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THE EFFECTS OF BOARDING PRIMARY SCHOOL EXPERIENCES UPON
CHILDREN'S INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH THEIR NUCLEAR
FAMILIES

BY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to investigate the effects of boarding primary school experiences upon children's interpersonal relationships with their nuclear families. 3 research objectives were developed to guide the study namely; to investigate the relationship between the child and the father and mother before and after joining boarding primary school and to document the best and worst boarding primary school experiences the children encountered. The study was guided by the attachment developmental theory formulated by Bowlby (1969-1988), and expounded by (Neufeld, 2004) and (Neufeld, 2007). The study targeted children who attended boarding primary schools for not less than 2 years and comprised children aged between 13 and 18 years. Purposive sampling method was employed to obtain one boys' and one girls' secondary schools. Purposive sampling was also used to obtain the children aged between 13 and 18 years who attended boarding primary schools for not less than 2 years. A structured questionnaire was used to collect the required information. Data was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to process the frequencies, percentages and descriptive statistics which were used to discuss the findings. Before joining boarding primary schools, the majority of the pupils felt close, significant and loved by their mothers. Girls felt significantly closer and loved by their fathers compared to the boys. The interpersonal relationships between the children and their parents were more established when compared to that of their siblings suggesting that the sibling system was still in its formative stage before they left for boarding primary schools. There were more boys who felt abandoned and rejected by their mothers after joining boarding primary schools compared to the girls. While the majority of both boys and girls never felt abandoned, rejected or disliked by their fathers, there was a statistically significant variation between the proportion of boys and girls who experienced those feelings after joining boarding primary schools. The study results show that girls were more adaptable to boarding primary schools and were therefore in a better position to settle down physically and emotionally faster than the boys. The boys did not seem to enjoy the boarding primary schools' environment, a probable reason why they may have had difficulties adapting to it. The worst memorable boarding primary school experiences included caning, being punished, waking up early and bad food. Recommendations are that parents should not only involve their children in decision making but should also emotionally prepare them before placing them in boarding primary schools. Parents and especially the fathers should ensure that they do not get detached from their children after placing them in boarding primary schools while the Ministry of Education should train teachers on alternative ways of disciplining children so as to eradicate caning and punishments completely from these institutions.

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