

## Abstract

Secondary school students are faced with challenges of navigating safely through their adolescence in a world full of depressive challenges. As adolescents' transit this stage they increasingly face a milliard of challenges which are depressive and at times lead to suicidal behaviors. Parents play a primary role in socializing their children on dealing with life challenges; however, the extent to which parenting styles predetermine students' suicidal behaviors remains obscure. The study investigated parenting styles, (authoritative, authoritarian, permissive indulgent and permissive neglectful) as predictors of suicidal behaviors among students in Embu county. The study was guided by the objective; to investigate the extent to which parenting styles significantly predict secondary school students' suicidal behaviors. The study was informed by Bronfenbrenners' bioecological theory and parenting styles theory by Maccoby and Martins. Survey research design was adopted for the study. Stratified random sampling method was used to select a sample of 15 schools. Stratified random sampling and systematic random sampling were used to select 399 participants (221 girls and 178 boys). Purposive sampling was used to select 15 Guidance and counseling teachers and 70 secondary school drop outs. A reliability of cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) of  $\alpha = 0.82$  for parenting styles questionnaires was reported and for risky behaviors  $\alpha = 0.78$ . The major findings of the study based on the objective of the study showed that parenting styles have a positive and significant prediction of risky sexual behaviors among secondary school students, and that parenting styles accounts for; 57.2% ( $R^2=0.572$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) of secondary school students risky sexual behaviors, The study recommended that, the government through the ministry of education (MOE) and the school boards of management maintain a trained resident school counselors or psychologists in schools, who do not have teaching duties, in order to enable them have enough time to identify students with depressive signs which are precursors of suicidal behavior. Such counselors would be available to help students and make follow-ups with parents.