

Portrayal Of Parenting In Selected Swahili Novels: Analysis Of Rosa Mistika, Nguvu Ya Sala And Mtoto Wa Mama Novels

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Abstract: This research paper investigated how parenting is portrayed in three selected novels namely Rosa Mistika (1971), Nguvu ya Sala (1999) and Mtoto wa Mama (2018). The issue of parenting has been the Centre of focus in many literary works with the concern being the review of the parenting styles employed, the challenges facing parenting and suggestions of possible solutions to the challenges associated with parenting. Since children form the foundation of the society, the role of parents in nurturing them needs to be looked at. Parenting encompass all the duties which parents undertake in relation to upbringing their children from conception till the time they transit to adulthood and become independent. The three reference novels in this research paper three novels were selected to enable the analysis of parenting in different historic times namely; the period of the 1970's, the period of 1990's and parenting as it is today. This paper was anchored on Realism theory (Flaubert, 1850). Content analysis was used to obtain data from the three selected novels. The emerging themes and characters were analyzed in the novels. Supplementary information which was relevant in this paper was collected from books, magazines, journals and e-resources. The results of this analysis established that parenting keeps changing from one historic period to another. In reference to the Rosa Mistika novel which was authored in the period of 1970's, the common parenting style was authoritarian parenting style. The main challenges facing parenting in regard to this novel were domestic violence, poverty, drunkenness especially among the male parents and failing to grant the children the necessary freedom. The proposed mitigative strategies to the noted challenges were ending domestic violence, reducing or stopping the habit of drinking among the parents and rethinking the issue of overprotecting children and ensuring that parents are considerate of the demands of their children. In reference to Nguvu ya Sala novel which represented the literary works which were authored during the period of 1990's, authoritarian, authoritative and permissive parenting styles were evident. The reported findings pointed at religious dogmatism among the parents, uninvolved parenting and immorality among some caregivers as some of the challenges facing parenting. The suggested solutions to the noted challenges included creating awareness among the parents on the negative effects of religious dogmatism on parenting, encouraging parents to be responsible and maintaining moral codes and standards among parents and teachers. Authoritarian and permissive parenting styles were the common practices in the Mtoto wa Mama novel which was written in 2018 and was selected in this paper to represent the present day parenting. Single parenting and separation among the parents were highlighted as the key challenges facing parenting. These problems can be solved through collaboration among the parents and maintaining unity in the family. The findings of this paper were hoped to benefit parents to understand the appropriate parenting style to adopt as well as learning the various ways of overcoming various challenges which face parenting. The conclusions and recommendations are also given.

I. INTRODUCTION

Parenting is a requisite requirement for the prosperity of a society. Wanjala (2015) opines that parenting is a complex concept which encompass various provisions which are granted to the children such as quality food, clothing, shelter,

education and appropriate counseling. The issue of parenting has been addressed in Swahili literary works such as Wanjala (2015), Kerre (2020), Kananu (2020) among others. This research paper focused on analyzing how parenting has been portrayed in three selected swahili novels. Wamitila (2003) defines a novel as a creative work which is written in prose

and whose length is deemed sufficient based on the different themes which are presented in the text. Njogu and Chimerah (1999) had earlier on defined a novel as a long creatively written work which uses prose language and has a distinct plot. Based on these assertions, a novel is a prose narrative whose length qualifies to form a book. The aspects and themes covered in a particular novel represent the experiences and characters in their lives. Madumulla (2009) further argues that a novel follows a given format and has specific objectives which it addresses. The preparation of a novel requires a lot of time in selecting the characters of various types, designing their traits and organizing various themes in the narrative (Wamitila, 2003). Nkwera (1978) opines that a novel focuses on life experiences of a person or a society in general and may involve two main characters. These characters may be people, animals, spirits or even non living objects.

Parenting is a process of rearing children according to the expectations of the society in order to produce responsible and reliable members of the society once they grow up. Zombwe (2018) explains that most successful people in adulthood signify appropriate parenting in childhood. This is an indication that such a particular child was protected from the adverse effects of the surrounding environment during the process of growth and development. Baumrind (1968) identified three parenting styles namely authoritarian, authoritative and permissive styles. Parents who adopt authoritarian style regulate the behaviours of their children by issuing strict instructions and ensuring that the children comply to the set rules. Any contrary behavior is punishable. The effect of this parenting style is that children may defy the set rules. Authoritative parenting style is evident where the parents guide their children with some level of understanding. The children are expected to live as per the expectations of their parents but the parents consider the views and opinions of the children. In case the parent wishes to punish the child for any wrongdoing, the children are duly informed of the reason for being punished and the punishment is not too harsh. This parenting style raises responsible children who are well behaved. Permissive parenting style is characterized by uninvolved parents whereby children are neither controlled nor punished. This parenting style was proposed by Spock(1948) as an appropriate strategy of raising the children with all the freedom they deserve. However, the parenting style ends up producing irresponsible children. Due to overprotection of the children by the parents, the children become in disciplined and always disobey rules and societal norms. Cherry (2012) asserts that the parenting style adopted by particular parents is largely determined by the societal values, the history of the parents, level of education among the parents, socioeconomic status and religion.

Njogu and Chimerah (1999) argue that literary works originate from the society and they have a significant role in describing the interactions among individuals in their society. Premised on this assertion, the three selected novels in this study namely Rosa Mistika (1971), Nguvu ya Sala (1999) and Mtoto wa Mama(2018) addresses parenting as well as other issues which are evident in the context of our society. Since parenting may vary from one period to another, this study was designed to analyze the parenting trends in three historic periods namely the period of 1970's, the period of 1990's and

the present day period. The novels Rosa Mistika, Nguvu ya Sala and Mtoto wa Mama were chosen to represent the three periods respectively. Analysis of parenting in the three novels generated evidence to attest that both parenting and challenges associated with parenting changes from one historic period to another.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This research paper investigated how parenting is portrayed in Swahili novels in three historic periods which the researcher delineated as the period of 1970s, the 1990s and the present period. The general objective of the paper was to analyze the portrayal of parenting by referring to three selected novels namely Rosa Mistika (1971), Nguvu ya Sala (1999) and Mtoto wa Mama (2018) to represent the three periods of 1970s, 1990s and the present day period respectively. The novels were analyzed to establish how parenting was portrayed in those three delineated historic times. Though past research studies such as Kananu (2020) and Kerre (2020) have looked at the issue of parenting in swahili literary works, little has been done to explain how parenting changes from one historic period to another. Given that the changes in society may trigger changes in parenting, the current paper was done to analyze the three selected novels and establish how parenting changes from one historic period to another.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This paper was anchored on the theoretical underpinnings of Realism theory which was advanced by Gustave Flaubert in 1850. Realism theory was proposed to focus on how various literary works analyze the real life situations in the people's daily lives. According to this theory, the character traits should be consistent with the components of the environment. The proponents of this theory argued that any literary work whose themes are inconsistent to the common happenings in the society should not be addressed in the literary works. This theory focuses on understanding of the various changes in the world and how realism manifests itself in the daily lives. These propositions are further emphasized by Wamitila(2003) who asserts that literary works such as Swahili novels should exhibit realism by narrating aspects which are evident in the given society and being able to create a vivid image through selection of characters, the context of narration and presentation of various selected themes.

The main tenets of this theory were relied upon guiding this paper. The first tenet of this theory is that any literary work should represent reality of what exists within the authors' environment. Realism must be manifested in the interactions among characters in a given literary work. These interactions lead to emergence of various themes which the author intends to address. Any author who is informed by realism theory in the choice of characters produces literary work whose themes are realistic. This tenet was relied on by the researchers of this study in identifying the parenting styles which were evident in the three selected novels. The second tenet of this theory was that the selected characters in a

particular literary work represent the normal human beings and their communication resembles that of the normal people. The traits of the selected characters such as language use, performance of the various tasks and their views and opinions are expounded by realism. This tenet was a guiding principle in this paper because in the three selected novels, *Rosa Mistika*, *Nguvu ya Sala* and *Mtoto wa Mama*, the characters were humans who were pursuing their normal daily chores in different contexts. This tenet was appropriate in efforts to analyze the challenges facing parenting and proposition of the appropriate mitigative strategies which may be put in place to avert the noted challenges.

The third tenet of this theory was that the author of any literary work should be able to identify challenges and do a keen analysis to establish the origin of the noted challenges. This paper focused on the various changes in parenting in three different historic times. This tenet was appropriate in this particular paper because there was interest to understand the dynamics which are evident in parenting in terms of the parenting styles and the challenges facing parenting in three distinct historic periods namely the period of 1970s, the 1990s and the present day period. This theory was deemed appropriate for use in this particular paper because it adequately explains the linkages between the variables which were being studied in this paper.

IV. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A Couple of research studies have been done to explore how different swahili literary works address the issue of parenting. This section looks at some of the past literary works which delved into this topic.

Momanyi (1998) conducted a study which explored how swahili poetry portrayed the woman in islamic contexts. The researchers' concern was to understand why the woman's portrayal in swahili poetry which is one category of the swahili literary works was unique. This paper was relevant to the current study because most responsibilities in parenting are undertaken by a woman. Therefore, the portrayal of a woman in poetry which basically resembles the portrayal of the woman in the society may have positive or adverse effects on parenting. Since this study analyzed swahili poetry, the current paper looked at parenting by focusing on Swahili novels. In addition, the current paper endeavored to address the role of parenting among the parents of both genders. This way, the current paper was useful in explaining how parents of both genders perform different duties in parenting.

A study that was conducted by Mayieka (2015) examined the emerging issues in swahili novels. The main objective of this paper was to establish how the emerging issues are presented in selected swahili novels. This paper was descriptive in nature and data was collected through content analysis. The analysis involved reading novels, magazines, books and other publications which have analyzed the current Swahili novels. Realism theory guided the analysis of data which was collected in this paper. The findings established that the emerging issues which are currently addressed in the Swahili novels include deterioration of the family set up and irresponsibility among the couples. These two factors affect

parenting hence this paper was relevant to the current paper which sought to analyze parenting dynamics in three distinct historic periods.

Kaviria(2008) explored how Swahili literary works addressed the issue of child abuse. The main objectives of this study were to identify the origins of child abuse, the various entities which execute the vice and the effects of these actions on children. This paper also endeavored to do a comparative analysis of how authors of different genders address the issues under question. Content analysis of the selected novels was done to yield data for this research paper. The reviewed study was relevant to the current paper because children are mostly abused by their parents and caregivers. The distinctive aspect of the current paper is that it looks at how parenting changes from one marked historic period to another.

A research study that was conducted by Wanjohi (2007) investigated the role of men in child rearing among the Maasai people. This research study specifically assessed the role of men in assisting women to raise infants who were below the age of three years. This research study shed light on the problems which are experienced in parenting and the role of parents of different genders in child rearing. The current paper focussed on the challenges of parenting and suggested the mitigative strategies which may be put in place to address those particular challenges.

A study which was related to the current paper was done by Mavisi (2009). This study explored how female characters were portrayed in the literary works written by Zainabu Burhani. The specific goal of this study was to establish how female authors portray female characters in their works. Efforts were also being made to establish the perspectives of these authors towards their characters. The theory of African feminism was relied upon in guiding this study. Data was collected using content analysis of the selected texts and interviews. In analysis of these literary works, the challenges of parenting were analyzed. Women were found to be significant role players in parenting. This study did not conclusively analyze the challenges of parenting because of focusing on the parenting among parents of one particular gender. The current study whose findings are reported in this article analyzed the challenges of parenting among the parents of both genders and generated more conclusive findings.

Wamalwa (2013) analyzed the challenges which caregivers face in parenting in reference to novels which are authored by John Habwe. This study was anchored on new historicism theory. Drunkenness, poor standards of living, laziness and immorality were identified as the frequently mentioned challenges of parenting in selected novels. This study formed a good basis for the current study because the current paper analyzed the challenges which are experienced in parenting in three distinct historic periods.

Kerre (2020) analyzed the changes which youths undergo as they grow in reference to Chozi Langu and Dunia Mashaka Makuu novels. This study focussed on issues such as parenting among the young people and the challenges facing parenting as well as the identified solutions to some of the noted challenges. Descriptive research design was used in this study and data was collected through in depth analysis of the selected novels. The study was guided by realism theory. This study established that some inappropriate parenting styles

have negative impacts on the development of the children. Through the review of this particular study, some challenges facing parenting were analyzed and this formed the basis of informing the current paper which looked at the similar phenomena in three historic periods.

A research study conducted by Kananu (2020) analyzed parenting styles in reference to Tumaini (2006) and Dunia Mashaka Makuu (2004) novels. With application of descriptive research design, content analysis was used to collect data from the two novels. The analysis of the collected data established that poor parenting characterized by lack of parental guidance resulted in indisciplined children who frequently engaged in drug and substance abuse. This study laid the basis of the current paper which explored the various parenting styles employed by the parents in different historic times and challenges of parenting which were experienced in each period.

The literature reviewed to this extent suffices for one to conclude that there are identifiable parenting issues addressed in Swahili literary works. Therefore, the current paper served as an avenue for generating information on how the selected Swahili novels portray parenting.

V. METHODOLOGY

This study employed descriptive research design. Stratton (2021) opines that descriptive research design is an appropriate research design when the intention of the researcher is to describe phenomenon as it is. Edwin (2019) also concurs to these assertions by positing that a descriptive research design suits a study that seeks to describe the variables being studied as they exist without necessarily manipulating the variables and attempting to establish the causations among the variables. This research design was deemed appropriate for use in this paper because the paper aimed to describe parenting as it is portrayed in the three selected novels which were written in three different historic times. In description of the portrayal of parenting, the analysis explored the types of parenting evident in each novel and the challenges of parenting as per each novel.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Content analysis technique was used to collect data from the three selected novels namely Rosa Mistika, Nguvu ya Sala and Mtoto wa Mama. During the process of collecting data, sentences and phrases which depicted parenting in each of the novels were quoted, analyzed accordingly and discussion given in line with the propositions of realism theory. The data was analyzed descriptively and emerging themes in regard to parenting were identified. The findings were presented in line with the objectives of the paper.

VI. RESULTS OF THE STUDY

This section presents the findings of this paper in themes which are in line with the objectives of the paper.

PORTRAYAL OF PARENTING IN ROSA MISTIKA NOVEL (KEZILAHABI, 1971).

Rosa Mistika novel was selected to represent the period of 1970's. The main character in this novel is a girl whose name is Rosa Mistika. This character underwent so many challenges during parenting. Due to strictness of the parents and other unfavourable prevailing circumstances, Rosa Mistika ended up committing suicide. This section presents results regarding portrayal of parenting in reference to this novel.

PARENTING STYLES IN THE NOVEL

The main parenting style which was identified in this novel is authoritarian style. This is a parenting style which is adopted when parents set strict rules to be adhered to by the children and leave no room for discussion with the children. In some instances, the parents who adopt this parenting style set expectations which are too high to be achieved by their children. At the same time, the children are expected to comply or else be punished. In the novel being studied, Rosa Mistika's father practised authoritarian parenting style and set very tough rules which made the life for Rosa Mistika quite unbearable. According to the author, "Zakaria was quite strict in the parenting of his daughters(pg38)"

In instances when Rosa Mistika violated some of the set rules, she would be beaten mercilessly. The evidence to attest how Rosa Mistika was ruthlessly beaten by her father after reports emerged that she had been visited by a male friend may be drawn from this excerpt

Rosa came with a falling sheet. Before she could say anything, she was beaten and fell down. She tried to rise and run but...Rosa was beaten again and again. Blows were consistent till she started bleeding through the nose and mouth (pg6).

Rosa Mistika experienced many other similar treatments in her childhood. Due to this authoritarian parenting, Rosa Mistika was traumatised to the extent of fearing to form relationships with boys. The mistreatment she experienced from her father had far reaching effects as she could not befriend the boys which was the norm with the other girls who were her schoolmates at Rosary girls secondary school. The restrictions adversely affected Rosa Mistika and at a point when she experienced some sort of freedom, she could not responsibly manage the freedom. Instead, the freedom ruined her life. She developed sexual relationships with several men and even executed many abortions. When her plan to marry Charles failed, she became so frustrated that she decided to commit suicide. Her last words shortly before her demise were a confirmation that authoritarian parenting is a bad style of parenting. These last words were as follows:

Now am dying. Am dying. My life has been full of difficult experiences. I can now clearly testify that my parenting is the genesis of my problems. Not the parenting by my mother. But parenting by my father. My father really overprotected me. I was overprotected like the prison girls. When i got freedom, i was not able to use it. Deogratias, Thomas, Charles-have lost all of you. Goodbye Flora, goodbye Honorata, goodbye Stella, Sperantia, Emmanuel, goodbye. My father and my mother, am sorry if I have done something wrong (pg 91).

In the school context, authoritarian parenting style was also evident. Very punitive styles were used to instil discipline among learners. For instance, at Rosary girls secondary school where Rosa Mistika was schooling, the girls were administered very severe punishment. This excerpt from the novel illustrates how the girls were being punished just for making noise:

The following day, there was no learning in the class. The whole class was punished. all the students were instructed to take slashers. The sister instructed them to slash alal the vegetation near the building. They slashed till noon (pg 26).

When some girls were reported to be drunk, the excerpt below describes the nature of punishment that was administered on them

The girls were called, each one of them was punished to ferry 100 wheelbarrows of sand. Due to the length of distance upto where they were taking the sand, the energetic girls were able to ferry twenty wheelbarrows in a day (pg 27).

Inferring from the above excerpt, the girls would be punished for about five days. This kind of punishment outweighs the normal punishment which learners should be administered at a school.

CHALLENGES TO PARENTING

As per the analysis of the novel "Rosa Mistika", the noted challenges of parenting include domestic violence, poverty, drunkenness and denying children the necessary freedom. Domestic violence is manifested in Rosa Mistika's home whereby her father, Zakaria mistreats her mother, Regina. The author narrates that, "since Regina got married, she has never been happy due to being disturbed and molested by her husband for no good reasons. In the whole village of Namagondo, no other woman was being beaten daily like Regina (pg 1)." domestic violence negatively affected the women in execution of their parenting roles.

Poverty was identified as another challenge facing parenting in this novel. Rosa Mistika's family lived in abject poverty. Due to poverty, Rosa Mistika and her siblings lacked the basic needs. The author narrates that, '*Zakaria could not manage to build a decent house, the house where he lived with his children had no good roof (pg 6).*' The author further explains that, "during the rainy season, children were being rained on as if they were sleeping under a tree. Regina would cover her children with cow hides to protect them from the rains (pg 13)". When Rosa Mistika was admitted into secondary school, she could not join learning immediately due to fees challenges. Her mother was forced to indulge into illegal business of selling illicit brew known as 'mapuya.' indulgence into this business was driven by poverty.

Drunkenness was also a challenge that was identified. Due to excessive drinking, Zakaria became irresponsible parent. As the author explains, "*Regina wouldn't want to leave her children, in her absence, her husband would not take care of the children (pg 30)*". Due to excessive drinking, Zakaria neglected his teaching duties and consequently he was sacked from the profession as explained in this excerpt, "*long ago, Zakaria was a teacher but he was sacked due to drinking (pg 60)*". Drunkenness causes irresponsibility among the parents

and contributes to their failure in provision of basic needs for their children.

Finally, denying the children the necessary freedom by overprotecting them is a challenge to parenting. At Rosa Mistika's home, the girls experienced so many restrictions that they could not interact well with their friends. Over protection adversely affected the girls and they started manifesting deviant behaviours. The other noted effect of denying the children the necessary freedom is that once the children acquire the freedom which they had been denied for long, they may misuse the freedom. For instance, when Rosa Mistika acquired freedom away from the restrictive home environment, she became a drunkard and a very immoral person. The effect of this poor parenting caused her depression and eventually she committed suicide.

SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

There is a need to end domestic violence. Husbands should not mistreat their wives as Zakaria did to Regina. Instead, husbands and wives should engage in dialogue in order to promote good parenting and effectively resolve various issues which face the institution of marriage.

Poverty which renders parents unable to provide the basic needs to their children may be alleviated through hard work. In reference to this novel, Regina devotedly worked in cotton farming and cattle rearing. Her efforts enabled her to pay school fees and buy clothing for her children. All parents ought to be committed in work in order to end poverty. It is suggested that parents should reduce or completely stop drinking. This would give the parents adequate time for engaging in constructive activities which contribute to appropriate parenting for their children. Finally, there is a need for the parents to rethink the issue of overprotecting their children and grant the children the necessary freedom. It is not good to raise children in a family set up whereby they view themselves as slaves. However, parents and other caregivers should not be too permissive as it can also be destructive to the children.

PORTRAYAL OF PARENTING IN NGUVU YA SALA NOVEL (WAMITILA, 1999)

This novel was selected to help in analysis of how swahili literary works portrayed parenting in the 1990s. The narration of this novel is in the context of a family set up in the family of Richard Ngunze and his wife Nzisa. The main character in the novel is their daughter, Susan. In this novel, parenting is guided by religious teachings which promote dogmatism and discourage children from too much questioning. When Susan joined university, she started doubting the religious teachings as they deviated from the real life contexts. Susan ended up questioning his father and calling him to embrace realism. She even became an advocate who fought for the rights of women as well as changes in parenting styles.

PARENTING STYLES IN THE NOVEL

In analysis of the novel Nguvu ya Sala (1999), three parenting styles were identified. These are authoritarian, authoritative and permissive parenting styles. Authoritarian

parenting style is practised in this novel because the head of the family, Richard Ngunze was too harsh to the extent that his children feared him. Susan says “*i was convinced to ask my father, but i refrained because he was very harsh (pg 1).*” Due to this harshness, the children stayed uninformed because they were afraid of seeking for explanations. Richard Ngunze also practised authoritarian parenting style by caning his children. The author explains that the children were being caned for interacting with the other children in the neighbourhood who were not christians. Susan also explains that she was heavily punished for going to visit her friend Bethsheba. The excerpt given describes the nature of punishment that was administered on her

I experienced a blow on my left chin... before the pain subsided, i was struck on the right chin...My father took a walking stick which he had hidden behind the chair and started beating me.... (pg 23).

In addition, when Susan's sister, Roselyn became expectant, she was beaten and insulted too much by her father. The father went ahead and chased Roselyn away from his home for being a disgrace to the family.

Authoritative parenting style is also evident in the novel. APA (2023) asserts that authoritative parenting style entails raising children responsibly while fulfilling their needs and guiding them. The views and opinions of the children are also listened to and considered by the caregivers. Examples of the characters who embraced authoritative parenting style include Mary Kasiva, Susan's mother. This mother counselled the children to live in line with the christian teachings. The mother also allowed the children to question her for clarification on various issues. For instance, Mary Kasiva was questioned by her children why their father does not permit them to play with the other children in the neighbourhood and her response was as follows, “*those children have bad manners... they are not christians (pg 2)*” authoritative parenting also calls for offering guidance and counselling services to the children. In different instances, Mary Kasiva would offer guidance to her children. For example, when Susan was leaving home to go to join secondary school, her mother advised her as follows; “*Behave well and do not ashame your father (pg 60)*” Similarly, Mary Kasiva also issued some pieces of advice to her daughter while she was preparing to join university. Authoritative parenting style has positive impacts on the children's development as it offers principles which guide the children in their daily lives.

Permissive parenting style was also identified in this novel. Permissive parenting style is adopted by parents who love their children too much and do not set any restrictive measures to bind their children. The behaviour patterns of some girls who schooled with Susan such as Juni, Rose Mafali and Bethsheba are indicators of children raised by permissive parents. For, Rose Mafali was immoral to an extent of encouraging Susan to have sexual relationship with their teacher whose name was Octavian Birundu. Susan, who had been well raised by her mother was against this immoral act. Juni and Bethsheba saw no need to work hard in academics. Juni argued that she should rest in the dormitory instead of reading. This is contrary to Susan who worked hard in her studies as advised by her mother. As a result of permissive parenting, the author explains that Bethsheba who had little

interest in education ended up indulging into early marriage (pg 139).

CHALLENGES FACING PARENTING

In relation to this novel, the challenges facing parenting include religious dogmatism and irresponsibility among some parents. Religious dogmatism causes people to deviate from realism. According to Susan, his father Richard Ngunze was so confined to religion that he could not give his children a chance to express their views to him. Susan explains this scenario as follows:

“We all needed to be understood. We and our generation. To a great extent, i feel that our father failed to understand this because o-f his so much indulgence in religion. To him, the most important aspect was following religious teachings and believing in the power of prayer” (pg. 188).

The parents who don't embrace realism fail to understand and guide their children appropriately. Therefore, their strictness and adherence to religion results in poor parenting among their children.

Irresponsibility among some parents has also been identified as a challenge to parenting. In reference to this novel, Mary Kasiva has been depicted as a partly neglectful participant in parenting. This mother has left most of the parenting roles to be executed by the father. As a mother, she does not adequately participate in parenting as it is expected of her. Some indications of non-participatory approach towards parenting may be drawn from her answers to her children. For instance, when she was questioned as to why they should not play with the children in the neighbourhood, she answered “*your father does not allow you to play with those children (pg2).*” In another scenario, when Susan came home late from her visit to Bethsheba, her mother asked her, “*my daughter, why do you want to get me into trouble? What would you tell your father? (pg 22).*” These two instances depict an uninvolved parent who does not take up her roles in parenting. Instead, she has left the responsibilities to be undertaken by the father only.

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

In order to mitigate the identified challenges, two strategies have been proposed. These are creation of awareness among caregivers and ensuring that religious teachings are appropriate and do not promote dogmatism. Creation of awareness among caregivers on appropriate parenting style which is associated with positive outcomes was suggested to be a good strategy in addressing the noted challenges. Awareness among the parents can be created through various forums where parents are engaged such as school meetings, public participation forums and religious gatherings. Parents who are well informed understand the pros and cons of each parenting style and are in a position to choose the appropriate parenting style for their children.

Ensuring that religious teachings are appropriate and do not promote dogmatism was also suggested as a n appropriate strategy for addressing this challenge. There is a need to advise parents who are strict followers of a certain religion at the expense of realism. As they embrace religion, they need to have a realistic view of the world coupled with some level of

understanding and embrace the virtues while handling some matters regarding parenting and guiding their children.

PORTRAYAL OF PARENTING IN MTOTO WA MAMA NOVEL (ADAM SHAFI, 2018)

Mtoto wa mama (1999) novel was selected in this study to help analyze how parenting is currently portrayed in Swahili works. The parenting styles as well as the challenges to parenting evident in the novel were analyzed. The possible solutions were also suggested. The novel is narrated in a family context and parenting is one of the main themes in the novel. Saburi, the main character in the novel is the daughter of Shauri and Zamda. Raising of Saburi was mostly undertaken by Zamda while his husband Shauri was in prison after committing murder of an auctioneer. When Saburi grew up, she organized to free her father from prison and the success of her plan resulted in reunion and a new dawn to their family.

PARENTING STYLES

The parenting styles which were identified in this novel were authoritative and permissive styles. Shauri is one of the characters who was raised through permissive parenting style. The author narrates that Shauri inherited money, buildings, parcels of land and precious jewels from his parents who were very rich. The author further explains that Shauri lived lavishly. Due to poor parenting, he would not listen to the advices that people tried to offer to him. Instead, "he viewed the advisors as mad people who were disturbing him with their noise (pg 3)." Such trait of rejecting advice is common among people who were raised under permissive parenting style with little or no advice given to them.

Saburi was also exposed to permissive parenting. After the death of Mzee Hamisi who had housed Saburi and her mother, they were forced to vacate the house by people who claimed to be the late Mzee's relatives. Due to various challenges, the two had to part ways; Zamda went to work at her father's house in disguise while Saburi went to live in a rented room at Njia Kuu area. Saburi had no one to control him and would even spend a day with drug addicts. Since the drug revellers were abusing drugs of different kinds, one may be persuaded to conclude that these individuals were victims of poor parenting.

Authoritative parenting was also evident in the novel. Zamda had raised Saburi using this parenting style prior to their separation that happened after the death of Mzee Hamisi. Authoritative parenting style entailed disciplining Saburi while being considerate and listening empathetically to the boy. For example, after quarreling and caning Saburi for wrong doing, the author explains that Zamda developed motherly feelings and started thinking why her son was suffering. Some of her thoughts are expressed in the following excerpt,

If his father was present, her son would not be a victim to ferrying goods for people and moving around the streets to sell bread (pg 41)

These thoughts indicate a considerate parent who is concerned with her son and desires that he gets the best provisions without much straining.

Authoritative parenting is also evident in many other instances whereby Zamda was offering pieces of advice to Saburi. For example, she advised him as follows; "*my son, be contented though you have problems. Never steal or pick anybody else's item*" (pg 42). This piece of advice was encouraging Saburi to be satisfied with whatever he has. In another instance, Zamda advised Saburi as follows, "*i see you are energetic but you should not fight with your friends*" (pg 60). Offering such pieces of advice is an indication that such a parent adopts authoritative parenting style. The parent disciplines the child, listens to the views of the child and guides the child on how to behave well.

Zamda herself had also been raised under an authoritative parenting style. The author describes Zamda's parenting as follows; "*Shauri married Zamda, the daughter of Mr. Hababuu. She was a woman who had been raised well, kept indoors and was not much exposed to external influence*" (pg 10). The effect of this type of parenting was also evident in how Zamda related with her husband. Even when they were experiencing challenges in life as a result of running bankrupt, Zamda's reactions are described as follows, "*Zamda who was well raised and trained to trust in fate saw all this as their fate*" (pg 12). This way, Zamda patiently lived well with her husband till the time when her husband was imprisoned. Given that Zamda's husband, Shauri had immoral behaviours, a lady who was not well raised may not withstand living with him in marriage. Zamda's patience in marriage may be interpreted as an indicator of being raised well by parents who advised her on how to endure challenges in life.

CHALLENGES TO PARENTING

The main challenges to parenting which were identified in reference to this novel were single parenting and separation among the parents. Saburi experienced single parenting after the imprisonment of his father Shauri. Shauri murdered an auctioneer who had been sent to auction his house. After the incident, Shauri was imprisoned while Zamda was left with the responsibility of raising Saburi alone. Zamda could not manage to provide her son with all the basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter. Zamda moved to be housed by Mzee Hamisi. The house in which Zamda and her son lived is described as follows, "*the house in which they lived was not a house that could be regarded as a house. It was just a shed roofed with makuti*" (pg 7). The author further explains that Zamda and her son sometimes missed food and would rely on little provision from Mzee Hamisi or sleep hungry. Lack of basic needs are indicators of challenges associated with single parenting.

Separation among the parents was also identified as a challenge of parenting. Zamda experienced separation from her husband following the imprisonment of the latter. This situation forced Zamda to play the role of both mother and father and the situation was quite challenging.

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

Appropriate guidance and counseling strategies should be put in place to ensure that children are equipped with the necessary coping skills and ways of addressing various challenges which they may be facing. The parents should engage in income generating activities such as small scale businesses as Zamda was doing in order to alleviate poverty.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

As established in this study, parenting styles as portrayed in swahili novels changes from one period to another. The period of the 1970's which is represented by Rosa Mistika (1971) novel was dominated by authoritative parenting style which was a common practice at school and at home. Poverty, excessive drinking and denying children freedom were the common challenges to parenting during this period.

In the 1990s, which was represented by Nguvu ya Sala (1999) novel, authoritarian, authoritative and permissive parenting styles were common. However, authoritative parenting style dominated most of the parenting scenes. Religious dogmatism which blinded some parents and misguided them in execution of their roles was the main challenge to parenting.

Mtoto wa Mama (2018) novel which represents the present period portrayed authoritarian and permissive parenting styles as the common styles currently applied by parents and caregivers. Permissive parenting was adopted in most cases. Single parenting, poverty and separation among the parents were noted as key challenges to parenting.

Generally, the dominant parenting style changes from one period to another. Similarly, the challenges to parenting also change from period to another. Hence studying the portrayal of parenting by analyzing the novels written in different periods gives a nuanced understanding of the dynamics in parenting styles as well as the varied challenges associated with parenting.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper offers the following recommendations. First, the parents should adopt authoritative parenting style because it has less negative effects on the growing children compared to authoritarian and permissive parenting styles. Whereas authoritarian parenting style exerts much pressure and sets high expectations which may cause children to rebel, permissive parenting style on the other hand gives the children too much freedom which may predispose them to bad behaviours hence ruining their morals.

It is recommended that both parents should be committed towards raising their children. None of the parents should fail to execute the responsibility which appertains to such parent.

Parents should embrace realism and avoid the religious teachings which promote dogmatism. Religious dogmatism blinds some parents and bars them from embracing perspectives which are essential for effective raising of children.

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