



Effect of Parents' Attendance in School Academic Meetings on Students' Academic Performance

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ABSTRACT

The influence of Parents' Attendance in School Academic Meetings on Students Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Manga Sub County- Kenya is the main concern of this study. Students can excel well with close supervision and support of school administrators like principals, teachers, parents and other education stakeholders. This can be done in different ways. School principals and teachers occasionally invite parents as custodians of children in school to discuss students' academic progress. This is majorly aimed at improving the results and the general behavior of the child. In many schools in Manga Sub County, it has been observed that the percentage attendance of parents in such meetings ranges from 32 percent to 48 percent. Majority of the parents do not attend such meetings. This has made it cumbersome for some school policies concerning improving the quality of education to be fully effective. The study utilized Kimberlé Crenshaw's conflict theory, which views human society as a collection of competing interests, relevant to the varying interests of teachers, parents, and students in education. This research adopted a descriptive survey design to describe the impact of parents' activities in school on academic performance. Stratified random sampling was employed to collect data from respondents. Data collection methods included questionnaires, observations, and interviews. Data analysis involved the use of percentages, means, and standard deviations, along with Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient to examine the relationship between variables. The findings were presented through pie charts, bar graphs, and verbatim reporting.

Keywords: Attendance, Meetings, Conflict Theory, Performance

INTRODUCTION

Globally, parents play a crucial role in their children's education. This has been confirmed by Eamon (2005) in his study on neighborhood and parenting influences on the academic achievements of Latino young adolescents. This researcher says that parents have to choose the school to admit their children or as per the performance in their final primary examinations. In high schools, they make follow-up activities to ensure good academic performance is sustained. Parents encourage their children where they sense performance is deteriorating.

Reports from the International Journal of Education Learning and Development, Bronfen (2013) have addressed the subject of parental involvement in the academic performance of their sons and daughters at various levels. For example in Japan, parents play the role of supervising their children against immoral activities like dating. Bronfen continues to say that dating was highly forbidden at all levels of junior high school. In this same journal the researcher (Bronfen), has researched in Germany and found out that parents guided their youths in school to prevent them from going to disco or other social places like cafeteria or sporting during school hours. The researcher has also observed that parents guided their youths to properly utilize their holidays. Bronfen (2013) established that parents encourage their children to make proper use of time. This is specifically in the evening after classes.

Benner and Mistry, (2007) in their work on Parental Expectations on Achievements of students in Ghana has expressed a lot of concern on what parents do towards academic improvement. The authors found out that truancy, dropouts and moral decadence were on the increase. Such students always posted low mean scores of 5.0 or below. This raised a lot of concern from the stakeholders. This happened in the public secondary schools. Their school-mean scores were below average. They expected parents to counsel and guide their children against such vices in the Community

Farrant, (2009) has observed that in Malawi parents go to school for moral support of their children. Farrant observes again that some school heads welcome parents as teacher aids on emerging issues. This enabled teachers to understand the background of their students. In Uganda, in the article by Kadondi, (2014) on Parental Involvement in Secondary School Students' Academic Performance, it is observed that parents do not provide learners with relevant equipment and materials for learning. This has lowered education standards. Mark Edwards, (1993) argue further that hardly do you

see such parents providing academic tool like pens, pencils ,pencil sharpener, reference books like bibles, Atlases for Geography, Dictionary for studying English, calculators and logarithm tables for Mathematics and other science subjects.

In Kenya, parental involvement in students` academic performance varies depending on the social, economic or political factors from one region to another Mbiti, (2009).This has been shown in the disparity of national examination results. Some schools post good performance while others fail badly. Mbiti wonders what parents do in the cases of students who dismally perform academically. The writer poses a challenge to the parents to be close to their children in order to identify internal teething problems and help them to sort out. This will help to narrow the gap between the higher performers and lower performers. This study sought to establish factors that hinder parents from being fully involved in the academic performance of their children.

According to Koskei (2014) in the International Journal of Education and Research, ninety percent of students in Nakuru County, Kenya, whose parents were less involved in their education, scored below average on standardized tests. This indicates that a lack of parental support negatively impacts children's academic performance. In Manga sub county, there are various indicators in the public secondary schools that need parental attention. At a quick look in the admission registers of some schools, dropout rates are alarming. Gesuka (2017), has shown the trends of a declining enrolment in some of the schools where the study will be carried out. For example the researcher indicates that in one of the schools 191 form one students were admitted. Out of these only 137 reached Form Four class. The researcher attributes this trend to lack of fee payment by parents. Then one wonders if parents help schools to retain their children in the schools they admitted them in form one. Hence this study sought to find out what hinders parents from full participation in the activities that enhance academic performance.

In MANGA sub-county national examination mean scores are quite low apart from the deteriorating transition rates. National examination results received by some schools in the sub-county need parental support for improvement. Looking at tables below, the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examination (KCSE) mean scores for two consecutive years are so low that the researcher sees the need to study on how best parents can be involved in the academic performance of their children. The study also looked into factors hindering parents from full participation in school meeting on academic performance of their children. Here below is a table showing the performance of the sub county in KCSE:

Table 1: Mean Grade Summary for MANGA Sub County in 2021and 2022

YR	ENTRY	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E	MS
2021	2558	0	4	28	53	112	170	212	265	362	456	700	177	3.3949
2022	2768	0	1	22	55	90	155	235	368	422	506	711	204	3.3048
2023	3208													

A good academic performance is a collective responsibility by all the stakeholders. When students are in school, the Board of management (BOM), Parents Teachers Association (PTA) representatives, principals, teachers and parents perform their duties to the best of their knowledge to ensure the students receive quality education services. This has been seen in various academic meetings or Annual General Meetings (AGM) that school administrators organize. The meetings are aimed at discussing academic challenges facing students so as to improve their performance. But, looking at the trends of the national examinations performance in the table below, the mean scores in MANGA Sub-county are still low.

On surveying parents attendance records on various academic days for the form fours the researcher learnt that the attendance of parents ranged from 32 -48% in most of the schools .This is very low since academic performance of students, motivational activities, discipline activities and provision of academic tools are discussed in these meetings. On this basis then, the researcher sought to establish the influence of parents` attendance in school academic meetings on students` academic performance in public secondary schools in MANGA Sub County, Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Literature

This study is grounded in the conflict theory by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), which views human society as a collection of competing interest groups and individuals, each with their own motives and expectations. The theory posits that members of society do not share the same values, interests, or expectations, which vary based on one's position, privileges, abilities, class, and wealth. This is likely to encourage unequal distributions of the scarce but valuable resources and opportunities. The same views are shared by Kombo and Tromp (2011). Parents have different motives of the taking children to school. Some parents take their children to school for attaining a good career to earn good

salary in future. The careers chosen are so competitive that students need parental support at different levels. Some parents take children to school just to obey government policy on education. Other parents feel children disturb a lot when at home, so they prefer to take children to school to be taken care of by teachers. All these motives determine the interests of parents and students. In turn parents, students and teachers have different expectations towards educational objectives. Marjoribanks (2002) argues that wealthy parents do not put much emphasis on education due to their limited time to attend school meetings. This reduces results. Karl Marx theory is related to this study on parental involvement in school activities on students' academic performance as parents, students and teachers have conflicting interests towards academic performance. When teachers work hard to improve results in schools, some students never bother so much due to their individual interest or the background they come from does not value education so much. Some parents do not heed school instructions to the letter as they have their own interests (Olembo, 1992). These are the main concerns why the study seeks to address on what hinders these parents from maximum involvement in the child's academic performance.

Participation in Academic Meetings and Academic performance

Bempechat (1992), records in his research that most education administrators and educators are very much in favor of involving parents in children's learning activities. They note that there is a stronger correlation between family background and environment. This means that the more the parents get involved in the academic meetings of their children, the more they increase the chances of improving in the academics. In this case the achievement and quality of the school may not matter very much. In Germany and France the percentage of parents' attendance is high as the writer insists: parents built a rapport between students and teachers at individual or class level in the course of their interaction.

Bempechat (1992) in *The Role of Parental Involvement in Children's Academic Achievements*, focuses on Nigeria where parents, as they participate in academic meetings, they influence the basic intellectual development of their children. Bempechat calls this as cognitive socialization. Similarly this has had a positive correlation between parental attendance and academic performance, Bempechat (1992) quotes Haggard (1957) that in Tanzania some children have difficulty in realizing their full potential academically. This was reflected in the low marks scored internally and nationally. The researcher indicates that majority of students in the end year examinations scored between 30-48%. He attributed this to low levels of parental involvement. They portrayed negative attitudes, low expectancies from academics and maladaptive achievement behaviors like learned helplessness. Parents teach their children good manners as they participate in the academic meeting directly and indirectly, Hess and Shipman, (1965) as cited by Bempechat (1992). The authors note that expert parents train their children on study attitudes and motives in school as they participate in academic meetings. For instance, active approach to learning as opposed to passive modes of studies. Mc Devitt and Hess (1985) as cited by Bempechat (1992) found out that parents' direct control techniques hampered children's cognitive development by influencing their self-appraisals. In this case, children will not practice their ability well. They will depend on their parent's appraisal.

In 2013 the Basic Education Act was put forward by government of Kenya as a law governing primary and secondary school education. It is compulsory and partially funded by the government. Parents being part of the key stakeholders in the education sector should work on the frontline to ensure their children get quality education (Mbiti 2009). This is to create a conducive environment for academic progress. Participation in the school academic meetings in schools by parents is critical. When invited most parents have been seen setting subject targets with their sons and daughters so as they work for them Olembo, (1992). Olembo adds that parents have a responsibility to make follow-up activities to ensure children adhere to what was deliberated. Parents are expected to check the resources students have so as to replenish them whenever depleted. This makes learners be psychologically comfortable for maximum concentrations, (Were 2003). This activity has to be repeatedly done to bear fruits. Were (2003) notes that 40% of the students whose parents visited them frequently had no stress nor indiscipline cases in school.

Parents discuss and finance academic trips to expose students on subject matter taught in class. They also receive behavioral reports of their children from teachers like class or lesson absconding or truancy from school and guide them as observed by Verkey (1997) as quoted by, Were, (2003). They also say that parents must be keen on their children in school. However this participation has had loopholes where some parents never turn up for the meetings and never makes up follow-up activities. This study seeks to find out if the parents' failure to attend academic meetings affects the children's academic performance.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The materials

This study employed a descriptive survey research design, which involves describing the current state of a phenomenon as it exists (Kombo & Tromp, 2011). The aim of descriptive research is to observe and report on how things are (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Data was collected on trends in academic performance in internal and external

examinations, challenges parents face in helping their children improve academically, parental involvement in school academic meetings in selected schools, and strategies for the government and school administration to enhance parental involvement in academic performance. After collecting data through surveys, the findings was related to the research design using figures and respondents' views.

A population is group of individuals, subject or items from which samples are takes for measurement (Kombo, 2011). In this case the target population will be seventeen schools in the sub county. This is 30% of the total number of schools. The principal, Deputy Principal and a class teacher/ teacher in charge of examination in each school were part of the study. The following, see Table 2, formed the target group.

Table 2: Target Population

Categories	Target population	Percentages
Principals	50	1,489
Deputy Principals	50	1,489
Examination Teacher/ Class Teacher	50	1,489
Form 4 students	3,208	95.533
Totals	3,358	100.00

Source: Sub-County Director of Education Office

Methods

This was done using descriptive statistics like frequency, means, and standards deviations and finally regression analysis was used to understand how the independent variable was related to the dependent variable and to infer the causal relationships between the independent and the dependent variables using the formula:

$$Y = a + bX$$

Where Y is the dependent variable (the variable that goes on the Y axis)

X is the independent variable (the variable that is plotted on the X axis)

b is the slope of the line

a is the y intercept

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Response Rate

Questionnaires were distributed to parents, teachers, and students, achieving response rates of 73.0% for parents, 88.1% for teachers, and 74.8% for students. The overall response rate was deemed sufficient. According to Mugenda (2003), a response rate between 50% and 60% is acceptable, between 60% and 70% is good, and above 70% is considered very good for research data analysis and reporting. Therefore, the response rate for this study was classified as very good based on Mugenda's criteria.

Influence of parents' attendance in school meetings on the students' academic performance

To conclude on the influence of parental involvement in communicating expectations and setting academic targets on students' academic achievement, a correlation test was performed between the independent variable (communication of expectations) and the dependent variable (academic achievement).

As shown in Table 3, there was a positive correlation of 0.145, which was significant at 0.016, indicating that communication of expectations positively influences students' academic achievement. The study found that schools with higher levels of this form of parental involvement had higher mean scores.

From the interviews, it was generally agreed that teachers and students set termly and annual academic targets. However, the majority indicated that parents are not fully involved in this process. One principal mentioned, "Subject teachers set targets with students, and from the subject mean scores, we set class targets which determine the school target mean score."

This suggests that parents are not fully engaged in setting academic targets for students and the school. This lack of involvement negatively impacts students' academic achievement, as observed in schools where higher levels of parental involvement through communication of expectations were associated with relatively higher mean scores for the third term of the 2021 academic year.

Table 3: Parents’ response on participating in school meetings

Statement	Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)
Check on my Childs’discipline issues at school.	31.3	16.3	16.8	21.8	13.8
My child's school has a policy on parental involvement.	32.8	24.8	8.7	22.6	11.1
I volunteer for school projects e.g. leveling playground.	23.1	39.6	15.7	13.3	8.3
I financially support the educational activities of the school.	3.0	10.2	14.4	38.2	34.2

According to Table 3, 53.9% of teachers disagreed that parents are visiting the school to check on students’ discipline. This indicates that parents are not closely monitoring their children's behavior at school. Character formation is a shared responsibility between parents and teachers, and it is essential for parents to visit schools and inquire about their children's discipline (Schueler, McIntyre, & Gehlbach, 2017). Furthermore, 76.3% of teachers disagreed that the school has a policy on parental involvement, a sentiment echoed by both parents and students. A parental involvement policy outlines how the school supports the crucial role of parents in their children's education and helps cultivate a positive school culture (Jeynes, 2016). The absence of such a policy may negatively impact students' academic achievement.

Additionally, 55.8% of teachers indicated that parents are not volunteering in school projects, as shown in Table 4. School principals noted that parents are often unaware of the ways they can contribute. Implementing a parental involvement policy could help inform parents about opportunities to participate in school activities. Jeynes (2016) suggests that volunteer activities can include mentoring or tutoring students, providing labor, and assisting children with special needs.

On a positive note, 62.4% of teachers agreed that parents are financing school academic programs that are not funded by the government. Such financial support facilitates remedial studies, which can ultimately enhance students’ academic performance. Various methods of financing school academic programs include personal savings, family support, grants, and scholarships (Ross, 2016).

Table 4: teachers’ response in participating in school activities

Statement	Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree(%)
Parents check on their children’sdiscipline issues in school.	27.4	26.5	10.5	24.8	10.8
The school has a parent involvement policy	43.9	32.4	9.7	11.9	2.1
Parents volunteer in school projects.	21.6	34.2	8.3	12.8	23.1
Parents are financially supporting education activities in the school.	18.8	16.8	2.0	32.9	29.5

According to Table 4, 45.9% of students agreed that their parents visit the school to check on their discipline issues. This indicates that many parents are closely monitoring their children's behavior at school, which helps address issues of indiscipline. Gregory et al. (2016) found that self-discipline positively correlates with and predicts students' academic achievement.

Additionally, 59.3% of students reported that their school does not have a policy on parental involvement, a view shared by parents and teachers. This suggests that many schools lack formal policies to promote parental engagement. A parental involvement policy enhances communication between parents and the school, aids in the implementation of academic programs, and helps develop a positive school culture (Jeynes, 2016).

Furthermore, 56.0% of students noted that parents do not volunteer for school projects, such as construction work, clearing fields, mentoring, and tutoring students. This sentiment was also echoed by parents and teachers. The absence of a school policy on parental involvement might contribute to this issue, as parents may be unaware of the expectations for their participation.

However, 81.5% of students agreed that their parents financially support school academic programs. This financial support is crucial for covering expenses related to academic activities, thereby enhancing students' academic achievement. Parents contribute to financing various school activities such as academic tours, remedial studies, procurement of revision books, symposia, and subject contests, supplementing the government's financial contributions to the school.

Table 5: students' response on participating in school activities

Statement	Stronglydisagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Stronglyagree (%)
My parents/guardians come to school to discuss discipline- related issues.	20.3	25.4	18.4	18.2	17.7
My school has a policy on parental involvement.	35.5	23.8	11.3	13.2	16.2
My parent/guardian volunteer in school projects.	25.3	30.7	12.4	19.0	12.6
My parents/guardians finance school academic activities.	10.1	7.5	0.9	44.7	36.8

A correlation test among the four constructs of the third variable (participation in school activities) revealed positive correlations for three constructs: checking in at school to discuss learners' discipline, financing school academic programs, and the presence of a school policy on parental involvement.

During interviews, school principals were asked about the existence of school policies on parental involvement. The principals generally stated that no formal policy was in place. A few mentioned having an unwritten policy that was seldom applied. Most principals indicated that parental involvement was limited to participation through representatives in PA (Parents Association) and BOM (Board of Management) meetings or during the AGM (Annual General Meeting). One principal remarked, "We do not have a clear school policy, but we engage parents through AGMs, PA, and BOM meetings." Another principal stated, "We have no policy on parent involvement, but we engage parents since they know their roles as parents." This suggests that some principals assume parents understand how to get involved in school activities, while some parents believe their responsibility is limited to paying school fees and leaving the rest to teachers.

To address this issue, schools should develop and implement clear policies on parental involvement. These policies should be actively communicated to parents, ensuring they understand their roles and how they can contribute to their

children's education. Schools should also strive to create an inviting environment for parents through community outreach programs and fostering positive relationships with all stakeholders.

Correlation Results of Study Variables

Table 6: correlation of parents' attendance on academic performance

			Total parents' attendance	Academic performance
Spearman's Rho	Total parents' attendance	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.625*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.013
		N	15	15
	Academic performance	Correlation Coefficient	.625*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.013	.
		N	15	15

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 6 revealed a significant positive correlation of +0.625 ($p = 0.013$) between overall parents' attendance and academic achievement, as measured by the Form Three class mean score. This suggests that increased parents' attendance correlates with improved academic performance. Similarly, Dahie, Mohamed, & Mohamed (2018) identified a positive relationship between parental involvement and academic success.

During interviews, school principals were asked about the level of parents' attendance in their schools. The general consensus was that parental involvement is insufficient. Many respondents emphasized the need to raise awareness among parents regarding their roles. One principal remarked, "The level of parents' attendance in my school is low and I think many parents don't know what is expected of them." This indicates that inadequate parents' attendance may stem from a lack of understanding of its importance.

Observations showed that schools with higher levels of parental involvement achieved better academic results. The study's three independent variables demonstrated a significant impact on academic performance. Consequently, the study recommends adopting these forms of involvement to enhance academic achievement in the sub-county.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that schools with higher levels of parents' attendance demonstrated significantly better academic results, as evidenced by their higher mean scores, compared to those with lower levels of attendance. This disparity underscores the critical role that parental engagement plays in students' academic success. The research highlights the need for schools to actively promote and facilitate parental involvement through various measures.

Participation in school activities is another vital component. Schools should encourage parents to get involved in various school functions, such as volunteering for events, participating in school governance, and supporting extracurricular activities. Establishing a formal policy on parental involvement can provide a framework for these activities, ensuring that parents understand their roles and the impact of their participation. The study's findings suggest that increasing parental involvement can significantly boost academic performance. Schools in the sub-county should,



therefore, prioritize strategies to engage parents more effectively. This can be achieved through comprehensive policies, regular communication, and creating opportunities for parents to be active participants in their children's education. By fostering a strong partnership between parents and schools, it is possible to create a supportive learning environment that enhances student achievement.

Recommendations

School principals should cultivate a welcoming atmosphere that encourages parents to visit at any time to inquire about their child's academic and behavioral progress. It is essential to foster seamless collaboration among parents, teachers, and students to guide children through their academic journey effectively.

The study recommends that schools in the sub-county implement termly and annual academic target-setting, involving learners, parents, and teachers.

Furthermore, school principals should develop and ensure the full implementation of a comprehensive school policy on parental involvement.

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