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Influence of Parent Involvement on Academic Performance of Students in Public Day Secondary Schools in Thika West and Gatundu North Sub-Counties, Kiambu County, Kenya

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Abstract

Parental involvement contributes significantly in students' academic success in national examinations. This has forced secondary school administrators to involve parents while preparing students for Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE). Parental involvement influence student's natural talent, improves behavior, increase classroom attendance and promotes classroom compliance which affects the student's academic performance. In this study, investigation on parental involvement in public day secondary school performance in Thika West and Gatundu North Sub-Counties, Kenya, was done. The study was guided by the Ecological Systems Theory with the use of descriptive research design. Teachers and students in the public secondary schools in Thika West and Gatundu North Sub-Counties were targeted. Questionnaires were used in this study. Demographic data and research questions were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Tables were used for the representation of data obtained in this study. The relationship between dependent and independent variables were analyzed using linear regression. Ethical issues were adhered to during the study. The study showed that good parent-student communication is a prerequisite for high academic achievement. In conclusion, schools which adhered to students' performance management policies showed higher academic performance. The study recommends that school administration should involve parents in preparation of calendar of events defining the role of parents in their children's academic performance. In addition, counseling department should be reinforced to deal with students problems that emanates from parents. School administrators and policy makers should make efforts to have open forums for parents, teachers and students in order to be able to interact with each other and communicate schools' expectations to parents and parents to be given a chance to express their views.

Key words: Students, Parent Involvement, Academic Performance, Public Day Secondary Schools, Thika West, Gatundu North, Kiambu County, Kenya

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Introduction

Background to the Study

It is every stakeholder`s desire in the education sector to have high levels of academic performance not only in Kenya but all over the world (Wang et al, 2018). Failure in the national examinations is detrimental to the students since it leads to despair and uncertainty in life hence the reason for Academic performance becoming a major concern for educational researchers. Several researchers have belabored the concept of academic achievement vis-à-vis various factors that determine academic achievement (Bryan et al, 2019). Such and other related researches have led to what is commonly known as the Effective Schools Model, which is made up of seven aspects according to (O`Flynn et al, 2018). Six out of the seven aspects apply strictly to the schools environment while home-school relations incorporate the involvement of parents/guardians in the academic achievement of students (Muller, 2018). When a family is able to; create a home environment for their child and be able to encourage them to learn; be able to express realistic expectations to their children on their future career and future achievements and the parents should be able to fully engage in their child`s education and in the society at large is what was term as being able to accurately predict the achievement of a child in school without determining their social status or how wealthy the family is(Whittle et al , 2017. Most of the children do better in school if their family is fully involved in their education (Đurišić & Bunijevac, 2017).

The children`s academics need to be involved as it is an imperative factor to consider in the child`s success (Coleman, 2018). Students are not only encouraged academically by their parents` involvement, they are also encouraged to make use of their natural talents, improve their behaviours, increase of their attendance in the classroom, promotion of compliance in class and increasing the achievement of the students education is effective and expected, then they tend to become more involved as determined Hampden-Thompson and Galindo (2017). Parents are not only expected to be academically (Lee et al, 2017). Parent are not only involved in their children`s` academic performance only, but they should also be involved in the improvement of school governance and democratization in general. The quality of a school is determined by how well the parents are involved in the school development as per the European Commission (Dotterer & Wehrspan, 2016). Globally, The Excellence in Schools` White Paper in England was first set out to show the role parents play in their children`s academic in 2007 through the government`s strategy of securing the involvement of parents. There were three elements that were involved in the strategy developed by the government of England, which included;

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information being provided to the parents, a voice being given to the parents and parents being encouraged to collaborate with the schools (Wilder, 2019). Schools were found to be popular according to how the school's parents got involved in the school's activities for more than 10 years in the Scottish schools through a study done by (Tizard et al, 2017)). Different from how Kenyan schools popularity is viewed through how the school has performed in the past years consecutively (Adan, 2016). This thus shows that the involvement of parents in schools plays a vital role in how children perform which then leads to the school being popular.

In Africa, the Cross River State on the southern educational zone was studied on the role parents play in the education of their children and how they influenced the performance of students in English language (Ebuta & Ekpo-Eloma, 2020). The English language achievement was greatly affected by the role played by parents in the children's education as the study revealed (Veas et al., 2019). There is likeliness in high achievements from students when their parents participate in their academic activities. Achievement should thus be facilitated through parents getting involved in activities of children that involve learning. In South Africa, a study was done on how a Cape Town school which is disadvantaged where he intended to determine how the participation of parents affected performance of their children (Page, 2016) . The researcher reported on how the parents participated in education in school and also other activities in the home setting. The primary school learners academic achievement was strongly affected by parental involvement as the study revealed.

The learner participants supported the fact that the involvement of parents was of key their success in school. The involvement did not only include class work but also other activities that support the well-being of the society (Daniel, 2016) . The homework activities came up with mixed reactions where both positive and negative feelings were expressed as per the parent's involvement. Most of the participants indicated that their mothers assisted them in their homework while very few indicated that their father's did. In Rwanda, a study was conducted on the influence of parental participation in their children's performance in school. Factors such as parent's socio-economic status, which includes the parents' level of education, their occupation status and income, were highlighted by the study done.

The study found out that parents with low levels of literacy lacked the required knowledge and skills to assist their children in their schoolwork (Mugari, 2017). Another study stated that the parental related factors that affected their children's performance in education included; socio-political factors, socio-economic condition, parents' negative school experience, education level of parents, parents' beliefs about whether the effects of involvement will contribute to their children's academic achievement, the family structure, parental style, parent's gender, cultural differences, language used at schools, age of students or pupils, lack of time, language and school attitudes and involvement (Jiménez & Vera, 2018); (Akellot & Bangirana, 2019).

The responsibilities of parents in Uganda as per the Education Act 2009 indicated that parents needed to; participate in giving of discipline to children when they are wrong, provide the required learning materials by the children, take caution of the welfare of the teachers, development of the school's structure and ensure that the children are well cared for (Akellot & Bangirana, 2019). The parents are encouraged to participate in the running of school activities

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even if the act does not legalize parents getting involved in schools management (Government of uk, 2017) . The study thus recommends that the school academic levels may improve if the parental involvement is in a high level. From the research done, it was found out there was a positive relation between parent involvement and education attainment of their children in school and were, therefore, able to convince the policymakers to take some initiatives to create family intervention programs (Boonk, Gijsselaers et al., 2018).

All the children in Kenya are not being provided for the quality of education that they deserve as the sector is facing challenges in providing for quality education. All the parents are concerned on how their children perform and appreciate when a teacher shows concern on the follow up on how the child is performing (Hornby & Blackwell, 2018). The competence of children, their perceptions and academic achievement are improved through parental involvement in the children's academics (Daoud & Quiocho, 2017). Another study was done on Kenyan secondary schools in Nairobi where the children's performance was evaluated and how it was affected by paternal involvement. (Adan, 2016). Parents who are called upon by the institutions administrators to participate in school activities motivate the students academically. The homework that learners are given should be directed and inspected by parents and they should also offer guidance on how to choose subjects.

The children's abilities in school are measured to certain extent according to how their parents participate in activities in the school. How the management of secondary schools is undertaken should be guided to the parents through offering knowledge and skills. There are various variables that are dependent on the performance of students. They include; the facilities and the type of school, teacher's qualification, the academic background of the student, the origin of their environment, the leadership involved by teachers and the qualifications of the management. In Kiambu County, the performance of public secondary schools can be rated in three categories; high, average and low. The schools are divided into national, Extra County, county and sub-county. There are both boarding and day schools where the performance is also divided in the same cadre. The schools are graded from the best performing to the least performing despite their differences in academic facilities and infrastructure.

Statement of the Problem

The discussion of how the achievement of children in education is affected by involvement of parents has not been given a lot of attention in the Education field. When parents participate in the academic activities of their children, they tend to perform well (Eliason. & Jenkins., 2017). In the skills and brain development, the children that are supported by their fathers in the academic activities in the Western world in the paternal involvement study perform better. Despite the fact that it is evident that parental involvement contributes positively on academic performance of students, such influence has not been emphasized in public day secondary schools in Thika West and Gatundu North Sub-Counties in Kiambu County. Due to this reason, the researcher was prompted to carry out research on the aspects of parental involvement that contribute to academic performance of students among public day secondary schools in Thika West and Gatundu North Sub-Counties, Kenya.

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Objective of the Study

- i. To determine the influence of parent involvement on academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Thika West and Gatundu North Sub-Counties

Review of Related Literature

The influence of parent involvement on academic performance of students in public secondary schools

Parents and schools are linked together when the parents take part in governance, making of decisions and participating in advocacy roles, which are strategies to promote parental involvement (Berrick et al., 2017). When parents get involved in school decision making as well as other activities of learning it helps the students to perform well which is part of the comprehensive program in parental involvement. The community also advantages through the participation of the community and parents in making of decisions in schools as they become more accountable. When parents are involved in school site councils, associations that include both the parents and teachers and other committee activities, they are able to get involved in decision making which strengthens their parental participation (Hegna & Smette, 2017). The students are enacted for policies by the school and the parents, which contribute in their outcomes through the benefits they receive. Through the decisions of the school, students are able to know of how they are represented in their family.

There is need for parents to connect with other families so that they can encourage and teach each other on the benefits of parental participation in schools. Through policy development, the teachers are also able to differentiate the roles that parents play in schools. The schools objectives can be achieved effectively if the parents are given a chance to participate in decision-making process in the school as showed by (Costa & Faria, 2017). There is need for parents to be involved in strategic planning process, making of policies, budgeting and evaluation of cyclical programs in the schools (Muller, 2018). The achievement of children was directly found to relate to parents' participation positively as claimed by (Wilder, 2019). If the parents only monitored and helped their children in doing their homework and did not take part in other activities, then the relationship would be found to weaken. The relationship was further strengthened when the parents participated which gave hope and care to the children.

For the academic excellence of the children, parents need to ensure that they participate in making available of the resources needed in the school for the children to learn. These activities include; ensuring that their children get to school in time, ensure that they provide the scholastic materials needed by the children and funding of the services required to ensure that children perform well (Brooks et al., 2018). In majority of the schools, the parents fund for all the activities and services in the school long since independence after the missionaries' donations were affected by the World War (Sekamwa, 2017). The skills required by a student to excel both academically and in home life, can be achieved through forming a working relationship between the parents and the teachers through implementation of parental involvement strategies and practices in the education society today (Aldridge, 2016). As stated by the National Education Association (NEA,) children do better in school when their parents are involved in their

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education activities. The schools that the children go to that their parents are involved, are known to be good (National Education Association). The student's education and future at large will be improved when the parents are significantly y involved in education activities in school. This promotes love and support, which in turn improves their relationship as advised by (Jeynes, 2015).

The school's and parents hard work and dedication make the school benefit from them which mostly affects the value of the student's education (Ganley et al., 2017). In the first 10 years of a child's life, there is a strong relationship between home life and school as this is when they spend more time with their families than any other time in their life (Patrikakou, 2015).The future of the child thus depends on these ten years as this is when the education and society norms are instilled in the child who helps them in coping in both school and the society. When schools, parents, families, and communities work together in support of a child's education, several benefits are realized which includes; the students earn higher grades, the school attendance is higher, students stay in school long and in higher level, and programs are enrolled more. Knowledge is developed through the participation of parents on the students' education by knowing the student better, which makes the parents active in participation in the success of the student, which improves their relationship both at home, and in school.The insight, guidance, and support from both the school and parents are needed in the educational career of the student. Education is provided to the student in the best way possible when the school and the family offer full support to the student, which raises their attitude and self-confidence.

The children are motivated through presents and rewards that they are offered when they engaged in good behaviours, when this continue children continues to engage themselves in desired behavior, which helped in shaping a society with desirable characters according to Ondieki (2018). The achievement, attendance, self-esteem and overall behavior; emotional and goals in life were affected positively by parents' involvement (Blake et al., 2017). When the parent participate in the academic activities of their children, the children are likely to be more motivated to learn and thus acquire good results (Alyssa et al., 2017).

Parents' involvement is also affected by how wealthy or how poor a family is, if a family is wealthy, they are more likely to have the power to participate in their academic excellence of their children unlike the poor families (Allan et al., 2016). It was also found that the parents of African American parents were low compared to that of American parents. The children that come from wealthy families can be provided for the financial support and home resources that they require to learn compared to those that are of poor background (Schulz, 2015). The education of children relied upon the participation of their parents largely according to most of the studies done globally.

The achievement of a child in their education is greatly determined by the academic level of their parents, which also motivates their involvement in matters concerning their children's education. The school events were much supported by parents that had a high educational background and had a good income compared to the parents with low education level. The education level that a child attains is greatly connected to the educational level of their parents. Most of the parents that are significantly involved in the educational journey of their

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children are those that have high educational levels and thus are mostly involved at home on the activities of their children (Chowa et al., 2013).

The parents who contributed low or did not contribute to the education of their children had a hand in low literacy levels (Koech, 2016). The less educated parents do not value the pre-school education of their children compared to those who are educated. The parents should have a good relationship with the school, which also improves their relationship with the student, which eventually enhances the attitude of the student and thus improves their educational performance. The partnership or involvement is therefore made a priority by the parents. The programs of the students in school are enhanced through parents participating directly and visiting the school occasionally.

The parents who are educated are very confident when visiting their children's schools and enquire on the academic follow up on their children.

Children whose parents have a high level of education offer them with solid educational foundation and success in life through empowering them. The parents are able to have a good relationship with their children's school, which also motivates the child to relate well with the teachers and school management. The education of their children is guided with competence and confidence from the parents (Markey & Okantey, 2019). Most of the poor parents do not enroll their children to school due to lack of funds to meet costs (Makewa et al., 2017). The parents are not able to offer necessities such as food and housing and at the same time afford to provide education to their children due to poverty. Those parents who enroll their children and cannot provide school materials such as school uniforms, tuition fees and activity fees, make the children to be sent home from time to time which disrupts their learning and some eventually drop out of school. A study was thus needed for find out how the level of education of parents influenced their level of participation in the academic performance of the children.

Theoretical Framework

Ecological Systems Theory

The ecological theory recognizes the academic performance of a child within the larger social and cultural contexts. The role parents play at home, school, community and other social institutions has a great impact on a child's life. The impact may not be viewed immediately but it has a long-term effect (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). For example, when Bronfenbrenner was a child he visited different places with his father, and he heard different terms in psychology from his mother. Although at that point of his life he did not understand any of the terms, when he grew up and went to the college he was able to understand the meaning of those words easily; his previous experience helped his comprehension.

The experience he had with his parents influenced and led him to work with children in both the United States and former USSR. A number of evaluation research studies looked at the impact of these programs and it was reported that parent involvement has a greater significant on the academic performance of a child (Van-Assche et al., 2019). In the 1980's, research began to highlight the impact of parent participation in the school, home, community and other social institutions. The outcome of the research reflected a positive relationship between parent participation and education attainment of their children in school and were therefore, able to

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convince the policymakers to take some initiatives to create family intervention programs. In the 1990's the federal government created the Action Center for Families, Communities, and Schools and the Children Learning Center for children from birth through high school.

A child grows in the setting of a school, peers, family, teachers, child health services and the neighborhood, which is the major aspects discussed in the Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory that makes it relevant to the study. The surrounding affects the child's development directly through physical factors and experiences from others. There is interaction between the microsystems that are used in the process of growth and development of a child. The child's development in academic and development of physical and mental behaviors is affected by the surroundings. It is therefore hoped that more parents will be involved in their children's academic performance based on this theory. The theory makes the parents to be more informed on the relevance of their participation in the process of their children's. The theory is a source of encouragement to parents to involve themselves fully in the academic work of their children. This will in the end eliminate regional disparities experienced in performance of the country's National exams among different schools.

Research design

The study adopted a descriptive research design which basically presents the current state of affairs. Questionnaires were used in this study. Demographic data and research questions were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Table was used for the representation of data obtained in this study.

Results and discussion

Influence of Parent Involvement on Academic Achievement of Students

The study aimed at establishing the influence of Parent-Student Involvement on academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Thika West and Gatundu North Sub-Counties. A degree of agreement or disagreement i.e. strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), undecided (N), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SDA) was used to rate the said involvement

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Table 1: Teachers view on Parent-Student Involvement

Parent-Student Involvement	Mean	Standard deviation
When parents provide enough shelter, food and clothing's at home, the students are psychologically settled while in school	4.83	0.383
When different parties such as families, schools, parents and communities work together to support learning, students tend to stay in school longer, achieve higher grades, attend school more regularly, and enroll in higher-level programs.	4.89	0.323
Parents who sets a good example in areas such time management, hard work and respect to others and spend more time to know their student and keeping that relationship in good standing will enable the student to perform better.	4.83	0.383
When parents pay fees on time and provide the necessary learning materials e.g uniform and stationery, students tent to perform better in their academics	4.94	0.235
Parent involvement in establishing up an acceptable home environment for study and monitoring homework given by teachers helps in improving performance	4.83	0.382

Source: Primary Data, 2021

The highest number of teachers strongly agreed that parents should; provide enough shelter, food and clothing's at home, work together with schools, families, and communities to support learning, set a good example in areas such time management, hard work respect to others and spend more time getting to know their student and keeping that relationship in good standing, pay school fees on time and provide the necessary learning materials e.g. uniform and stationery and get involved in setting up a home environment which is acceptable for study and monitoring homework given by teachers. Doing all the above things would greatly help in the students' performance.

Summary

The significance of the findings emphasized on public schools importance, especially parents for the purpose of building strong relationships between them to enhance the potential and success of their students. The study found that when parents provide a conducive home environment with enough food, shelter and clothing, their children tend to perform better in school. Further, performance was enhanced by parents paying fees on time and providing necessary learning materials.

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Conclusion

A conclusion was made from the findings that parents' involvements in academic achievement of the students were very important as it lead to academic improvement.

Recommendations

To enhance parent participation on academic matters of their students, school administration must involve parents in preparation of calendar of events defining the role of parents in their children's academic performance. In addition, counseling department should be reinforced to deal with students problems that emanates from parents. School administrators and policy makers should also make efforts to have open forums for parents, teachers and students in order to be able to interact with each other and communicate schools` expectations to parents and parents to be given a chance to express their views. The school administration should also establish an effective communication channels such as parents whatsapp groups where constant communication will be done to inform the parents of what they are expected to do in order to support academic programmes

Suggestions for Further Research

This research was conducted in day schools, a similar research can be done in boarding schools for comparison purposes. In addition, since the study was done to establish the effect of parent involvement on academic performance, it is recommended that another study be done to establish other factors which may contribute to academic performance apart from parents.

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