



## **Influence of Parenting Styles on Image of God Among Selected Students of Teresa Nuzzo Girls Secondary School, Kiambu County, Kenya.**

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55248/gengpi.4.1223.123437>

### **ABSTRACT**

Parenting style adopted by a parent in child rearing play a very significant role in shaping the development of a child and in refining their image of God. As a growing child begin to associate things in terms of images and symbols, their development of image of God could be associated with the good or bad experiences from their parents. This study examined the influence of parenting styles on the image of God among selected students of Teresa Nuzzo Girls Secondary School, Kiambu County, Kenya. The study used correlational design and purposive sampling technique with a sample size of 38 participants who were form three students, aged between 15-20 years old. Buri's Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) and Image of God Questionnaire developed by the researchers were used to collect data. The findings revealed that 44.6% of the participants were at authoritative parenting style, 31.1% of them under authoritarian parenting style, while 24.3% permissive parenting style. The study established that authoritarian parenting style has no significant relationship with image of God, permissive parenting negatively but significant correlated with image of God as a judge, and authoritative parenting significantly correlated with God of life, and God as a Parent. Regression analysis also show that parenting style influenced image of God at  $F(1,5550.719) = 1.160, P = 0.000$ .

Keywords: Parenting style, Image of God, Authoritative parenting, Authoritarian parenting, Permissive parenting

### **1. Introduction**

Influence of parenting styles on image of God is a topic of concern especially in a time today, when adolescents seem to grow up in a battlefield of social pressure, search for greater freedom, identity crisis, and limited role models and influence from media. Influence of parenting styles on an individual's perception and understanding of God is a complex and intriguing area of study within the realms of psychology, religion, and sociology.

In the context of this study, Authoritative style of parents sets limits but encourages. They are known to be warm and nurturing, experienced to treat their children with kindness thus promoting independence and likely to perceive God according to their experience with their parents (Aghi & Bhatia, 2021). consequently, making a child experience being loved, given life, forgiven, and parented positively. On the other hand, authoritarian style of parenting style is described to tends to set rigid rules, with little sensitivity towards child's emotional needs and stress obedience to authority which instills fear with possibility of high level of one feeling judged (Chou and Uata, 2012). Aghi and Bhatia (2021) views permissive parenting style to be overflowing in parental warmth but known to set not limit. These researchers also view this type of parenting as uninvolved parenting, with their children observed to have low levels of functioning in many areas and known to be more likely to exhibit delinquent behavior in schools as students (Aghi & Bhatia, 2021). This can also affect the way one may perceive or experience God.

The state of marriage in Kenya and parenting of digital generation is experienced to cause an arising alarm as highlighted by Okinda (2018). The increasing parental behavior of neglect, absenteeism, and emotional deprivation is observed by Achieng (2018) among today's busy parents to lead to coldness in matters of religion, feeling of an absent God and difficulty in being convinced of a presence of a loving God among the youth. It is therefore becoming evident that without strong moral upbringing, such pressure may lead to destructive behaviors such as drug abuse, sexual promiscuity, violence, and committing crime. At times, the negative experiences youth have in relationship with their parents has likelihood of them growing up with distorted image of God.

Image of God is defined as how people conceptualize and feel about God (Chou & Uata, 2012). The same researchers viewed image of God as an overarching mental presentation of God, that brings on board both cognitive and affective dimension since a greater part of parenting style is experienced through child's perception of parent or child's emotional relationship with the parent. This study intended to understand how parenting styles contributes to individuals' perception of God as a judge, merciful loving, as a parent, life giving God and possibility of perceiving God as a God of death among the youth especially among the selected form three students of Teresa Nuzzo girls Secondary School, Kiambu County, Kenya.

Levi (2011) describes parenting styles as the various ways in which parents behave, feel, or think in relation to child upbringing or rearing. They demonstrate practical attempts used by parents to control the behavior of their children by ensuring that they follow set standards of behavior. Diana Baumrid identifies three major parenting styles including authoritative, permissive and authoritarian (Kuppens & Ceulemans, 2019) as discussed in this study. Ebrahimi and Firoozi (2019) claim that various parenting styles, such as authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive, may exert distinct influences on a child's perception of God and spiritual development which is a concern in the contemporary world.

In the United States, a study by Chou and Uata (2012) sought to examine how parental discipline influenced one's God's image. The study focused on the degree to which the participants perceived God as forgiving, loving, available and trustworthy. The researchers compared the impacts of various parenting styles such as authoritarian, neglectful, authoritative, and permissive on how they affected child's view of God on later stages of life, especially at college level. Using students from a state university in Utah to complete the questionnaire, the results demonstrated a strong relationship between God's image and one's parenting style. However, the researchers noted that Women's image of God were more affected by different factors, they noted that for women, being raised in a happy family has a significant impact on perceiving God as loving rather than the discipline style received from their parents. Parenting styles were noted to have varying impacts on the image of God. For instance, the God's image among the male participants was greatly affected by parenting style they received at young age. Those exposed to authoritative parenting style showed a strong sense of self believe, trust, social responsibility, and commitment towards God.

In Malaysia, a study was conducted by Tan and Yasin (2020) to explore the extent to which parenting styles and roles shape a child's moral and character development. The study used a critical systematic review to collect data from quantitative and qualitative studies published between 2009 and 2018. Findings indicated the responsibility of parents in shaping child's morality. Parenting styles was noted to play a vital role in shaping a child's beliefs, values, and attitudes towards various aspects of life, including their spiritual and religious perspectives. Nevertheless, picking the best parenting style that will lead to strong religious commitment is a serious challenge for many parents.

In Iran, Ebrahimi and Firoozi (2019) carried out a descriptive correlational study to determine how child's perception and God's image is affected by the parenting style received by the child. Using a multi-stage sampling procedure, the study had 375 participants who were students from the Islamic Azad University of Birjand. Two questionnaires were administered: one about various parenting style, and the other on parental attachment and God's perception. The findings revealed that there is no strong relationship. (Chi-square index was estimated at 46.7, and considered statistically insignificant at 0.01) between parenting style and God's perception. However, the study acknowledges the ability of parenting style to improve one's God's perception by either decreasing or increasing parental attachments. The study further stated that permissive and rejection styles of parenting were noted to affect Child's image of God directly or indirectly by increasing mistrust towards parents and decrease in dependency on God. In addition, mother-child attachment was noted to play a vital role in building God's perception among children compared to the father-child relationship. In contrary Purnama, et al., (2022) noted that parenting style adopted by parents can significantly impact a child's perception of authority, trust, love, discipline, and overall worldview.

Similar findings can be drawn from a study carried out in South Africa by Roman, Makwakwa & Lacante (2016) on the perceptions of parenting styles' perception and influence on God. Parenting style questionnaire was used to collect data from a population comprising of 746 participants, where 46% were males and 64% females. From the study's results, it was reported that children raised by authoritarian parents expressed feelings of being withdrawn, disconnected, and distrustful towards their parents. The same trend extends to their perceptions towards the image of God. Similarly, children raised by permissive parents are experienced to lack self-control, had difficulties in forming relationships, and were egocentric and demanding. However, the outcomes of children raised by authoritative parents showed a strong sense of social responsibility, self-esteem, self-confidence and independence.

These findings are further supported by a study conducted by Goodman and Dyer (2020) regarding parents' role in faith formation among young people aged 13-19 years of age. According to the findings, faith formation and transmission was highly evident in families that had strong religious beliefs and practices and among adolescents with physiological sensitivity to the surrounding (Goodman & Dyer, 2020). However, there existed a negative parent-adolescent religiosity relationship due to weak authoritative mothering during childhood. There is a strong connection between these findings and the provisions of Bronfenbrenner's bio ecological theory, as it describes parents influence at the beginning of adolescent religiosity and its development throughout the adolescent years.

In Kenya, a study was carried out by Maami (2019) on the Influence of Parenting Styles on the Social Behavior of Pre-Adolescents among PCEA Kahawa farmers in Kiambu County. The researcher used both qualitative and quantitative approaches to aid data collection from a sample population size of 50 participants, where 25 were pre-adolescents aged between 10 and 12, and 25 were their respective parents. The study acknowledged the influence of various parenting styles on a child's behavior, both socially and spiritually. From the findings of the study, it was reported that pre-adolescents manifest behavioral disorders when raised by parents who utilize neglectful and authoritarian parenting styles.

Various parenting styles, such as authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive, may exert distinct influences on a child's perception of God and spiritual development. An authoritative parenting style, characterized by warmth, guidance, and reasonable expectations, may foster a child's positive view of God as loving, just, and caring, mirroring the parent-child relationship Ebrahimi and Firoozi (2019). The study serves to understand deeper the influence of parenting styles on images of God as supported by Tan and Yasin (2020) in their study done in Malaysia whose findings stressed parents' responsibility of playing their role in shaping their children's morality.

### Objectives of the study

1. To determine the parenting styles, experience among selected students of Teresa Nuzzo girls Secondary School, Kiambu County, Kenya.
2. To establish the influence of parenting styles on image of God among selected students of Teresa Nuzzo girls Secondary School, Kiambu County, Kenya.

## 2. Research Methodology

The study adopted a correlational research design. Purposive sampling procedure was used to sample 38 form three students aged 15-20 years old from a target population of 132 students. Buri's Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) and Image of God Questionnaire developed by the researcher were used to collect data. Google form questionnaire for collecting quantitative data were distributed to the students through the principal of the school who participated as research assistant and supervised the filling of the form. This was a 30-item tool with three subscales: permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative parenting styles. A 30 itemed Image of God scale was developed by the researchers and taken through a reliability test with findings reflecting Cronbach's Alpha .878. Descriptive statistical score was used to analyse research objective 1 and regression analysis was used to analyse objective 2. Required data collection procedure and ethical consideration were observed.

## 3. FINDINGS

### Demographics of age, birth position and religion

In this study, 97.4% participants ranged between 15-20 years of age. 2.6% ranged 21-25 years old. In relation to their birth positions, 36.8% were last born, 28.9% first born, 23.7% second born and 10.5 % only child. In relation to their religion, 97.3% were Christians while 2.7% were non-Christians and 100% of respondents were Form Three students.

### Parenting Styles Experience Among Selected Students of Teresa Nuzzo Girls Secondary School, Kiambu County, Kenya

The first objective of this study was to determine the parenting styles experienced among selected students of Teresa Nuzzo girls Secondary School, Kiambu county, Kenya. Thus, 30 questions were used to gauge parenting styles. The Parenting Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) has 3 dimensions in which items 2, 3, 7, 9, 12, 16, 18, 25, 26 and 29 = Authoritarian parenting style, items: 4, 5, 8, 11, 15, 20, 22, 23, 27, and 30 = Authoritative parenting styles, and items: 1, 6, 10, 13, 14, 17, 19, 21, 24 and 28 = Permissive parenting style. Descriptive statistical score was conducted and the findings are given in Table 2

**Table 2**

*Parenting Styles Experience Among Selected Students*

Types of parenting style	Frequency	Percentage
Authoritarian	12	31.1
Authoritative	17	44.6
Permissive	11	24.3
Total	38	100

The parental styles experienced by the students were well distributed, although more students (44.6%) experienced authoritative parenting styles

### Influence of Parenting Styles on Image of God Among Selected Students of Teresa Nuzzo Girls Secondary School, Kiambu County, Kenya.

The second objective of this study sought to establish the influence of parenting styles on image of God among selected students of Teresa Nuzzo girls Secondary School in Kiambu County, Kenya. Regression analysis was conducted to realize this objective and the results are presented in Table 3 below.

**Table 3**

*Influence of parenting styles on image of God among selected students*

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	178.781	1	178.781	1.160	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	5550.719	36	154.187		
	Total	5729.500	37			

As seen in Table 3 results showed that F- value (1, 5550.719) = 1.160, and P value = .000,  $\leq 0.05$ . These findings held that the regression model was significant in establishing the influence of the predictor on the dependent variable. Therefore, this indicated that parenting styles influenced image of God among selected students of Teresa Nuzzo girls Secondary School in Kiambu County, Kenya.

### ***Influence of permissive parenting style on image of God among selected students of Teresa Nuzzo girls Secondary School in Kiambu County, Kenya***

Regression analysis was conducted to examine the influence of permissive parenting style on image of God among selected students of Teresa Nuzzo girls Secondary School in Kiambu County, Kenya. The results are presented in Table...

**Table 4.**

*Influence of permissive parenting style on image of God among selected students*

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	44.691	1	44.691	.283	.598 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	5684.809	36	157.911		
	Total	5729.500	37			

As seen in Table 4 results showed that F- value (1, 5684.809) = .283, and P value = .598,  $\geq 0.05$ . These results revealed that the regression model was statistically insignificant in establishing the influence of the predictor on the dependent variable. Therefore, this indicated that permissive parenting style did not influence image of God among selected students of Teresa Nuzzo girls Secondary School in Kiambu County, Kenya.

### ***Influence authoritarian parenting style on image of God***

Regression analysis was carried out to investigate the influence of authoritarian parenting style on image of God among selected students of Teresa Nuzzo girls Secondary School in Kiambu County, Kenya. Results are given in Table 5

**Table 5**

*Influence authoritarian parenting style on image of God among selected students*

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	101.864	1	101.864	.652	.425 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	5627.636	36	156.323		
	Total	5729.500	37			

According to Table 5, analysis showed that F- value (1, 156.323) = .652, and P value = .425,  $\geq 0.05$ . These findings demonstrated that the regression model was statistically insignificant in establishing the influence of the predictor on the dependent variable. Thus, this pointed that authoritarian parenting style did not influence image of God among selected students of Teresa Nuzzo girls Secondary School in Kiambu County, Kenya

### ***Influence authoritative parenting style on image of God.***

Regression analysis was conducted out to determine the influence of authoritative parenting style on image of God among selected students of Teresa Nuzzo girls Secondary School in Kiambu County, Kenya. Findings are given in Table 6.

**Table 6**

*Influence authoritative parenting style on image of God among selected students*

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	603.690	1	603.690	4.240	.047 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	5125.810	36	142.384		
	Total	5729.500	37			

As seen in Table 6, results showed that F- value (1, 5125.810) = 4.240, and P value = .047,  $\leq 0.05$ . These findings held that the regression model was significant in establishing the influence of the predictor on the dependent variable. Therefore, this indicated that authoritative parenting style influenced image of God among selected students of Teresa Nuzzo girls Secondary School in Kiambu County, Kenya.

### ***Relationship between Permissive parenting style and images of God among selected students of Teresa Nuzzo girls Secondary School in Kiambu County, Kenya.***

The Pearson correlation coefficient analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between permissive parenting style and images of God among selected students of Teresa Nuzzo Girls secondary school in Kiambu County, Kenya. The results are given in Table 7.

**Table 7***Relationship between Permissive parenting style and images of God*

		God as Merciful					
		Permissiveness	God as a Judge	and loving	God of Death	God of Life	God as a Parent
<b>Permissiveness</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	-.402*	-.011	-.122	.086	-.012
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.012	.950	.466	.608	.944
	N	38	38	38	38	38	38
God as a Judge	Pearson Correlation	-.402*	1	.520**	.656**	.526**	.483**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.012		.001	.000	.001	.002
	N	38	38	38	38	38	38
God as Merciful and loving	Pearson Correlation	-.011	.520**	1	.445**	.745**	.586**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.950	.001		.005	.000	.000
	N	38	38	38	38	38	38
God of Death	Pearson Correlation	-.122	.656**	.445**	1	.466**	.613**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.466	.000	.005		.003	.000
	N	38	38	38	38	38	38
God of Life	Pearson Correlation	.086	.526**	.745**	.466**	1	.645**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.608	.001	.000	.003		.000
	N	38	38	38	38	38	38
God as a Parent	Pearson Correlation	-.012	.483**	.586**	.613**	.645**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.944	.002	.000	.000	.000	
	N	38	38	38	38	38	38

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

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

The Pearson's correlation matrix summarized in table 7 show that there was a moderately weak negative but significant relationship ( $r = -.402$ ,  $p = .012$ ) between permissive parenting style and image of God as a Judge. This implies that the higher the permissive parenting style the lower the perception of God as a Judge.

***Relationship between Authoritarian Parenting Style and Images of God among Selected Students of Teresa Nuzzo Girls Secondary School in Kiambu County, Kenya.***

The Pearson correlation coefficient analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between Authoritarian parenting style and images of God among selected students of Teresa Nuzzo Girls Secondary School in Kiambu County, Kenya. The results are given in Table 8.

**Table 8***Relationship between Authoritarian parenting style and Images of God*

		Authoritarian	God as Judge	God as merciful	God of Death	God of life	God as a parent
Authoritarian	Pearson Correlation	1	.203	.136	.121	.161	-.007
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.221	.416	.469	.333	.969
	N	38	38	38	38	38	38
God as a Judge	Pearson Correlation	.203	1	.520**	.656**	.526**	.483**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.221		.001	.000	.001	.002
	N	38	38	38	38	38	38
God as merciful	Pearson Correlation	.136	.520**	1	.445**	.745**	.586**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.416	.001		.005	.000	.000
	N	38	38	38	38	38	38
God of death	Pearson Correlation	.121	.656**	.445**	1	.466**	.613**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.469	.000	.005		.003	.000
	N	38	38	38	38	38	38
God of life	Pearson Correlation	.161	.526**	.745**	.466**	1	.645**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.333	.001	.000	.003		.000
	N	38	38	38	38	38	38

God as a parent	Pearson Correlation	-.007	.483**	.586**	.613**	.645**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.969	.002	.000	.000	.000	
	N	38	38	38	38	38	38

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

Findings from table 8 show that Authoritarian parenting did not have any significant relationship with the images of God as a Judge, Merciful, as God of death and life and as a parent among selected students of Teresa Nuzzo Girls Secondary School in Kiambu County, Kenya.

#### ***Relationship between Authoritative Parenting Style and Images of God among Selected Students of Teresa Nuzzo Girls Secondary School in Kiambu County, Kenya.***

The Pearson correlation coefficient analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between Authoritative parenting style and images of God among selected students of Teresa Nuzzo Girls Secondary School in Kiambu County, Kenya. The results are given in Table 9.

**Table 9**

*Relationship between Authoritative parenting and images of God*

		Authoritative parenting	God as a Judge	God as Merciful	God of Death	God of life	God as a parent
Authoritative parenting	Pearson Correlation	1	.148	.225	.421**	.347*	.396*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.376	.175	.009	.033	.014
	N	38	38	38	38	38	38
God as a judge	Pearson Correlation	.148	1	.520**	.656**	.526**	.483**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.376		.001	.000	.001	.002
	N	38	38	38	38	38	38
God as Merciful	Pearson Correlation	.225	.520**	1	.445**	.745**	.586**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.175	.001		.005	.000	.000
	N	38	38	38	38	38	38
God of death	Pearson Correlation	.421**	.656**	.445**	1	.466**	.613**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009	.000	.005		.003	.000
	N	38	38	38	38	38	38
God of life	Pearson Correlation	.347*	.526**	.745**	.466**	1	.645**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.033	.001	.000	.003		.000
	N	38	38	38	38	38	38
God as a parent	Pearson Correlation	.396*	.483**	.586**	.613**	.645**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.014	.002	.000	.000	.000	
	N	38	38	38	38	38	38

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

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

As seen in table 9, results show that there was a weak and significant relationship between Authoritative parenting style and image of God as God of life ( $r=.347, p=.033$ ), as a parent ( $r=.396, p=.014$ ), and as God of Death ( $r=.421, p<.01$ )

## **4. Discussions**

The study aimed at establishing the influence of parenting styles on image of God among selected students of Teresa Nuzzo girls Secondary School, Kiambu County, Kenya.

The study established authoritarian parenting style has no significant relationship with image of God, permissive parenting negatively but significant correlated with image of God as a judge, and authoritative parenting significantly correlated with God of life, and God as a Parent. Regression analysis also show that parenting style influenced image of God at  $F(1,5550.719) = 1.160, P = 0.000$

#### ***Relationship between Permissive parenting style and images of God***

Findings pointed out that there was a moderate weak negative but significant relationship ( $r = -.402^*, p = .012 < 0.05$ ) between permissive parenting style and image of God as a judge. These findings implied that an increase in one variable leads to a corresponding decrease in the other variable, meaning that, parents creating an atmosphere of permissive type of parenting made their children view God as less judgmental. These results are in consistent with Ebrahimi and Firoozi (2019) study done in Iran that examined how child's God's image is affected by the parenting style received by the child, where permissive styles of parenting were noted to affect Child's image of God directly or indirectly by increasing mistrust towards parents and decrease in

dependency on God. Researchers noted how this type of parenting lead to children forming a concept of God as a benevolent figure who allows for individual freedom and autonomy.

However, the findings also indicated that permissive parenting style experienced by the participants of this study did not influence the images of God. There was an insignificant relationship with permissive parenting and the images of God among students of Teresa Nuzzo girls Secondary School in Kiambu County, Kenya. This reflects a possibility of parents being reluctant in taking responsibility over their children shaping their image of God and their struggles to remain the best models.

The findings also confirmed those of Koch et al. (2018) who noted that permissive parent's failure to emphasize on accountability for one's actions as much as other parenting styles which impact a child's view of God, potentially making them perceive God as less concerned with judgment or consequences for wrongdoing. This is in line with Roman, Makwakwa and Lacante (2016) whose findings noted that children raised by permissive parents were experienced to have issues with self-control, had difficulties in forming relationships, and were egocentric and demanding. The findings reflect a possibility that parents who exercised Permissive parenting in Teresa Nuzzo girls secondary school exercised reduced control, limited boundaries that did not strongly shape image of God as merciful and loving.

#### ***Relationship between Authoritarian parenting style and Images of God***

The study found that there was no significant relationship between Authoritarian parenting style and the image of God. To confirm the correlation findings, results demonstrated by regression model revealed that Authoritarian parenting style did not influence image of God among the participant and that findings were statistically insignificant in establishing the influence of the predictor on the dependent variable (F- value (1,156.323) =.652, and P value =.425,  $\geq 0.05$  level of significance among selected students. This indicated that the more parents applied authoritarian parenting style, the more it never influenced child's image of God in any of the attributes among selected students of Teresa Nuzzo girls Secondary School in Kiambu County, Kenya. This also may suggest possibility of cognitive and emotional disconnectedness between the parent and the child to an extend of making a visible influence in their parenting style.

The findings are confirmed by Maami(2019) in his study on the Influence of Parenting Styles on the Social Behavior of Pre-Adolescents which reported that adolescents manifest behavioral disorders when raised by parents who utilize authoritarian parenting styles. Using Ainsworth's topology of attachment of infants, it is possible to show how attachment of parents and infants impacts their lives (Bradshaw et al., 2019; Coffman, 2019). Securely attached infants tend to develop a strong intimacy with their caregiver. The findings have been supported by other scholars who reported that this attachment is transferred to God, as securely attached people believe in God (Tan & Yasin, 2020).

Roman et al. (2016) concurred with these findings in their discovery that children raised by authoritarian parents expressed feelings of being withdrawn, disconnected, and distrustful towards their parents, of which the same trend extends to their perceptions towards the image of God. In this case, it is evident that individuals brought up with good attachment have more intimacy with God, and therefore, are more likely to maintain positive image with God and embrace religion even at later stages of their lives (Koch et al., 2018). It is therefore possible that parents of the 31.1% of the students in Teresa Nuzzo girls' school did not provide environment that could influence image of God among their children. It is therefore essential for Christian parents to raise children who maintain their image with God from childhood to adulthood.

#### ***Relationship between Authoritative parenting and images of God***

The presence of a moderate positive significant relationship between authoritative parenting styles and image of God as God of life, God as a parent imply that an increase in one variable leads to an increase in the other variable, meaning that, the parents who practiced more used authoritative parenting styles where parents control child's behaviour by explaining rules and nurturing values yielded an increased growth in influencing Gods image as God of life and as a parent. The effect of authoritative parenting style will lead to a corresponding influence on the image of God in different attributes of God. Statistics also revealed that there was a moderate positive significant relationship ( $r=.421^*$ ,  $p=.009 < 0.01$ ) between Authoritative parenting style and image of God as God of death. This implies that the good practice of authoritative parenting style as experienced by the 44.6% participants led to a corresponding positive experience of God as giving life instead of death since all items of attribute of God as God of death were reverse items.

The findings imply that the students experienced their parents as life giving and as good parents hence influencing their image God as life giving and as a parent. This is supported by another study by Lavrič and Naterer, (2020) who reported that authoritative parents encourage their children to be independent and responsible. As a result, children raised in this environment develop a more mature and nuanced understanding of God as a guiding and supportive figure who allows them to make choices and learn from their experiences. However, results show that there was a weak and insignificant relationship ( $r=.148$ ,  $p=.376 > 0.05$ ), ( $r=.225$ ,  $p=.175 > 0.05$ ) between Authoritative parenting style and images of God as a judge and God as merciful and loving respectively.

Similar findings were obtained in a study by Chou and Uata (2012) done in United states to examine how parental discipline influenced one's God's image. The results demonstrated a strong relationship between God's image and one's parenting style and noted that those exposed to authoritative parenting style showed a strong sense of self believe, trust, social responsibility, and commitment towards God. When it comes to the development of a child's concept of God, authoritative parenting shapes their perception. Authoritative parenting fosters secure attachment, wherein children feel emotionally safe and supported by their parents. This security can translate into a perception of God as a merciful loving and caring figure. Children raised by authoritative parents often have a positive view of authority, which extend to their image of a benevolent and caring God.

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## Conclusion and recommendation

The study sought to establish the influence of parenting styles on image of God among selected students of Teresa Nuzzo girls Secondary School, Kiambu County, Kenya. The results indicated that parenting styles influenced image of God among selected students. This knowledge may have significant implications for psychological counselling, spiritual guidance, and interventions that promote healthy and holistic development in individuals' religious and spiritual domains. Today, adolescents' needs are becoming complex simply because their parents are observed to be in a young generation with their own identity issues who find themselves struggling to raise their children with better privileges than they had. However, a study by Bradshaw et al., (2019) reported that parents turn to religion, particularly Christianity to help limit the impacts of such negative influences in adolescence and young adulthood.

This finding reveals the role of parenting and the need to cultivate a parenting style that promote child's wellbeing in developing positive and healthy image of God. The researcher therefore recommends to the school administration to consider introducing psychospiritual therapy school to enhance student's wellbeing.

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