The Four Parenting Style Backgrounds.

Parenting style	Performance	Children	Activity area performance (%)			% Mean score
			Language	Maths	S.studies	
Democratic	Ab. Average	8	95	98	98	97
	Average	1	85	80	75	80
	B. Average	0	-	-	-	-
Authoritarian	Ab. Average	3	95	95	96	95.5
	Average	2	78	82	72	77
	B. Average	-	-	-	-	-
Indulgent	Ab. Average	2	96	95	96	95.6
	Average	9	76	84	72	77.3
	B. Average	1	49	48	50	49
neglectful	Ab. Average	2	96	96	96	96
	Average	3	88	84	76	82.6
	B. Average	5	64	48	48	47.3

From Table 4.6(b), democratic parenting background led by producing 8 children who attained above average performance; once again with the highest number in that group just as it was in the initial test. Their mean score was 97%. Indulgent parenting style came second with four (4) children with a mean score of 95.6%. Authoritarian was third with three (3) children and a mean score of 95.5%, while neglectful managed to have two children in that category with a mean score of 96%.

In average performance, the indulgent parenting style background had the highest number of children, 9 attaining a mean score of 77.3%. It is important to note that the same parenting style produced the highest number, 8 children in the same category in the initial test. This was followed by the authoritarian and neglectful parenting, having tied at 3 children in that category with a mean score of 77% and 82.6% respectively. The least number of average performers came from democratic parenting background with 1 child who had a mean score of 80%.

In below average performance, neglectful parenting again took the lead with five children attaining a mean score of 47.3%. It was followed by indulgent parenting style where 1 child attained a mean score of 49%. In this end of session test exercise, there were no children from democratic and authoritarian parenting styles who were below average.

From the results shown on tables 4.6(a) and 4.6(b) of initial and end of session tests, it is evident that children's acquisition of cognitive skills may be facilitated by their interaction with parents as they grow up (Landry, Smith and Swank, 2006). It is therefore not surprising that democratic parenting style has the best performance since it registered the highest number of children who

attained the highest mean score in both initial and end of session tests at 96% and 97% respectively. The indulgent parenting style had the highest number of the children who are average as it recorded the highest number of children in both initial and end of session tests, with a mean score tied at 77.3%. The neglectful style had the most below average children in both initial and end of session tests, with a mean score of 41.6% and 47.3% respectively. In authoritarian background, there were no cases of children who were below average in performance. However, their numbers in above average and average groups were neither too high nor too low but their mean scores were good at 96% and 95.5% respectively for the above average in the 2 tests and 86% and 77% respectively for the average in the 2 tests.

These results indicate that parental involvement in the preschool children's learning activities is most crucial and, that parent's support spurs children towards good performance as noted in Liew (2003) views. From the questionnaire and interview schedules with those parents who visited the school on their own initiative and whenever called upon by the teachers for consultation were of the opinion that children work harder and better when they are aware of parental involvement in their class activities. Not all those who came were warm towards their children. Some parents visited the school to find out whether their children were completing their tasks (Teachers' visitor's book). Some 2 parents also came to see the teachers because of bad reports they had been given about their children's bad conduct in the school. In an effort to find out why some parents never visited the school, their children gave various reasons like parents being too busy, one child was noted to have been orphaned during post election violence, while three other orphans were being taken care of in a children's home called ' *Watoto wetu* ('

our children)'. These conditions were beyond the children's control and the guardians were never available to explain why they never came to school.

The degree of parental involvement was in terms of how much support the teachers got from the parents as they taught and helped the preschoolers. Teachers indicated that the level of parental involvement was not adequate. Teachers' expectations were that parents must always avail themselves for consultation whenever they were called upon. In addition to that, they were required to participate in daily learning activities of their children through monitoring their progress. From observations it was noted that those children who enjoyed responsive parenting developed intellectual and social skills that are needed for faster success in school (Cobb 2001). This implies that parents are like custodians of desirable behaviors, character and attitudes of their children which influence their manner of participation of learning activities. These eventually impact positively or negatively on their level of performance in school (Hart, Ladd and Burleson, 1990).

4.7. Differences in Class Performance of Milimani Preschool Children from the Four Different Parenting Styles; Democratic, Authoritarian, Indulgent and Neglectful.

4.7.1. Democratic Parenting Style

The study identifies the democratic parenting style as the most effective way of raising children who are intellectually skilled. It yielded the largest number of preschoolers who attained above average performance, 8 children in both initial and end of session tests. At the same time, it recorded the least number of average performers, 2 children and 1 child in the first and last tests respectively as well as least number of children who performed poorly, 2 children and none in

the initial and end of session tests respectively. What makes it superior to other parenting styles is that it is child-friendly, chiefly because a parent who uses this style engages two important parent-child interaction dimensions, namely warmth and parental involvement, which are child-centered in nature (Maccoby and Martin, 1983).

A parent who is warm listens and responds to a child's needs, praises that child for good work and behavior, expresses positive emotions towards the child and around the child among other things (Landry, 1997). This parental responsiveness is sensitive and supportive to the child. Likewise, in the views of Baumrind (1989), parental involvement is about the amount of time a parent spends in interaction with the child. This democratic parent is available and participates in the child's learning activities. Therefore these two dimensions are very key as they show the degree to which parents' attitudes are child-centered (Maccoby and Martin, 1983). Democratic parenting style therefore creates most stimulation to learn and this explains why most top performers were children who were raised in families who used it. In addition to that, democratic parenting style provides the cornerstones for building independence, self-control, assertiveness, self discipline among many other life skills in children by their parents (Papalia, 1999). A child who has been raised in such a family is morally upright and thus, the family may have provided a strong foundation for that child to develop cognitive skills. This could be one reason why children with democratic parenting style backgrounds were better in academic performance (Maccoby and Martin, 1983).

4.7.2. Authoritarian Parenting Style

The results also show that the authoritarian parenting style had children in the above average and average groups, and, none in the below average in the two tests. In the above average, there were 2 and 3 children in the initial and end of session tests respectively and 3 (three) and 2 (two) children in the average groups in both the initial and end of session tests respectively. No child from this parenting background was in below average performance in both tests. Children who are raised in families where this style is used grow up under a lot of parents' control mechanisms (Baumrind, 1991). Notably from their characteristics, authoritarian parents are also highly demanding and directive towards their children; therefore they are the decision makers. This authoritarian style cuts off means of parent – child interaction where children could express their needs to the parents. Under authoritarian parenting style, children live and work under fear of their parents, so they cannot share their problems and challenges. They must do what parents demand of them. These conditions breed fear and anxiety which work against children's academic performance (Baumrind, 1991).

One possible reason for not performing very well is that children growing under this parenting style lack parents' support in their learning activities and life in general (Cobb, 2001). Instead of enhancing children's holistic development parents demand to see in them only those qualities they desire without caring what these children like or not. Since it lacks in supportive parent-child interaction, it creates little or no stimulation to perform well (Iannelli, 2001). Children do not experience any warmth and parental involvement, therefore a state of unfulfilled psychological need is created in their lives and as Papalia (1999) suggests, this need can only be met through cordial parent – child interaction dimensions namely, warmth and involvement.

Whenever these are applied, children are encouraged to work harder in their studies, hence show improved results.

4.7.3. Indulgent Parenting Style

The analysis indicates that the indulgent background had no children in the above average in the initial test and 2 (two) in end of session tests. It had the most average performing children, 8 (eight) and 9 (nine) children in the initial and end of session testing respectively, and in below average it had 4 (four) and 1 (one) child in the initial and end of session tests respectively. Factors leading to this outcome could only be traced back to the strengths and weakness of this parenting style (Kochanska, 1993; Baumrind, 1989). It shares some similarities with the democratic style but at the same time leaves a lot of loopholes. While it has warmth and nurturance, it offers little supervision or none at all to the children. It allows free expression but yields to coercion and whining (Iannelli, 2001). Indulgent parents consider themselves more as resources and not models as noted by Papalia *et al.*, (1999).

Though parents are more responsive than demanding, they ignore or accept bad behavior and their manner of disciplining is inconsistent and they exercise leniency when dealing with their children's misbehavior or misconduct (Baumrind, 1991). When young children are left without sound guidelines and direction, they tend to work on assigned tasks as they please. This attitude extends to school and class activities. Since in this style there is no consistent enforcement of rules, the children may take their studies lightly and develop a "don't care" attitude. This does not enhance self-discipline, self control or self reliance. On the contrary, it creates very little learning stimulation. Therefore most children could be average performers because there is inadequate parental support to push them up or encourage them to work harder beyond their

comfort. Parents who are indulgent may not be available to exert any pressure on their children to put extra effort in their studies (Baumrind, 1991).

4.7.4. Neglectful Parenting Style

Results obtained from the analysis show that most children who were below average came from neglectful parenting style background, 5 children in both initial and end of session tests respectively. The number of above average were 2 in both pre and post tests, and in the average group there were 3 children in both pre and post tests. This could only be explained by closely examining their characteristics which have same impacts on the preschoolers. Children who are brought up in families where this style is practiced experience little warmth, nurturance or supervision (Baumrind, 1991). It is like children bring themselves up. Parents are low in demandingness and responsiveness due to their self-centeredness. These conditions cannot foster better results. Only a child who is intellectually gifted can perform well, with the help of the teacher (Baumrind, 1991). This style therefore encourages children to work when they feel like and the way they want to. Even in classroom situations, the same happened; the results were low in academic performance because children lacked parental support in their endeavors. Children brought up under neglectful parenting style miss out early stimulation to learn and there is no way for good character building which take place through parent-child, interaction. This style does not provide for parent role model (Baumrind, 1991). It therefore does not provide for modeled behavior, or opportunities for children to listen and take instructions through parent – child interaction (Bandura, 1977). These preceding factors explain why children raised up under this parenting style performed the way they did.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .

5.1 Summary

The study focused on the four parenting styles; democratic, authoritarian, indulgent and neglectful, with a need to establish their impact on academic performance of preschool children of Milimani primary school, Nairobi province, Kenya. Considering that each parenting style has unique characteristics, children who have been brought up under their influence manifest behaviors, characters and attitudes that are also unique. These are acquired during child upbringing. When children come to school from these parenting style backgrounds, they are impacted differently psychologically, physiologically and psychosocially and therefore handle classroom tasks differently. This study therefore, sought to establish whether there is any relationship between these characteristics of parenting styles and the preschoolers' academic performance.

For this study, Milimani preschool was purposefully sampled mainly because of its geographical location. This is a key factor as it attracts children from all social-economic backgrounds. There are children in this preschool who come from families living in the affluent neighborhood of Kilimani/ Milimani, the middle class from Jamuhuri estate and Racecourse along Ngong Road and the low social-economic class from the informal settlement areas of Kibera and Kawangware. The preschool children, their parents and teachers were the study participants whose responses

provided the necessary data whose analysis established the impact of the four parenting styles on the academic performance of the preschoolers. The study's instruments were carefully selected and after their validity and reliability was ascertained, they were put into use. These were the questionnaire for the preschool teachers, the personal participatory module by the researcher, interview schedules for preschool children and for their parents and the documentary analysis form for the purpose of scrutinizing the children's class and homework books. The findings were interpreted using various aspects and characteristics of the four parenting styles and were then used to classify children into their respective parenting backgrounds. Their individual performance was finally worked out in terms of percentage mean scores to show the children in above average, average and below average categories in all the four parenting styles.

Responses from the questionnaire provided data on parental involvement and children's performance. The personal participatory module provided for opportunity for interaction and involvement of children and parents in interview schedules and for observation of day to day activities and experiences of the respondents by the researcher. During this time, the preschool children did two tests; an initial test and an end of session test whose percentage mean scores were calculated and used to show children's performance in reference to their parenting style backgrounds. At the same time, scrutiny of the children's books was done to find out how often parents signed and made comments in them about their children's school work. Parents were to do that voluntarily without any influence from the teachers. The study's analysis showed that children who enjoy a democratic parenting background have a higher chance of better performance whereas those children whose parents are uninvolved generally perform poorly. The indulgent parents bring up more average performing preschoolers than other groups of parents.

Authoritarian parents' children were in above average and average categories with no children in the below average category. In this group, parents put demands on their children and expect all of them to be met. The fear of the parents' actions towards them in the event of failure drives them to work hard.

Results from the two tests show a similarity in the categories of children's performance with regards to their parenting styles backgrounds. For instance, the numbers of those in above average, average and below average categories per parenting style in the initial test, did not change much in the end-of-session test. Those children whose parents adopted democratic style of raising them up were more in the above average performance in both tests. The indulgent parents had the highest number of children who were average in both initial and end of session tests. The authoritarian parents who are highly demanding put conditions and set standards for children to work hard, and therefore, their children were in the above average and average categories, with none in the below average in both tests. The indulgent parents had more average performing children while the neglectful parents seem to have the least children who performed well and had majority of those who performed poorly in both tests. These results imply that parenting styles can indeed influence learners' behavior and attitude towards learning. Where positive styles are applied, parents' warmth, involvement and responsiveness can develop early stimulation in their young children to learn (Cobb, 2001).

Close scrutiny of the characteristics of the four parenting styles shows that the democratic and indulgent parenting styles share some of them in common. For instance, parents who adopt either of them show a lot of warmth and nurturance towards their children. In addition to that,

they are responsive than demanding and encourage free expression of impulses and desires. This is in contrast to authoritarian parenting style whereby parents are highly demanding and directive but not responsive. They also lack in warmth and positive involvement. This authoritarian parenting style is also full of control mechanism. Likewise neglectful or uninvolved parenting style has very little warmth, nurturing and responsiveness. Children bring themselves up as parents pursue self gratification at the expense of their children's welfare. They are not available to provide stimulative conditions to learn (Baumrind, 1989). This outcome implies that indeed children's behavior, attitude and character in the classroom may have been influenced by their parenting styles backgrounds within the home environment. These styles indicate the type of cognitive, physical and psychological support a child gets from the parents.

Styles that involve parents' participation in their children's learning activities in one way or another have yielded better performance than those on the contrary (Landry *et al.*, 1997). In addition to that, the results imply that children's acquisition of learning abilities may have been facilitated by parent-child interaction dimensions during childrearing process at home. Evidently parenting styles influence children's behaviors, characters and attitudes differently and undoubtedly impact the way these children perform in class and life generally. Parenting herefore depends on how well informed, prepared and responsible the parents are (Liew, 2003).

Parenting is a complex activity that includes many characteristics and these work individually and collectively to influence a child's personality. In other words, parenting styles may determine the behavioral tendencies, social development and character of a child. These are important components of learning because they determine how a child copes with learning tasks

as well as how he/she relates with others (Blanton, 2005). This then, may offer an explanation as to why the children from the four parenting styles backgrounds attained different percentage mean scores in both initial and end of session tests. The fact that the preschoolers were taught by the same qualified teachers who used same teaching and learning resources and were put under the same learning environment notwithstanding, their different percentage mean scores could only have been influenced by the parenting style backgrounds which vary from one household to another. There are other variables that could have played a part, but the results show that one parenting style background had the highest number of children whose performance was above average in both the initial and end-of –session tests.

The results of the study show that a child’s ability to handle learning tasks well may be an outcome of a strong foundation laid down by parents at home through warm, supportive and responsive parent-child interaction. The results also indicate that there is no substitute for parental involvement when it comes to children’s academic excellence. For instance, even when the teachers provided all the services and support to all the children indiscriminately, the differences in performance were still noted. It is only through cordial parent-child interactive relationship that a child can get trained to develop positive attitude towards learning activities (Maccoby and Martin, 1983; Landry *et al.*, 2006).

5.2 Conclusions

The study purposed to highlight the impact of parenting styles on preschool children’s academic performance. The findings show that the percentage mean scores of children whose families used child –centered and child-friendly parenting styles were higher than those children whose

parenting style backgrounds were seemingly demanding, uninvolved and full of control mechanism. As parental involvement, support, and responsiveness decreased and changed according to particular parenting styles, so did the performance drop from bad to worse. For instance, it was noted that democratic parenting style which has a lot of warmth and responsiveness towards the child registered the highest number of above average children in both tests.

Indulgent parenting style which has the characteristics of warmth and responsiveness but lacks in providing guidance and direction came second in terms of the number of children who did fairly well as it registered the highest number in average performance. The third group was the authoritarian which lacks in both warmth and responsiveness but is highly demanding and full of control mechanisms. In this style, parents are available but not warm towards their children. The children therefore, work under fear and this together with other characteristics may influence their performance. They made it to above average and average levels. No children from this group were in below average. The neglectful parenting had only two (2) children who were above average but had the highest number of those who were below average in performance. Children brought up by neglectful parents are on their own. Parents are simply self-centered are not available to provide any stimulation to learn and do not participate in the children's learning activities. They provide little or no parental support towards their children's lives both at home and in school.

Parents/guardians can make a contribution towards their children's success in school through early training and stimulation that come out of a positive parent-child interaction. Through such

an interaction, children are well prepared physically; intellectually and psychosocially to handle tasks and face life both in and outside school life. Although teachers use various strategies and approaches to enable children to learn, they cannot substitute parental love, support, responsiveness and involvement (Cobb, 2001). Children learn through observation and imitation of modeled behavior and listening to instructions from the parents or caregivers (Bandura, 1977). The kind of environment at home, both physical and psychological are key as they determine the behavioral characteristics and attitudes of a child and in views expressed by Cobb (2001), they greatly influence either negatively or positively how a child is able to cope with learning activities away from home.

5.3 Recommendations

From interview schedules with the parents and other subsequent discussions held with a number of them in the course of the study, it was noted that parents bring up their children the way they do because they are ignorant about the impact of the four parenting styles on their children's success in life both at home and school. For instance, there are those authoritarian parents who feel that control and strictness is a form of exercise of power over their children, and, a means to nurturing and providing direction to the children. To such parents, the warmth and involvement dimension are viewed as a way of '*spoiling*' the children and denying them a chance to 'mature' quickly. Such parents tend to exert parental control whereby they 'train' their children to meet their expectations through enforcement of rules. In addition to that, it was found through interview schedules with the parents that their choices of parent-child interaction styles depend on how they were themselves parented and instructed.

The great challenge therefore, is how to eliminate this kind of mentality and empower every parent so that all the children in preschools may have the privilege of enjoying a supportive, loving and responsive parent-child interactive relationship for a better life and improved performance in school. There is therefore, a great need to educate the parents and other caregivers on this important matter. This requires the participation of the Government through related ministries that are concerned with the welfare of the children. The study therefore recommends the following, all of which contain parenting styles and children's academic performance implications:-

1. Parents to be enlightened on qualities of good parenting styles as a matter of national importance. The Ministry of Education to spearhead this through sponsored workshops countrywide at selected centers to create awareness and sensitize the parents on the impact of the parenting styles they employ at home as they bring up their children. There is a need therefore, to highlight those characteristics that stimulate learning in their children, those that enhance their initiatives to learn, to relate well with others and to take responsibilities among other things.
2. Better training of ECDE teachers to enable them detect those children under a particular parenting style that impedes their performance in school. The training will also equip the teachers to intervene in such a way that will help both the parent and the child to improve on the existent parent-child relationship and academic performance for success in life respectively.

3. Inclusion of parenting styles and family life in the curriculum for the training of nurses and other health professionals who handle mothers and babies during pre- and post-natal periods. The contents should be expounded to the extent of passing on this value to mothers, on how to develop the desired parenting system that brings out optimal success in life and academic performance of the children.

5.4 Recommendations for further research

A further research should be carried out on:

1. The impact of the sensitization programs carried out by the Ministry of Education and that of Public Health on the implications of parenting styles on child growth and development.
2. Relationship between careers like teaching, medical personnel, philosophers, administrators, politicians and engineers, and parenting styles background.
3. Impact of parenting styles on older children (8-9 years) who can handle more complex tasks.

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APPENDIX I: SAMPLE SCHEMES OF WORK FOR PRE-UNIT (5 YEARS)

1. LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES

WEEK	LESSON	TOPIC Sub topic	OBJECTIVES	LEARNING ACTIVITIES	LEARNING RESOURCES AND REFERENCES	REMARKS
1	1	LETTERS AND SOUNDS Oral practice	At the end of the lesson, the child should be able to:- • Describe the family members and their roles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussing • Drawing • Colouring • Question and answer. • Demonstration • Role play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Republic of Kenya (2008) Handbook for ECDE Syllabus pg.35- • Republic of Kenya (1990) Management and Language Activity bk.1 • Pictures • Diagrams • Story books. 	
	2	Reading	• Learn letter names and sounds.			
	3	Writing	• Pattern writing using letters.			
	4	Drawing	• Draw and colour mother and father.			
	5	Story telling	• Listen to a story about families.			
			<u>2. MATHEMATICS ACTIVITIES</u>			
2	1	NUMBERS Counting	At the end of the lesson, the child should be able to:- • Count the members of the family and write their numbers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matching • Drawing • Discussing • Grouping • Demonstration • Colouring • Observation • Questions and answer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • K.I.E. (2008) Handbook for ECDE syllabus pg.44 • K.I.E. (2008) Mathematics and Environment Activity bk.3 • Realia • Charts • Flash cards • Diagrams 	
	2	Matching	• Match numbers with members of the family.			
	3	Model	• Model the number of family members.			
	4	Drawing	• Draw and match numbers with family members.			
	5	Grouping	• Group and count members of the family.			

3. SOCIAL STUDIES						
3	1 2	FAMILY Family members	<p>At the end of the lesson, the child should be able to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify people living at home. • Listen to stories about people living at home. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussing • Singing • Observation • Answering questions. • Role play • Demonstration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • K.I.E. (2008) Handbook for ECDE syllabus pg.78 • K.I.E. (2008) Mathematics and Environment Activity bk.3 • Story books • Pictures • Diagrams 	

APPENDIX III
Structured interview schedule for parents

Instructions:

ALL your responses will be treated confidentially.

Parent:

1. Relationship with the child:
2. Occupation: _____ Employer: _____
3. Religion:
4. How many do you have?
5. What is the birth order of your pre-school child?
6. What time do you leave home in the morning?
7. What time do you get back home?
8. Who prepares the child for school?
9. Who picks the child from school?
10. Does the child come with homework every day?
11. How does the child behave while doing his/ her homework?
12. Who checks the child's homework?
13. Does the child seek any help from you while doing the homework?
14. State briefly the qualities you would like to develop in your child:
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)
 - d)
15. State briefly how you instil these qualities in your child:
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)
 - d)
16. How much time do you give to the child's time?
17. What do you do with the child during your free time?
18. What does your child talk to you about?
19. What do you generally tell your child?

APPENDIX IV
Interview schedule for children

Instructions:

ALL your responses will be treated confidentially.

Child:

Sex: Male Female.

1. Date of birth: / / (dd/mm/yy).
2. Tell me who prepares you for school every morning:
3. Tell me who takes you to school and who picks you from school:
Takes me:
Picks me:
4. You are given homework by the teacher. Tell me the person who helps you do it at home:
5. Who sits with you at the table while you are doing your homework:
6. Who comes to see the teacher when your parents are called?
7. When you have a secret, whom do you tell first?
8. Mum and Dad love you. Are they your best friends?
9. You love Mum and Dad, tell me how they treat you when you disobey them:
10. How many story books do you have at home?
11. Who reads the story books with you?
12. What do you do during your free time?
13. What do you do with your parents?
14. What would you like to do with your parents?

APPENDIX V
Documentary analysis form

1. Child:
2. Parent:

3. Relationship with the child

Mother
Father
Any other specify.

4. Number of times the child's homework has been checked and signed by the parent per week:
5. How many times has the parent visited the school to check on the child's class progress with the teacher?
6. How many times has the parent made comments on the child's homework book?