

Parental Involvement as a Predictor of Pre-Primary School Learners' Acquisition of Collaborative Competencies in Ganze, Kilifi County Kenya

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between parental involvement and collaborative learning competencies among pre-primary school learners in Ganze, Kilifi County, Kenya. A descriptive research design was employed to gather data from parents, teachers, and learners. The researchers utilized a stratified random sampling technique to ensure a representative sample. The study reveals that parental involvement is a significant predictor of pre-primary school learners' acquisition of collaborative competencies in Ganze, Kilifi County, Kenya. The model utilized in the study explains 88.3% of the total variance in collaborative competencies, indicating a strong relationship between the dependent and independent variables. The results demonstrate that parental involvement, learners' achievement of collaborative skills, and determinants of parental involvement significantly influence collaborative competencies. Specifically, when the independent variables are held constant, parental involvement/activities contribute 27.6%, learners' achievement of collaborative skills contributes 20.2%, and determinants of parental involvement contribute 44.5% towards collaborative competencies. These findings highlight the importance of actively involving parents in supporting and promoting collaborative learning among pre-primary school learners. By recognizing and fostering parental involvement, educators and stakeholders can enhance the development of collaborative competencies in young learners, ultimately contributing to their overall educational outcomes. The study made various recommendations: To strengthen parental involvement and collaborative competencies, actively engage parents in learning activities and establish a strong partnership with educators, maintain regular communication with parents, provide resources, and offer training opportunities to support their involvement,

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1. Introduction

Involvement of parents in the education of their children has been found to be an important aspect in the acquisition of learners' overall academic achievement. (Mwenje, 2020). This is more so particularly this time States globally are realigning their educational programs to competence-based education. In Kenya, the competence-based curriculum is now fully rolled out in the early year's education grades. Competence based curriculum is a collaborative system of education where the parent is a key stakeholder in extending the teaching learning process at home. The competence-based curriculum is an education system that puts emphasis on unavailing a learner's unique talents and abilities rather than focusing wholly on academics and exam performance (Orina, Macharia, & Okpalaenwe, 2021). It starts at pre-primary level and ends at grade 12 when each individual learner would have identified their strengths, competencies and ready to pathways on career development in tertiary and university education. Parental involvement in school or home programs for children cannot be overemphasized. Parental involvement in early language learning projects contributes to the enhancement of young children's literacy skills (Korosidou, Griva, & Pavlenko, 2021).

European studies have shed light on the impact of parental involvement on collaborative competencies among pre-primary school learners. In the United Kingdom, a longitudinal study by Sharabi and Marom-Golan (2018) explored the long-term effects of parental involvement on collaborative competencies in early year's education. The research revealed that children whose parents were actively involved in school activities, such as parent-teacher conferences and school events, showed continuous improvement in their collaboration and problem-solving skills throughout their educational journey. In Nigeria, a study by Olatoye and Agbatogun (2009) found that parental involvement was a significant predictor of collaborative competencies among pre-primary school learners in Nigeria. The study used a sample of 480 pre-primary school children and their parents, and

found that parents who were more involved in their children's education had children who were more likely to demonstrate collaborative competencies, such as working together, helping each other, and resolving conflicts peacefully.

In Kenya Wairimu, Macharia and Muiru (2016). revealed the fact that more than half of parents always set aside time and space at home for their children, less than 40% of parents would always help their children with schoolwork. The majority of students said their parents did not always check their assignments. The study was conducted in Nyeri County on parental involvement and the academic achievement of their pre-primary school. The study did not investigate parental involvement and learners' achievement of collaborative competency.

The current study investigates pre-primary school parents' school involvement and its influence on learners' acquisition of collaborative learning competencies which is one of the main expected learning outcomes in the CBC. Mutea (2020) an educationist consultant in her public address on the topic parental engagement as quoted by Ndwiga, Warren, Okondo, Abuya, and Sripad, (2022). emphasized that when a parent is engaged in their child learning they work closely with the teachers and the school to impact knowledge skills, competencies, values and attitudes to the child. Parents also help monitor the academic progress of the child, identifying areas of weakness and together put intervention to ensure improvement in the child informal education at home and in the community which complements and supplements what the child learns at school.

Considering the above cases therefore, studies have pointed out positive correlation between parental involvement in education and success in learning. In Ganze Sub- County, available data indicates low academic achievement in lower grades. This could result from various reasons including stakeholders' collaboration and involvement. This study endeavors to investigate parental involvement and its predictive value on learners' achievement in collaborative learning competencies.

2. Research Problem

Parental involvement is deemed crucial for children's learning and collaborative skills development, particularly within the context of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC). Without active parental engagement, children may struggle to adapt to school and acquire necessary skills. Collaborative learning, especially in lower primary and pre-primary grades, benefits greatly from parental support, fostering higher-level thinking, confidence, and self-esteem. Research has consistently shown that parental involvement positively correlates with student achievement, particularly in collaborative learning scenarios. In Ganze sub-county, Kilifi County, grade three students' academic performance has lagged behind their peers, potentially indicating insufficient parental involvement. This study aims to explore the relationship between parental involvement and students' acquisition of collaborative learning competencies in this region, with the hope of informing strategies to enhance academic achievement.

3. Methodology

The used a mixed methodology, combining qualitative and quantitative methods, to gather both discrete and non-discrete data. Creswell (2014) emphasized that these approaches minimize interference with the data, allowing the researcher to utilize the collected data to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. Qualitative data was employed to describe activities and assess parental involvement in relation to the acquisition of collaborative competencies by using questionnaires filled out by the responsible teachers. Parents engaged in discussions and provided written answers through their secretary, while the researcher observed the discussions and recorded them. Additionally, the behavior of the pre-school learners was observed and their actions were recorded for later analysis.

The study adopted a descriptive research design to investigate the effects of independent variables on the dependent variable. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) noted that the descriptive design allows researchers to assess the degree of relationship between multiple variables. In this study, the researcher examined the influence of parental involvement and its predictive value on the acquisition of collaborative skills competencies by learners. The target population was 520 parents, 306 pre-school children, and 421 pre-primary teachers. Both from the public pre-primary school and private pre- schools in Ganze Sub- County. A 10% sample size was used in this study. The sample size was 528.

The study utilized a combination of data collection methods to comprehensively investigate parental involvement and collaborative learning competencies. A structured questionnaire was employed to gather data from teachers, providing consistent items for efficient data management and allowing for remote submission through various means. Focus Group Discussions (FGDG) were conducted with parents, guided by a specific outline, to capture essential insights into their involvement levels and the factors influencing their engagement. Additionally, an observation checklist form was utilized to review learners' and teachers' records, academic arrangements, and the implementation of collaborative learning practices, also considering contextual factors such as pedagogical approaches. This multi-method approach aimed to provide a well-rounded understanding of parental involvement and its impact on collaborative learning competencies, with supplementary analysis of

relevant educational reports.

4. Findings

4.1 Determinants of Parental Involvement for Ganze Subcounty Preschools

Level of education. Parents with higher levels of education are more likely to be involved in their children's education. This is because they have a better understanding of the importance of education and they are more likely to have the skills and resources to help their children succeed. Economic engagement. Parents who are employed and have higher incomes are more likely to be involved in their children's education. This is because they have more time and resources to devote to their children's education. Single parenthood. Single parents are more likely to face challenges in being involved in their children's education. This is because they may have less time and resources, and they may also be facing other challenges, such as negative attitudes from teachers, financial hardship or lack of support. Marital issues. Parents who are experiencing marital problems are more likely to be less involved in their children's education. This is because they may be preoccupied with their own problems, and they may not have the time or energy to focus on their children's education. Lack of information. Parents who lack information about their children's education are less likely to be involved. This is because they may not know what they can do to help, or they may not know how to get involved. Uncooperative teacher(s). Parents are less likely to be involved if they feel that their child's teacher is uncooperative or unhelpful. This is because they may feel that their efforts are not being appreciated, or they may feel that they are not being given the information or support they need.

Other factors that may affect parental involvement in Ganze Sub- County include: Parental attitudes towards education. Parents who believe that education is important are more likely to be involved in their children's education. Parental expectations. Parents who have high expectations for their children's education are more likely to be involved in helping their children achieve those expectations. Transportation. Parents who live far from their child's school or who do not have access to reliable transportation may face challenges in being involved this is mostly the case for Ganze Sub- County.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics for Levels of Parental Involvement

The average mean of 4.54 shows that the respondents strongly agreed on parental involvement for the preprimary schools, the standard deviation of .674 shows moderate variation. The respondents confirmed that parents supported collaborative teaching by strongly agreeing (Mean=4.88, Standard Deviation, .412). The respondents also confirmed that parents understood the importance of their involvement by strongly agreeing (Mean=4.87, Standard deviation, .410). The standard deviation for this statement was the least, showing least variation of the responses. Further the respondents strongly agreed to the statements: confirming that parents attend all school functions (Mean=4.83, Standard Deviation, .501), parents working harmoniously with the class teacher (Mean=4.82, Standard Deviation,.454), parents supporting the school administration (Mean=4.74, Standard Deviation, .587) and the parents being supportive (Mean=4.65, Standard Deviation, .737).

The respondents agreed to the following statements; parents supporting with teaching/learning resources (Mean=4.48, Standard Deviation, .662), parents sometimes coming for consultation (Mean=4.46, Standard Deviation, .690) and parents having positive attitude towards the school (Mean=4.15, Standard Deviation, .872). Finally, the respondents were undecided on whether the parents support learners with homework (Mean=3.48, Standard Deviation, 1.419). The standard deviation was the largest implying highest variation of the responses.

Table 1: Parental Involvement

Parental Involvement	Mean	Std. Deviation
I can confirm that our parents support collaborative teaching	4.88	.412
I can confirm that our parents understand the importance of their involvement	4.87	.410
I can confirm that our parents attend all school functions	4.83	.501
I can confirm that our parents work harmoniously with the class teacher	4.82	.454
I can confirm that our parents support the school administration	4.74	.587
I can confirm that our parents are supportive	4.65	.737
I can confirm that our parents support with teaching/learning resources	4.48	.662
I can confirm that our parents sometimes come for consultation	4.46	.690
I can confirm that our parents have positive attitude to the school	4.15	.872
I can confirm that our parents support learners with homework	3.48	1.419
Average	4.54	.674

Descriptive Statistics for Parental Involvement

4.3 Descriptive Statistics for Collaborative Competencies Among Learners

The mean and standard deviation of the responses were calculated and tabulated as below. The average mean of 4.88 shows that the respondents strongly agreed on collaborative competencies among learners the standard deviation of .419 shows moderate variation. The respondents strongly agreed on the affirmation that; learners' achievement is much better with the use of collaborative learning, collaborative learning has more benefits to the learner, they use collaborative learning all with a mean of 4.91 and the corresponding standard deviation of .305 was the least showing least variation for the responses of these three statements. Also, the respondents strongly agreed on the affirmation that learners have acquired social skills more as a result of the use collaborative learning (Mean=4.90, Standard Deviation, .344), collaborative learning among learners has been greatly boosted by the parents' involvement (Mean=4.88, Standard Deviation, .398), due parental involvement, collaborative learning competencies among learners will greatly improve learners' overall achievement (Mean=4.87, Standard Deviation, .415).

The respondents strongly agreed on the affirmation that; usage of collaborative learning (Mean=4.86, Standard Deviation, .474), involve learners in collaborative learning activities (Mean=4.86, Standard Deviation, .474). Also, the respondents strongly agreed on the affirmation that; learners have acquired considerable competencies in collaborative learning (Mean=4.84, Standard Deviation, .586) and collaborative learning is important for competency acquisition (Mean=4.84, Standard Deviation, .586)

Table 2: Collaborative Competencies Among Learners

Collaborative Competencies Among Learners	Mean	Std. Deviation
I can affirm that our learners' achievement is much better with the use of collaborative learning	4.91	.305
I can affirm that collaborative learning has more benefits to the learner	4.91	.305
I can affirm that I use collaborative learning	4.91	.305
I can affirm that our learners have acquired social skills more as a result of the use collaborative learning	4.90	.344
I can affirm that collaborative learning among learners has been greatly boosted by the parents' involvement	4.88	.398
I can affirm that due parental involvement, collaborative learning competencies among learners will greatly improve learners' overall achievement	4.87	.415
I can affirm that I use collaborative learning	4.86	.474
I can affirm that I involve learners in collaborative learning activities	4.86	.474
I can affirm that our learners have acquired considerable competencies in collaborative learning	4.84	.586
I can affirm that collaborative learning is important for competency acquisition	4.84	.586
Average	4.88	.419

Descriptive Statistics for Collaborative Competencies Among Learners

4.4 Descriptive Statistics for Parental Involvement Predicting Achievement of Collaborative Learning Competencies

The average mean of 4.63 shows that the respondents strongly agreed on parental involvement predicting achievement of collaborative learning competencies the standard deviation of .710 shows moderate variation. The respondents strongly agreed that parental involvement; is a sure predictor of learners' collaborative learning outcomes (Mean=4.66, Standard Deviation, .668), can predict learner's academic learning outcomes (Mean=4.64, Standard Deviation, .682), determines learning outcomes (Mean=4.63, Standard Deviation, .687), determines collaborative learning outcomes (Mean=4.61, Standard Deviation, .736), determines learners' motivation (Mean=4.61, Standard Deviation, .754) and finally parental involvement promotes teacher /parent relationship (Mean=4.60, Standard Deviation, .731).

Table 3: Parental involvement Predicting Achievement of Collaborative Learning Competencies

Parental Involvement Predicting Achievement of Collaborative Learning Competencies	Mean	Std. Deviation
I am convinced that parental involvement is a sure predictor of learners' collaborative learning outcomes	4.66	.668
I am convinced that parental involvement can predict learner's academic learning outcomes	4.64	.682
I am convinced that parental involvement determines learning outcomes	4.63	.687
I am convinced that parental involvement determines collaborative learning outcomes	4.61	.736
I am convinced that parental involvement determines learners' motivation	4.61	.754

I am convinced that parental involvement promotes teacher /parent relationship	4.60	.731
Average	4.63	.710

Descriptive Statistics for Parental Involvement Predicting Achievement of Collaborative Learning Competencies

4.5 Coefficients of the Regression Model

The co-efficient of the regression model were obtained from the analysis and presented. The regression equation is as shown below;

$$Y=0.242+0.276X_1+0.202X_2+0.445X_3.$$

Y –Collaborative Competencies

X₁– Parental Involvement/Activities

X₂– Learners' achievement of Collaborative skills

X₃– Determinants of Parental Involvement

When the independent variables are all zeros, this means that collaborative competencies will be at 0.242 (i.e. 24.2%). All other independent variables under consideration in this study held constant (X₂, and X₃). Parental Involvement/Activities would contribute 0.276 (27.6%) towards collaborative competencies. All other independent variables under consideration in this study held constant (X₁, and X₃). Learners' achievement of Collaborative skills would contribute 0.202 (20.2%) towards collaborative competencies. All other independent variables under consideration in this study held constant (X₁, and X₂). Determinants of Parental Involvement would contribute 0.445 (44.5%) towards collaborative competencies.

5. Conclusion

The study's findings reveal a predominantly positive outlook on parental involvement in pre-primary education in Ganze, Kilifi County, Kenya. Respondents largely acknowledged parents' support for collaborative teaching and recognized the importance of their engagement in this educational context. High agreement was observed concerning parents' attendance at school events, their cooperative relationship with class teachers, and their support for school administration, indicating a supportive parental involvement environment. However, there is room for improvement, as respondents were less unanimous about parents' positive attitudes toward the school and their effectiveness in assisting with homework. These insights can guide educators and policymakers in devising strategies to strengthen and broaden parental involvement, ultimately leading to enhanced collaborative learning competencies among pre-primary students in the region.

The study's findings demonstrate that parents in Ganze, Kilifi County, Kenya, exhibit substantial involvement and support in various facets of their children's pre-primary education. Respondents overwhelmingly agreed that parents contribute both financially and non-financially to the school, offering financial assistance and aiding in safety, discipline, homework, and the provision of educational resources. Parents actively engage with the school through volunteering, attending meetings, and participating in school-wide activities while valuing open communication with teachers. They highly appreciate the dedication and skills of preschool teachers and stress the significance of regular communication and active involvement in their child's education, ultimately fostering collaboration. These findings underscore the positive and multifaceted role of parents in enhancing collaborative competencies among pre-primary learners in the region, emphasizing the importance of nurturing the school-home partnership.

The study's findings underscore the pivotal role of parental involvement in nurturing collaborative competencies among pre-primary school learners in Ganze, Kilifi County, Kenya. Respondents strongly affirmed the significant advantages of collaborative learning for students and recognized parental involvement as a key driver in promoting and enhancing these competencies. The research reveals a positive correlation between parental engagement and learners' achievements, social skills, and overall proficiency in collaborative learning. These results emphasize the importance of collaborative learning for improved educational outcomes and underscore the vital role of parents in supporting and fostering collaborative learning environments. They also call for collaborative efforts between educators, policymakers, and parents to encourage active parental involvement, provide resources and information on the benefits of collaborative learning, and promote effective communication between parents and teachers to further enhance collaborative competencies among pre-primary school learners in the region.

Based on the study's findings, it can be conclusively affirmed that parental involvement serves as a substantial predictor of pre-primary school learners' acquisition of collaborative competencies in Ganze, Kilifi County, Kenya. The respondents overwhelmingly expressed strong agreement regarding the pivotal role of parental involvement in predicting learners' outcomes in collaborative learning, encompassing competencies, academic achievements, learning outcomes, and motivation. The consistent high mean score among respondents further underscores the predictive power of parental involvement. These findings unequivocally establish that active parental engagement positively influences the development and acquisition of collaborative competencies, serving as a critical determinant of learners' collaborative learning outcomes, academic achievements, and motivation. Furthermore, the study highlights the constructive impact of parental involvement on fostering a positive teacher-parent relationship, emphasizing the necessity of collaboration between educators and parents in cultivating an effective and supportive learning environment. These results hold significant implications for both parents and educators, underscoring the imperative nature of parental involvement in promoting collaborative