

Parental Occupation and Parental Involvement in Education Among Public Day Secondary Schools in Moyale Sub-County, Marsabit County, Kenya

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Abstract

Several obstacles have been proposed as potential roadblocks to parental involvement in schooling. This study sought to examine the influence of parental occupation on parental involvement in education among public day secondary schools in Moyale Sub-County, Marsabit County. This study used a descriptive cross-sectional design. The target population included 10 public day schools with a total enrollment of 1861 students. The sample size was 329 students, who were selected using simple random sampling. The findings indicated that parental occupation had a positive and significant relationship with parental involvement in education. The study concluded that parental occupation contributed significantly to parental involvement in education. The study recommended that school management should create awareness among parents about the role their occupation plays in their children's education. Parents should be able to strike a balance between work and getting involved in the education of their children.

Keywords: *Parental occupation, Parental involvement, Education*

1.0 Introduction

Parental involvement is the degree to which parents are engaged in all aspects of their children's educational successes and performance at school and home (Clinton & Hattie, 2013). It has been proven that parental involvement in schools is a major element in children's academic success. Parental occupation is defined as what parents do for a living for an instant, casual laborers, farmers' pastoralists' professionals, and business people (Cruz, 2016).

Müller (2018) proposed parents' involvement in children's education in the United Kingdom. However, caution must be exercised to ensure that parents' interests are associated with active and visible participation. As the number of single-parent households rises, the number of women working rises, and employment rise, time and other constraints may limit some parents' capacity to spend substantial time and energy on their children's scholastic and extracurricular activities. In the United Kingdom, a variety of parenting engagement initiatives are encouraged and implemented (Murray, McFarland-Piazza & Harrison, 2015). The focus of these tactics varies depending on whether they emphasize parental choice in school or parental involvement in learning and teaching after the child has graduated.

In South Africa, Mudau (2015) found that parents of some students argued that teachers knew and could do everything themselves and therefore their participation was unnecessary and

meaningless. Parents' attitudes influence the type of involvement that society wants (Buka, Matiwane-Mcengwa & Molepo, 2017). The attitudes of parents in turn shape the ideology of society and thus become excluded and passive participants in improving students' academic achievement. Such dangerous ideologies are still supported by most stakeholders, such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), government, and churches, but they are declining in the education of children.

In Kenya, successive governments have consistently recognized the need to improve the learning environment through parental involvement. According to the Kenya Primary Education Act (2013), politicians involved in raising children in Kenya strongly advocate the role of parents in children's activities. Parents, according to Nyandwaki (2012), must be involved in their children's development. The major job of parents is to raise excellent citizens in their children. "Parental involvement in their children's education looks to be restricted," he continued because parents' role in preschools is limited to contributing funds and infrastructure.

Moyale is one of the Sub-Counties in Marsabit County. There are three boarding secondary schools in Moyale. These are Moyale Odda Military Camp Secondary, Moyale Boys' Secondary, Moyale Girls' Secondary, and 10-day secondary schools. Overall, literacy levels in Marsabit County remain quite low, at 76.1 percent, according to the Integrated SMART Survey (2018) report. Only 8.2 percent and 6.7 percent of individuals with formal education had acquired primary and secondary education, respectively, while only 4.1 percent of the sampled population had received tertiary education.

1.1 Problem Statement

Parental participation in child rising is beneficial. Children who had connections with their parents scored better in science than those who did not, according to Chemagosi (2012). Olmstead (2013) believes that proactive engagement involves keeping parents informed about school events and measuring their children's progress, which does not necessitate parents' physical presence at school because technology may connect them in other ways. By the way, school websites, call telephone, and parent portal. Regardless of the type of participation, the result should be to improve children's educational opportunities and performance (Mwanamisi, 2015).

In Marsabit County, however, parental involvement in children's education remains a key concern. The Education Quality Dialogue (2018) report conducted by the Ministry of Education revealed that in terms of numeracy and literacy skills among class three learners; the learners from Northern Counties performed relatively lower compared to other regions. In particular, the Maths, English, and Kiswahili mean scores for learners from Marsabit County were ranked the lowest. This indicates that parental involvement in their children's schooling is lacking. According to the KNEC (2020) report, counties from the Coast and North Eastern were ranked among the poorest performers in the 2019 KCSE examination.

Many issues have been recognized as potential roadblocks to parental involvement in schooling. Work responsibilities, other children's demands, parenting difficulties and a lack of time, parents deemed ineligible to participate, feelings of inadequacy, language barriers, a lack of mutual understanding between school staff and parents, what commitment parents are leading to teachers, and families and parents accused of feeling unappreciated are just a few examples (Mageau et al., 2015).

There has been a previous study on parental participation. Mwenda (2017) looked at the factors that influence parental engagement in secondary school homework in Laikipia. As in Laikipia, the analysis reveals that there is a context gap. Magwa (2017) looked at the factors that

influence parents' involvement in their children's education and found that their financial position and educational level had a significant impact on their children's education. However, the study points to a content gap, as was the case in Zimbabwe. Mahuro and Hungi (2016) investigated the impact of parental participation on students' school performance in Uganda. This study reveals a conceptual gap as it focuses on academic performance as a dependent concept. Based on the above studies, none of them had focused on parental involvement in Marsabit County. The current study sought to examine the influence of parental occupation on parental involvement in education among public day secondary schools in Moyale Sub-County, Marsabit County.

1.2 Research Hypothesis

Ho: There is no significant relationship between parental occupation and parental involvement in education among public day secondary schools in Moyale Sub-County, Marsabit County

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The theory of ecological systems was developed by Bronfenbrenner (1974), who emphasized the need to involve parents in children's academic affairs. The Bronfenbrenner framework helped incorporate parental involvement into founding legislation (Zigler & Muenchow, 1992) as well as the Comer School Development Program (Comer & Haynes, 1991). According to the idea, the microsystem covers social class, ethnicity, religion, and geographic location, while the ecosystem encompasses the influence of social networks, workplace, environment, and politics on parental engagement practices (Salwiesz, 2015).

This theory examines the individual role and environmental transitions based on natural changes in the life course, called ecological transitions, such as first going to school or leaving parents' home at the end of training (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). The author identified the microsystem as the most intimate structure through which a person can interact face-to-face with others, including at home and work.

Rather than studying the engagement of parents in isolation, this approach advises that they be included in groups within the greater school social system. To accommodate parental engagement, he also sought to significantly modify the school's environment. As a result, the Comer and Haynes School Development Program schools place a high value on family participation (Comer & Haynes, 1991). The idea has been used to explain the inclusion of a parental involvement requirement in founding statutes and has played a significant role in the history of parental engagement in educational policy efforts (Zigler & Muenchow, 1992). Critics of the ecological systems theory (Guy-Evans, 2020; Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000) contend that there is insufficient evidence that children are disadvantaged when they are exposed to negative environmental impacts or do not have access to a certain setting.

Collaboration between family, community, and school, according to Bronfenbrenner, increases student attitudes toward school and stakeholder engagement in school management. The ecological theory of Bronfenbrenner is relevant to this study because it describes how an individual's growth is the product of several interacting circumstances that either support or inhibit the individual's potential. This study focuses on parental characteristics as possible predictors of parental involvement in children's education. As such, the theory provided a theoretical link between parental characteristics of occupation and parental involvement in children's education.

2.2 Empirical Review

Parental occupation is defined as what parents do for a living for an instant, casual laborers, farmers' pastoralists' professionals, and business people (Cruz, 2016). Gianelli and Rapalini (2019) examined the correlation between parental occupation and children's school mathematics outcomes. The results show that children's math scores increase when parents consider math worth learning because of its usefulness in the job market. Using the same identification strategy, it was found that an increase of 1 standard deviation in students' belief that effort in mathematics helps the job market increase their score by more than 60 points. Finally, reducing anxiety by 1 standard deviation increased the score by more than 100 points. In summary, with this study, we demonstrate the importance of several previously unexplored intangible factors in explaining children's academic performance. However, this study focused only on outcomes in mathematics but left other disciplines and thus provided a conceptual framework.

In mixed public schools, Ngare, Maronga, Tikoko, and Sigei (2016) evaluated the role of the parenting profession in predicting students' academic performance in Kenyan secondary education on mixed days in Nyamira Utara District. From a random sample of 265 parents and 21 principals in public secondary schools with mixed days. The results show that being a parent does not affect the results of the 2010 KCSE exam. Apart from these findings, the survey reveals that the majority of parents engage in low-paying physical labor, resulting in low income and education for their children. This study, on the other hand, focused on mixed public schools in North Nyamira County, whereas the study focused on public schools in Moyale Sub-County, Kenya, resulting in a contextual gap.

Walter (2018) investigated the influences of parental occupation and education level on their children's academic progress in public schools. The sample comprised 210 students who were chosen using a causal test design and a simple and stratified random sample. Questionnaires were used to collect information about students' household life. The findings found that parental occupation greatly affected the academic success of students. However, the parental standard of schooling has little impact on the academic success of pupils. This study advises parents to participate in their students' academic relationships, regardless of their parents' educational level. However, this study only focused on 42 schools in Kipkelion Sub-County, while the current study aimed to examine the impact of parental employment on parental education in the Moyale sub-County.

In Kenya's Kisumu West Sub County public elementary schools, Goro (2018) investigated the connection between parental profession and academic success. 50 headteachers, 53 class 8 teachers, and 2340 parents whose children were registered in class 8 for the KCPE in 2016 were polled for the study, which used descriptive and correlational research designs. The data indicate that a parent's employment has a significant and favorable impact on their children's academic achievement in public elementary schools. The study, however, presented a conceptual gap since it was focused on primary school pupils while providing little evidence on the secondary school students.

3.0 Methodology

This study used a descriptive cross-sectional design. All public day secondary schools in Moyale Sub-County were targeted, particularly, students and headteachers. In Moyale Sub-County, there are ten public day schools with a total enrollment of 1861 students. The sample size was 329 students, who were selected using simple random sampling. The principals were chosen purposively. Interview schedules and questionnaires were used to collect both

qualitative and quantitative data. The research variables were described using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages. To identify the relationship between the study variables, correlation analysis was conducted. Qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis.

4.0 Results and Discussion

Descriptive and correlation analysis results are presented in this section.

4.1 Parental Involvement in Education

Descriptive statistics on parental involvement in education are presented in Table 1. The respondents were asked to rate the statements on parental involvement in education.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on Parental Involvement

Statements on Parental involvement	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
My parents regularly attend parent-teacher meetings and activities	53(18.9%)	44(15.7%)	183(65.4%)
Both my parents pay for my education without failure/delay	77 (27.5%)	45(16.1%)	158(56.4%)
Both my parents regularly engage me in one-on-one communication about my academics	57(20.4%)	38(13.6%)	185(66.1%)
Both my parents help me study while at home	76(27.1%)	50(17.9%)	154(55%)
There is a conducive environment for me to study at home.	65(23.2%)	59(21.1%)	156(55.7%)
My parents have hired a personal tutor to help me with learning over the weekends at home	156(55.7%)	67(23.9%)	57(20.4%)
My parents are aware of my school life and are in close contact with the school management	38(13.6%)	47(16.8%)	195(69.6%)

The findings in Table 1 indicate that most of the respondents agreed with the statement that parents regularly attend parent-teacher meetings and activities (183, 65.4%), both parents pay for their education without failure/delay (158, 56.4%), both parents regularly engage them in one-on-one communication about their academics (185, 66.1%), both parents help them study while at home (154, 55%), there was a conducive environment for them to study at home (156, 55.7%), and parents were aware of their school life and were in close contact with the school management (195, 69.6%). The findings suggested that most students acknowledged the involvement of their parents or guardians in their education. According to Lara and Sarakosti (2019) children with less parental participation have lower school performance. Further, Darko-Asumadou and Sika-Bright (2021) observed that parental involvement, work, and family size all have a statistically significant impact on student academic attainment.

However, the respondents disagreed with the statement that their parents have hired a personal tutor to help them with learning over the weekends at home (156, 55.7%). This implied that most parents or guardians do not consider hiring a personal tutor for their children necessary. It could also be attributed to additional expenses that most parents cannot afford. Victor (2019) established that majority of parents were not participating in their children's school activities

and only occasionally assisted them with homework, indicating that parents are not completely engaged in their children's education.

The school principals were asked to provide information on the level of parental involvement in the education of students in Moyale Sub-County. The principals noted that parents were moderately involved in the education of the students. They also cited that most parents were not even aware of what was going on in school. Further, the principals expressed concern that parents had left the responsibility of students' education affairs to teachers. This suggested most parents in Moyale Sub-County were not concerned about the education of their children.

4.2 Parental Occupation and Parental Involvement

Descriptive statistics on parental occupation are presented in Table 2. The respondents were asked to rate the statements on parental occupation.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on Parental Occupation

Statements on Occupation	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
My father is the only one with employment	175(62.5%)	25(8.9%)	80(28.6%)
My mother is the only one with employment	210(75%)	34(12.1%)	36(12.9%)
My parents have no employment	98(35%)	48(17.1%)	134(47.9%)
My parents have permanent employment	213(76.1%)	21(7.5%)	46(16.4%)
My parents are casual labourers	147(52.5%)	52(18.6%)	81(28.9%)
My parents are business person	155(55.4%)	36(12.9%)	89(31.8%)
My parents' employment allows them time to be involved in my education	112(40%)	50(17.9%)	118(42.1%)

The findings in Table 2 indicate that most of the respondents disagreed with the statement that their father was the only one with employment (175, 62.5%), their mother was the only one with employment (210, 75%), and their parents have permanent employment (213, 76.1%), their parents were casual laborers (147, 52.5%), and their parents were a business person (155, 55.4%). This implied that in most households, both parents had an occupation. The findings also suggested that most parents did not have permanent employment.

Further, the results indicate that 134 (47.9%) of the respondents agreed that their parents had no employment, and 118 (42.1%) agreed that their parents' employment allows them time to be involved in their education. This suggested that for most parents, their occupation does not allow them time to be involved in their children's education. Therefore, occupation could be a hindrance to parental involvement in education. The findings agreed with Ngare, Maronga, Tikoko, and Sigei (2016) argument that the majority of parents engage in low-paying physical labor, resulting in low income and education for their children.

The school principals were asked to give their views on how parental occupation influences involved in the education of the students in Moyale Sub-County. They noted that parental occupation determines how a parent provides for the educational need of the child. The economic activities of the parents greatly influence child education. Some students leave school to join their parents in doing business. Since most parents are nomads, most of them have no

link at all with the students who are left on their own. Parents' informal employment follow up on their child's progress in schools better. Parents' occupation is very engaging in such a way that there is little parental involvement.

4.3 Correlation Analysis

This section provides results on the correlation between the independent and dependent variables. The study intended to investigate the influence of parental occupation on parental involvement in education in public day secondary schools in Moyale Sub-County. Pearson correlation coefficient was used to compute the correlation between parental occupation and parental involvement in education. The findings are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Correlation Results

		Parental Involvement	Parental Occupation
Parental Involvement	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
Parental Occupation	Pearson Correlation	.321**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The findings in Table 3 indicate that parental occupation ($r = .321, P = .000 < .05$), had a positive and significant correlation with parental involvement in education. This implied that improvement in parental occupation was significantly associated with parental involvement in education. The findings concurred with those of Walter (2018) who found that parental occupation greatly affected the academic success of students. The findings also corroborated with those of Goro (2018) who found that parents' employment had a significant and positive impact on their children's academic achievement.

The null hypothesis (H_0) stated that there was no significant relationship between parental occupation and parental involvement in education among public day secondary schools in Moyale Sub-County, Marsabit County. The correlation results indicate a p-value of $0.000 < 0.05$ significant level. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected implying that there was a significant relationship between parental occupation and parental involvement in education among public day secondary schools in Moyale Sub-County, Marsabit County.

5.0 Conclusion

The study concluded that most parents in Moyale Sub-County did not have permanent employment. The study also concluded that the occupation of most parents prevents them from actively getting involved in the education of their children. Further, the study concluded that parental occupation had a positive and significant influence on parental involvement in education among public day secondary schools in Moyale Sub-County. The implication is that parental occupation is expected to enhance the involvement of parents in education.

6.0 Recommendations

The study established that parental occupation had a positive and significant influence on parental involvement in education among public day secondary schools in Moyale Sub-County. The study recommended that the school management should create awareness among the parents on the role their occupation plays in their children's education. Parents should be able to strike a balance between work and getting involved in the education of their children.

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