

**AN INVESTIGATION OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF PARENTS' PARTICIPATION
IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN MUKURWE-INI CENTRAL DIVISION,
NYERI COUNTY**

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ABSTRACT

It is widely recognized that if pupils are to maximize their potential from schooling, they would need the full support of their parents. Thus, the study intended to investigate the contributions of parental participation on academic performance of children in early childhood education in Mukurwe-ini Central Division in Nyeri County. The literature for this study was based on contributions of parents as academic role models, school decision making, behavior modification and involvement in children's homework. The study adopted a mixture of qualitative and quantitative approaches of methodology since it involved collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data. Questionnaires, interview schedules and focused group interviews were used to collect data from head teachers, ECDE teachers, parents and ECDE children. The study applied explanatory sequential design in which researcher implemented the quantitative and qualitative method where qualitative data helped explain or build upon initial quantitative results. This started with the collection and analysis of quantitative data and then this first phase was followed by the subsequent collection and analysis of qualitative data. The second, qualitative phase of the study was designed so that it followed from the results of the first quantitative phase. The target population for this study included 600 parents' representatives, 37 head teachers, 71 ECDE teachers and 1500 ECDE children all totaling to 2208. Using The Central Limit Theorem, the researcher sampled 7 schools, that is, 18.92% of 37. Based on the same theorem, the researcher sampled 200 respondents, that is, 9.06% of 2208. The researcher applied stratified sampling to create 4 strata based on the number of zones each consisting of at least 9 ECDE centers. From each stratum 1 ECDE teacher, 1 head teacher was nominated using purposive sampling. 14 parents' representatives and 34 ECDE children were selected using simple random sampling. This sampling procedure enabled the researcher to realize a sample of 4 head teachers, 7 ECDE teachers, 55 parents' representatives and 134 ECDE children. Collected data was analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively and then merged into one overall interpretation in which the researcher related the quantitative results to the qualitative findings. Analysis of data obtained from interviews and focused group interviews were done through identifying common themes from the respondents' description of their experiences. Frequency counts of the responses were then obtained to generate information about the respondents and to illustrate the general trend of findings on the various variables that were under investigation. The collected data was analyzed qualitatively along the study objectives and the basic quantitative data was analyzed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) in Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS). The findings of the study were presented using percentages and tables and since they summarize large quantities of data. The study has established that parents' involvement contributes to the holistic development of children in early childhood settings. The study thus recommends that a policy should be formulated to enforce adherence to Partnership Policy which spells out the roles of the parents in the education sector amongst children in early childhood settings.