

Relationship between Parental Involvement in Pupils' Educational Activities at School and their Academic Performance in Ainabkoi Sub-County, Kenya

Petrolina Kaptich¹; Henry Kiptiony Kiplangat^{2*} Jennifer Munyua³

^{1,3}Catholic University of Eastern Africa, P.O. Box 62157-00200, City Square Nairobi, Kenya.

²Kabarak University, P.O. Box Private Bag - 20157 Kabarak, Kenya.

*corresponding author.

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ABSTRACT

Most public schools in Kenya post poor results amid claims that parents are not supportive of their children's educational activities at school. While research has shown that parental involvement in primary schools is a significant contributor to the mental capacity, social and cognitive behaviour of students, public primary schools in Ainabkoi sub-county are yet to achieve. This paper draws our attention to a study that was conducted in the sub-county to investigate the relationship between parental involvement in pupils' educational activities at school and their academic performance in public primary schools. This study was guided by Type 3 Epstein's model of the six types of parent involvement as developed by Joyce Epstein. The study adopted ex-post facto research design and considered a target population of 2404 Class 8 pupils and 61 class teachers from which 331 Class eight pupils and 61 teachers were drawn using stratified random sampling and census approach, respectively. Questionnaire and interview schedule were used for data collection which was later analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were analyzed in the form of percentages and means. Chi-square was used to test the hypotheses of the study. The study found out that there was a positive and significant relationship between parental participation in educational activities at school ($X^2=22.619$; $p=0.001$) and pupils' academic performance in Ainabkoi Sub County. Qualitative data were analyzed using a thematic framework. The study concluded that parental involvement in educational activities in school was positively related to academic performance. The study recommended that the government should sensitize parents on involvement in their children's school activities through policy development to improve their academic performance.

Keywords: Parental involvement, Academic performance, Pupils, Primary school, Educational activities, Ainabkoi.

Introduction

Parental involvement in educational activities has been described by scholars as a representation of various behavioural practices by parents and considered one of the main factors determining educational success in many schools. According to Levanda[1], parental involvement includes a wide variety of actions parents take for the benefit of their children's academic success at school and at home. These include parenting style, parental expectations and aspiration, home rules and parental supervision, helping with homework, visiting the school to talk to teachers, benefits regarding their child's education among others [1, 2]. In this paper, however, the authors drive their focus on parental participation in academic activities at school and how this relates to the academic performance of pupils in public primary schools. The study is founded on the type 3 Epstein's model of parental involvement and is drawn on the hypothesis that: there is a significant relationship between parents' participation in the pupils' educational activities at school and academic performance.

Epstein's Model

Epstein's model as developed by Epstein [3] is the most widely researched model of parental involvement in children's education. The model involves six types of organized parent involvement activities; the first type covers the basic needs of children by having parents involved in routine activities such as preparing their child for school [4]; the second type includes all forms of communication between the school and parents; the fourth type of parent involvement consists of home activities related to school; fifth type of parental involvement represents the parental participation in parents association, school boards and committees; and sixth involvement of parent in school governance [3]. The current study is drawn on the type 3 Epstein's model which involves parents being involved in the activities of the school by performing volunteer duties on behalf of their child [3]. It is Important for schools to develop several opportunities for parents that foster accessibility to be able to perform volunteer opportunities and stay involved in the daily activities of the children in the school environment. Parent volunteer activities are a resource to the school that promotes self-confidence and socialization among children [5].

Literature Underpinning

Pomerantz, Moorman and Litwack[6] found that a number of parents are not observant enough to ensure that their sons and daughters have a moral foundation. Some end up in the defence of unscrupulous behaviour right from home to society and the school. The sole instiller of discipline for students may not be the teacher since the parents

spend most of the time with the children. It is, therefore, negligence to vest the duty of a child's discipline on the teacher.

Hountenville and Conway [7] used national data from more than 10,000 eighth-grade students in public and private schools; their parents, teachers and school administrations. They were particularly interested in how frequently parents discussed activities or events of particular interest to the child, discussed selecting courses or programs at school, attended school meetings and volunteered at the child's schools programs. Hountenville and Conway [7] based at the University of New Hampshire observed that higher academic achievement of students was due to parents spending more time talking to their children during dinner time to understand their worries and fears. The research proved that the most effective forms of parent's involvement are those which engage parents in working directly with their children in learning activities at home. Decades of research by Hountenville and Conway showed that when parents are fully involved in the education process; students get higher grades, graduation rates are high, better school attendance is realized, increased student motivation to self-driven academic orientation is realized, students have a better self-esteem, lower rates of suspension are evident, use of drugs and alcohol is decreased, and there are fewer instances of violent behaviour [7].

In a study carried out in Namibia, Erlendsdottir [8] ascertained how parental involvement at Combretum Trust School affects the academic achievement of learners. A qualitative research approach was used. Data was gathered by interviewing parents of seven (7) learners in Windhoek all of who had achieved academically. The main findings of the study were that all the parents interviewed were highly involved with their children's education. The study concluded that by being involved with their children's education, parent's impact positively on academic performance of the learner in school work. The study recommended that all schools establish a strong and positive relationship with parents, and develop a platform for parents to collectively voice their concerns. It also encouraged the schools to maintain the relationship with the parents once it has been established and motivated them to become actively involved in their children education. This study is highly recommendable since it is based on a developing African country.

In Smith, Wohlstetter, Kuzin and Pedro's study conducted in Columbia, the focus was on parental involvement in urban charter schools of regular students. The qualitative research approach was used where interviews and questionnaires were engaged. The study reviewed 41 schools in Columbia district out of which 12 schools were sampled in 6 states. Data collection was done through interviews and questionnaires. According to the study findings, parental involvement activities in the schools falls within the basic obligations of families such as taking children to school on time, holding conferences, guarding them in and out of school, helping in classroom work, beautifying the school among other basic activities. In a conclusive remark, the study mandated that parents read for 45 minutes each night with their children and check homework. It also recommended that parents be educated in various ways of becoming more engaged in the school and learning of their children [4].

Nermeen, Elnokailil, Heather, Bachman and Vatruba[9] conducted a study on parental involvement and children's academic and social development in elementary schools. The study consisted of parents from regular schools with a population of 1364 participants who included parents and learners. Over 90% of the parents were reported attending school parental general meetings and participating in regular scheduled parent-teacher meetings. About 80% of the parents in the nationally representative sample were reported attending school events and about 60% volunteering in the classroom. Results from the study show that children with highly involved parents had enhanced social functioning and reduced behavioural problems. Similar patterns of findings emerged from teacher-parent reports with better social skills, better academic performance, attitudes and emotions expressed as highly enhanced by parental involvement [9].

Echaune, Ndiku and Sang [10] conducted a study to investigate the effect of parental involvement in homework and primary school academic performance in Kenya. The factors associated with students' academic performance may have been addressed but the impact of parental involvement continues to be a significant issue. Some schools in Kenya post poor results amid claims that parents are not supportive. This study examined the effect of parental involvement in homework on academic performance in public primary schools in Teso North Sub County, Busia-Kenya. The objectives were; to establish the types of homework assistance children get from parents, to ascertain the extent of parental involvement in homework and to examine the association between parental involvement in homework and school academic performance. All teachers, head teachers, pupils and parents in public primary

schools were targeted. Thirty schools were sampled randomly from where 532 respondents (30 head teachers, 30 parents, 192 teachers and 280 pupils) were then sampled. Parents and head teachers were purposively sampled while teachers and pupils were proportionately sampled. A descriptive survey design was employed and data collected using questionnaires, semi-structured interviews schedules and document analysis. Quantitative data were analyzed using means, percentages and frequencies and qualitative data were reported directly. T-tests, Pearson moment correlation coefficient, and OLS regression coefficients were used to test hypotheses. The results indicate female parents were more willing to assist children in homework. Parents provided limited assistance in areas such as reading, writing and solving difficult sums. Parental involvement in homework positively correlated with school academic performance. The positive effect of parental involvement in homework disappeared when other variables were controlled for. It was concluded that since educational gains of parental involvement are noted and confirmed the significance of parents in educational processes. It was recommended that parents who don't assist children in homework should be sensitized to do so [10].

Muiru, Thingur, Njagi and Ngunu[11] conducted a study to investigate the influence of Parental Involvement and Primary School Academic Performance in Teso North District. The project research sought to investigate the extent of parents' involvement in primary school academic performance; the influence of parents' involvement in primary school academic performance; and the types of parental involvement that was considered to contribute most to primary school academic performance in TesoNorth district. The study was based on a descriptive survey design targeting 3507 respondents. Stratified random sampling was used to select schools for the study. Simple random sampling was used to select teachers and pupils while purposive sampling was used to select head teachers. The study used questionnaires and document analysis to collect data. Open-ended, closed-ended and rating scale items were used for data collection. The findings of this study were presented in tables, pie-charts, frequencies distributions and discussions. The study focused on establishing the extent of the influence of parental involvement through; management of pupils' affairs, volunteerism, decision making and provision of resources on pupils' academic performance in Teso North district. The study recommended that a similar study should be done in all the districts in Kenya [11].

A study by Kibet that employed ex post facto design with a sample size consisting of 135 parents, 60 teachers, 10 head teachers and 5 education officials found that parents in private and public schools in Uasin-Gishu County differed significantly in their levels of involvement. This study concluded that the involvement was low or limited especially in volunteering because both parents and teachers did not see the need to do so [12]. Ciaraka[13] who sampled 30 parents in Egoji- Meru, Kenya found out that 93% of the parents checked their children's exercise books occasionally. Majority of the parents indicated that they neither participate in school decision making nor attend school functions. Furthermore, teachers reported that parents did not attend school functions voluntarily in spite of sending meeting notices early. They had to send children to collect their parents on the material day set for the meeting or else very few parents would attend.

Muriithi[14] investigated the effect of parental determinants of academic performance of learners in public day secondary schools in Imenti North sub-county, Meru County, Kenya. This increase has brought about positive and negative academic results. Day schools have in past years, recorded a decline in the national examinations and this has raised concerns amongst the many education stakeholders. The major cause of these poor results can be attributed to parents' and guardians' factors. The rationale of this study focused on the education gap experienced in day schools due to parental related factors and analyzed how each of the aspects affecting the results could be approached. Questionnaires were distributed to parents, students, teachers, and head teachers to help gather the relevant data. The total number of people who responded to the questionnaires was 398 individuals. The research design used was both descriptive and relational to help gather data on the independent variables and related them to the dependent variables [14]. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to collect and analyze the data after which a summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations were recorded to guide on any future step(s) to be taken in ensuring satisfactory performance and proper parental input. Parental involvement in students' education, social-economic status (incomes and occupation), parental level of education, special characteristics and parent-teacher relationship were all found to influence students' academic performance in Imenti North Sub-County but in different proportions. This research proposes that parents should engage in their children's learning activities, incomes of the people should be upgraded by the government, parents should be regularly trained to improve their literacy and the relationship between teachers and parents should also be improved for better performance.

A study conducted by Kobia[15] on problems associated with day secondary schools in Meru Central revealed that there was laxity on the side of parents and guardians. The study showed that some parents have left the duty of parenting to teachers and school administrators. The study further indicated that that 40% of parents are not concerned with what their children did in school and they did not liaise with teachers to know the problems or issues that could be affecting their students in schools. This translated to some students' not attending classes regularly yet they left home every morning but never reached school. Consistency in class attendance was a vital practice if all students had to maintain good grades in school [15].

Bironga[16] conducted a study to determine paternal involvement in pupils' education and academic achievement among primary school pupils in Nairobi County, Kenya. The research design of this study was ex-post facto. The study was carried out in Nairobi County because of its diversity of the population in general and its metropolitan nature. One school was selected from each of the four districts through simple random sampling. Forty standard six pupils were purposively sampled from each selected school due to their performance from the teacher' assessment record. This gave rise to a sample size of 160 pupils. Fathers of the selected children were automatically part of the sample, giving a total of 320 participants in the study.

The results showed that there was a relationship between paternal involvement and pupils' academic achievement. Pearson Correlation had revealed that there was a relationship between fathers' involvement in pupils' education and pupils' academic achievement. The t-test showed that there was no significant mean the difference in the average scores of fathers' involvement in the education of boys and girls. ANOVA manifested that paternal involvement in pupils' education did not differ significantly by levels of education of the fathers [16].

The results from (ANOVA) also displayed that paternal involvement in pupils' education did not differ significantly by the occupation of the fathers. Fathers were involved in activities like paying school fees, buying books and checking whether the children completed their homework. However, fathers were found to leave some duties like attending meetings and talking to teachers to their wives. It was concluded that fathers' involvement in their children's education influences their children's performance. The study recommended that there was a need for school managers to encourage fathers to closely monitor and participate in their children's education [16].

Ondieki[17]conducted a study on a survey of home school relationship in primary schools within Kisii Municipal council, Kisii district. The study sampled out 10 public primary schools targeting teachers, parents and head teachers to investigate whether effective home-school relationships exist among primary schools. This study associated educational failure in the district to lack cooperation between teachers and parents and concluded that most parents were not involved in school management programs. However, the questionnaire was the only instrument used to collect data and descriptive statistics were used for data analysis [17]. The present study targets a larger sample and both descriptive and inferential statistics are used for data analysis.

Methodology

The study adopted the ex-post facto design because the authors could not directly manipulate the independent variable of the study since their manifestation had already happened. A target population of 2404 Class 8 pupils and 61 class teachers in Ainabkoi Sub-county were considered for the study. This population size was obtained from the County Education Office as per October 2018. The study targeted Primary schools teachers because they are change agents for quality teaching and learning. They are the custodians of knowledge for pupils on behalf of parents. A sample is a small portion of a target population [18], while sampling means selecting a given number of subjects from a defined population as a representative of that population. Kothari adds that the size of the sample should neither be excessively too large nor too small and generally it must be optimum [18]. The sample size of the pupils was therefore obtained through stratified simple random sampling technique to select a sample of 331 pupils, stratified based on their gender that is male and female. Census approach was employed in which all the 61 class teachers were involved in the study.

The study employed questionnaires to collect data from pupils and an interview schedule for the teachers' data. Interviews allowed the authors to clarify and elaborate on the purpose of the research study to the respondents to enable them to give useful information. According to Kothari [18], data analysis is the process of bringing order and meaning to raw data hence this study analyzed both quantitative and qualitative data. Data analysis for quantitative

data was done by both descriptive statistics and inferential statistics in the form of frequencies, percentages and standard deviation, and chi-square to test the hypothesis. The significance tests were done at 95% confidence level. Qualitative data, on the other hand, was analyzed using the thematic framework. According to Benard and Ryan[19], the thematic framework is a way of organizing or defining history to identify and place sites, persons and events in context. In this study, the focus was on identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas within the themes as stipulated in the study objective. Coding was used to represent themes and linked to raw data analysis. The results were in line with the obtained study themes.

Findings and Discussion

This study sought to investigate the relationship between parental participation in educational activities at school and pupils academic performance in Ainabkoi Sub County. The findings from the quantitative data were analyzed and presented in Table 1. The findings were drawn on a 5 point Likert scale indicating strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree and Strongly disagree.

[Follow Table 1 on next page.]

Table 1. Parental Involvement in Educational Activities at School and Pupil's Academic Performance

Statements	SD	D	U	A	SA	Mean	S. Dev
My parent/guardian attends school functions	98(29.6%)	35(10.6%)	39(11.8%)	84(25.5%)	74(22.4%)	3.01	1.56
My parent/guardian attend all school organized parents meetings	61(18.4%)	61(18.4%)	33(10.0%)	87(26.5%)	124(37.7%)	3.58	1.50
My parent/guardian discusses my academic performance with my teachers	62(19.0%)	34(10.3%)	40(12.1%)	88(20.6%)	125(38.0%)	3.48	1.53
My parent/guardian always attend meetings regarding pupils	100(30.2%)	62(19.0%)	44(13.4%)	45(13.7%)	78(23.7%)	2.82	1.57
My parent/guardian attend school open days	123(37.4%)	70(21.2%)	52(16.8%)	32(9.7%)	50(15.0%)	2.44	1.45
My parent/guardian attend visiting days	36(10.8%)	44(13.3%)	7(2.1%)	168(50.8%)	76(23.1%)	3.6	1.39
My parent/guardian always attends Board of Management (BoM) meetings	39(11.8%)	76(23.1%)	11(3.6%)	150(45.6%)	52(15.9%)	3.3	1.30
My parents/guardians enquire about my progress from teachers	47(14.4%)	65(19.7%)	24(7.2%)	133(40.3%)	61(18.5%)	3.1	1.38
My parents/guardians purchase learning materials such as story books	103(31.3%)	159(48.2%)	20(6.2%)	30(9.2%)	17(5.1%)	2.9	1.09

Source: Field Data (2018)

Based on the study findings as presented in Table 1, the pupils were asked to indicate whether their parents/guardian attended school functions. The majority (47.9%) of the pupils agreed, 11.8% were undecided while 40.2% disagreed. On whether the parents/guardians attend all school organized parents meetings, the findings indicated that 54.2% of the pupils agreed, 10.0% were undecided while 36.8% of the pupils disagreed. It is evident that a good number of parents did not attend important meetings organized by the school. Following this, parents should be sensitized on attending academic meetings organized by the school. Such meetings have proved effective especially in solving problems that are typically barriers to student's achievements or discipline.

The study also sought to investigate whether parents/guardians discussed pupils' academic performance with teachers. The findings divulged that majority (58.6%) of the parents discussed the performance of their children with the class teachers, 12.1% of the pupils were undecided while 22.4% of the pupils disagreed that they discussed their academic performance with their class teachers. In addition, the authors sought to investigate whether the parents/guardians attended school open days. The findings indicated that majority of the pupils disagreed that their parents attended to the parents' open day, 16.8% were undecided while 24.7% of the pupils agreed that their parents attended to the parents open days. Furthermore, in establishing whether the parents/guardians attended visiting days, and the majority (73.9%) of the pupils agreed that their parents attended to the visiting days in schools, 2.1% were undecided while 24.1% of the pupils disagreed that their parents attended the visiting days in schools.

To check the significance and relationship between the variables a chi-square was computed and results are presented below in Table 2.

Decision rule: If the p-value is less than or equal to 0.05 reject the Null hypothesis. If the p-value is greater than 0.05 do not reject the Null hypothesis.

Table 2. Chi-Square Test

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	22.619	2	.001
Likelihood Ratio	14.556	2	.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.317	1	.021
N of Valid Cases	330		

Source: Field Data (2018)

The hypothesis tested was that parental participation in educational activities at school has no significant influence on pupils' academic performance. The results show $\chi^2=22.619$, $df=2$ and $p=0.001$ which is less than the level of significance 0.05 thus the researcher authors rejected the null hypothesis concluding that there exists a significant relationship ($p<0.05$) between parental participation in educational activities at school and pupils academic performance in primary schools in Ainabkoi Sub County.

The findings concur with Pomerantz, Moorman and Litwack[6] who found that a number of parents are not observant enough to ensure that their sons and daughters have a moral foundation. Some end up defending their children's unscrupulous behaviour right from home to society and the school. It should, therefore, be agreed upon that teachers should not be solely left to be instillers of discipline among pupils but should be supported by parental involvement. Parents spend most of the time with the children hence should be fully in charge as it is negligence to vest the duty of a child's discipline on the teacher.

The findings are also supported Hountenville and Conway based at the University of New Hampshire observed that higher academic achievement of students was due to parents spending more time talking to their children during dinner time to understand their worries and fears. Their study proved that the most effective forms of parent's involvement are those which engage parents in working directly with their children in learning activities at school [7].

The findings were also consistent with Erlendsdottir's[8] findings that parental involvement affects the academic achievement of learners. In this study, all the parents interviewed were highly involved with their children's education hence the author concluded that by being involved with their children's education, parents impact positively on academic performance of their children in school work. The findings are also similar to those of Smith, Wohlsetter, Kuzin and Pedro [4] study conducted in Columbia which established that parental involvement in educational activities in the schools falls within the basic obligations of families such as taking children to school on time, holding conferences, guarding them in and out of school, helping in classroom work, beautifying the school, among other basic activities which had a positive effect of their children academic performance.

The findings also supported Nermeen, Elnokalil, Heather, Bachman and Vatruba's[9] study on parental involvement and children academic as well as their social development in elementary schools. The study established that over 90% of the parents were reported attending school parental general meetings and participating in regular scheduled parent-teacher meetings. About 80% of the parents in the nationally representative sample were reported attending school events and about 60% volunteering in the classroom. Results from the study show that children with highly involved parents had enhanced social functioning and fewer behaviour problems. Similar patterns of findings emerged from teacher-parent reports with better social skills, better academic performance, attitudes and emotions expressed as highly enhanced by parental involvement.

Similarly, Echaune, Ndiku and Sang [10] in a study conducted to examine the effect of parental involvement in homework and primary school academic performance in Teso North Sub County, Busia- Kenya, found out that female parents were more willing to assist children in homework. Parents provided limited assistance in areas such as reading, writing and solving difficult sums. Parental involvement in homework positively correlated with school academic performance. The positive effect of parental involvement in homework disappeared when other variables were controlled for. It was concluded that since educational gains of parental involvement are noted and confirmed the significance of parents in educational processes. It was recommended that parents who don't assist children in homework should be sensitized to do so. In the same vein, these findings support Muiru, Thingur, Njagi and Ngunu[11] whose study sought the influence of parental involvement and primary school academic performance in Teso North District. Their study established aspects like management of pupils' affairs, volunteerism, decision making and provision of resources by parents as being part of the elements that largely contributed to pupils' academic performance in Teso North district. The study recommended that a similar study should be done in all the districts in Kenya hence this study focused on Uasin Gishu County.

The findings also supported Kobia's findings on problems associated with day secondary schools in Meru Central which divulged that there was laxity on the side of parents and guardians. The study showed that some parents have left the duty of parenting to teachers and school administrators. The study further indicated that 40% of parents were not concerned with what their children did in school and they did not liaise with teachers to know the problems or issues that could be affecting their students in schools. This translated to some students absconding some classes. The authors suggest that if all students have to maintain good grades in school, consistency in class attendance is a vital practice.

The findings also supported Bironga's[16] study on paternal involvement in pupils' education and academic achievement among primary school pupils in Nairobi County, Kenya. The results showed that there was a relationship between paternal involvement and pupils' academic achievement. Pearson Correlation demonstrated that there was a relationship between fathers' involvement in pupils' education and their academic achievement. The t-test manifested that there was no significant mean difference in the average scores of fathers' involvement in the education of boys and girls.

Finally, this study's findings are in tandem with Ondieki's[17] study on the effect of home school relationship in primary schools within Kisii Municipal council, Kisii district. His study established that effective home-school relationships were associated with improved educational performance. The study, however, highlighted a lack of cooperation between teachers and parents as a contributor to the poor performance of the students in the district. This was also indicated in this study.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the authors conclude that there exists a significant relationship between parental participation in educational activities at school and pupils' academic performance in primary schools in Ainabkoi Sub County. The findings attested that parental involvement in schools in terms of attending school meetings, participating in clinical supervision of their children's academic performance, providing basic needs and providing learning materials such as references books had a positive effect on the pupil's academic performance. Parental participation in educational activities at school, therefore, has a significant influence on pupils' academic performance.

Recommendation

The Kenya Government should consider developing and implementing policies that support parental involvement in school activities. In addition, policymakers should continue to investigate ways of increasing parental involvement activities and demonstrate to the parents that their involvement in pupils' academic activities at school is related to their children's academic performance.

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