

Improving of Learning in Kenyan Public Primary Schools: Parents' Role in Nandi Central Sub-County

CHEPSIROR, E; ACHOKA, J.S.K, & ODOYO, F.S (2014)

ABSTRACT

The KCPE results released in Nandi Central Sub-County showed that the bottom 64 out of 186 schools which attained below the average mark 250 out of 500 marks were all public primary schools (MOEST, 2013) hence the study sought to investigate influence of parents' academic support on performance of class eight pupils in public primary schools in Nandi Central Sub- County, Kenya. The study was guided by these research questions: What is the role of parents in enhancing the performance of class eight pupils in public primary schools in Nandi Central Sub-County Kenya?, This study will be significant to the MOEST, head teachers, teachers, parents and SMC. Epstein, (2002) theoretical model on six- type's parents' involvement was used to guide the study Cross-section descriptive Survey design was used in the study. The target population consisted of all public primary schools in Nandi Central Sub-County, Kenya which consist of N=186 giving a total target population of N=11,032 and a sample size of n=390. Stratified sampling was used to stratify Sub-County schools in to 10 zones and the schools in to 8 class strata and class eight strata was chosen for the study. Simple random technique was used to sample: 3 schools in every zone, double streams and class eight pupils. The head teachers, class teachers and the parents of selected pupils were included. Qualitative data collection instruments were used to facilitate triangulation with those from quantitative data collection instruments then analyzed using descriptive statistics. 2 schools were used for pilot for the purpose of pre-testing instruments for data collection and to ensure their reliability. The data was analyzed using frequencies, percentages and mean and summarized in tables and triangulated with qualitative data thereby drawing conclusion. The findings of the study indicate that parents' support influence class eight academic performance. Recommendations include: the government should establish a policy that stipulates how parents should play a central role in their children's education so as to contribute to a child's academic performance, the government should increase the subsidy per pupil to enable schools to buy enough teaching learning materials among others. The study made suggestions for further research.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Parents in every race, nationality, religion and culture in all parts of the world are the primary caregivers and teachers of their children, preparing them for a happy, fulfilling and productive life through the support on the foundation of education (Teklemariam and Akala 2011). Parents are the anchors of the family and the genesis of communities and societies. According to the Children Act (2001), children have a right to education; this needs the support of the parents. The best interest of the child must be presented at all times and all actions and decisions made that may affect any child must be at the interest of the child. This is also stipulated in the Education Act, (2012) which stresses the importance of schools partnering with parents to ensure a quality education and nurturing environment for children.

An effective form of involvement is presented by Epstein's model (2002) which describes how children learn and develop through three overlapping "spheres of influence." These are: Family, school and the community. These three spheres must form partnership to best meet the needs of the child. Epstein defines six types of involvement based on the relationship between family, school and the community: Parenting (skills), communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision making and collaborating with the community. Epstein (2002) emphasizes that all of these six types of involvement must be included to have successful partnership. Pupils who have support from the parents at home show better performance at school, while students lacking support are struggling (Epstein, 2002).

Education Act, (2012), allows parent's participation in election of the school management committee (SMC) that should be ratified by the Ministry of Education. The Government has committed itself to

**Address for correspondence*

the provision of education to all its citizens in order to eradicate illiteracy, poverty, ignorance and diseases (Republic of Kenya, 2006). The government of Kenya (GoK) has developed a number of educational policies and strategies geared to school effectiveness and school improvement. Given the benefits outlined above, an effective parents' support would be particularly suitable means for improving education in a developing country like Kenya.

The contact between parents and children which is vital in child's early development has been lost; parents rely on schools to raise their children declares (Oriendo, 2011). Attempts to enhance parents' involvement in education involve educators across Kenya. It is anticipated that parents should play a role not only in promoting their children's achievements but more broadly in school improvement (Disforges and Abouchaar, 2003).

Following subsequent drop in performance in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) in public primary schools in Nandi Central Sub- County Kenya as reported in (MOEST, 2013) attempts to enhance parents' involvement in education involve administrators, educators and parents association. It is against this background that the researcher sought to investigate Influence of parents' academic support on class eight performances in public primary schools in Nandi Central Sub-County, Kenya.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

An important manifestation of partnership in education is better pupil performance especially in their academic examination. This became critical since parents are to be involved in the learning of their children (RoK, 1988). However, every year the KCPE results are announced, the big problem is how unimpressive the performance is in public primary compared to private schools. The problem of minimal parents' support in education of public primary schools in Kenya has reached an alarming proportion, to the extent that even the standards of education have dropped (Oriendo, 2011). A National level survey carried out by Omwenga, (2014) revealed that in the 47 counties, 220 out of total 235 schools listed among top five in every county were private schools which represent 95% of the top five slots in all counties. On the other hand, 221 out of 235 schools which is 96% of bottom five schools in each county were public primary schools, all scoring below half the total mark of 500 which is the highest mark a candidate can score in KCPE.

Nevertheless, the above trend in KCPE performance has elicited a lot of concern among the stakeholders (Omwenga, 2014). Many factors contribute to students' academic excellence in school and in examinations. One of these factors is parents' academic support but some parents are ignorant and negligent regarding their supportive roles to the children in so far as academic is concerned. This is more so in communities that think that educating a child is the exclusive job for the experts in the education sector (Mohan, 2002) and as a result, parents' support has not been adequate.

A County report by the County Quality Assurance and Standards Officer, (MOEST, 2013) Indicates that a drop in performance in public primary schools in Nandi Central Sub-County, Kenya in comparison to other Sub-Counties in Kenya was attributed to lack of parents playing their role in the education of their children. The results released showed that the bottom 64 out of 186 schools which attained below the average mark 250 out of 500 marks were all public primary schools (MOEST, 2013). However, it is reported in one of the Daily's after the release of KCPE that "surprisingly, private schools once again out shone their public counterparts" (Rajab, 2014). The game of blaming and counter blaming has been going on for long posing the question does parents' academic support influence class eight performance? This scenario elicited the researcher's interest to investigate Influence of parents' academic support on class eight performance in public primary schools in Nandi Central Sub-county. Kenya.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study was guided by this research question:

What role do parents play to support academic performance of class eight pupils in public primary school in Nandi Central Sub- County, Kenya?

RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design is referred to as "study design" that takes overall conception of the study including description of all concepts, variables, and categories, the relationship prepositions and the methods of

data collection and analysis, (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). To elaborate, "... a research design is an action plan for getting from here to there. Where, "here" may be defined as initial set of research questions to be answered and "there" is some set of conclusions (answers)..." (Yin, 2003). Therefore this study utilized Cross-section descriptive survey design which involved taking a characteristic sample size that is representative and mixed methods majorly quantitative was used. This design was appropriate because the respondents were able to report the state of the variables.

Descriptive studies are those studies that are concerned with characteristics of the particular individual or a group. The design as indicated by Kothari, (2004) gave space for use of questionnaires to quantify the social phenomena and was also appropriate for qualitative data. The quantitative approach was used to analyze data in statistical terms, used statistical arguments or numbers to summarize and presented continuous variable responses to establish relationship between variables.

SUMMARY

There is no way in which parents can evade having a determining effect upon children's educational achievement. Research indicates that parents play an important role in pupil's performance. The study sought to investigate influence of parents' academic support on performance of class eight pupils in public primary schools in Nandi Central Sub- County, Kenya. The study was guided by these research questions: What role do parents play to support academic performance of class eight pupils in public primary schools in Nandi Central Sub-County Kenya?

Concerning the role that parents should play to support academic performance of class eight pupils, results from the study indicated the highest frequency of the respondents 26(86.4%) head teachers and 24(80.3%) strongly agreed that parents should frequently consult with class teacher on class eight's pupils' academic performance, another 23(76.4%) head teachers and 21(70.2%) class teachers strongly agreed that parents should buy class eight pupils adequate revision materials. However, parents are negligent on their roles as a smaller number 23(15.3%) of pupils confirmed that their parents check on their homework. While the largest number 127(84.7%) said that parents do not check homework.

CONCLUSION

These conclusions are made on the basis of the findings of the research questions. Parents contribute to a child's sense of academic performance in many ways. The study found that parents have critical roles that are instrumental for the academic success of children. For instance creating conducive home environment that promotes learning and reinforces what is being taught at school. Most parents do not buy supplementary learning materials and do not ensure that the children get all the needed materials necessary for learning. It was also found that parents do not consult frequently with class teacher on children's academic progress, it was found that parents do not pay required school fees however those who paid do not pay in time forcing the head teachers to send the pupils for the same causing rampant absenteeism in public primary schools. The study found that parents do not contact teachers on academic progress of pupils, buy supplementary learning materials or attend PTA meetings and academic days.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The parents should provide all the necessary support to their children especially those in class eight. The roles that parents play in the academic success of the children are enormous. The government should come up with policy which stipulates that parents should consult with TRs and the number of times on the child's academic progress. The parents should be free to forward complaints concerning their children's academic performance to the school. Nonetheless, the parents should collaborate with TRs to enhance the academic performance of their children. They should attend PTA meetings and academic days so as to keep tracking their children's performance. On perception of parents' academic support, sensitization through the HTRs of primary schools should be made to parents on the importance of: monitoring pupils' academic progress, buying revision materials and providing moral support to class eight pupils.

REFERENCES

- Desforges & Abouchaar, (2003). *The impact of Parental Involvement, Parental Support and Family Education on pupil Achievement and Adjustments: A Literature Review*. Sherwood Park: Queens's printer.
- Epstein, J. L. (2002). *School, family and community partnership, preparing Educators and Improving schools*. Boulders Co. West view press.
- Kenya educational Act, (2012) [www.kenyalaw.org/klr/fileadmin...Basic education bill 2012](http://www.kenyalaw.org/klr/fileadmin...Basic_education_bill_2012). Accessed on Jan 2nd 2014.
- Kothari, C. R. (2004). *Research Methodology techniques*, (2nd Ed.) New Delhi. New Age International Publishers.
- Mohan, B. (2002). Teachers' & parents' perceptions on parents' involvement in Brazilian Early year and primary education international. *Journal of early year's Education*, 10 (3), 227-241.
- Mugenda, O. M. & Mugenda, A. G. (2003). *Research methods quantitative and Qualitative approaches*, Nairobi: African center for technology studies (ACTS) Press.
- Ondieki, L. G. (2012). A study of parents' involvement in pre-scholars' academic work Dondora Educational Zone of Nairobi County, Kenya.
- Oriendo, M. (2011, April 27) Education, The Standard, pp. 30.
- Rajab, R. (2014 Jan 1). Private schools dominate. The Star pp.2.
- Republic of Kenya Ministry of Education Science & Technology, (2013). *Nandi Central Sub- County Educational Awards*. Kapsabet: Horizon printers.
- Republic of Kenya, Ministry of Education Science and Technology, (MOEST, 2006) *Strategic plan 2006, School instructional improvement management Handbook*. Nairobi: Kenya MOEST.
- Sessional Paper No. 6 (1988). *Education and Training for the next decade and Beyond*. Nairobi: Government printer. Available from: [http://www.softkenya.com/.../education-policy-in ke...](http://www.softkenya.com/.../education-policy-in-ke...) Retrieved 29th June 2014.
- Teklemariam, A. A. & Akalas, W. J. (2011). *Effective schools for 21st Century in Africa*. Nairobi: CUEA press.
- UNESCO, (2001). *The Convention on the Rights of The Child*. Paris: UNESCO Publishers. Available: <http://www.unesco.org>. Retrieved Jan 22nd 2014
- Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case Study Research Design and Methods (3rdEds.)* Thousand Oaks: C.A Sage Publications.