

# Indicators Of Parental Negligence In Selected Swahili Novels: An Analysis Of Rosa Mistika And Nguvu Ya Sala

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**Abstract:** *This paper examined ways in which parental negligence has been indicated in two selected Swahili novels namely Rosa Mistika (1971) and Nguvu ya Sala (1999). The two novels have delved into the issue of parenting. Therefore, a critical analysis was done to evaluate how both mothers and fathers execute their parenting roles in order to establish the unaddressed gaps in parenting which are the indicators of parental negligence. This study analyzed the indicators of parental negligence in Rosa Mistika novel and to examine and identify the indicators of parental negligence in Nguvu ya Sala novel. The study was guided by Psychoanalytic theory which borrows from the ideas of Sigmund Freud and Realism theory which was advanced by Flaubert (1850). Data collection was done in the library using content analysis method. The two selected novels were thoroughly read through while doing a critical analysis of the character traits of the identified characters and identifying the emerging themes in each novel. The role of each of the identified characters in the plot development was also examined. Books, journals, Magazines and electronic resources were referred to in order to amass extra information that was relevant to this study. This study established that there are different indicators of parental negligence in each of the novels. In the Rosa Mistika novel, it was established that the key indicators of parental negligence are failure by the parents to provide basic needs, absentee fathers and denying children freedom. In Nguvu ya Sala novel, it was established the three key indicators of parental negligence were ineffective communication, permissive parenting and religious dogmatism. The conclusions are given along with the researcher's recommendations.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Parenting has been defined by Virasiri et al. (2011) as an act of rearing a child or children while demonstrating care and love and offering guidance that is needed for optimal growth of the child from birth until adulthood. Inferring from this definition, parenting encompasses provisions for the children's basic needs such as food, shelter and clothing and secondary needs such as education. Kerre (2020) posits that parenting should be viewed as a complex process that involves parents and their children as the key actors and affects mental, social and psychological development of the children. Kerre further argues that parenting affects the children's character development.

As Elsayed (2024) asserts, parenting is a significant pillar in building a strong society. Accordingly, the society relies on parents and parent figures to instill social values among the children hence promoting awareness among them on their culture and the role they should play in building their society. The significance of parenting in societal development has been emphasized much by Bush et al. (2022) who argues that

parenting is a fundamental component to be considered for the prosperity of the society. As per the assertions by Njogu and Chimerah (1999) on the origin of literary works, their origin may be traced from the society and their significance in describing societal issues must be underscored. The highlighted societal issues which may be described in literary works include education, crime, relationships, parenting, economic and political issues. These assertions place parenting at the centre as the key societal issue which calls for close attention among scholars of literary works.

Since parenting and society are inseparable, swahili literary works which are based within the societal context have explored the issue of parenting. For instance, swahili novels such as Asali Chungu, (Said A. Mohamed), Rosa Mistika (kezilahabi), Anasa (King'a la), Nguvu ya Sala (Wamitila, 1999), Fahari ya Mateso (oyoo) and Mtoto wa Mama (2018) bear themes which touch aspects of parenting such as parenting styles, challenges to parenting, parental negligence and roles of both mothers and fathers in raising children. The incorporation of the issues of parenting in swahili literary works has led to emergence of research studies which look at

parenting as portrayed in swahili literary works. Some of the notable research studies include Kerre (2020) who did an analysis of selected Swahili novels with the aim of establishing how the society contributes to identity among the children. Lenah and Murithi (2025) did a study that focussed on how parenting is portrayed in Rosa Mistika, Nguvu ya Sala and Mtoto wa Mama novels by delving into aspects namely; parenting styles and challenges to parenting. Msingala (2025) also did analysis of Rosa Mistika novel and explained the adverse effects that poor parenting has on children.

Similarly, Wanjala (2015) studied parental negligence was depicted in three selected swahili novels namely Asali Chungu, Anasa and Fahari ya Mateso. As per Wanjala (2015) findings, parental negligence was well portrayed in Asali Chungu and Anasa novels. In reference to Asali Chungu novel, parental negligence was evident in that parents were not offering their children adequate guidance and counseling on good conduct and there was ineffective communication between parents and their children. Additionally, parents raised their children in environments which were dominated by domestic violence. This adversely affected the children's growth and development. Wanjala's analysis of parenting in Anasa novel points at granting children excess freedom and failure to teach the children societal norms as the key indicators of negligence in parenting. Wanjala's study significantly contributed to the current analysis by offering guidelines on identification of the indicators of parental negligence in swahili novels.

The past studies have set a basis for the current study which investigates

Parental negligence as an aspect of poor parenting by referring to two selected novels namely Rosa Mistika and Nguvu ya Sala.

## II. THEORETICAL FRAME WORK

Two theories will be used to provide a comprehensive framework for analyzing the aspect of parental negligence in the selected novels. The two theories are psychoanalytic literary theory and Realism theory.

### PSYCHOANALYTIC LITERARY THEORY

This theory was developed from the ideas of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis theory (Freud, 1964). The theory applies the ideas of sigmund freud into literature. Freud (1964) asserts that writings presented in various literary works present what is inside the unconscious mind and critical analysis of the literary works helps to uncover the deeper meanings and the themes in the writings. Freud further argues that how one interprets the literary work will determine the understanding of the character traits of the individuals mentioned in the work as well as the themes which are presented in the work.

As per the tenets of this theory, an individual's personality development is largely a function of the relationships with the parents and other members of the community and the childhood experiences. The nature of the

childhood experiences is determined by the parenting styles which are employed by the parents and care givers. Therefore, a child may have good and pleasant experiences or in other circumstances, a child may have derailing experiences which have adverse effects on growth and development. The derailing experiences emerge from parental negligence. Parental negligence has adverse effects on emotional stability, behavioural patterns and identity formation.

Hossain (2017) argued that psychoanalytic literary theory is one of the modern theories which can guide scholars when analysing literary works. In reference to swahili novels, character development of children whose lives are narrated in the texts is determined by the nature of parenting. In the literary contexts, parental negligence may result to insecurity, rebellion, anger and psychological distress. These effects affect the development of the children and they transit to adulthood with the effects. The appropriateness of this theory in this study was to explain the effects of parental negligence on the children's development.

### REALISM THEORY

Realism Theory was advanced by Gustave Flaubert in 1850. The theory explains that literary works should reflect real-life situations as they occur in society. It emphasizes that characters, themes, and events in a literary text should be consistent with the realities of the author's environment. In support of this view, Wamitila (2003) argues that Swahili novels should portray aspects that are evident in society through appropriate choice of characters, context, and themes. Realism Theory was therefore useful in this study because it helped in examining how parental negligence is presented in the selected novels in relation to real social life.

The study relied on the main tenets of Realism Theory in analyzing the two selected novels. First, the theory holds that literary works should represent reality through the interactions of characters, which bring out themes relevant to society. Second, it argues that characters in literary works should resemble normal human beings in their language, behavior, and daily activities. Third, the theory emphasizes that authors should identify social challenges and analyze their causes. These principles made the theory appropriate to guide the study in identifying the indicators of parental negligence in the two novels.

## III. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

There are many past studies which looked at different aspects of parenting as portrayed in Swahili literary works. This section explores some of the literary works.

In analysis of Chozi Langu and Dunia Mashaka makuu novels, Kerre (2020) attempted to highlight the indicators of parental negligence. This study was descriptive in nature and it was grounded on the tenets of realism theory. This study established that parents embraced different parenting styles. The study further established that adoption of permissive parenting style was a key indicator of parental negligence. The children who were raised using this parenting style were given unnecessary freedom with parents paying little attention

to them. The parenting style had a negative effect on the children's development. This study laid a good foundation for the current study which sought to analyse other three novels to identify more indicators of parental negligence.

A study that was done by Wanjala (2015) explored the portrayal of parenting in Swahili novels with reference to *Asali Chungu*, *Anasa* and *Fahari ya Mateso* novels. One of the key aspects of parenting which the researcher delved into was parental negligence. Parental negligence was investigated in the context of *Anasa* and *Asali Chungu* novels. Content analysis was used to collect the required data. Analysis of the data revealed that parental negligence was manifested in the two novels. The various ways which indicate parental negligence include failure by the parents to advise their children, ineffective communication between children and the parents, raising children in hostile environments where domestic violence is common and granting children unnecessary freedom. The four indicators of parental negligence lead to raising of children who have degraded morals and are irresponsible.

Parental negligence was also studied by Kananu (2020) in an investigation that targeted to analyse *tumaini* (2006) and *Dunia Mashaka Makuu* (2004) novels. Applying descriptive research design, the researcher collected the necessary data on the two selected novels using content analysis. The findings of this study were that parental negligence as an aspect of poor parenting was indicated by lack of guidance. The parents in both contexts were not offering guidance and counseling services to their children. The outcome of parental negligence was raising children who engaged in drug and substance abuse. The study by Kananu emphasizes that failure to offer guidance to children should be classified as a key indicator of parental negligence because the latter significantly contributes to moral and social development of individuals.

Lenah and Murithi (2025) studied how parenting is portrayed in Swahili novels namely *Rosa Mistika*, *Nguvu ya Sala* and *Mtoto wa Mama*. In this analysis, the key focus was on parenting styles adopted in each of the novels and the challenges to parenting which were evident in each novel. The study was anchored on the theoretical underpinning of realism theory and data was collected from the library using content analysis. This study established that permissive parenting style was associated with parental negligence. The study also established that some challenges that affected parenting also indicated parental negligence. This study is significant to the current study because it laid a good foundation for the current study whose aim was to study parental negligence as depicted in the same three novels. Therefore, the current study borrowed some ideas from this study.

Ponera (2024) did an analysis of *Rosa Mistika* novel with the aim of studying how the novel portrays parenting. This study was guided by realism theory and data was collected using a content analysis method. This study established that most of the challenges young people come across and affect their social and emotional development emanate from poor parenting. The study further highlighted the consequences of negligence in parenting which include children being denied their rights and privileges, unwanted pregnancies among girls, isolation among children and some children getting infected with diseases.

#### IV. METHODOLOGY

This study applied descriptive research design. Descriptive research design has been described by Stratton (2021) as a n appropriate research design to embrace when the researcher intends to describe the phenomena as it is. As Dahiya et al. (2025) explains, descriptive research methodology involves using naturalistic data as it is and intervention or manipulation of the variables is not done. In the context of this paper, the aim of the study was to analyze the two selected novels and identify the key indicators of parental negligence in each of the novels. There was no manipulation of the variables being studied. Therefore, descriptive research design was appropriate for this study.

#### DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Collection of data from the two selected novels employed content analysis method. This involved thorough reading of the selected novels. During the reading, sentences and phrases which indicated negligence in parenting were identified and highlighted. The sentences and the phrases were quoted and analyzed accordingly with the discussions given in consistency with the objectives of the study. Data analysis was done in line with the objectives of the study and findings were presented descriptively using narratives.

#### V. RESULTS OF THE STUDY

This section presents the findings on the indicators of parental negligence as it was established in the analysis of *Rosa Mistika* and *Nguvu ya Sala* novels.

#### PARENTAL NEGLIGENCE IN ROSA MISTIKA NOVEL

##### *SYNOPSIS OF THE NOVEL*

*Rosa Mistika* novel was written by Euphrase Kezilahabi and was first published in 1971. The main character in the novel is *Rosa Mistika*. Her parents were *Zakaria* and *Regina*. Her sisters were *Flora*, *Honorata*, *Stella* and *Sperantia*. The novel is divided into two sections. The first section which has seven chapters describes the life of *Rosa Mistika* from birth till she completed her secondary education. The second section has five chapters which majorly focus on *Rosa Mistika*'s life after being affected by parental negligence. The section delves into how *Rosa Mistika* experienced moral degradation, failed in life and eventually committed suicide. As Ponera (2024) argues, the novel is written in a simple and straightforward language which may be easily understood by the readers.

##### *INDICATORS OF PARENTAL NEGLIGENCE*

This subsection discusses some indicators of parental negligence which were established in the analysis of the *Rosa Mistika* novel.

### FAILURE IN PROVISION OF ESSENTIAL NEEDS

In the theory of human motivation, Maslow (1943) described essential needs as the basic, physiological and safety needs. Inferring from this assertion, essential needs include food, water, shelter, clothing and security. The international labour organisation (1976) further emphasized that essential needs are the minimum requirements that guarantee an individual decent standard living. The needs include the physical necessities such as food and shelter, and also access to education and sanitation. Majorly, it is the duty of the parents and other care givers to provide essential needs to their children and failure to do so amounts to parental negligence.

In reference to the Rosa Mistika novel, it was established that Rosa Mistika's parents were not able to provide essential needs to their children. The identified essential needs which they were unable to provide include decent housing and education. The house in which Zakaria's family lived was in a dilapidated state. The author says, "Zakaria was not able to build a decent house. In the house in which he lived together with his children, stars would laugh at them everyday during the night" (pg 6). This implies that the roof was worn out with many holes through which one would see the stars. The author further explains that the children suffered a lot during the period of rains. For instance, the author narrates as follows:

*"That night it rained heavily. Gosh! The house was like a tree. The roof leaked profusely. There were cow hides in the house. Regina picked the hides and covered the children with them. The rain drops played on the surface of the hides" (pg 13).*

As the author explains, the children also lacked clothing such as blankets which would cover them for warmth. That's why the mother opted to cover the children with the hides. Since decent shelter and clothing are some of the basic needs which children must be provided with, failure to provide such is an indicator of parental negligence.

Failure to support the children's education is also an indicator of parental negligence. In the Rosa Mistika novel, Zakaria neglected his duty of paying school fees and instead indulged in drinking. According to the author, "Zakaria was a teacher but he was dismissed because of drinking. His neighbours argued that he was more concerned with beer than he was concerned with his children. He wasn't contributing anything for school fees. The children would only remain in school due to the effort of their mother. She worked hard in cultivating cotton. The money she earned was utilized to buy the children clothes. (pg 6).

The author's assertion clearly indicates how Zakaria neglected his duties of paying school fees and buying the children clothes. Zakaria burdened Regina with the responsibility of making the provisions. In order to make ends meet, Regina was forced to adopt poor parenting strategies at the point where she introduced her daughters into selling locally made illegal brew in order to raise money for school fees.

As an indication of parental negligence, when Regina sold a cow in order to take Rosa Mistika to secondary school, Regina's father took the money and spent it at the drinking dens. When Regina followed Zakaria to the drinking dens, the author explains as follows, "Ndalo informed her clearly that

Zakaria was buying people brew anyhow. Even those who did not know him benefited. He had spent almost fifty shillings" (pg 180). With such negligence, children even lacked the hope of proceeding to secondary school. This is demonstrated in the text as the author says, "it was now apparent that Rosa would not enroll in secondary school." given that the father who is much relied upon in familial context demonstrated parental negligence. The parenting duties were being undertaken by the mother only.

### ABSENTEE FATHER

Austin (2020) elaborates that the concept of absentee fathers refers to fathers who are physically, emotionally or socially absent from the life of their children and show little or no active participation in key parenting roles such as provisions, protection, guidance and emotional support. This explanation implies that absentee fathers do not regularly interact with their children and their role in growth and development of the children is insignificant. An absentee father is an indicator of parental negligence.

In Rosa Mistika novel, the conduct of Zakaria warrants him to be regarded as an absentee father. According to the author, "Regina never wanted to leave behind her children, without her, her husband could not take care of them.(pg3). As per this assertion, one of the reasons why Zakaria would not take care of the children was because the time which he would spend interacting with the children was spent in drinking dens. As established earlier on, apart from unavailability at home, he was also not able to provide the basic needs for the children such as food and water.

Due to absenteeism, Zakaria was not available to guide and counsel his children. As explained in the novel, Zakaria would come home late at night while drunk. He would force Regina to wake the children up. Then he would entertain them by urging them to sing and dance as he directed them (pg3). Zakaria's actions indicate disturbance to his children and that is an indicator of parental negligence because it deprives children their sleep. Having lacked adequate time for guiding and counseling his children, Zakaria opted to impose too strict rules to his children. The rules left no room for discussion with his children. This strictness caused him to fail in parenting. For instance, when Stella informed him that Rosa had received twenty shillings and a letter from Charles, the author narrates, "Zakaria got angry. Rosa was called immediately. Rosa came with the sheet she had wrapped herself with almost falling. Before she could say anything, she struck and fell down. She was slapped continuously till blood started oozing from her nose and mouth" (pg 6). If Zakaria was not neglectful in parenting, he would not have punished Rosa that much. Instead, he would have listened to her and advised her on appropriate ways of handling boy-girl relationships.

Parental negligence caused Rosa Mistika to suffer psychological trauma when she returned home while weak and having passed through life ruining experiences. When Zakaria was informed that the state in Rosa Mistika had returned home, Zakaria argued, "who is Rosa? A prostitute cannot be my visitor or my child." (pg 57).

These words implied rejecting a child at a time when the child needed parental care quite much. The author describes Rosa Mistika's situation as follows, "*This time, Rosa was like a prodigal son. She needed warm reception and passionate rebuke. A thought that there were people who were concerned with her was adequate to help relax and be happy*(pg 57). If Zakaria was not negligent, he would have supported Regina in helping Rosa Mistika to develop self acceptance and reform.

As a repercussion of Zakaria's negligence, Rosa Mistika finally decided to commit suicide. Her last words shortly before taking away her life blamed her father for failure in parenting. The words were as follows;

*"Now I am dying. I am dying now. My life has been quite difficult. Now I see that my parenting was the genesis of my problems. Parenting is not parenting by my mother; but parenting by my father. It's true that my father over-guarded me... when i got freedom, I was not able to use it."* (pg91).

If Zakaria was present to listen to Rosa Mistika and give her appropriate guidance, she would not have committed suicide as it happened. Otherwise, his guidance would have transformed Rosa Mistika's thoughts, change her view of life and reform to live a more fulfilling life.

#### DENYING CHILDREN FREEDOM

Gill(2019) explains that denying children freedom is evident in incidences where children are barred from interacting with others or participating in activities that involve children. When children are barred from interacting with other children, they experience isolation and distress. In some instances, they may rebel against the instructions and start fighting for their freedom. As Cherry (2025) asserts, denying children the necessary freedom is a quality which is associated with authoritative parenting and it's an indicator of parental negligence as the parents are inconsiderate of their children's need to socialize.

In Rosa Mistika novel, many incidences of denying children freedom are evident. When Rosa Mistika was visited by Charles, her father beat her seriously and went ahead to warn Charles with the following words, "*Charles, from today, stop visiting my daughter* "(Pg 8). This warning made Rosa Mistika stop interacting with boys. When Rosa Mistika joined secondary school, she told her friend Thereza how she hated interacting with boys. She told her, "*I don't like talking to boys...they dont speak any truth.... I dont even want them to touch me.*" (pg 21). These words imply the effects of being denied freedom to interact with boys right from an early age. However, the consequences of denying girls freedom are evident. Some girls opted to fight for their freedom. The author attests this with the following words, "*Zakaria denied his daughters light at the time when they needed it very much. He beat and denied them a chance to speak to any boy. Just like a tree grows tall, they grew tall to access light and could not be warned by anyone*" (pg 47). This excerpt is evidence that denying children freedom is an aspect of poor parenting because at some point, the children defy the rules.

As Rosa Mistika was growing up, the father failed to listen to her. When she got freedom, while at college, she misused the freedom and ruined her life. Later she decided to commit suicide. Her final blame was the being over-guarded

and denial of freedom by her father. The author explained that Rosa Mistika concluded that her downfall was contributed by the strictness of her father in the early stages of life and eventually her later life got ruined and irreparable (pg 91). If Rosa Mistika was not denied freedom by the parents, would have learned responsible behaviours and got adequate experience on how to handle freedom. This way, her life may not have been ruined and she would not have thought to terminate her life.

At Mwanza girls secondary school where Flora was studying, the students were also denied freedom. The girls were being guarded by police officers and they had nicknamed their school "prison". When Rosa Mistika went to the school to visit her sister, the following thoughts trickled in her mind,

"These are the things I don't like, being guarded like animals. They think that this is the answer. They think that is a way of preventing girls from becoming expectant. These people don't know" (pg 61).

When Rosa Mistika met her sister Flora, Flora told her, "*Rosa, our school is funny, we are guarded like little children. They think even during midterm they will guard us. Many girls have become expectant and sent away from school* (pg62). The excerpt implies that denying children freedom does not necessarily prevent misbehaviours. The children will still misbehave under your guardianship. To avoid rebellion among children, teachers as some of the significant care givers in the society should be considerate and give students under their watch the necessary freedom. However, the students should not be given too much freedom as it may be detrimental to their moral and social development.

#### VI. PARENTAL NEGLIGENCE IN REFERENCE TO NGUVU YA SALA NOVEL

##### SYNOPSIS OF THE NOVEL

Nguvu ya Sala novel was written by Wamitila and was first published in 1999. The novel's narration revolves around the family of Richard Ngunze and his wife Mary Kasiva. The two parents were blessed with four daughters namely Susan, Redempta, Jacqueline and Roselyn. Richard Ngunze raised his children in line with the biblical religious teachings and strictly forced his children to follow the teachings. Richard Ngunze was against the cultural values of his society.

As a father and a leader of his family, he taught his children to believe in the power of prayer and refrain from interacting with other children who were not following the christian religious teachings. When Susan was enrolled into the university, she started questioning her father's teachings and the authoritarian parenting style her father had adopted. She fought religious dogmatism until her father changed his firm stand and embraced reality.

##### INDICATORS OF PARENTAL NEGLIGENCE

This section delves into presenting the indicators of parental negligence which were identified in the analysis of Nguvu ya Sala novel.

### INEFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Hawa et al.(2020) defines ineffective communication as reduced attention among the parents towards their children. Ineffective communication leads to communication crisis which is characterized by reduced face to face interactions, weakened emotional bonds and widened generational communication gaps. Hawa further argues that ineffective communication signifies parental negligence and has adverse effects on the growth and development of the children. Children raised in families dominated by ineffective communication tend to have many unclarified issues because they do not get a chance to discuss with their parents.

In reference to Nguvu ya Sala novel, there are many incidences of ineffective communication. Richard Ngunze's children were given instructions and teachings by their father but they were not allowed to ask questions. Since the main teachings concentrated on the power of prayer and the need to adhere to God's will, Susan wanted to enquire more about God's will. However, she did not ask. As evidenced in the novel, she says, *"I was convinced to ask my father but I could not manage because my father was very harsh"* (pg 1 ). Due to the harshness of the father, the children could not ask for clarification about the religious teachings by their father.

Additionally, the father barred communication by discouraging the children from being inquisitive. During his teachings, Richard Ngunze emphasized that children who ask too many questions do not follow the Christian way of life. Due to this reason, when Susan was interested in knowing more about traditional sacrifices which are offered to gods, she thought of asking her father. However, she says, *"I was convinced to ask my father, but I stopped. He must be very much embarrassed. Quite recently, he had warned me against this behaviour of being inquisitive. He emphasized that the behaviour will lead to gossiping and gossip was not good for Christians"* (Pg 10). This implies that Susan stayed with unanswered questions; a problem that would have been solved if there were open channels of communication.

Mary Kasiva, Richard , Ngunze's wife, also employed her own strategies of discouraging children from asking questions. The aim of the discouragement was to reduce the tendency of the children to engage the parents in dialogues seeking to do a critical analysis of various issues including the religious teachings. When Susan disturbed her mother with a series of questions, the mother ignorantly answered, *"You cannot understand, you will realize when you grow up"* (pg2). This argument reprimands children who ask questions and requires them to follow teachings as they are as they wait to understand such issues when they grow up. This is a sort of ignorance because it discourages two way communication between parents and their children. Further, Mary Kasiva would keep quiet and just look at the child posing questions as a way of discouraging the behaviour of questioning. When Susan questioned her about the religious beliefs of her father, Susan explains, *"My mother just stared at me, she did not answer."* (pg 13). Though the two strategies served the intended purpose of discouraging questioning, they created ineffective communication which has detrimental effects on children who seek to know much about different issues as they grow.

### INSTILLING FEAR IN CHILDREN

Fear has been defined by Beckers et Al. (2023) as an adaptive emotion that mobilizes defensive resources when confronted by danger or when there is imminent incidence of danger in future. When parents instill fear among their children, the children feel insecure and uncomfortable in the presence of their parents. Other caregivers such as teachers can also instill fear among children.

In analysis of Nguvu ya Sala novel, Richard Ngunze instilled fear among his children. He instilled the fear through reprimands, caning the children and demonstrating anger. Richard Ngunze was also feared by the other members of the community because he had a virtue of not being very talkative as Susan explains, *"he was not very talkative, this virtue made many people fear and respect him."* (pg 5). When Susan compared how she feared parents and her teacher, she confessed as follows, *"I feared my father more than I feared my teachers"* (pg 4). Due to the fear, Susan revised and rehearsed the religious teachings offered by her father till she was sure that she cannot miss any aspect.

Fear also prevented Susan from expressing herself to her father. When she went to visit Bathsheba without permission, her father questioned her. However, she could not answer the posed questions. Instead, she confesses, *"I got scared, I feared my father and I knew I had nothing to do"* (pg 22). In this instance, Susan had points to argue out. However, due to fear, she could not express herself and she opted to lie to her father. on further questioning, Susan explains that fear spread throughout her body (pg 23). Having children stay at home in an environment dominated by fear for the father is an indicator of parental negligence because such a father is not concerned with the children's welfare.

At school, the students were instilled fear by some teachers. Susan explains that she and her fellow students in the class feared their Mathematics teacher who was known as Boniface Ngewa. Susan describes the Mathematics teacher as follows, *"He was a male teacher with a scaring appearance. He had an unkept beard that was never combed. His eyes were red."* (pg 15). The explanation given in this excerpt points at an image of a person who scares students. In addition to the scarring physical appearance, Boniface Ngewa was also feared by the students for caning them. Some of the students who were handled by the teacher experienced a lot of fear within the school context. Children's environments are either home or the school. When children are instilled with fear in both contexts, they feel insecure.

Mary Kasiva also demonstrated this aspect of parental negligence by instilling fear in Susan. When Susan came home late from visiting Bathsheba, her mother asked her, *"my daughter, why are you pushing me into trouble?"* (pg 22). This question cultivated a sense of guilt in Susan and she viewed herself as a great wrong doer. The mother went on and asked Susan, *"How will you explain to your father?"*(pg 22). This second question threatened Susan as it emphasized the intensity of punishment she was likely to receive from her father. Neglectful parents instill fear among their children not to do wrong but they do not take an opportunity of discussing the consequences of wrongdoing with their children.

## PERMISSIVE PARENTING

Permissive parenting was described by Cherry (2023) as a parenting style adopted by parents who raise their children with so much love, affection and without strict rules to guide their conduct. This parenting style produces indisciplined and irresponsible individuals who deviate from set rules frequently. Spock (1948) cautioned parents and care givers that permissive parenting style can only be an appropriate parenting style when parents are raising children without expectations of getting responsible individuals from them. Parents who are negligent in parenting have a high likelihood of adopting this parenting style.

In Nguvu ya Sala novel, characters such as Bathsheba, Juni, Rose Mafali and Fortunata were raised through a permissive parenting style. After analysing Fortunata's behaviour, Susan concluded, *"At their home, there must have been a lot of freedom"* (pg 43). Excess freedom is found in homes where parents have adopted a permissive parenting style. Children raised through permissive parenting style do not concentrate much on academics. They focus on building and maintaining opposite sex relationships. Rose Mafali emphasized that getting a boyfriend is being lucky. (pg 59). Juni on her side doesn't see the need to work hard in academics. As the other students were proceeding to the library for preps, she said, *"I am returning to the dormitory to relax"* (pg 60). This implies that she was not interested in working hard in her studies. Similarly, Bathsheba was not interested in academics. Susan describes her as follows, *"Bathsheba was in position twenty two. that did not bother her. She had repeatedly told me that she has no plans to further her studies. She did not understand the reasons for furthering her studies. According to her, it is men who should further their studies and not women who end up being house wives."*

The main reason why children raised permissively were indisciplined was lack of guidance and counselling from their parents. Therefore, such children do not understand the consequences of their decisions and actions. Being uninvolved in parenting and raising children permissively is an indicator of parental negligence.

## RELIGIOUS DOGMATISM

Religious dogmatism is a closed minded adherence and rigid and uncritical acceptance of religious beliefs and doctrines (Church, 2018). People who have religious dogmatism see religious teachings as absolute truth which should not be subjected to dialogue or questioning. According to them, the teachings should be followed as they are. This virtue discourages doing analysis or questioning the teachings. Bornstein et al. (2022) argues that emphasis on rearing children according to the religious teachings may have positive or negative effects on the children's development. Therefore, Bornstein called upon parents to exercise caution in order to ensure that their faith and religious teachings do not negatively affect their children.

Parents who embrace religious dogmatism may have problems with their children while raising them. In reference to Nguvu ya Sala novel, Richard Ngunze was adversely

affected by religious dogmatism that he lost touch with reality and could not understand his children. According to Susan's opinions, *"we all needed to be understood within the context of our time. To a great extent, I felt that our father failed to understand this based on the way he had indulged so much into his faith. To him, the most important thing to follow was to follow the religious teachings and trust in the power of prayer."* (pg 188). Failure to understand the children as a result of being blindfolded by religion amounts to parental negligence.

Religious dogmatism caused parents to bar their children from socializing with the other children in the neighborhood. Socialization promotes social development among children. Richard Ngunze and his wife discouraged their children from playing with children who did not hail from families that practice Christianity. When Siusan questioned her mother why it was wrong to go and play with Alice and Peter whom they meet at Sunday school, the mother answered, *"...but their family is not a Christian family"* (pg 2). This emphasis forced children to develop a negative attitude towards some children and became anti-social towards those children. Being a restrictive parent in a child's socialization results in psychological distress as the children do not understand why parents give them such treatment. This is attested in Susan's thoughts as she was being interrogated for visiting Bathsheba. Her thoughts were as follows, *"A section of my mind advised me that there was nothing wrong in my action. This section blamed my father for not realizing that I need time to interact with others just as the other children did"* (pg 23).

Religious dogmatism also saw Richard Ngunze fail in parenting when Roselyn became expectant. Due to Richard Ngunze's strictness, he chased away Roselyn because becoming expectant was deviancy from religious teachings. At this point, Susan courageously confronted her father and demonstrated how religious dogmatism was contributing to parental negligence as indicated in the following excerpt, *"Dad, i am not quarrelling you but i must tell you the truth... we should not let faith to blind us"* (pg 198).

She went further and told her father this, *"Dad, I see you also chase me away. However, I must say religion should not make people lack love for their children.' you cannot chase your child because of your faith"* (pg 198). The words of Susan significantly transformed her father to embrace realism and stopped being dogmatic towards religion. As a way of demonstrating having undergone transformation, Richard Ngunze accepted to go where her daughter Roselyn had been housed after being chased away from home and ensure that she unconditionally returns home.

## VII. CONCLUSIONS

This paper has established that there are different ways in which parents demonstrate parental negligence in the two selected novels. In the Rosa Mistika novel, the identified indicators of parental negligence were failure in provision of essential needs such as shelter, clothing and school fees, absentee father who failed to provide basic needs and to be available to guide and counsel the children and denying children the necessary freedom they need in their lives. In

analysis of *Nguvu ya Sala* novel, the established indicators of parental negligence were ineffective communication between the parents and the children, instilling fear among the children and religious dogmatism which blinded the parents and affected their efficiency in execution of parenting duties. In the two novels, most of the negligence was executed by the fathers. Though mothers were involved a bit, their non participation in the parenting was not very significant.

### VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper offers the following recommendations. First, it is recommended that parents should adopt an authoritative parenting style because it is the only style which lacks the aspect of parental negligence. Authoritarian parents fail to listen and advise their children while permissive parents have no control over their children, hence their children lack the appropriate guidance and support needed from the parents. Secondly, it is recommended that parents should embrace realism in order to avoid religious dogmatism which can cause them to approach issues blindly and eventually fail in parenting. Additionally, the parents and other care givers should ensure that child rearing environments such as home and schools are conducive for the children, therefore, they should ensure that in any circumstance, children are not instilled with fear. Finally, the parents should ensure that there are open channels for communication in order to facilitate sharing of ideas with their children as well as enabling children to share their concerns with their parents.

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