

Parental Involvement and Primary School Academic Performance in Teso North District

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Abstract: *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 Teso North district. The study was based on descriptive survey design. The target population was 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 schedule to collect data. Open ended, closed ended and rating scale items was used for data collection. Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). 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.*

Keywords: Parental involvement, academic performance, parental influence, human capital development, basic needs.

1.Introduction

The role of primary education in human capital development cannot be underscored. It has been acknowledged widely that education enhances people's capabilities to participate effectively in nation building, improve health care and nutrition as well as lowering fertility and infant mortality (Chiuri, 2005; Psacharopoulos, 1987). Atieno (2011) and King, et.al (1993) also argue that primary education lays the foundation upon which social and political development of a nation is founded.

The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World conference at Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 and its follow-up in Dakar, Senegal in 2000 committed many African countries to invest in relevant and quality primary education to foster economic growth and social equality (World Bank, 2008; UNESCO 2005). Consequently, Provision of quality basic education became a priority for many governments.

Like in most parts of the country, provision of quality primary education in Busia County, particularly Teso North district has been a challenge. This is depicted in low performance in standard eight national examinations (KNEC, 2013; Nation Team, 2012). It has been pointed out that teachers are responsible for the poor performance. However, in their response affected teachers claim that they were innocent; instead they accuse parents for not supporting them. Apparently Free Primary Education has made primary school management more public than it were in the yesteryears. As a result issues of academic performance have become more of public concern such that accusations and counter accusations between head teachers, teachers and parents are the order of the day. Although accusations are not always unhealthy, whenever they are manifested through disruptive activities that affect smooth running of schools, they become undesirable.

Parents are important in providing environmental, social and economic factors, which have powerful effects on pupils' academic lives. Ciriaka (2003) observes that parents' willingness to contact teachers about their children's progress is perhaps the first step to becoming involved in education.

1.1 Statement of the problem

Article 51 of the constitution of Kenya 2010 provides all children a right to access free basic education. Unlike in the past when parents were required to provide learning material, today, the government provides both learning material and teachers. This notwithstanding, parents remain critical stakeholders in children's learning process. There is need to streamline the role of parents in order to avoid disrupting smooth running of primary schools as witnessed recently when parents accused teachers for 'causing' low performance. More important is that the allegations being made by either party need to be backed by empirical evidence. This project proposal therefore sought to answer questions such as; how are parents in Teso North district involved in school academic performance? To what extent are parents involved in schools academic performance? What influence do parents have on school academic performance, and do parents know the areas they ought to be involved in schools?

1.2 Objectives of the study

The specific objectives of this project proposal are:

- i. To establish extent of parents' involvement in primary school academic performance in Teso North District.
- ii. To find out influence of parental involvement on pupils' academic performance in Teso North District.

2.Literature Review

2.1 Parental Involvement

In Africa, parents are involved in financing, school decision making and provision of teaching and learning resources. For instance, in South Africa, the Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996) mandates all public schools to have elected School Governing Body consisting of the head teacher, teachers, parents, non-teaching staff and students (Dubbeldan 2000).

In Burundi, too, education policies require parents to make financial and in-kind contributions for school buildings, maintain and support personnel salaries. The state also encourages Parents' Councils and SMCs to define school needs and connect schools to parents.

In Malawi, parents have no role to play in running of schools. Majority of parents indicate that it is not their responsibility to assist teachers in running schools, (Action Aid, 2009).

Parental involvement is not a new phenomenon in Kenya. There has been a positive relationship between schools and parents witnessed as early as during the pre-colonial era when parents and communities provided building posts, grass, bricks and mud for building classrooms (Bogonko, 1992).

Recently, the Sessional paper No. 1 of 2005 on policy framework on Education, Training and Research was adopted as the Government's blue print aimed at promoting partnership between teachers, parents, and communities as a significant factor in school improvement. The government has also put in place measures to train primary school head teachers on how to enhance parent- teacher relationship in primary schools through School Empowerment Program (SEP, 2004).

2.2 Students' performance

However, Spernes (2011) claims that there is limited sharing of responsibility between teachers and parents in most rural schools. It has also been claimed that Kenyan parents have very little interest in what their children do in school and that their role has been relegated to paying levies (Bishop Crowley, 2012).

A Study by Kibet (2010) 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 UasinGishu district 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.

Ciaraka (2003) who sampled out 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 did not participate in school decision making neither did they attend school functions. Further more 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.

2.3 School performance

Mbugua (1987) suggests that good relationship existed between schools and parents in Thika Municipality. This study considered fifty five respondents all comprising of teachers and found that head teachers expect parents to play a critical role in schools so as to improve the quality of education. However, parents and pupils were excluded yet they form part of the key stakeholders in education. No serious study of this nature can therefore be done without considering the views of these two groups.

2.4 Parental involvement and Students' performance

Ondieki (1988) in a study entitled; "A survey of home school relationship in primary schools within Kisii Municipal council, Kisii district" 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 of co-operation between teachers and parents and concluded that most parents were not involved in school management programs. However, questionnaire was the only instrument used to collect data and descriptive statistics were used for data analysis. The present study targets a larger sample and both descriptive and inferential statistics will be used for data analysis. Unlike the previous study, this study will use questionnaire and document analysis for triangulation.

3.Research Methodology

This study employed a descriptive survey design. This design was appropriate because it was less expensive and could enable the researcher to examine data from a wider area within a short time (Gatara, 2010). This design was also ideal for obtaining, recording and reporting conditions as they exist. Singleton (1993) observes that an ideal setting for research is one that directly satisfies the researcher's interests. Teso North district was selected purposively after comparing its' KCPE results with those of the other districts in the County. KNEC records for years 2008-2012 indicate that Teso North district had a mean score of 233 ranking last among districts in the County.

4.Data Presentation and Analysis

This chapter presents data collected from the field, its analysis, and finally the interpretation and discussion of the findings on parental involvement and academic performance in Teso North sub county.

4.1 Extent of parental involvement in school academic performance

This section focuses on the first objective of the study. The study sought to establish the extent of parental involvement in school academic performance through attending meetings,

provision of resources, decision making and management of pupils' affairs.

4.2 Parents' involvement in school meetings

Head teachers were required to involve parents in the management of schools (Kamunge Report, 1988). Parents were therefore expected to attend and actively participate in the proceedings of various meetings where school plans are developed and policies formulated. Pupils were asked whether they could remember any time during the term when their parents/guardians came to school for a meeting. The findings were presented in the table below.

Table 2: Parents going to school for a meeting

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	162	90.0
No	18	10.0
Total	180	100.0

From the data findings, 90 % of the pupils indicated that they could remember a time during the term when their parents/guardians came to school for a meeting while only 10% of them could not remember. This data implies that majority of the parents in the sampled schools attended meeting

Regarding the purpose or nature of the meeting, 15.3 % of the pupils indicated that the meeting was on school academic performance, 11.9% of the pupils indicated that the purpose of the meeting was Co-curricular, 2.8 % of the pupils indicated that the purpose of the meeting was discipline 67.6% of the pupils indicated that the purpose of the meeting was an Annual General Meeting 2.3% of the pupils indicated that they did not know the purpose of the meeting. The findings could imply that majority of the parents were more involved in Annual General Meetings. This could imply that most parents were not keen on school academic performance.

Table 3: Purpose of the meeting

	Frequency	Valid
Academic	27	15.3
Co-Curricular	21	11.9
Discipline	5	2.8
Annual General Meeting	119	67.6
Don't Know	4	2.3
Total	176	100.0

Regarding who attended the meetings, the data indicated that 59.7% of the pupils indicated that their mothers attended the meeting, 29 % of the pupils indicated their fathers attended, 4 % of the pupils indicated that their sisters, 2.3% of the pupils indicated that they didn't know who attended while 5.1% of the pupils indicated that other relatives attended the meeting.

From the data findings 6.9 % of the teachers indicated that none of the parents would attend, 24.6% indicated that about half would attend, 34.6% indicated that about quarter would attend, 23.1% indicated that about three quarter would attend, 3.1% indicated that all would attend while 7.7 %

indicated that about third would attend. From the data gets the impression that majority of the parents were not keen on school academic performance.

When the head teachers were asked to rate the extent of parental involvement in meetings to discuss school academic performance, the findings are presented below

Table 4: Head teacher's evaluation of parents' attendance of meetings to discuss school academic performance

	Frequency	Percent
None	2	7.7
About Half	2	7.7
About a Quarter	12	46.2
About Three Quarters	6	23.1
All	4	15.4
Total	26	100.0

From the findings, 46.2% of the head teachers indicated that about a quarter of parents could turn up for a meeting to discuss school academic performance. 23.1% of the head teachers indicated that about three quarters could turn up, 15.4% of the indicated that all parents could turn up, 7.7% of the head teachers indicated that about half of parents could turn up while 7.7% of the head teachers indicated that none of the parents could turn up for a meeting to discuss school academic performance. These findings concur with the views of the teachers and that of the pupils; hence one gets the view parental involvement in academic performance is generally very low.

4.3 School building infrastructure

The study sought to determine the extent to which parents were involved in provision of school building infrastructure in TND. The findings are presented in the table below.

Table 4: Funding for school building infrastructure

	Frequency	Percent
Non-Governmental	12	46.2
Ministry Of Education	6	23.1
Others	2	7.7
Constituency Development	6	23.1
Total	26	100.0

From the findings, majority (46.2) % of the head teachers indicated that their schools had nongovernmental organizations as their main source of funding for school building infrastructure. 23.1% of the head teachers indicated that their schools had ministry of education as their main source of funding for school building infrastructure. 23.1% of the head teachers indicated that their schools had constituency development fund (C.D.F) as their main source of funding for school building infrastructure while 7.7% of the head teachers indicated that their schools obtained funding for school building infrastructure from other sources. This data indicates that parental involvement in the provision of school building infrastructure was very low as represented by 7.7% under the category of others. This however could be attributed to the success of CDF as well as

government FPE policy that parents are not levied any school development funds.

4.4 Parents' involvement in management of pupils' affairs

4.4.1 Health and nutrition

The study sought to find out the extent to which parents provided for the physiological needs of the pupils. The children were therefore asked how many meals; excluding breakfast there households take households per day. The findings are presented in the table below.

Table 9: Meals, excluding breakfast taken by household per day

	Frequency	Percent
One	35	19.4
Two	103	57.2
Three	34	18.9
None	8	4.4
Total	180	100.0

From the data findings, majority (57.2%) of the pupils indicated that they take two meals per day, used pit latrine, 19.4 % of the pupils indicated that they take only one meal, 18.9% of the pupils indicated that they take three meals per day while 4.4% said they did not take any meal at home.

When asked whether they ever took breakfast before going to school, 27.8 % of the pupils indicated that they took breakfast while majority (72.2%) of the pupils indicated that they did not take breakfast before coming to school. From the findings, one may get the impression that schools should be encouraged to have proper schools feeding programs or otherwise children learning may be hampered.

The study further sought to establish if the school had feeding program .The findings are presented in the table below.

Table10: Presence of school feeding program

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	22	84.6
No	4	15.4
Total	26	100.0

From the findings, 84.6% of the head teachers indicated that their schools had feeding programwhile 15.4% of the head teachers indicated that their schools had feeding program. It was further established that majority (90.9%) of the head teachers indicated that thefeeding program was sponsored by parents while 9.1% of the head teachers indicated that feeding program was sponsored by teachers.

Table 11: Sponsorship of school feeding program

	Frequency	Percent
Parents	20	90.9
Teachers	2	9.1
Total	22	100

4.4.2 Main cause of learners' absenteeism in the school

Further the study sought to determine the MAIN causes of learners' absenteeism in the school. The findings are presented in the table below.

Table 12: Main cause of learners' absenteeism in the school

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Domestic chores	21	18.4
Walking long distance to school	6	5.3
Illness	2	1.8
Lack of sanitary towels	3	2.6
Payment of school levies e.g. examination fee	32	28.1
Parents ask them to be absent	7	6.1
Lack of personal interest in education	23	20.2
Available opportunities for income generation e.g. BodaBoda	18	15.8
Other	2	1.8
Total	113	100.0

18.4 % of the teachers indicated that it was domestic chores, 5.3% of the teachers indicated that it was walking long distance to school, 1.8 % of the teachers indicated that it was illness, 2.6 % of the teachers indicated that it was lack of sanitary towels 28.1% of the teachers indicated that it was payment of school levies e.g. examination fee, 6.1 % of the teachers indicated that parents asked them to be absent 20.2% of the teachers indicated that it was lack of personal interest in education, 15.8 % of the teachers indicated that it was Available opportunities for income generation e.g. BodaBoda and 1.8% of the teachers indicated that it was other unmentioned reasons.

4.4.3 Parents/guardians who give excuses

The study sought to establish if TEN pupils are absent in day, what then would be the numbers of pupils Parents/guardians who will excuse. The findings are presented in the table below.

Table 13: Parents/guardians who give excuses

	Frequency	Percent
All	4	3.0
About Half	9	6.9
About Quarter	50	38.5
None	67	51.5
Total	130	100.0

From the data findings 3 % of the teachers indicated that all the of pupils Parents/guardians will excuse, 6.9 % of the teachers indicated that about half the of pupils Parents/guardians will excuse, 38.5 % of the teachers indicated that about quarter the of pupils Parents/guardians will excuse and 51.5 % of the teachers indicated that none the of pupils Parents/guardians will excuse.

4.4.4 Ways used to contact parents in order to apprise them of their children's academic progress

The study sought to find out the ways that are usually used to contact parents in order to appraise them of their

children's academic progress. The findings are presented in the table below.

Table14: Ways used to contact parents in order to appraise them of their children's academic progress

	Frequency	Percent
School academic days/clinics	37	28.5
Written reports at end of term	77	59.2
Making comments on students' logbook	11	8.5
Annual prize giving day	2	1.5
Others	3	2.3
Total	130	100.0

From the data findings 28.5 % of the teachers indicated that they used School academic days/clinics, 59.2 % of the teachers indicated that they used written reports at end of term, 8.5 % of the teachers indicated that they made comments on students' logbook, 1.5 % of the teachers indicated that they used annual prize giving day while as 2.3% of the teachers indicated that they used others.

4.5 Main causes of learners absenteeism in school

The study sought to determine main causes of learners' absenteeism in school. The findings were presented in the table below.

Table 16: Main causes of learners absenteeism in school

	Frequency	Percent
Domestic Chores	9	34.6
Illness	1	3.8
Non Payment of School Levies E.G. Examination Fee	9	34.6
Available Opportunities for Entertainment E.G. Video	2	7.7
Lack of Personal Interest in Education	5	19.2
Total	26	100.0

From the findings, 34.6 % of the head teachers indicated that the learners' absenteeism in school was caused by domestic chores. 34.6% of the head teachers indicated that the learners' absenteeism in school was caused by nonpayment of school levies e.g. examination fee. 19.2% of the head teachers indicated that the learner's absenteeism in school was caused by lack of personal interest in education. 7.7% of the head teachers indicated that the learner's absenteeism in school was caused by available opportunities for entertainment e.g. video while 3.8% of the head teachers indicated that the learners' absenteeism in school was caused by illness.

4.6 The most significant problem faced by head teachers when dealing with parents

The study sought to find out the most significant problems the head teachers face while dealing with parents. The findings are presented in the table below.

Table 6: The most significant problem faced by head teachers when dealing with parents.

	Frequency	Percent
Illiteracy	2	7.7
Poverty	13	50.0
Lack of Interest In School Programs	8	30.8
Undue Interference in the Day To Day Running Of The School	3	11.5
Total	26	100.0

From the findings, majority (50.0%) of the head teachers indicated that the most significant problems they faced while dealing with parents was poverty 30.8% of the head teachers indicated that the most significant problems they faced while dealing with parents was lack of interest in school programs. 11.5% of the head teachers indicated that the most significant problems they faced while dealing with parents was lack of interest in school programs was undue interference in the day to day running of the school while 7.7% of the head teachers indicated that the most significant problems they faced while dealing with parents was illiteracy.

4.7 Parents Involvement

The study computed the mean and Std. Deviation to rate the parents' involvement in school activities. The findings were presented in the table below.

Figure 18: Parents Involvement

	Mean	Std. Deviation
rating the parents involvement in provision of teaching and learning resources	1.8077	.40192
rating the parents involvement counselling learners	1.4231	.50383
rating the parents involvement supervising learners homework	1.5385	.50839
rating the parents involvement motivation of teachers	1.2692	.45234
rating the parents involvement motivation of non-teaching staff	1.3077	.47068
rating the parents involvement teachers	1.3462	.48516
rating the parents involvement school decision making	2.0000	.00000

On parents' involvement in provision of teaching and learning resources, the respondents indicated that partially involved as shown by a mean of 1.8077 and a Std. Deviation of .40192. On parents involvement counselling learners the respondents indicated that they were not involved as shown by a mean of 1.4231 and a Std. Deviation of .50383. On the parents involvement supervising learners' homework the respondents indicated that they were partially involved as shown by a mean of 1.5385 and a Std. Deviation of .50839.

On the parents involvement motivation of teachers the respondents indicated that they were not involved as shown by a mean of 1.2692 and a Std. Deviation of .45234. On the parents involvement motivation of non-teaching staff the respondents indicated that they were not involved as shown

by a mean of 1.3077 and a Std. Deviation of .47068. On the parents involvement teachers staff the respondents indicated that they were not involved as shown by a mean of 1.3462 and a Std. Deviation of .48516. On the parents involvement school decision making the respondents indicated that they were not involved as shown by a mean of 2.0000 and a Std. Deviation of .00000.

4.7 Category of parents involved more in academic performance

The study sought to find out the category of parents who were more involved in academic performance in the school. The findings were presented in the table below.

Table 21: Category of parents involved more in academic performance

	Frequency	Percent
Female	26	100.0

From the findings, all (100%) the head teachers indicated that the female were the category involved in academic performance in the school.

4.8 A duly elected and functional school management committee

The study sought to establish whether the schools had a duly elected and functional school management committee. The findings were presented in the table below.

Table 22: A duly elected and functional school management committee

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	24	92.3
No	2	7.7
Total	26	100.0

From the findings, 92.3% of the head teachers indicated that their schools had a duly elected and functional school management committee while 7.7% of the head teachers indicated that their schools had no duly elected and functional school management committee.

4.9 Holding school management committee official meetings

The study sought to find out the number of times the head teachers held school management committee official meetings that year. The findings were presented in the table below.

Table 23: Holding school management committee official meetings

	Frequency	Percent
Once	2	7.7
Twice	16	61.5
Three times	6	23.1
Total	24	92.3

From the findings, 61.5% of the head teachers indicated that they held school management committee official meetings twice that year. 23.1% of the head teachers indicated that they held school management committee official meetings three times that year while 7.7% of the head teachers indicated that they held school management committee official meetings once that year.

4.10 Main agenda in last school management committee official meetings

The study sought to determine the main agenda of the last school management committee official meetings. The findings were presented in the table below.

Table 24: Main agenda in last school management committee official meetings

	Frequency	Valid Percent
School academic performance	18	75.0
Routine parents meeting e.g. AGM	4	16.7
Others	2	8.3
Total	24	100.0

From the findings, 75.0% of the head teachers indicated that the agenda of the last school management committee official meetings was on school academic performance. 16.7% of the head teachers indicated that the agenda of the last school management committee official meetings was on routine parents meeting while 8.3% of head teachers indicated that the last school management committee official meetings was on other agendas.

On the extent of parents' involvement in primary school academic performance the study concluded that the parents were deeply involved in the provision of teaching and learning resources and that lack of parental support or involvement in school academic performance for most of the parents was a significant problem in the school.

On the influence of parental involvement on pupils' academic performance the study concluded that the parents were deeply involved in supervising learners homework and that head teachers faced the challenge of lack of parental support in making school performance better.

On the area(s) of parental involvement that was considered to contribute significantly to primary school academic performance the study concluded that the most parents were involved in was provision of uniform, discipline and supporting school programs.

5. Recommendations

On the extent of parents' involvement in primary school academic performance the study recommends that the parents' have a role in decision making including attendance of school functions, consultation with teachers and ensuring the school resources were properly utilized. Parents can also be involved in making decisions related to curriculum and instruction as well as quality and standards assurance.

On the area(s) of parental involvement that is considered to contribute significantly to primary school academic performance the study recommends that education policies require parents to make financial and in-kind contributions for school buildings, maintain and support personnel salaries. The study also recommended those parents' Councils and SMCs to define school needs and connect schools to parents.

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