

Impact of parental involvement in Sunday school ministry on spiritual formation of teenagers.

A case of Africa Inland Church Kapropita District

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Abstract-

The study sought to determine the extent of parental involvement in Sunday school ministry impact on the spiritual formation of teenagers in Africa inland church Kapropita district church council. The target population was 349 participants. The study used mixed methods with a sample size of 181 using Yaro Yamane formulae. The researcher used simple random sampling to obtain participants who filled the questionnaires, and focus group to complement quantitative research methods. The analysis was conducted using (SPSS) version 23 and QDA miner lite version 2.0 8.

The findings indicated a strong relationship between parental involvement in Sunday school ministry and the spiritual formation of the Teenagers. There is a need for the parents to enhance how they instill discipline, prayer, and impact knowledge onto their teenagers as well as the financial support as the majority believes that they don't have to offer voluntary financial support to their children.

Index Terms- Parental Involvement, Sunday school Ministry and Spiritual formation.

I. INTRODUCTION

Sunday School is the ground where Christian moral values are communicated to the children especially when the ministry is effective. However, spiritual guides and mentors come alongside them in their journey of spiritual formation(Chiroma, 2015, p. 72).Wisdom from the book of proverbs strongly states that "train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not turn from it" (Proverbs 22:6). Teenagers are challenged to develop critical thinking and analytical skills as they grow up, and effective Sunday school ministry needs to re-shape their new relationship with Jesus and continue talking about how the relationship is transformational in its very essence. As a result, they continued celebrating how that faith had driven and focused their whole rounded spiritual growth.

Sunday schools in A.I.C Kenya are conducted for children and young people aged between 3 years and 21 years. The Bible teachings given are intended to train the current generation for Christ. It is also supposed to be conducted in different ways for different age groups. Children are supposed to be grouped according to their ages and taught by trained teachers who understand their feelings and interests (Mumo, 2013). Many families, institutions, and churches," have realized the fruitful impact of effective Sunday school training" (Brewster, 2015). In Kapropita D.C.C, some teenagers from Christian families have exhibited negative lifestyles such as stealing, use of illicit drugs, lying, killing, teenage pregnancies, and dropping out of school.

In Kapropita District Church, most of the teenagers both boys and girls rarely attend church services. Pastor Francis Chesire (personal communication, December 5, 2019) comments that" in almost every Sunday school in Kapropita D.C.C, the population is going down when children reach teenage years". He continues to say that" many don't show interest in the church and its involvement" which raises a concern about what makes them draw from the church activities.

II. THEORETICAL REVIEW

One theory that heavily influenced this study is the faith development theory. This theory was developed by James Fowler (Andrade, 2014). Fowler's theory states that" individuals grow spiritually in stages"(Andrade, 2014). Fowler's faith development theory is applied to this study especially in stages three and four where it talks about children showing interest in learning new things and as a result developing a personal identity. And stage four enables one to gain understanding, Stage 3 – "Synthetic-Conventional" Faith (Ages 12 to Adult) and Stage 4 – "Individuate-Reflective Faith" (Ages Mid-Twenties to Late Thirties. Teenagers need to be introduced to this friend who is closer than a brother which results in an understanding of deeper Christian truths.

2.1 Literature Review

2.1.1 Parental Involvement

Parenting is the process of promoting and supporting the

physical, emotional, social, and intellectual development of a child from infancy to adulthood. Parenting refers to the intricacies of raising a child aside from the biological relationship" (Brooks 2013, 45). The quality of parents' and children's relationships is one of the most powerful factors in child growth and development. Early experiences influence the later development of children. The findings according to Lara and Saracostti (2019, p. 1). "Show that there are differences in children's academic achievement between the parental involvement profiles, indicating children whose parents have a low involvement have lower academic achievement". The involvement of parents and church in Sunday school ministry can help the teenagers become young people who are emotionally and spiritually mature for their age.

Parents need to recognize that God has called them to be His agents. Parents must," guide their children to understand life, themselves, and their needs from a biblical perspective" (Deut. 6:6-7) (Tripp, 1995). Not only to live it for the Sunday school teachers to do it.

Stewart attests to the fact that " Children who are fortunate enough to grow up in a family where Christ is known, loved, and served came to know about God through their parents, even before they are old enough to fully understand all the beliefs their parents hold" (Stewart, 2013). This is true because family life offers an excellent opportunity for teaching, especially Christian education. Taking children to Sunday school and Church services is necessary although the trust and love which a Christ-centered family displays towards God provide a natural setting for spiritual learning.

An effective mentor is a good role model who can strengthen the learning experience by being approachable, planning a variety of different learning experiences, and maximizing learning opportunities" (Brooker et al. 2007, 113). A good role model is always positive, calm, and confident in themselves. Role models demonstrate their commitment to the desired goal and are willing to invest the necessary time and effort to achieve success.

Follow-up programs such efforts, "show teenage participants that an adult cares and is not satisfied with just focusing on program time and activities" (Delgado 2012, 140). Teaching teenagers can be beneficial to both children and their parents. As a parent gets to understand the areas he or she needs to concentrate on. As the subject matter taught, all of them shared the following common characteristics.

Moral support, "parental supportive or emotional relationship between parent and offspring directly affects the socialization of the children" (Kumar 2019, 188). Moral support is a manner of showing support for a person, a cause, or one side in a conflict without contributing anything other than the emotional or psychological worth of the support. The parental financial situation" can adversely influence child care both in terms of the basic provisions available and the very quality of the parent-child relationship" (Whittaker & Garbarino 2009, 229).

2.1.2 Spiritual formation for teenagers

Willard defined spiritual formation as, "the spirit-driven process of forming the inner world of the human self in such a way that it becomes like the inner being of Christ himself"

(Willard 2002, 22). Further, "spiritual formation is a process in which one exhibits a change from spiritual infancy to spiritual maturity" (Moore, 2014). Moore stated spiritual formation is "a step-by-step process, through which a child is guided, encouraged, nurtured, admonished, and disciplined to embrace Christ as Savior and be a disciple to develop as a Christian through the work and power of the Holy Spirit" (Moore 2014, 258). Spiritual formation, "becomes a growth in Christian maturity or as psychological, moral, or character" (Doornenbal 2012, 232).

James 1:17 says, " every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows". Horan wrote, "Transformation occurs when life conflicts produce anxiety prompting one to scan for solutions with the assistance of the Holy, consciously or unconsciously" (Horan 2017, 61). The idea is, that "the individual begins to be a person who makes the right choices and does the right thing because the transformative power of the Spirit indwells in them" (Willard, 2022). The individual stands firm in his godly character, he is fixed and steadfast in godliness. In the first nine verses of Philippians 4, Paul tells us in verse 1 to, "Stand firm in the Lord." Paul wants his spiritual children to be mature. The Church needs to do all it takes to see that teenagers grow into maturity according to the processes that God has ordained that they grow to wholeness.

The Bible teaches that Samuel as a child grew in the knowledge of the Lord (1st Samuel 2:26). Jesus at age twelve grew in wisdom, stature, and favor with God and man (Luke 2:52).

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.

The target population of interest for the quantitative research method had 329 respondents and for qualitative research had 20 participants. The study used mixed methods and embedded design with quantitative as the main source of data, while qualitative data was supported. The samples were drawn on the quantitative research using Yaro Yamane formulae which lead to a sample size of 181 comprising of both male and female genders. The researcher used simple random sampling to obtain participants for quantitative. Data collection was done on selected participant's who filled the questionnaires, and there was a focus group to complement quantitative research methods. The analysis was conducted using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 23 for quantitative data and QDA miner lite version 2.08 for qualitative data. A descriptive analysis and inferential analysis were done using both qualitative and quantitative tools of analysis.

IV. RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.3.1 Parental follows-up

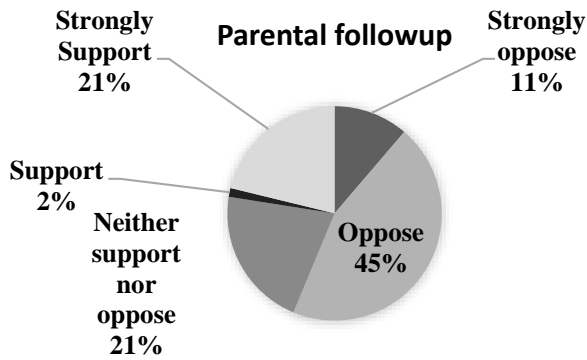
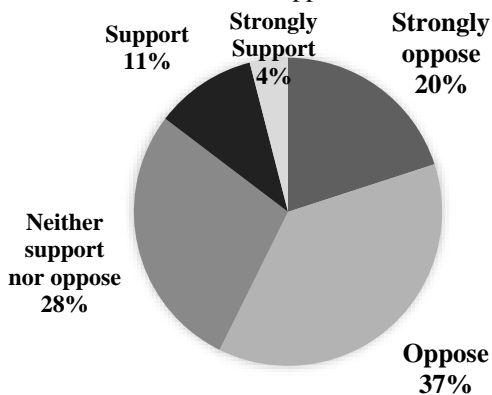


Figure 4.4 Parents take time to make follow-up program

The researcher was able to determine that most respondents opposed that parents take time to make follow-up programs with what is happening to their teenagers, Kapropita district church council. There were 17 respondents (11 percent) and 68 respondents (45 percent) who *Strongly opposed* and *opposed* respectively that Parents take time to make follow-up programs on what is happening to their teenagers at Kapropita district church council. Further, there were 32 respondents (21 percent) and 2 respondents (2 percent) who *Strongly supported* and *supported* respectively that parents take time to make follow-up programs on what is happening to their teenagers. Lastly, 4 respondents (2 percent) neither supported nor opposed that parents take time to make a follow-up on what is happening to their teenagers at Kapropita district church council.

4.3.2 Teens program financial support by parents.

Figure 4.6: Parental financial support



The finding from the study indicates that most respondents opposed that parents usually offer financial support to the programs undertaken by their children. Statistically, there were 54 respondents (30 percent) and 30 respondents (20 percent) who *Strongly opposed* and *opposed* respectively that parents usually offer financial support to the programs undertaken by their teenagers at Africa inland church Kapropita district church council. While 16 respondents (25 percent) and 6 respondents (4 percent) *strongly support* and *support* respectively that parents usually offer financial support to the programs undertaken by their children at Kapropita district church council. Lastly, 6 respondents (2 percent) neither supported nor opposed. Parents usually offer financial

support to the programs undertaken by their teenagers, at Africa inland church Kapropita district church council.

4.33 Hypothesis testing

Table 4.3: H02: There is no significant relationship between parental involvement in Sunday school ministry and the spiritual formation of the Teenagers.

		Curriculum	Spiritual
Parental involvement	Pearson Correlation	1	.943**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	150	150
Spiritual formation	Pearson Correlation	.943**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	150	150

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

Therefore, there is a strong relationship between parental involvement in Sunday school ministry and the spiritual formation of the Teenagers as Pearson Correlation which is $r = .943^{**}$ which indicates a strong relationship with a p-value of 0.000, which is less than the conventional p-value of 0.05 ($r=.943^{**}$, $p=0.000$). This further reveals that there is a positive significant statistical relationship between parental involvement in Sunday school ministry and the spiritual formation of Teenagers. Based on these results, the H0 is rejected.

Table 4.4: Multiple Regression

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	-.109	.085		-1.280	.203
	Curriculum	.283	.127	.216	2.234	.027
	Parental involvement	.897	.116	.748	7.727	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Spiritual formation of the Teenagers

The study used multivariate regression analysis to establish a relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable by use of the following regression model:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \epsilon$$

Where,

$$Y = -.109 + .283 X_1 + .897 X_2$$

Y = Spiritual formation of teenager (Dependent Variable)

X₁ – X₂ – Independent Variables

X₁ = Curriculum

X₂ = Parental participation

β₀ = Co-efficient of the model

β₁ – β₂ = Beta Co-efficient of dependent variables.

ε = Stochastic Error Term

The results of the Regression of Coefficient reveal that there is a positive with a statistically significant impact between Parental participation and Spiritual formation of the teenagers as ($r=0.748$, while $p = 0.000$). This is supported by a beta coefficient of 0.748 and a p-value of $0.000 < 0.05$. This therefore further indicates that an increase in parental involvement by 1 unit would lead to an increased spiritual formation of teenagers by 74.8%.

CONCLUSION

The study reveals that parental involvement is important in Sunday school and impacts the spiritual formation of teenagers. The study established that the parents are taking time to make follow-up programs with what is

happening to their children. Further, it was established that parents are not adequately providing moral support to their children. In terms of financial support, they have not provided the financial support as expected. Therefore, in conclusion, there is a challenge as the study has established that there is a strong relationship between parental involvement in Sunday school ministry and the spiritual formation of Teenagers.

RECOMMENDATION

The researcher makes the following recommendation for parental involvement; therefore, they need to start making follows up on what their children are being taught in the church and ensure what the teenagers are taught is implemented. Secondly, they need to offer moral support to their children when they are affected in one way or the other, and whenever financial support is needed, they need to be ready and willing to support the needs of the ministry financial support through making generous contributions, it has been evident that they have not been providing the financial support as it is expected. As the study has established that parental involvement in Sunday school ministry has a greater impact on the spiritual formation of their teenagers in Africa inland church Kapropita district church council.

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