INFLUENCE OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIP ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF PUPILS IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KIANJIRU ZONE, EMBU COUNTY, KENYA

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Abstract

One of the major aspects of the Kenya Vision 2030 is Education. Kenya Vision 2030 states that education and training is an instrument to develop Kenya to be a middle-income economy. Home factors have been pin- pointed as of great importance in moulding the performance of pupils in schools worldwide. This research, therefore, investigates the influence of family relationship on the academic performance of pupils in Kianjiru zone, Mbeere South Sub-county. The interest to pursue this research arose due to the poor performance by pupils in the said area in the national examinations. The study adopted a descriptive survey design method to collect information. The target population of the study was 458 standard seven and eight pupils in Kianjiru from where a sample size of 88 pupils was drawn. The data was collected using questionnaires for pupils that were analyzed using descriptive statistics and presented using frequencies, percentages. Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 21 was used to aid in generating a summary of results. The study established that families play a vital role in the pupils learning and that the efforts of the parents are important in improving the performance of the pupils. It further established that pupils' academic performance is affected by parental factors which include providing them with learning materials, providing them with the necessary stationery, helping them to do their homework, doing follow-up of their schoolwork and attending school meetings. It was also notable that differences in educational background of parents did not contribute to a significant difference in the academic achievement of the pupils. The recommendations of the study were that the parents should be sensitized on the need of their involvement in the children's learning. The school administration should organize seminars to educate the parents on the importance of creating a good learning environment at home.

Key words: Kenya; Family relationships; Pupils' academic performance; Public primary schools; Learning environment.

1. Introduction

Good academic performance in education guarantees skilled and dynamic citizens. In addition, one of the aspects of social pillar of Kenya vision 2030 is education. Kenya vision 2030 points out that education and trainings are fundamental in ensuring that

Kenya becomes a middle-income economy. Noting the importance of education to the Kenyan economy it would be useful to identify those factors that affect pupils and their academic performance. Identifying such factors would be essential in ensuring that the ministry of education and other relevant government bodies are able to develop systems for addressing the negative and maximizing on the positive factors. Existing literature identifies home attributes as essential factors affecting pupil's achievements and thus the long term outcomes of the pupils (Glanz 2002, Graetz 2005, Jeynes 2002). Home factors are of great importance in shaping the performance of pupils in schools worldwide. The reason is that academic performance is usually a result of support and motivation that pupils get from the parents/guardians and people they interact with in their initial stages of life.

Many researchers conducted detailed studies about the factors contributing to a pupil's performance at different study levels. Glanz (2002) suggested "Pupils educational success contingent heavily on home status of his/her parents/guardians in the society". Considine and Zappala (2002) said that parent's income status positively affects the pupil test score in examination. Parent's economic condition, which includes parents' academic and professional qualification, revenue and occupational affiliation, is also associated with academic gain of pupils. The results of many studies confirmed that academic achievement of pupils is contingent upon parent's economic condition. So the pupils belonging to higher economical backgrounds will perform better than other pupils associated with low economic backgrounds. Home factors of pupils are generally determined by combining parents' qualification, occupation and income standard (Jeynes, 2002).

Success in an educational institution is measured by academic performance. Over the years, the importance of pupils doing well in school has become the common concern of parent, legislators, teachers, counselors and psychologists. According to Adeyemo (2006), parents devote a lot of resources to their pupil's education because they believed that good academic performance would provide a stable future for them. Also, Jeynes (2002) opines that many educational authorities have sought to find out reasons for the downward trend in the academic performance of pupils in public primary schools.

In Kianjiru, it is noted that academic achievement of pupils may not only depend on the quality of schools and the teachers, but also the extent of home- based factors that are believed to have a vital role to play in academic achievement of their pupils. This, therefore, creates a gap on other ways that home factors influence the academic performance of pupils in public primary schools in Kianjiru zone. Pupils are more likely to have higher academic achievement levels and improved behavior when the home factors are favourable (Bryan, 2005).

2. Purpose of the Study

This study was conducted to examine the influence of family relationships on academic performance of pupils in public primary schools in Kianjiru Zone.

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3. Methodology
The study employed the descriptive survey research design. The descriptive survey design was relevant to this study because it enabled the researcher to describe the state of affairs in schools by collecting data without manipulating variables.The target population for this study was all the 458 pupils in public primary schools in Kianjiru zone, Mbeere South Sub-county. A sample size of 19% is sufficient for the study considering the degree of variability, in which the population did not have a high level of variability. The sample constituted 4 standard seven pupils and 4 standard eight pupils from each school in 11 schools. The stratified random sampling method of simple random sampling was used in selecting the 11 schools, with 8 pupils participating per school. A questionnaire was suitable for collecting data for research because it was appropriate for collecting a lot of information over a short period of time. Expert opinions of University supervisors were engaged to ascertain the validity of the research instruments. Reliability of the instruments was estimated by use of Spearman's rank correlation coefficient and a correlation coefficient of 0.816 was obtained. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics including percentages and frequency counts with the aid of SPSS version 21.0. The analyzed data were presented on frequency tables.

4. Results and Discussion
The following are the results of the study and the discussions of the results

4.1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents
This section presents a brief description of the demographic characteristics of the study participants. The study established that the majority (55%) of the respondents were aged between 10 and 13 years, while 30% of the respondents were age between 14 and 16 years. The study further established that 15% were aged 17 years and above. The study established that the majority (58%) of the respondents were female while 42% of the respondents were male. The study established that the majority (50%) of the respondents were in class seven while another 50% were in class eight. The majority (31.8 %) of the pupils' respondents who sat for the end of first term exam scored D grade, 26.1% scored E grade, 20.5% scored grade C. The data further shows that 12.5% scored B grade while only 9.1% pupils scored A grade in the end of term exams. Glanz (2002) attributes the cause of poor academic performance of pupils to a combination of personal and institutional factors. The Personal factors include the level of individual's intelligence, knowledge and ability, while Institutional factors are family or parental influence. The study further sought to find out the causes of the pupils to repeat classes, and the respondents indicated that one of the major causes of repetition was irregular attendance of school. This led to poor performance of the pupils, hence repetition.

4.2 Influence of Family Relationships on Academic Performance of Pupils in Public Primary Schools.
The study further sought to establish whether the pupils came from families with single or complete families. The responses are presented on the table below
Table 1: Status of the Family

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	66	75
No	22	25
Total	**88**	**100**

The study established that the majority (75%) of the respondents indicated that they came from complete nuclear families with both parents, while 25% were not from such families. The study further established that 30% of the pupils that did not come from complete nuclear families lived with single parents, while 70% of them were living with relatives and their grandparents.

The study further sought to establish how the family relationship affected the performance of the pupils in the primary schools. The responses are presented on the likert scale below where: Strongly Agree (SA) Agree (A) Disagree (D) Neutral (N) Strongly Disagree (SD).

Table 2: Effects of Family Relationship on Performance of the Pupils

Statement	Response				
	SD	D	N	A	SA
Having good family relationship encourages me to have high goals in education.	0	2.5	12.5	40	45
My parents show concern over my academic performance.	5	10	10	50	25
I receive help from other family members when doing homework at home.	0	12.5	12.5	55	20
Families are the conductive environment for the development of the virtues which humanize the pupil's life hence academic performance.	5.6	1.7	8.7	49.8	18.6
The emerging family structures may have an influence on academic performance' as pupils depend on the family emotional and material support.	11.2	1.1	4.3	63.5	16.1
Family provides the environment where the pupil learns	10.6	3.6	6.8	62.9	13.0

	SD	D	N	A	SA
to use their faculties and understand and cope with the physical world.					
The structure of a family has been changing from the traditional family structure comprising of parents and pupils to other forms of family structures that provides alternative dependence system.	11.2	1.7	4.9	64.8	10.6
The family relationship probably has the greatest influence on the pupil's future life than any other agent	13.0	7.3	2.4	67.3	6.8
The efficacy of a family influence for academic performance is determined to a large degree by a pupil's family relationship.	4.3	9.3	1.2	62.9	17.4
Academic performance is achieved only if family relationship resources can be accessed to maximize the association between family influences and outcomes.	9.3	5.5	6.8	54.2	19.3

The study established that the majority (75%) of the respondents indicated that they came from complete nuclear families with both parents, while 25% were not from such families. Existing literature identifies home attributes as essential factors affecting pupil's achievements and thus the long term outcomes of the pupils (Glanz 2002, Graetz 2005, Jeynes 2002). The study further established that 30% of the pupils that did not come from complete nuclear families lived with single parents, while 70% of them were living with relatives and their grandparents.

Many researchers conducted detailed studies about the factors contributing to a pupil's performance at different study levels. Glanz (2002) suggested "Pupils educational success contingent heavily on home status of his/her parents/guardians in the society". The findings showed that majority of the respondents at strongly agreed (40%) or agreed (45%) that having a good relationship with their family helped in their academic

performance. The reason is that academic performance is usually a result of support and motivation that pupils get from the parents/guardians and people they interact with in their initial stages of life.

Home is the first level of socialization where important interactions happen with parents, care-givers, friends, siblings, and others in the community (Glanz, 2002). The study further established that another 25% strongly agreed that their parents showed concern over their academic performance, and 50% agreed. Those that disagreed or remained neutral over the role of good family relationship were 15% combined, and 25% over those disagreeing (15%) or neutral (10%) regarding parental concern over their academic performance. Thus the home continues to exercise a strong influence over the pupil's life and academic performance in school. It has to be noted that homes differ in terms of their significances in the social orders. For instance, some have more prestige and money while some have wider experience and knowledge of how to operate within the society or school environment (Constatine, 2005).

The study further established that 55% of the respondents indicated that they received help from their family members when doing homework at home, and thus this had an impact on their performance. Interactions between children and adults are seen as "the primary medium by which literacy is acquired" (Collins, 2007). Interactions with others around (Bryan, 2005), as well as general talk about events not present (engagement in decontextualized language) (Bandura, 2007) have been shown to play key roles in pupil's literacy development.

The study further established that families are the conductive environment for the development of the virtues which humanize the pupil's life hence academic performance, as was revealed by (49.8%) of the respondents. The training provided in the home is practical rather than theoretical. It provides the most conductive environment for the development of the virtues which humanize the pupil's life hence academic performance (Bryan, 2005). The study further established that the emerging family structures may have an influence on academic performance' as pupils depend on the family emotional and material support, as was revealed by (63.5%) of the respondents. The study further established that the family provided the environment where the pupil learns to use their faculties and understand and cope with the physical world, as was revealed by (62.9%) of the respondents.

According to Balli et al (2008), noted that better-educated families are more likely to consider the quality of the local schools when selecting a neighborhood in which to live. Once the pupil enters a school, educated families are also more likely to pay attention to the quality of the pupil's teachers and may attempt to ensure that the pupils are adequately served. The study further established that Healthy family relationships, love of the dearest people, understanding and care of everybody are needed in this pupils' life, as was indicated by (64.2%) of the respondents. High parental expectations, more parental attention to and effort towards pupil education help raise pupil academic performance. (Bradley et al ,2001).

The majority (64.8%) of the respondents indicated that the structure of a family has been

changing from the traditional family structure comprising of parents and pupils to other forms of family structures that provides alternative dependence system. The study further established that the family relationship has the greatest influence on the pupil 's future life than any other agent, as was agreed by 67.3% of the respondents. In a family socialization perspective, it is proposed that the absence of a parent is probably associated with a decrease in total parental involvement, which in turn is related to poorer school outcomes (Balli et al. 2008).

Good family relationship provides conducive home environment that entails parent encouragement that proves to be catalyst in boosting, maintaining achievement and motivation among the pupils that in turn influence their academic performance. The study further established that the efficacy of a family influence for academic performance is determined to a large degree by a pupil's family relationship, as was revealed by (62.9%) of the respondents. Pupils need a pleasing and interesting environment, characterized by human care particularly by the mother, and at the same time, providing various experiences and stimulations (Caldwell, 2002).

The study further established that academic performance is achieved only if family relationship resources can be accessed to maximize the association between family influences and outcomes, as was revealed by 54.2% of the respondents. A Pearson correlation between effects of family relationship and performance of the pupils was computed and the results are shown below;

Table 3.Pearson Correlation between Family Relationship on Academic Performance of the Pupils

			Performance of the Pupils
Family Relationship variables	Pearson Correlation	1	.737[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	88	88
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).			

The study established that the strength of relationship between Family Relationship variables and Performance of the Pupils was high (r= 0.737) and the correlation coefficient was significantly high as indicated by P<0.05. This implies that 54.32% (r^2= 0.737^2) of the variations in the Family Relationship variables negatively affected Performance of the Pupils. According to (Balli et al. 2008) analyses on the relations between families and academic performance also need to consider pupil's family structures; a mother does homework with her children. It is generally acknowledged that family relationship is the most powerful influence in determining a pupil's academic motivation and achievement.

5. Summary

The study established that the family relationship variables had influence on the academic performance of the pupils in primary schools in kianjiru zone. The extent of the relationship has been revealed by the Pearson's correlation coefficient of 0.737, which implies that for every positive change in the family relationships variables, there was a significant improvement in the academic performance of the pupils.

6. Conclusion

It can be concluded that families play a vital role in the pupil's learning and that the efforts of the parents are important in improving the grades of the pupils. Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that pupils' academic performance in is affected parental factors that include; providing them with learning materials, providing them with the necessary stationery, helping them to do their homework, doing follow-up of their schoolwork and attending their PTA meetings.

7. Recommendations

It was recommended that the head teachers should hold meetings with the parents to sensitize them on the need of their involvement in the pupils learning. The school administration should also organize seminars and educate the parents on the importance of creating a good home reading environment. Learning environments at home should be made conducive by the parents to promote the learning of pupils while at home.

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