

# **Relationship between Adolescents' Perceptions of Their Parents' Behaviours and the Teenagers' Non-Illegal and Minor- Illegal Delinquency in Nairobi County Secondary Schools, Kenya**

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## **Abstract**

This study investigated the relationship between adolescents' perceptions of their parents' behaviours and teenagers' involvement in non-illegal and minor illegal delinquency in Nairobi County, Kenya. The study was based on parenting styles theory by Baumrind, social control theory by Nye and ego identity versus role confusion theory by Erikson. The participants comprised 219 female and 191 male students selected through the use of stratified and simple random sampling. Data was collected using a researcher designed questionnaire and a self-report behaviour checklist. The independent variables of study were adolescents' perceptions of parents' behaviours that included supportiveness, monitoring of the teenagers' conducts, punitive disciplining, conflicts and alcohol use. The dependent variables comprised adolescents' non-illegal noncompliance and truancy) and minor-illegal (violence, substance abuse and stealing) delinquent behaviours. A correlational survey design was employed and relationships were examined using correlation coefficient statistics. The findings indicate that 279 adolescents had perceptions that they were excessively supported, 74.9% were occasionally involved, 17.7% were persistently (frequently) involved and 7.5% were never involved in the non-illegal delinquent behaviours. Further, 13 adolescents reported that they had perceptions of inadequate parental supportiveness, 61.5% of them were involved occasionally and 35.5% were never involved in the minor-illegal delinquent behaviours. Parental supportiveness was not related at  $p > .01$  (two tailed test) to adolescents' non-illegal and minor-illegal delinquent behaviours. The adolescents who perceived excessive parental monitoring comprised the highest percentage of those who were involved in occasional non-illegal (77.6%) and occasional minor-illegal (51.7%) delinquent behaviours. The highest percentage of the persistent non-illegal (17.5%) and persistent minor-illegal (7.7%) delinquent behaviours were those who perceived excessive parental monitoring. The lowest percentage of the adolescents who were involved in occasional non-illegal (46.2%) and persistent non-illegal (7.7%) behaviours were those who perceived low parental monitoring. The results revealed a significant positive relationship between adolescents' perceptions of parental monitoring and non-illegal, and substance abuse delinquent behaviours at  $p < .01$  (two tailed test). There was a significant positive relationship between perceptions of parental use of harsh words and adolescents' involvement in non-illegal delinquent behaviours. Perceived corporal punishment and adolescents' substance abuse were significantly positively related at  $p < .05$  (two tailed test). Frequent perceptions of parental alcohol use were significantly positively related to non-illegal delinquent behaviours and generalised delinquency. Adolescents' perceptions of parental alcohol were positively related to their involvement in non-illegal and minor illegal delinquent behaviours at  $p < .01$  (two tailed test). Parenting training and adolescents' counselling were recommended to alleviate the youths' involvement in non-illegal and minor-illegal delinquent behaviours. Adolescents' behaviour surveillance in schools was also recommended.

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