

Influence of Parental Guidance on Learning Outcomes among Preschoolers in Masaba South Sub-County, Kisii County

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Abstract

Parent involvement is often considered a pathway through which schools enhance the achievement of underperforming children. However, past research on parent involvement and children's academic skills has yielded mixed results. Therefore, the main objective of the study was to examine the influence of parental guidance on learning outcomes among preschoolers in Masaba South Sub County, Kisii County. The study was guided by the Cultural capital theory and supported Epstein's Theory of Comprehensive School Reform Model. The study used the mixed methods approach together with the triangulation design targeting the parents of the preschoolers, the pre-primary school teachers the school managers and the Sub County Education Officers in charge of pre-primary education. A sample size of 120 respondents was obtained through purposive sampling method was to be used for the study. Data was collected through questionnaires and was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Piloting of the instruments will be conducted on 10% of the sample size, all from Kisii Central Sub County, Kisii County. Piloting helped to establish reliability, credibility and dependability of the instruments. Reliability index $r = 0.64$ was obtained using Cronbach Alpha to check internal consistency. Credibility was ensured through involving different analysts while dependability was manifested through comprehensive reporting and independent interview to respondents. Data analysis involved qualitative data being analyzed in themes while quantitative data through descriptive statistics and inferential statistics with the use of Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS 23) and presented using tables and charts. The findings of this study are meant to enlighten the stakeholders in preschool on the need for parental guidance as an intervention meant to address performance of preschoolers. This would be instrumental in shaping practice and policy decisions as well as future research directions.

Key Words: preschoolers, parental, guidance, learning, outcomes

Background to the Study

The first six years of life are most important for the development of human kind during which time children experience exceptionally fast growth and development in all aspects with brain growth being the most rapid (Bernndt, 2013). Consequently, efforts are being undertaken globally to increase the thresholds of access to formal early childhood education. However, educators are also concerned by the quality of learning and more specifically the learning outcomes among the preschoolers and the necessary measures needed to address them. Consequently, educationalists and policy makers worldwide are trying to improve student learning by focusing on parental involvement. The conventional view is that education should be the responsibility of professional educators only. This perception is being replaced with the recognition that professionals can be more effective when supported by informed parents (Schwartz et al., 2018). Many of the piecemeal initiatives in parent involvement in the past five decades have suffered a predictable loss of momentum, but they have had the effect of encouraging the schools to shift away from

"exclusive" professionalism and to open up the debate on real parent involvement in school life (Muchuchuti, 2015).

Parental guidance is a form of parental involvement. Various definitions of parental involvement have been proposed. Reynolds and Clements (2005) defined parental involvement as parental behavior with, or on behalf of children, at home or at school. It is the expectations that parents hold for children's future. For an elaborate understanding, Tramonte and Williams (2010) define parental involvement through four constructs - home discussion, home supervision, school communication and school participation. Jackson (2009) proposed a range of dimensions that include: school choice - that is, parents select the education institutions and experiences for their children; involvement in school governance and decision-making where parents participate in formal school structures. They also suggest involvement in teaching and learning activities in the classroom and at home where parents volunteer in the classroom, converse with teachers outside of formal meetings, help with homework and discuss school-related issues with children. Finally, they propose communication between home and school (parents contact the school and receive communications from the school).

Engaging families in the education of their children at home and at school is increasingly viewed as an important means to support better learning outcomes for children. Educators have frequently pointed out the role of family and home environment in determining school progress and that the earlier in a child's educational process parental participation that can lead to good parental encouragement, guidance, communication, collaborating with the community begins, the more powerful the effects on child's holistic development (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2013).

In Africa and specifically in Ghana, a research study by Lee et al., (2015) showed that Ghanaian parents often have engaged in their children's learning in one form or another. In addition, parents' involvement in the school environment appears to be high in school meetings, attendance, and discussing expectations with their children while others never assist their children directly with homework. The situation in Rwanda shows that with the implementation of ECD policy, every administrative cell had to establish a nursery school (NCDC, 2006), but this was not successfully done since those schools were to be run and managed by parents. Many schools started but later, some were closed down because parents who were to sustain them were confused about their role in the management of the schools.

Ndarihoranye and Ndayambaje (2012) studied the socio-economic problems affecting early childhood education in Gasabo District and found out that some parents were willing to participate in educating their children except that they were not able due to poverty. The same was noted in Gakenke District by Ntahombyariye and Maniragaba (2012) who noted that parents' involvement in pre-school education was less because they were requested to pay a certain amount for tuition. Kagabo (2008) found out that in Gasabo District, parents are more involved in their children's education at home than at school. His study however focused on lower primary school but the current one will involve pre-primary schools.

In another study in Africa and especially in Kenya, Githuthwa (2011) revealed that successful parent-teacher partnerships require a sustained mutual collaboration, support and participation of teachers and parents at home and at school in activities that can directly affect the success of

children's learning. In addition, a research conducted in Uasin Gishu District, Kenya showed that parents and teachers differed among themselves in their reports of teachers' level of involvement reportedly ranging from low in volunteering to often in communication and learning at home (Wambiri, 2014). Where there was communication, Ondieki (2012) found out that it was in form of phone calls, short visits to the school or written notes to and from the teachers.

Ogoye-Ndegwa, Mengichand Abidha (2007) in a study also conducted in Kenya, state that parents who did not involve themselves in their children's education gave several reasons for not doing so. For example, they said children were not given homework by the teachers, some of the parents were not literate or the educated ones were too busy and compensated by taking their children for tuition. Furthermore, a study in Kenya by Ondieki (2012) revealed that children whose parents participated in their pre-school activities performed better than those whose parents did so less frequently or rarely. Similarly, Ndani (2011), in another study in Kenya showed that there was a significant difference in the level of participation in pre-school activities among communities in the various pre-school sponsorships. She noted that in private schools, the most common mode of participation was communication, as most of the private schools required parents to make comments and sign in their children's homework books daily, parents suggesting places for field trips, accompanying children in trips and end of term discussion on children's performance comprised the other activities. Furthermore, in public schools in addition to attending meetings parents were sometimes involved in deciding on matters related to providing learning materials, fees to be paid, construction of facilities and their maintenance.

Statement of the Problem

The growing influence of formal preschool education on the holistic development of the learner has been documented in several extant studies and as such, internationally, educators, governments and multiple stakeholders are renewing their efforts to ensure children get access to formal preschool education. In the same breadth, there is growing need to ensure that preschool education be strengthened through several interventions so as to improve its outcomes, notably, learning outcomes. Among these initiatives is parental involvement. Parent involvement is often considered a pathway through which schools enhance the achievement of underperforming children (Berger, 2010). Consequently, parent involvement is encouraged by teachers, childcare providers, policy makers, parents, and researchers (Duch, 2005; Sheldon, 2005). However, past research on parent involvement and children's academic skills has yielded mixed results (Wilder, 2014). Some studies have found no significant association between parent involvement and academic achievement (Froiland, Peterson & Davison, 2013; Okpala, 2012; Kim et al, 2012) and a few have even detected negative associations (Danese et al., 2009; Sad & Gurbuzturk, 2013). Yet, positive associations between parent involvement and academic achievement have been demonstrated repeatedly in the literature. A recent meta-analysis by Wilder (2014) finds moderate associations between parent involvement and an array of learning-related or academic skills, such as achievement motivation, task-persistence, and receptive vocabulary, during preschool and kindergarten. With a predominant research focus on parent involvement and achievement in either primary school or high school, the potentially supportive role of parent involvement during preschool remains understudied. Therefore, the study sought to examine the influence of parental participation on learning outcomes among preschoolers in Masaba South Sub County, Kisii County.

Literature Review

Parents have a crucial task of preparing the child for education. In their task of socializing the child, parents have a greater influence on the child's development and future life choices (McIntyre, 2008). Moreover, the family background provides the social environment that the children first and closely interact with. According to Nikken and Schols (2015), the number of contact hours between parents and children is important for the scholastic achievements of children. This is because seeing their parents only occasionally children benefit too little from their skills and knowledge. Kaiser and McIntyre (2010) further asserts that some parents raise their children with certain principles in mind and such can influence and direct the learners on the choice of subjects they can undertake in order to meet the parental expectations.

It has been postulated that the family environment impinges on curriculum and influences the quality of school practices. This is possibly because the family is represented in school organizations and they influence the curriculum and practices through ideas and financial support. According to Neece, Green and Baker (2012), it is increasingly recognized that parents play an important role in their children's education but these parents need more knowledge about particular schools and education in the broadest sense. This assumption points to the fact that parents may not advice their children on subject choice due to their limited information and awareness. Kline (2011) argues that parents and guardians want schools to satisfy the culture of real life interests and needs of children as well as to prepare them for success later in life.

The family background also orientates the learner towards certain thinking that determines what the learner thinks of him/herself. According to Lee and Chae (2007), certain conditions within the home or the family can expose children to experiences, which may render them more vulnerable to onset of learning and behavior problems socially. Disadvantaged children who grow up in large or single parent families and have low family incomes are pre-disposed to lower education achievement. This happens because such parents hold unrealistic expectations about their off spring performance in school and habitually telling them that they should do better. Under such circumstances, they may precipitate fear and anxieties within them, which cause untold misery and unhappiness. This view supports Kim and Anderson (2008). who argued that students see their parents as role models and that parental encouragement or discouragement influences non-traditional career choices. Thus, a learner's family back ground can either limit or foster him/her into what he or she wants to do (Ito et al., 2010).

Vaala (2014) observed that, there must be some credible role models in the community who imparted in the mind of individuals the benefits of self-employment as a career. Haines et al, (2010) also observed that, lack of role models was a limiting factor in the career choices of young people; and that business ownership emerges more readily in the presence of strong entrepreneurial role models. The abundance of successful independent businesses acted as role models in the community and a contributing factor in students' choice of technical subjects in schools. According to Singer and Singer (2011), gender was probably the most important variable related to pupils' attitudes to science and technology subjects. Many studies, for instance, Nikken and Schols (2015) reported that males had more positive attitudes toward science and technology subjects than females. Peer group effects on pupils' achievement in school had been widely reported (Neece et al., 2012). These effects on achievement may have spillover effects on subject choice. In addition, a student 's choice of subject may be influenced

by the aspirations of their peer group or through the expectations that schools had for that peer group.

Methodology

The study used concurrent triangulation design, qualitative and quantitative data was collected and analyzed in order to describe the specific phenomena in its current trends, events and linkages between different factors at the current time. The study involved collection of qualitative data by use of observation checklist and questionnaire from the respondents. Frankel and Wallen (2000) define sampling as a procedure of selecting members of a research sample from the accessible population which ensures that conclusions from the study can be generalized to the study population. The study used both purposive sampling methods to identify the sample according to the respondent type. Kathuri and Pals (1993) and Denscombe (2007) recommend a minimum of 100 subjects as ideal for a survey research in social sciences. A sample size of 120 respondents shall be used for the study comprising 58 parents, 50 preschool teachers, 10 school managers and 2 the Sub County Education Officers in charge of pre-primary education. This brings up a sample of 120 responents for the study, the extra 20 is necessary to take care of none response and attrition..

Table 1: Sample Size Grid

| Categories | Target Population | Sample Size | Sampling Procedure |
|---------------|-------------------|-------------|--------------------|
| Head teachers | 106 | 58 | purposive sampling |
| Teachers | 318 | 50 | Simple random |
| Total | 424 | 108 | |

Source: The Researcher, 2019

Results

Data obtained from the questionnaires was first cleaned and edited before being coded and subjected to further analysis. The Likert scales in closed ended questions in the questionnaires were converted to numerical codes and be scored on 1-5 point scale in order of magnitude of the construct being measured, then be entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.0 computer programme. The data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive analysis was done using, means, modes and standard deviations to describe the basic characteristics of the population. Inferential statistics involved the use of Pearson’s Product Moment correlation and multiple regression to determine the nature of the relationship between the variables. The regression model below was used to examine the relationships between the variables under study;

$$y = a + b_1x_1 + b_2x_2 + b_3x_3 + b_4x_4 + e$$

Y =Learning Outcomes among preschoolers in Masaba South Sub County

X₁= Parental Guidance

X₂= Parental Encouragement

X_3 =Parental Communication

X_4 =Parental Participation of Educational Activities

e =error term.

The findings were then presented in tables and discussed.

The study had a sample size of 120 respondents. The researcher picked the filled questionnaires after three weeks. 107 respondents had filled in the questionnaire giving a response rate of 89.16%. The researcher made efforts to call other respondents to fill the questionnaires, but it was not successful. Due to the constraint of time, the researcher continued with the analysis since according to Best and Khan, (2006) a response rate of 50% is considered adequate, 60% good and above 70% very good. Therefore, in view of this, the response rate was considered very good and exceeded the threshold postulated by Best and Khan.

Quantitative analysis was carried on the data collected for the study. The findings obtained were presented in the section that follows. The findings obtained on whether parents act like role models for their children are shown in the table 2.

Table 2: Parents act like role models for their children

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Strongly Disagree | 18 | 16.8 | 16.8 | 16.8 |
| | Disagree | 37 | 34.6 | 34.6 | 51.4 |
| | Undecided | 15 | 14.0 | 14.0 | 65.4 |
| | Agree | 37 | 34.6 | 34.6 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 107 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Field Data, 2019

From the table above, 51.4% of the respondents disagreed that parents act like role models to their children. 14% of the respondents were undecided on whether parents act like role models to their children. 34.6% of the respondents agreed that parents act like role models to their children. Majority of the respondents disagreed that parents act like role models to their children. According to (McIntyre, 2008) parents have a crucial task of preparing their children for education. They have a greater influence on the child’s development and future life choices. From the findings above, its important for parents to positive impact their children’s lives. Children learning by example and whatever is absorbed becomes part of them.

Furthermore, role modeling is seen as a key motivator for preschoolers as indicated in table 3.

Table 3: Role modeling is a key motivator for preschoolers

| | | Role modeling is a key motivator to preschoolers | | | Cumulative |
|-------|----------------|---|---------|---------------|------------|
| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Percent |
| Valid | Disagree | 32 | 29.9 | 29.9 | 29.9 |
| | Undecided | 10 | 9.3 | 9.3 | 39.3 |
| | Agree | 37 | 34.6 | 34.6 | 73.8 |
| | Strongly Agree | 28 | 26.2 | 26.2 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 107 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Field Data, 2019

From the table above, 29.9% of the respondents disagreed that role modeling was a key motivator to preschoolers. 9.3% of the respondents were undecided on whether role modeling was a key motivator to preschoolers. 60.8% of the respondents agreed that role modeling was a key motivator to preschoolers. Majority of the respondents agreed that role modeling was a key motivator to preschoolers. (Kim and Anderson, 2008) argued that, students see their parents as role models and that parental encouragement or discouragement influences non-traditional career choices. A learner’s family background can either limit or foster into what they want to do. It is important for parents to raise their children with the best principles. The outcome of a child is the direct replica of what the parents invested in them.

It is important that parents be instrumental in instilling discipline for their children as indicated in table 4.

Table 4: It is important that parents be instrumental in instilling discipline for their children

| | | It is important that parent be instrumental in instilling discipline to their children | | | Cumulative |
|-------|-------------------|---|---------|---------------|------------|
| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Percent |
| Valid | Strongly Disagree | 15 | 14.0 | 14.0 | 14.0 |
| | Disagree | 33 | 30.8 | 30.8 | 44.8 |
| | Undecided | 10 | 9.3 | 9.3 | 54.2 |
| | Agree | 43 | 40.2 | 40.2 | 94.4 |
| | Strongly Agree | 6 | 5.6 | 5.6 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 107 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Field Data, 2019

From the table above, 44.8% of the respondents disagreed that parents were instrumental in managing the discipline of children. 45.8% of the respondents agreed that parents were instrumental in managing the discipline of children. 9.3% of the respondents were undecided on

whether parents were instrumental in managing the discipline of children. Majority of the respondents agreed that parents were instrumental in managing the discipline of children. According to (Green & Baker, 2012), parents are primarily responsible in ensuring their children have the desired behavior and traits that show that their children are well-mannered and nurtured. Based on the findings of the study, parents must ensure that their have traits and an attitude that entails respect, neatness, tidiness and humbleness.

Findings in table 5 shows that parents are nowadays reluctant to discipline their children

Table 5: Parents are nowadays reluctant to discipline their children

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Strongly Disagree | 15 | 14.0 | 14.0 | 14.0 |
| | Disagree | 33 | 30.8 | 30.8 | 44.9 |
| | Undecided | 10 | 9.3 | 9.3 | 54.2 |
| | Agree | 43 | 40.2 | 40.2 | 94.4 |
| | Strongly Agree | 6 | 5.6 | 5.6 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 107 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Field Data, 2019

From the findings above, 44.9% of the respondents disagreed that it’s important to be instrumental in instilling disciplines to their children. 45.8% of the respondents agreed that that it’s important to be instrumental in instilling disciplines to their children. 9.3% of the respondents were undecided on whether it’s important to be instrumental in instilling disciplines to their children. Majority of the respondents agreed that it’s important to be instrumental in instilling discipline to their children. From the literature review, McIntyre (2010) stated that parents spend more time with their children and should not neglect their parental duties with the assumption that teachers spend more time with the children during the day. From the findings, parents should recognize that a teacher’s responsibility is to guide a student in attaining an education. All other responsibilities belong to the parents

Further quantitative analysis was conducted on the data collected. The techniques used were correlation and linear regression. The findings obtained were presented in the section below.

Correlation

| | | Correlations | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| | | Parents ought to act like role models to their children | Role modelling is a key motivator to pre schoolers | It's important for parents be instrumental in instilling discipline to their children | Parents are now reluctant to discipline their children |
| Parents ought to act like role models to their children | Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) | 1 | -.682** | -.196* | .631** |
| | N | 107 | 107 | 107 | 107 |
| Role modelling is a key motivator to pre schoolers | Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) | -.682** | 1 | .397* | -.565** |
| | N | 107 | 107 | 107 | 107 |
| It's important that parent be instrumental in instilling discipline to their children | Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) | -.196* | .397* | 1 | -.619** |
| | N | 107 | 107 | 107 | 107 |
| Parents are now reluctant to discipline their children | Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) | .631** | -.565** | -.619** | 1 |
| | N | 107 | 107 | 107 | 107 |

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

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

Source: Field Data, 2019

The following variable combinations had a strong positive effect of increasing learning outcomes among preschoolers:

- Role modeling is a key motivator to preschoolers and parents should act as role models to their children. This had a correlation coefficient of -.682**.
- Parents are reluctant in disciplining their children and it's important for parents to discipline their children. This had a correlation coefficient of .619**.
- Parents should act as role models to their children and parents are reluctant in disciplining their children. This had a correlation coefficient of .631**.

- Role modeling is a key motivator to preschoolers and parents are reluctant in disciplining their children. This had a correlation coefficient of .565**.

Linear regression

The findings obtained were shown in the table below.

| Model | | Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|-------|---|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|------|
| | | Unstandardized Coefficients | Std. Error | | | |
| 1 | (Constant) | .009 | .625 | | .015 | .988 |
| | Parents ought to act like role models to their children | .544 | .105 | .713 | 5.170 | .000 |
| | Role modelling is a key motivator to pre schoolers | .457 | .090 | .626 | 5.075 | .000 |
| | It's important that parent be instrumental in instilling discipline to their children | -.017 | .082 | -.024 | -.208 | .836 |
| | Parents are now reluctant to discipline their children | -.018 | .113 | -.022 | -.155 | .877 |

a. Dependent Variable: Learning outcomes

Source: Field Data, 2019

From the table above, two variables had a significant effect of increasing learners’ participation among preschoolers; parents should act as role models to their children and role modeling is a key motivator to preschoolers. Both had a significance level of .0005, meaning that they had a 95% confidence level of increasing learning participation among preschoolers.

Qualitative responses

A school manager who was interviewed stated the following:

“Parental guidance is fundamental to a preschooler’s learning participation. What is taught in school should be practiced in depth once the child gets home. Parents should never ignore their responsibility to discipline their or assume teachers will take care of it. It’s important for parents to take charge of their children’s behavior at home since the same will be seen in school. Preschoolers always look up to their parents. Fundamentally, children have been with their parents since birth. That is the reason why they should be good role models to their kids.”

Conclusion

On the influence of parents' guidance on learning outcomes among preschoolers, it is important for parents to positive impact their children's lives. It is important for parents to raise their children with the best principles. The outcome of a child is the direct replica of what the parents invested in them. Based on the findings of the study, parents must ensure that their have traits and an attitude that entails respect, neatness, tidiness and humbleness. Parents should recognize that a teacher's responsibility is to guide a student in attaining an education. All other responsibilities belong to the parents

In determining parental encouragement on learning outcomes among preschoolers, it is important for parents to encourage their children in school. They must show interest and concern in their children' studies especially early childhood education. Based on the response rate on sensitization of parents motivating their children, the respondents supported the awareness that parents must always be there for their children. They more they are involvement in the academic journey of their child, the higher the likelihood of him/her achieving great success. Parents should walk with their children in every step of their way. They should participate in both on and off school activities. They should never delegate responsibilities that involve their children to their house-helps since it will lead to low academic achievement. Based on the findings gathered, its integral for a parent to participate in the academic journey of their child. The boosts the morale of child to perform better even though the path may be rocky.

Recommendations

1. Preschools should find a way to organize inter forums that will unite all the schools within Masaba sub-county and find the best way to positively the learning process of preschoolers.
2. Parents should create a balance between their work and family and ensure that they are present in the learning process of their children
3. Teachers should be well trained to have the appropriate skills for dealing with preschoolers and seek to understand them individually since they have different needs.

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