



# PARENTAL PARTICIPATION IN HOME LEARNING AMONG PUBLIC PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOLS LEARNERS IN MOMBASA COUNTY, KENYA

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## Abstract

This study investigated on parental home participation on public pre-primary school learners' education in Mombasa County, Kenya. This study embraced Epstein's theory (1987) of overlapping spheres of influence. The sample used descriptive research design. A sample of 50 participants that included 30 teachers, 10 head teachers and 10 parents was drawn from a target population of 97 head teachers, 400 teachers and 8000 parents using stratified, purposive and simple random sampling techniques. Questionnaire and interview schedule were the instruments that informed data collection. The study established that there was low parental participation of children education at home. It was concluded that parental participation on children education result to children improved attendance, motivation, homework completion and language, psychomotor and arithmetic performance.

**Key words:** Parental participation, Public pre-primary school, Early Childhood Education

## 1. Introduction

Parental participation in children' education is an important activity to future social and economic development. For children to appreciate and understand the importance of education, parental participation is paramount (Taniesha, 2010). They are considered the foremost key educators of their children at home (OECD, 2012). According to World Bank (2007) school Boards of Management emphasizes on collegial relationship among parents, school and other stakeholders for learners improved quality of education. The World Declaration on Education for all held in Jomtein, Thailand in 1990 advocated for strategies that encompasses both private and government sectors, communities and family at all levels of education (Gray, 1999).

Epstein (1987) note that parental involvement in children education include six aspects that are; parenting, collaborating, volunteering, learning at home, communicating and decision making. Desforges and Abouchaar (2003) note that parental supervision in their children's learning activities at home is closely associated with increased children's mental abilities in the early years. Donkor (2010) averred that a student whose academic

performance was detrimental was due to parents' inability to supervise homework assignments. Mukuna and Indoshi (2012) note that parental participation in children's home learning entail academic and utility activities. Academic participation includes activities such as completion of homework assignments, reading provision of instructional materials. Utility engagement includes paying school levies, provision of physical facilities and school feeding programme. Parental participation in children education at home is pivotal (Moon & Ivins, 2004) and should be accorded due attention.

A study by Cheronno and Syomwene (2018) investigated on parental home involvement in their children education at home in Njoro Sub-county, Kenya. The study embraced Epstein's theory (1987) of overlapping spheres. The study had a sample size of 23 head teachers, 46 teachers and 46 parents using Simple random sampling technique. A questionnaire and interview schedules were the two instruments used to gather data. The findings established that a majority of parents helped their children with completion of homework assignments in in reading, writing and arithmetic activities. The study further noted that a majority of parents had appropriate skills and knowledge in homework assistance. However, this study was conducted in Mombasa County and used a questionnaire, interview schedule and documentary analysis to collect data. The study sample had 50 participants that included of 30 teachers, 10 head teachers and 10 parents selected from the 7 Sub Counties of Mombasa County.

UNESCO (2011) postulate that parents are able to provide an enabling home climate such as; allocating homework place, proving instructional materials, and supervision of homework assignments and studies. Homework activity is highly appreciated as additional learning strategy that goes beyond the usual school routine. This is in respect to curriculum overload that requires more time allocation for exhaustion of activity areas. Mwirichia (2013) assert that parental participation in their children education at home include; supervision of homework, assist with reading abilities, involving in mathematics plays, and computer games and provide playing materials.

Nyakoni (2012) noted that parents' inability to provide children with lighting during the night made learners not to complete homework assignments that indicate a participation in curriculum implementation. Parents who are economically empowered are able to avail adequate furniture, study rooms, essential services such as water, food, lighting and guidance and counseling and motivation (Ayoo, 2002). Adequate instructional materials help improves students' performance especially from low incomes setting (UNESCO, 2008). According to Oluoch (2011) any success or failure of education curriculum depends on availability of physical facilities, learning materials and equipment at both school and home.

Henderson and Mapp (2002) opines that parents could become valuable teachers at home by use of diverse reinforcement mechanism, while at school they can assist teachers painting, drawing, being resource persons, improvisation of teaching materials and accompanying learners to excursions, sports and games. According to Gitahi (2019) successful implementation of competency based curriculum requires parental participation, classroom teacher and school administration as curriculum facilitators of any learning process. Parents play a critical role in monitoring of homework assignments, guiding and counseling and providing teaching and learning facilities and materials for practical oriented-activities (Gitahi, 2019).

Parents acknowledge the key role played by decision-making but management bureaucracy and tensions in schools is a hindrance to its implementation (Tissot, 2011). Some studies opines that schools lack sound communication during educational planning and curriculum implementation for learners with disabilities (Mueller & Buckley, 2014; Leyser & Kirk, 2011) causing a feeling of exception from team building for effective relationship (Blue-Banning, Frankland, Summers, Nelson, & Beegle, 2004).

Kostadinova (2012) conducted a study on role of parents in the implementation of the curricula in Macedonia. The study established that there aren't sound schools and teachers strategies to involve parents in core decision-making and implementation of curriculum. The finding further established that parent's role is marginalized and limited to only fulfilling of certain obligations and statutory duties with no defined influence on implementation of the curriculum. Armento, Scafidi and Henderson (2011) opine that teachers are parents by extension and should therefore seal a bond of cooperation between school and home so as to achieve the

desired high academic performance. Jebii, Odongo and Aloka (2016) opines that in order to improve pre-school learners education, parents should attend school meetings, help with homework completion, provide school feeding programmes, take part in organized school forums, conferences and visits and provide teaching and learning resources.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

Since inception of the 2010 constitution, the pre-primary school education was to the forty-seven Counties in Kenya. However, these Counties cannot solemnly prepare pre-primary school children for holistic development. Therefore, the implementation of this curriculum needs active parental participation from home. This is because parents are considered as key ingredients to children education at home. Most studies done in Kenya have focused on parental involvement in children education in regards to; parental level of education, marital status, socio-economic status, provision of physical and teaching materials but none has been conducted on parental involvement in pre-primary education at home in Mombasa County. This is the gap that the present study sought to fill. Thus, the study sought to investigate on parental participation in home learning among public pre-primary schools learners in Mombasa County, Kenya.

## **3. Objectives of the Study**

- i. To establish parental home participation on public pre-primary schools learners education in Mombasa County, Kenya.
- ii. To determine strategies employed by parental home participation on public pre-primary schools learners education in Mombasa County, Kenya.

## **4. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework**

### **i. Theoretical Framework**

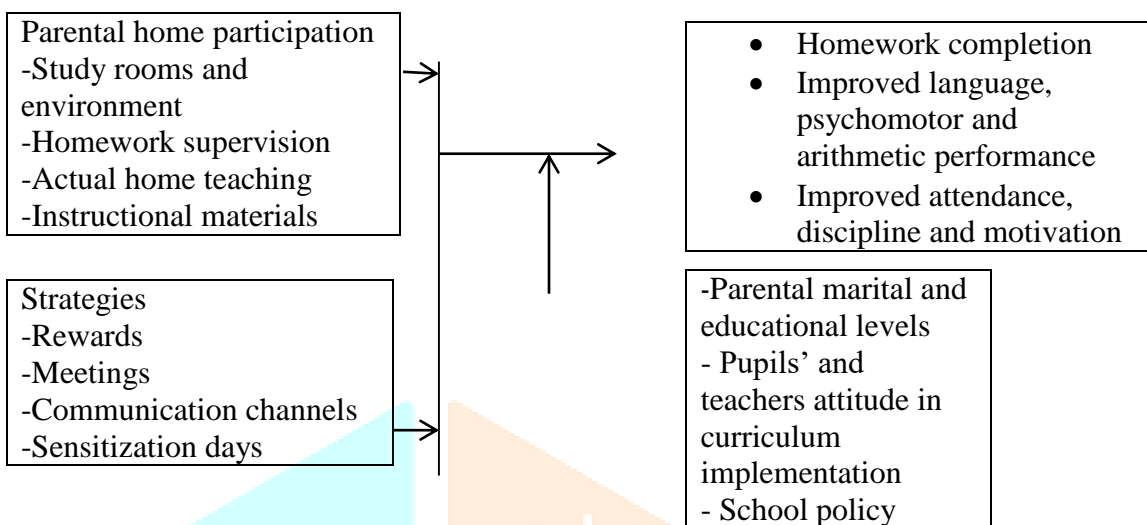
This study embraced Epstein's theory (1987) of overlapping spheres of influence. The theory states that children education is a shared responsibility among the school, the community and the family. Epstein believe that in order for children to succeed in other higher levels of education the school, the community and the family ought to collaborate, support and complement each other so as to realize children full potentials in learning and development. Thus, this study investigated the home environment of learning in order to complement school teaching and learning process. This theory was considered suitable for this study because of the over-lapping teaching and learning environment between school and the family in facilitating public pre-primary schools learners' educational performance.

## ii. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework following shows the over-lap among variables of the study.

### Independent variables

### Dependent variable



## 5. Methodology

The study was premised on descriptive research design because of its combination of quantitative and qualitative paradigms. The study was carried out in public pre-primary schools in Mombasa County, Kenya. The study population was 97 public-pre-primary schools head teachers, 400 teachers and 8000 parents from which a sample of 30 pre-primary school head teachers, 60 teachers and 10 parents was drawn. The selected sample was based on Mugenda and Mugenda postulation that a sample of 10%-30% of the population is an adequate representative sample size for generalization of the findings of the study. Stratified, purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used to select the study sample. Head teachers interview schedule and teachers and parents' questionnaire were the instruments used to collect data. Piloting was conducted from the neighbouring Kilifi South Sub County that was not within the actual study locale. Instruments validity was enhanced through content and face validity. Test re-test method enhanced instruments reliability whose reliability co-efficient was 0.75 and therefore deemed appropriate for actual use. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics by use of frequencies, percentages and means and data presented in tables. The qualitative data was analysed in narrative and verbatim forms.

## 5. Research findings and Discussions

### i. Parental home participation on public pre-primary schools learners' education

The responses were premised on a 2- point Likert scale of agree (2) and disagree (1). The responses were used to calculate the mean and level of parental participation concluded. A mean of  $\geq 1.5$  indicates high parental participation whereas a mean of  $\leq 1.4$  indicates low parental participation. This is illustrated in Table 1.



**Table 1: Parents participation Approach (Parents 30, teachers 60)**

Type of activity	Response	Agree	Disagree	Mean	Level of parental participation
Provided study rooms	Teachers	25 (41.7%)	35 (58.3%)	1.39	Low
	Parents	11 (36.7%)	19 (63.3%)		
Hire private teachers	Teachers	10 (16.7%)	50 (83.3%)	1.20	Low
	Parents	8 (26.7%)	22 (73.3%)		
Take role of syllabus curriculum implementation	Teachers	9 (15.0%)	51 (85.0%)	1.14	Low
	Parents	4 (13.3%)	26 (86.7%)		
Help homework completion	Teachers	18 (30.0%)	42 (70.0%)	1.27	Low
	Parents	6 (20.0%)	24 (80.0%)		
Avail instructional materials	Teachers	20 (33.3%)	40 (66.7%)	1.34	Low
	Parents	11 (36.7%)	19 (63.3%)		
Supervise homework study	Teachers	10 (16.7%)	50 (83.3%)	1.26	Low
	Parents	9 (30.0%)	21 (70.0%)		
Provide recreational and play facilities	Teachers	5 (8.3%)	55 (91.7%)	1.13	Low
	Parents	7 (23.3%)	23 (76.7%)		
Involve in decision making	Teachers	30 (50.0%)	30 (50.0%)	1.44	Low
	Parents	10 (33.3%)	20 (67.7%)		

Table 1 indicate that majority of teachers 35 (58.3%) and parents 19 (63.3%) had the perception that parental involvement in providing study rooms was low as shown by a mean of 1.39. Inadequate availability of study rooms with fascinating education materials and equipment result to children's low motivation, attitudes and learning outcomes. One of the head teachers 5 retorted '*Most parents are of low socio-economic status and therefore they are not in a position to create enough rooms for home study and therefor impact negatively on pre-school children education*'. The study concurs with UNESCO (2011) that parents should be able to provide an enabling home climate such as allocating homework place for educational outcomes. The study complement Epstein (1987) who believes that in order for children to succeed in other higher levels of education the school, the community and the family ought to collaborate, support and complement each other so as to realize full potentials in learning and development.

The finding depicted a low mean of 1.2 in regards to parental participation to helping children with hiring of private tutoring. Facilitation of home teaching enables slow learners to cope up with mastery of curriculum content and education outcomes. Most head teachers reported that their parents are of lower educational attainments and therefore prefer to hire private tutors to augment school curriculum implementation because of their inability to read and write. However, According to Epstein (1987) parental involvement in children education can be strengthened by parents acting as classroom volunteers in order to achieve improved outcomes.

Regarding parental assistance with completion of homework, majority of teachers and parents disagree that they in deed help their children. This was established by a low mean of 1.27. Parental participation as co-teachers is a precursor to children motivation, attitudinal change, and acquisition of varied activity content matter. They can better assist teachers with material development and actual teaching, accompanying children to field trips, games and sports and act as classroom resource persons in their field of excellence. This is because of the key role played from being passive to active teaching participants. The findings in agreement with Cheronno and Syomwene (2018) whose study established that a majority of parents helped their children with completion of homework assignments in in reading, writing and arithmetic activities.

Teachers and parents perception was that parental participation of availing teaching and learning materials was low as indicated by a low mean of 1.34. A follow up learning at home with adequate instructional materials facilitates mastery of content matter, manipulation of learning activities and improved performance outcomes. Head teachers reported inadequate teaching materials to enhance effective learning at home. They

further added that parental inability to aid availability of instructional materials at home is an impediment to successful learner's education outcomes. According to Oluoch (2011) any success or failure of education curriculum depends on availability of physical facilities, learning materials and equipment at both school and home.

On activity of supervision of homework assignments most teachers and parents agreed that there was a low mean parental participation which stood at 1.26. Supervision of children homework activities is perquisite to children improved home learning and academic improvement. Head teachers were in agreement due to high pupils' enrollment and inadequate learning facilities and materials teachers were overwhelmed and therefore needed parental intervention on children completion of homework assignments. The finding was in contrast to UNESCO (2011) postulation that parents are able to provide an enabling home climate such as supervision of homework assignments and studies. Similarly, Desforges and Abouchaar (2003) note that parental supervision in children's learning activities at home is closely associated with increased children's mental abilities in the early years.

The finding from Table 1 show that parental participation in children provision of recreational and play facilities was low as indicated by low mean of 1.13. Children exposure to recreation facilities and play makes learning real, child-centred and intrinsically motivated. Most head teachers acknowledge inadequate funding and time constrains as main factors inhibiting children participation in play and recreational learning to actualize child-centred teaching. They decried parental socio-economic status and inadequate time at home to enable children participates in play and recreational facilities. According to Gitahi (2019) parents play a critical role in monitoring children homework assignments, guiding and counseling and providing teaching and learning facilities and materials for practical oriented-activities (Gitahi, 2019).

The study reveals a low parental participation mean of 1.44 in school decision making organs. This was despite teachers response indicated 30 (50%) agreement perception. Parental participation in their children education at home enhances children; school attendance, improved achievement, increased discipline and health development. The finding agrees with Kostadinova (2012) who averred that parental participation in school decision making is marginalized and limited to only fulfilling of certain obligations and statutory duties with no defined influence on implementation of the curriculum.

## **ii. Strategies employed by parental home participation on public pre-primary schools learners' education**

Teachers and parents were asked to provide their response on strategies that could be considered in improving parental participation on children education. Different strategies were put across but the major options are shown in Table 2 based on a 2-point Likert scale as agree (2) and disagree (1). The responses were further calculated to determine the mean and level of parental participation. A response mean of  $\geq 1.5$  indicated high parental participation whereas a mean of  $\leq 1.4$  indicated low parental participation.

**Table 2: Strategies of improving parental participation in children education at home (Parents 30, teachers 60)**

Strategies	Response	Agree	Disagree	Mean	Parental participation
Make direct phone calls	Teachers	55 (91.7%)	5 (8.3%)	1.8	High
	Parents	17 (56.7%)	13 (43.3%)		
Hold academic, closing, sports and games days at school	Teachers	38 (63.3%)	22 (36.7%)	1.9	High
	Parents	16 (53.3%)	14 (6.7%)		
Organize school and class meetings	Teachers	43 (71.7%)	17 (28.3%)	1.7	High
	Parents	25 (83.3%)	5 (16.7%)		
Involve in decision making	Teachers	31 (51.7%)	29 (48.3%)	1.6	High
	Parents	26 (80.0%)	4 (20.0%)		
Involve in representation on school Board of Management	Teachers	56 (93.3%)	4 (6.7%)	1.9	High
	Parents	28 (93.3%)	2 (6.7%)		
Establish strong school-parents relationships	Teachers	53 (88.3%)	7 (11.7%)	1.9	High
	Parents	27 (90.0%)	3 (10.0%)		
Arrange teachers home visitations	Teachers	27 (45.0%)	33 (55.0%)	1.3	Low
	Parents	8 (26.7%)	22 (73.3%)		
Provide guiding and counseling	Teachers	54 (90%)	6 (10%)	1.9	High
	Parents	27 (90%)	3 (10%)		
Improve children discipline	Teachers	43 (71.7%)	17 (28.3%)	1.7	High
	Parents	25 (83.3%)	5 (16.7%)		
Rewarding children	Teachers	28 (93.3%)	2 (6.7%)	1.8	High
	Parents	49 (81.7%)	11 (18.3%)		

The findings from the Table indicate that majority of teachers and parents response identified making direct phone calls, involve in decision making, organizing school and class meetings, establishing strong parent-school relations, rewarding children, involving parents in school Board of Management and holding academic, closing, sports and games days at school as key strategies of engaging parents participate in their children education at home as represented by a high mean of above 1.5. Most head teachers' were in agreement that the performance of children education depends on mutual co-existence between parents and school and therefore none can exist in isolation. According to Gitahi (2019) successful implementation of competency based curriculum requires parental participation, classroom teacher and school administration as curriculum facilitators of any learning process. Similarly, the findings concur with Jebii, Odongo and Aloka (2016) who opines that in order to improve pre-school learners education, parents should attend school meetings, help with homework completion, provide school feeding programmes, take part in organized school forums, conferences and visits and provide teaching and learning resources.

However, strategies that were identified to have limited influence of parental participation on children's education at home were arranging for teachers home visitations as reflected by a lower mean of 1.3. Most head teachers cited unavailability of time and both school and government policy formulation on how such a strategy can be achieved and implemented. The findings opines that of Tissot (2011) that parents acknowledge the key role played by decision-making but management bureaucracy and tensions in schools is a hindrance to its implementation.

### Conclusions

The study concluded that parental home participation in children education is low in regards to aiding and supervision of homework and engagement in syllabus completion, hiring private teachers, improve discipline, providing study rooms, guiding and counseling, instructional materials, recreational and play facilities and involvement in schools decision making. It was also concluded that the strategy of involving teachers in home visitation was not a strong strategy to parental participation on pre-primary learners' education. Most participants agreed that parental participation at home on children education result to improved children; attendance, motivation, homework completion and language, psychomotor and arithmetic performance.

## 6. i. Recommendations

- a) Based on the study findings and conclusions, the study recommended that the Government should come up with policies that incorporate parental participation in the education of children from home.
- b) Schools should sensitive parents on importance of parental participation in their children's education at home.

## ii. Suggestions for Further Study

The study recommended for the following studies.

- i. A comparative study of parental home participation in privately owned and public pre-primary schools.
- ii. Similar studies should be replicated in other Counties in Kenya to compare, contrast and generalize the findings of the study findings.

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