

The influence of boarding school to young children: A case of two boarding schools in Hai District in Kilimanjaro, Tanzania

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Abstract

This study aimed at determining the influence of boarding schools to the very young learners. It intended to investigate how boarding school life influences young learners' social life, how boarding school life influences young learners' academic performance, teachers' views on young children in boarding schools and parents' views on the young children in boarding schools. The study used analysis of covariance where the influence of independent variable i. e boarding school life over the dependent variable of very younger children's school life. Pearson correlation was run to determine the relationship between boarding schools and the younger children's academic and social life. The study also used a common critical value of Alpha denoted by $\alpha = .05$. The findings of this study revealed that there is a significant relationship between school life and younger children's academic and social life because the P value was .001. However, participating parents reiterated many reasons enforcing boarding schools for the younger children, including broken families, long illness of the parents, orphans and sponsorships among them. This study recommends the government interventions for quality and improvement purposes.

Keywords: Influence, Boarding, young Children, Hai District, Kilimanjaro

Introduction

A boarding school is a school in which most or all of the students live during the part of the year that they go to lessons. The word 'boarding' is used in the sense of "bed and board," i.e., lodging and meals (Moris, 2013). The first boarding schools were established in the United States during the late 19th and early 20th centuries to educate Native American children and youths according to Euro-American standards. They were first established by Christian missionaries of various denominations, who often started schools on reservations and founded boarding schools to provide opportunities for children who did not have schools nearby, especially in the lightly populated areas of the West (Moris, 2013). Therefore, the government paid religious societies to provide education to Native American children on reservations. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) founded additional boarding schools based on the assimilation model of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School (Moris, 2013).

Children were usually immersed in European-American culture through appearance changes with haircuts, children were forbidden to speak their native languages, and traditional names were replaced by new European-American names for the purpose of both civilize and Christianize(Gardner, 2015).

Although boarding schools were established in 1949 to look after war orphans of the civil war, as well as the children of new Communist Party leaders who suddenly found themselves too busy for childcare (Luc Behaghely, 2015). Many countries, including African countries, later joined and concurred with this idea of boarding schools with many reasons, differing from family to family and probably country to country.

Morris noticed the experience of the schools was often harsh, especially for the younger children who were separated from their families. This study therefore, seeks to explore the influence of boarding schools to young children. That is the effect boarding schools on young children's social life, academic performance, psychological development, and the views of the teachers and parents on boarding schools.

The Theory of the Study

This study was guided by Erickson's child development theory which he proposes that personality development follows a generically pre-programmed sequence. He places a considerable emphasis on the role of family, culture, and society in the development of individual's personality. Erickson recognized that the social environment in which children grow, develop, and learn can influence significantly the outcomes of personality development (Puckett & Diffily, 2004).

Erickson identified a series of eight stages, in which a healthy developing individual should pass through from infancy to late adulthood. Erickson proposed that these critical steps constitute turning points in human personality development in which progress or regression occurs and integration of favorable resolutions of the crises into one's personality lead to human strength. These stages determine the types of interactions and guidance that support healthy personality development and social and moral competence (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Puckett & Diffily, 2004).

Conceptualistic theories also provide comprehensive perspectives on social and cultural influence on growth, development and learning. That is, the interactive process between individuals and the environment provides cognitive development (Puckett & Diffily, 2004; Hagedorn, Tibbetts, Matsumoto, Moon, & Makuakane-Lundin, 2003). It is argued that the early social environment the child interacts with it in their early age from infant to ten years influenced personality development and reflected much in their life (The Studio Publishing Service Ltd, 2009). Therefore, the school environment influenced their personality development as well as academic performance.

The focus of this study therefore, is towards the theory of psychosocial and its influence on the learners' social and academic life at their tender age in boarding school environment. It is also paramount to determine the life of the day scholars' verses boarding scholars towards life experiences and personality development.

Literature Review

The boarding schools changed through the decades with legal and social change from different countries, governments and of course family wise (Stout, 2012). This reveals that boarding schools for young children developed from nations/countries and keep on changing accordingly. It is from this point of view that younger boarders are a system in almost all parts of the world to serve some purposes which cannot be circumvented.

The new emphasis for boarding schools for younger children is as a result of the working mothers. However, the care and love of the mothers for younger children influenced even boarding schools for young children to employ more teacher mothers to take care of the young boarders (Baynton, 1996). This is because women were seen as being suited to this newly defined role of the teacher in caring the younger children from three (3) years of age as compared to men because of the very young children who are taken to boarding school. Ellen G. White was of the view that the suitable age for the children to boarding school is that of ten (10) years of age. She said, "... that the children could not go to school till they were ten years old, I wanted to tell you that... when the light was given to me that the children should not attend school until they were old enough to be instructed (p. 17)". Also, Kenya parliament insisted that the proper age for boarding school should be twelve years of age when children are old enough to be in a boarding school (Official Report, 2002).

These boarding schools have both advantages and disadvantages on the young children. Behaghely (2015) states, boarders enjoy better studying conditions than control students. However, they start beating control students in mathematics, only two years after admission, and this effect mostly comes from strong students. He adds that after one year levels of well-being are lower among boarders, but in their second year, students adjust; the well-being catches-up. This suggests that substituting school to home is disruptive; only strong students benefit from the boarding schools, once they have managed to adapt to their new environment. But also aged students who understand themselves, from 12 years of age can manage to be in boarding schools.

Although boarding schools have their advantages and disadvantages in the child's life experience towards personality development, parents provide many reasons as to why they have to send their children to boarding school at their tender age. One of the parents Xu Jing, in Maris's (2013) study says: - "I think it's good for the children because it helps promote self-independence. Other parents don't have time or energy to look after their kids". Moris (2013) adds that it is a very different business as China's wealthy business elite send off their babies in an attempt to establish their independence earlier than most, hoping to set them up with life skills from a very tender age. However, other parents values the time they have with their children at home. They think it is inhuman having children and then, not taking the responsibility of raising them up that the biggest loser in the end is the child (Michael, 2014). The child was thus in the position of infant Oedipus; as shown in Paton (2011). This shows that children may develop a traumatic situation which might affect his/her personality and develop mistrust to the parents, which is felt as inhuman to the growing child.

Reasons for Boarding Schools

Amongst the reasons for boarding schools for young learners during the first world war was increased orphans due the death of the parents and prolonged illness (Piccard, 2013, Paton, 2011; Kamerman, 2007; Luc Behaghely, 2015 and Reparations and American Indian Boarding Schools:, 2010). Other reasons are the communities that did not have a primary school nearby, children were sent away to boarding school from as early as age 5 (Luc Behaghely, 2015). Additionally, the Wrangell Institute enrolled children roughly from ages 5 to 15. While Wrangell served children who were orphans or who had been removed from families due to problems, it also served many children who were taken away from healthy families living in communities that did not have primary schools (Sharp & Hirshberg, 2005).

With few exceptions, students were forced to go away to school to have space and enjoy; this would encourage developing traumatic situations in the child to feel neglected by the parents where Oedipus developed (Michael, 2014; Grier, 2013). In this view, Michael insisted that the parents should understand their roles which cannot be replaced by boarding schools. Zirima (2012) argues that as much as what boarding schools might provide as solutions to unsettled families, as stated by Damon and Lerner (2006), child abuse in home and change in behavior when they are left with relatives; they may not completely replace the role of parents, especially at this tender age.

Sometimes, the child's family may be dealing with complex situations such as severe mental illness, physical disability, illness, drug or alcohol problems, domestic violence, homelessness, acute financial hardship, instability, and may be on the verge of breakdown (Roby, 2011; Cameron, 2014; Grier, 2013). On the other hand, the child may be cared for by siblings, grandparents, aunts or uncles, or other extended family members because of the death of their parents, or the inability of their own parents to care well and safely for them. Some other reasons cited are divorce, single parents, mistreatment of babysitters and lack of the same people in home; as significant for the boarding schools for younger children (Stout, 2012; Adams & DeLuzio, 2012; Yuli, Haningsih, & Adikrishna, 2011). Further, Coleman (1988, 1990) has argued that the negative effects of moving for children may be due to the loss of social capital in the short-term after moving.

Social and Psychological Effect of boarding schools on Small Children

Various authors have written about the effect of being sent away to boarding school on the development of the child (Lonetree (Ho-Chunk), 2011, Cameron, 2014, Schaverien, 2015, and Paton, 2011). Children develop their social skills from their very younger age, as they interact with parents, relatives, teachers and other fellows. This interaction plays a major role in personality development of the child. As in traditional Chinese culture, many grandparents live with the family, and because of China's one child policy, sometimes there are four grandparents, two parents and just one child in a home. Some parents worry that the grandparents will spoil the child, so they send them to boarding schools (Paton, 2011, Moris, 2013).

In contrary, Duffell, (2000) observes that children who board are forced to survive psychologically to their great cost. Duffell insists that "in order to cope with their loss of family and to adapt to their school environment, children unconsciously construct a strategic survival personality and that such personality structure invariably becomes counter-productive in adult life" (p. 51).

Also, these younger children experience bullying and sexual abuse from the grown up children. As Piccard (2013), Smith (2004) and Duffell (2000) emphasize “sexual abuse is the jewel in the crown of double-binding the message the abuser implicitly imparts to his victim: You are special to me but you are nothing, your reality doesn’t count. As usual, such double messages are crazy-making” (Duffell, 2000. P. 177). This shows a bad experience that boarding schools bring to the life of these younger children.

However, the boarding school experience is not uniform; it is multidimensional and students who lived through boarding schools tell astonishing stories of courage, resistance and adaptation (Stout, 2012). Further, boarding offers opportunities to form, and explore in depth, a wide variety of social networks and relationships. Friendship, civility, fairness, justice, loyalty, and cooperation (McGinley & Varchevker, 2013). One parent gave this narrative of her child:

At first we missed her so much , but we think the world is more global, sooner or later she will leave us, so we have taken her to the boarding for trial; after few weeks she liked her space and said she want to stay at boarding. (Moris, 2013)

Another testimony in the study by Cameron (2014) , one of the respondents said this:- "At the beginning I missed home, but the food was very good, and the environment was lovely, with lots of trees," she says. Similarly, another child says; “I think that now, compared to other people of my age, I am more independent and more responsible; but I also cherish my relationship with my parents more than my peers do" (Adams & DeLuzio, 2012). These sentiments suggest that although the food, environment, peer interaction and freedom help the child to stay in the boarding school, it will never replace the parental love and relationship to the child.

Academic Performance of young Boarders

The experiences of boarding scholars and day scholars differ depending on each individual and the school attached to it. Where by the influence of the school for young learners is a vehicle to reflecting the future personality of an individual which includes mental, physical, social and emotional.

Boarding schools seem to have varied benefits for the learners’ future life, like improving academically as they have all the time available to immerse in an education environment, extra-curricular opportunities to get involved in new hobbies as they interact with others in the evening and weekends, built-in social life, where children will be living with friends for fun, fostering independence for self-reliance, and also appropriate place for busy parents against hostile life at home. Boarding schools still influence various traumatic experiences which affect learners’ personality (Perveen & Kazmi, 2011; Zirima, 2012).

Kazmi and Perveen (2011) from their cross sectional study found out that the environment affects personality development as a result of lack of emotional expression. However, the respondents were of the view that sending children to boarding schools can help in easing the psychological and educational challenges of absent parenting (Schaverien, 2015). It is also emphasized by Moris (2013) and Cameron (2014) that boarding schools offer many opportunities for all children, including an extended range of education, supervised homework time (“prep”), before and after school activities and high quality pastoral care. This is particularly important for vulnerable children

coming from chaotic homes or homes where they are not supported to make the most of their educational opportunities.

Further, boarding schools can bring stability to children's lives, they can also reduce education barriers and improve educational outcomes. As Fryer and Curtoy (2011) state, boarding can be one way of meeting the needs of young people in difficult situations to prevent family breakdown or a formal move into the care system. It can also help to raise the aspirations of the child and everyone around them (Henderson, Kunitz, Gabriel, McCright, & Levy, 2014).

Furthermore, involvement in the church activities at age 8 was associated with higher endorsement of not only church but also school, good grades, and especially for boys community activities (Damon & Lerner, 2006). Damon and Lerner (2006) state that the extent to which parents are involved in school-related activities, is positively related to children's academic outcomes at elementary school. Similarly, the experience of boarding is seen by some parents as a way for a toddler to get ahead from boarding kindergarten and they are likely to win a place at a good university, which is their hope.

Methodology

This study used a descriptive survey. The participants were 20; 13 teachers and 7 parents. Random sampling was done to select the respondents from two boarding schools in Hai District in Kilimanjaro region in Tanzania. To collect data both questionnaires and interviews were used. Thirteen (13) questionnaires were administered to teachers from the two boarding schools and 7 interviews were conducted to parents to get their views on the boarding schools to the young learners.

The analysis of the data was done using ANCOVA, whereby Pearson correlation was run to find: the relationship between boarding school and young learners' social life and academic performance. Also, transcription of the interview was done to get the views of the parents and teachers about boarding schools and the young learners. Their views were categorized according to major reasons for parents to send their younger ones to boarding school, the boarders' academic performance, social life and psychological influence.

The purpose of the study was to determine if boarding schools have any effect on the young children's social life and academic performance. A critical value used to determine the level of significance is the common value of $\alpha = 0.05$. This value is used to determine the level of significant of the factors given and their influence on the child's social life and academic performance. Cronbach's Alpha was also used to determine the level consistence of the statements to measure the variables (factors used to influence) reliability and being realistic.

Results of the Findings

This research aimed at assessing the influence of boarding school to young children's social life and academic performance in the two selected boarding schools in Hai District in Kilimanjaro region in Tanzania.

To determining the consistence of the statements, Cronbach's Alpha was used with a reliability of 87.5 % which was deemed reliable for the study.

Demographic Information of the Participants

The number of teachers and parents who were involved in this study were 20. The charts below give the details of the age, gender, experience and educational level differences of the teachers who participated in the study.

Table1. Teachers' Age

	Frequency	Percent
25-35 Years	10	76.9
36-44Years	3	23.1
Total	13	100.00

Table2.The Teachers' Gender

	Frequency	Percent
Male	4	30.8
Female	9	69.2
Total	13	100.0

Table3. Experience of teachers in the teaching

	Frequency	Percent
1-5 Years	5	38.5
6-10 Years	5	38.5
11-15Years	3	23.1
Total	13	100.0

Table 4. Education level of the Teachers

	Frequency	Percent
Certificate	8	61.5
Diploma	5	38.5
Total	13	100.0

Objectives Analysis

The Relationship between Boarding School and Young Learners' Social Life

One of the objectives in this study was to assess the influence of boarding school to the young learners' social life behavior. A Likert scale of four levels was used to measure the relationship between variables of boarding school and the social life characteristics that the students develop as a result of being in boarding school. In achieving this kind of relationship, the results of Pearson correlation show that there is a significant relationship between boarding school and social/psychological life of young children in their tender age.

Table 5. Pearson Correlations

	SOCIAL	APE
Pearson Correlation	1	.821**
Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
N	13	13
Pearson Correlation	.821**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
N	13	13

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

According to the above analysis, the social behavior of the young learners is significantly influenced by the boarding school life because the sig is .001, which is less than .05. Also, the relationship is direct and very strong because the Pearson correlation is .821.

The Relationship between Boarding School and Young Learners' Academic Performance

The second objective was to assess the relationship between boarding school and the young learners' academic performance. A Pearson correlation shows that the boarding school influences the academic performance of the young learners. This is because the sig is .001, which is less than a critical value of .05. The Pearson correlation of .821 shows that the relationship is direct and very strong.

The Teachers' Views on Young Children's Boarding School

Almost all the teachers interviewed reiterated that there are various reasons for the parents to take their younger ones to boarding schools. Some of the reasons teachers identified are like; single parent's issues, broken families, business and working in busy schedules, abuse from relatives due to extended families, parents suffering from long illness, orphans due to the death of the parents, baby sitters are not available and are not trusted, sponsorship of the young learners.

The Parents Views on Young Children's Boarding School

Parents interviewed were of the view that, boarding school for toddlers is not totally good, but there are different issues that force parents to send their young kids to boarding school, thinking that the boarding school is better sometimes than the situation that the child goes through. Participating parents regretted also for some schools that allow bad habits, including child abuse, to happen to their younger children.

Parents also reiterated that governments should intervene to provide the necessary requirements rather than just leaving the whole burden to the Donnas and sponsors. Especially to the orphan centers where most of the kids have totally no parents to think even about them. Also children in the orphan centers are very young compared to those in just normal boarding schools.

Discussion and Interpretation of the Analysis of the Findings

The preceding analysis shows that all teachers and parents reiterated boarding schools are not totally hundred percent places for the young children. However, there are circumstances that cannot be circumvented in taking the young child to boarding schools. It's obvious from the analysis that there is a significant relationship between boarding school and social/psychological life of younger children in their tender age. This is because the sig is .001, which is less than a critical common value of $\alpha = 0.05$. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states 'the boarding school is good for the younger children academically and socially' is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

The H_0 which is rejected is that boarding schools help young children to achieve better academic performance and develop positive social life to influence personality development. It is believed that boarding schools can be a better place for the younger children's academic performance and social life. Because children have all the time available to immerse in an education environment, extra-curricular opportunities to get involved in new hobbies as they interact with others in the evening and weekends, built-in social life, where children will be living with friends for fun, fostering independence for self-reliance, and also appropriate place for busy parents against hostile life at home (Perveen & Kazmi, 2011; Zirima, 2012). However, the analysis from this study found out that boarding school is not a better place for the younger children. That, boarding schools still influences various traumatic experiences which affect learners' personality.

For example, one of the parents involved in the study said:- "the child grows very well when the balanced food is given to them, that balanced diet helps the child in mental development and healthy body, which help the child perform better and interact well with social environment" (Interview with T1 March 9, 2016). T1 emphasized that when the child does not get good results, which is not the case in many boarding schools; the child becomes weak to perform school activities and to interact with others. Zirima (2012) presented similar findings suggesting that health food, environment and aspects of a boarding school have an effect on the adjustment skills and ability as a result of being alone; therefore, emotional instability and academic performance are significantly related with boarding school life.

Other participating teachers' argued that they receive very younger children as young as 4 to 5 years. At this age the child needs the parent and because the parents are not there, the child tends to cry all the time; sometimes older students in the absence of the teachers abuse the young child. They said abusing the child at this age may make him/her develop psychological torture, which may lower his or her personality. These findings are similar to the findings of Piccard, (2013), and Duffell (2000) who emphasize that "sexual abuse is the jewel in the crown of double-binding the message the abuser implicitly imparts to his victim". This means that when the child is abused, it leaves a mark to his or her entire life. Kazmi and Perveen (2011) from their cross sectional study found out that environment affect personality development as a result of lack of emotional expression. The study proves that children feels distraught full which later on results into adaptation of phony personality. It is also similar to Schaverien (2004) findings who found, personality of hostlers and non-hostlers to be "significantly different on major dimensions of the personality such as neuroticism, openness, agreeableness, conscientiousness and extraversion.

Participating parents and teachers were of the view that although boarding schools are not reliable for the young children, it is still the first choice for vulnerable children. Furthermore, participating

teachers stated that when parents bring their children to boarding schools, the child lives hostile life until they adapt to the new environment where teachers help them to attend the library and supervise their homework during prep time. Sometimes children watch cartoon videos under controlled environment of the teacher; as one of the ways in developing children's academic performance.

Recommendations

This study made the following recommendations:-

First and foremost, the schools should try to make their boarding schools appropriate for the younger children in order to reduce the hostility situation. Where good food, friendly/ caring and committed teachers are found. Available resources for the children and everything deemed important to the kids.

Also the government should come in the situation of boarding schools for the young children, rather than leaving everything to the owners. The government to make policies that guide the situations in boarding schools for the purpose of improvement rather than leaving everything to the school owners. There should be standard and qualities to be met before one establishes a boarding school for the young children.

This study dealt with the influence of boarding school to young learners' academic and social development. The population was very small therefore; it is recommended that a larger sample should be carried out on the same study.

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