

Parents' Involvement in Children's Academic Success: A Case Study of One Public Primary School in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Nhandi Nyolobi Kija,¹ & Mary Atanas Mosha, PhD.²

¹Kampala International University in Tanzania, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Email: nnyolobi@kiut.ac.tz

²Department of Education, Faculty of Education and Legal Studies, Kampala International University in Tanzania, Dar es Salaam. Corresponding author. Email: m.mosha@kiut.ac.tz

Abstract:

This study examined the contributions of parents to children's academic success at a public primary school in Dar es Salaam. The study employed the descriptive research design. It involved 102 participants who were recruited through random and purposive sampling techniques. The sample included parents and teachers. Data were collected through in-depth interview and documentary review, and analyzed using descriptive and thematic analyses. The findings revealed that some of the parents are educated but did not spare enough time to help their children or guide them in their homework. In addition, poor teaching and learning environment, poverty of some families, truancy, frequent interruption of studies, overcrowded classrooms and shortage of teaching and learning materials contributed to pupils' poor performance at the school. Despite the fact that parents attended school meetings and there was communication between the parents and the teachers, there was only a marginal impact on the pupils' academic success. Therefore, parents have to spare more time for their children at home, attend school meetings, and work closely with teachers in order to improve pupils' academic success in all subjects done by pupils, and in which poor performances have been observed. The study recommends that parents should be actively involved in the academic affairs of their children, and also strengthen teacher-parent relations, with a view to achieving a common ground in addressing the challenges of pupils.

Keywords: Education, teaching, learning, curriculum, environment.

Suggested Citation: N. N. Kija & M. A. Mosha (2024), 'Parents Involvement in Children's Academic Success: A Case Study of One Public Primary School in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania,' *TzJMS*. Vol. 2.No. 1. pp. 1-19.

Peer Reviewed

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0).



1. INTRODUCTION

The involvement of parents in their children's education is regarded as critically important in providing children with a good starting point for independent effort and success (Epstein, 2018; Goodall and Montgomery, 2014). Irrespective of their social, educational and ethnic backgrounds, the interest and input of parents can aid and encourage children to perform better in their studies (Dahie, Mohamed, and Mohamed, 2018). Involvement can take the form of a mix of diverse activities through which parents can contribute to their children's education, including helping children with their homework, negotiating with teachers and attending school events (Holloway, 2013).

Parents play a crucial role in their child's education, serving as their first and most influential teachers. When parents actively engage in their child's learning journey, they create a strong foundation for academic success and holistic development. For instance, when parents show an active interest in their child's education, it sends a powerful message that learning is valuable and worthwhile. This enthusiasm is contagious and encourages children to approach their studies with passion and curiosity. Research demonstrates clearly that parental involvement positively impacts students' academic achievement. Parents' active participation in their child's education creates a supportive environment that encourages learning and motivates students to excel (Dis, 2023). Kayombo (2017) asserts that parental engagement and children's academic success are positively correlated, as shown by extensive studies conducted in a variety of educational contexts. Parental involvement takes various forms, including engaging in educational activities at home, maintaining regular communication with teachers, participating in school activities, and providing a helpful learning atmosphere at home.

Parents and families have a major impact on the success and process of children's education and upbringing. The involvement of parents is related to their position at home, that is by monitoring learning by children, as well as participation in activities organized at school such as parent-teacher conferences, volunteer activities, various forms of parental activism and workshops and seminars for parents. It is well established that parental involvement correlates with school achievement of both children and adolescents (Long, 2007). Literature indicates clearly that the education of parents has a significant influence on children's knowledge, skills and values. Furthermore, parents' involvement in educational activities at home have positive effects on their kids' educational attainment (Harris & Goodall, 2008; Kassim, 2011).

Educated parents can also provide proper guidance to their children as they have already gone through the process of education. They follow the highs and lows of educational decisions, and can therefore share lessons from their own experiences to motivate their children to study. In addition, home arrangements made by parents are also based on their understanding and education, and have positive influences on students' educational performance (Harb & El-Shaarawi, 2006).

2. EDUCATION IN TANZANIA

The government of Tanzania recognizes the central role of the education sector in achieving the overall development goal of improving the quality of life of Tanzanians. Several policy and structural reforms have been initiated by the government to improve the quality of education and ensure universal primary education for all so as to strengthen the link between education provided at all levels and the socio-economic development of the country (The United Republic of Tanzania, 2001).

The education system in Tanzania places importance on primary education because it serves as the fundamental building block of children's academic journey. Primary education in the country is compulsory and spans a period of seven years. The curriculum for primary education aims to provide a well-rounded education focused on developing basic literacy, numeracy and problem-solving skills (Kimaryo, 2011). In addition, the Tanzanian government is committed to ensuring universal access to primary education, and has made effort to address barriers such as gender disparity and geographical inequality (Vavrus and Moshi, 2009). Furthermore, it aims to strengthen primary education and equip pupils with a solid educational foundation that will prepare them for further education and future opportunities (Cosmas, 2018; Ngwaru, 2014).

Recently, the government revamped the education sector and introduced the 2023 Education and Training Policy that took three years to develop. The policy reviewed and updated the Education and Training Policy of 2014. The policy placed more emphasis on developing skills that are relevant to the changing job market, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, communication and digital literacy. The new policy came up with a new system of education whereby sixth-grade students undergo assessments instead of examinations to attain certificates, departing from previous practices. Furthermore, the policy has highlighted changes in curriculum design, assessment methods and professional development for teachers by declaring that the areas revised in the new education policy include teacher's education, higher learning education, skills-based curricula and research.

3. THE PRIMARY EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The primary education curriculum begins from standard one and ends at standard six in contrast to the previous policy of 2014 where primary education ends at standard seven. According to The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (2023) the curriculum specified in the 2023 Edition has been developed in accordance with the Education and Training Policy of 2014. The curriculum adheres to the education vision that aims to prepare an 'educated Tanzanian' with the knowledge, skills, positive attitudes, respect for equality, justice, and lifelong education for sustainable national and international development. Furthermore, the curriculum observes the main objectives, as well as the specific objectives of primary education in Tanzania.

Based on these considerations, the curriculum sets standards for the delivery of education at the level of primary education, prescribing the competences, knowledge, skills, and attitudes that pupils should acquire. The curriculum also stated the general competences, key learning areas, main and specific competences, as well as teaching and learning methods for primary education. It has been added that, the curriculum has specified the duration for implementation, the language of teaching and learning, teaching and learning materials, and assessment approaches that will be used to develop the intended competences for learners. The curriculum observes theories of human development and learning, and the philosophy of education for self-reliance which emphasize the provision of education that enables a Tanzanian who will be self-reliant in his or her daily life. Furthermore, the curriculum has been developed to prepare Tanzanians with knowledge, skills, ethics, patriotism and positive attitudes to contribute to national development, taking into account, advancements in science and technology and the demands of the 21st century (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2023).

4. THE STRUCTURE OF PRIMARY EDUCATION

As stated in the Education and Training Policy of 2014, and the 2023 edition, primary education will span a duration of six years and will consist of two stages. The first stage will span a period of two years and will include Standard I and Standard II. The main objective of this stage is to develop competences in Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic (3Rs). The second stage will begin from Standard III to Standard VI and aims to enhance the 3Rs (Reading, Writing and Arithmetic) skills along with other life skills. A pupil will begin Standard I at the age of six and complete Standard VI at the age of eleven (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2023).

In this study, the concept of parental involvement is used, as it is widely employed in literature to refer to the role and contribution of parents in their children's education. In this context, parents are involved in education with the aim of improving students' performance in addition to their well-being. Parents and teachers are two primary educators of students at home as well as in schools. Literature demonstrates that parental engagement and children's academic success are positively correlated (Kayombo, 2017). Additionally, community involvement and parental engagement are considered crucial factors in supporting children's academic success at the primary level (Cosmas, 2018; Walker et al. 2005). Regardless of close parental involvement, pupils at the primary school level in Tanzania still perform poorly in Science, English and Mathematics. Table 1 presents standard seven pupils' results in one of the selected primary schools in Dar es Salaam.

Table 1: National Standard Seven Examination Results

Year	Subjects	Registered	Sat for Exams	Pass	Fail
2022	Mathematics	354	345	195	144
	English	354	345	109	231
	Science	354	345	276	57
2021	Mathematics	246	236	179	67
	English	246	236	127	119
	Science	246	236	233	03
2020	Mathematics	230	228	114	111
	English	230	228	92	134
	Science	230	228	182	42

Source: National Examination Council of Tanzania 2020, 2021 and 2022 Results

Data in Table 1 shows standard seven pupils' performance in three subjects (Mathematics, English and Science). The results indicate that more pupils failed English and Mathematics compared to science. For instance, in 2020, 134 pupils out of 228 failed English. In 2021, 119 pupils out of 236 failed the subject. In 2022, 231 pupils out of 345 failed. This means that almost half of the pupils failed English at the school in three consecutive years. The performance in Mathematics was a bit better in 2021 when 179 pupils out of 236 passed and 67 failed. In 2022, 144 pupils out of 345 failed and 195 passed. Almost half of the pupils failed the subject despite the fact that various strategies were undertaken by government to improve pupils' performance in all primary schools. It is interesting to find that pupils performed well in science but failed English and Mathematics. In view of the fact that the number of failing pupils in the two subjects increases year by year despite the involvement of parents, this study has investigated the cause of the problem. Therefore, six research questions have been put forward:

1. Do parents' level of education contribute to their children's academic success?
2. Do parents attend meetings at school?
3. Do parents assist their children when doing homework?
4. Is a parent's involvement important in children's education?
5. Do parents and teachers communicate on pupils' academic performance?
6. What are the challenges that contribute to pupils' poor performance at school?

5. RELATED LITERATURE REVIEW

Parenting is a vital component of students' success (Masabo et al, 2017). According to (Harris, 2014), Parent involvement can broadly be defined as the ways in which parents support their children's education in word and deed. Parents can be involved in the school setting or at home; their aspirations and expectations for their children also matter very much. Parents get involved primarily because they develop a personal construction of the

parental role that includes participation in their children's education. As a result, they develop a positive sense of responsibility by helping their children for success in school.

The roles that can be played by parents in the learning process of their children are potentially enormous. However, parents may not always be aware of, or be able to fulfil this potential. A study by Uwezo (2013), in Tanzania, found that only one (1) out of four (4) parents' help their children with homework, and only one (1) out of four (4) had discussed their children's education at a school committee meeting. Four (4) out of ten (10) had spoken with their children's teachers at least once in the past year, indicating that the majority of parents are not involved in their children's learning process in secondary schools.

It is widely recognized that students' academic performance can be improved when they have the full support of their parents and teachers too. It is anticipated that parents will play a big role not only in promoting children's academic achievement but also in improving school effectiveness (Msengi, 2017). Studies repeatedly demonstrate that active parental involvement in children's education leads to improved attendance, higher motivation, enhanced grades, and increased educational aspirations (Cosmas, 2018; Mpiluka, 2014). Furthermore, findings in Mauka's (2015) study on the 'influence of parents' engagement in school activities on children's academic success and attendance in public primary schools in Dar es Salaam revealed a substantial correlation between parental engagement in school activities and pupils' performance.

Parental participation in school activities involves supporting children's academic performance. Family learning affects children's academic performance, and the effects of parents' level of education rub off on their children academic performance (Gestwicki, 1996; Li & Hamlin, 2019). Gestwicki (1996) noted some of the ways by which parents can become involved in their children's learning at home, for example, by helping the child with homework, communicating with the child about school, and spending "quality" time with their children. According to Velez & Jones (1997), parent-child interaction lays a firm foundation for academic performance, and the stronger the relationship especially as they relate to educational issues, the higher the academic performance. When schools and families work together to support learning, children tend to succeed not only in school, but throughout life.

Li & Hamlin (2019) considered whether day by day parental help with homework was supportive in children's educational success. Their study utilized cross-sectional study design with surveys including 73 instructors, 4 teachers and 4 principals. Their findings revealed that previous low levels of achievement, financial impediment, and minority status were related to an elevated propensity to give homework to pupils or offer assistance in homework. Children whose parents or guardians provided help or supervision for homework recorded a better performance at school.

Literature also indicates that parents have a role to play in their children's academic success. For example, by demonstrating a strong positive association between

parental participation and children's academic performance, Ates (2021) showed that parents' engagement, support, and communication are important for academic accomplishment. In the same vein, Bicer and Capraro (2013) conducted detailed research on the effects of parental engagement on pupils' aptitude for mathematics. Their findings indicate that parental engagement in school events, including help with homework and parental expectations significantly increased children's arithmetic test results. Similarly, parental supervision, parental participation at home, and parental goals for their children's education all had a beneficial impact on their academic success, including grades and performance on standardized tests (Suizzo and Stapleton, 2007).

The importance of parents in their children's education is also evident in Epstein's (1991) conceptual framework, which has been used extensively by other scholars. This framework categorizes parental involvement in children's education into six: parenting, communication, volunteering, teaching at home, decision-making, and collaboration with the community. Porumbu and Necşoi (2013) reinforced Epstein's idea when they noted that an authoritative parenting style, parents' high and explicit expectations and aspirations for their children's academic performance, communication between parents and children about school activities and forthcoming plans, and parents' communication with teachers about their children's progress or challenges, were factors that contributed to pupils' academic performance.

6. THE BENEFITS OF PARENTS' INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION

Parental involvement in the education of students begins at home with the parents providing a safe and healthy environment, appropriate learning experiences, support, and a positive attitude about school. Several studies indicate increased academic achievement by students from homes in which parents were involved in their academic activities (Epstein, 2009). Research has also shown that successful students' have strong academic support from their parents (Sheldon, 2009). Parental involvement helps to extend teaching outside the classroom, creates a more positive experience for children and leads to improved performance by children in school. It is essential for parents to support learning in preschool settings and the home as well. Sanders and Sheldon (2009) maintain that schools become successful when a strong and positive relationship among students, parents, teachers and the community is established. All students are more likely to experience academic success if their home environment is supportive (Sanders & Sheldon, 2009). Additionally, activities to encourage learning at home provide parents with information on what children are doing in the classroom and how to help them with homework.

Educators and parents play major roles in the success of students. Students need a positive learning experience to succeed: providing support, motivation, and quality instruction. With increasing demands on families, parental support in the education of

students extends beyond the school building. Many families are faced with overwhelming and unpredictable schedules and circumstances while juggling school, sports, family time, work schedules, and other responsibilities, allowing minimal time to provide support in any one given area (Swap, 1993). It should be noted that parental involvement provides an important opportunity not only for children but also for schools in general.

7. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study applied the Social Cognitive Theory by Albert Bandura (1977). This theory was founded most prominently by Albert Bandura, who is also known for his work on observational learning, self-efficacy, and reciprocal determinism. Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory proposes that human behaviour is the product of the interaction between personal factors, environmental influences, and behavioural patterns. It posits that learning occurs in a social context with dynamic and reciprocal interaction of the person, environment, and behaviour. The unique feature of Bandura's social cognitive theory is the emphasis it lays on social influence and on external and internal social reinforcement. Epstein (2001, 2009) stated that there are many reasons for developing and establishing a partnership between school, family and community. The main reason for such a partnership is to aid students in succeeding at school.

The theory is an extension of social learning that includes the effects of cognitive processes such as conceptions, judgement, and motivation. Bandura's perspective has been applied to a wide range of topics in education, the health sciences, social policy and psychotherapy, personality development, and functioning and organizational programmes. Bandura suggests that learning occurs through observation, imitation and modelling. The theory emphasizes that individuals primarily learn by observing others and the reciprocal interactions between individuals, their environment and personal factors. In the context of parental involvement, it suggests that parental involvement in a child's education might improve not only academic performance but also the child's social and emotional well-being and sense of self-worth.

In other words, children learn from observing and modelling their parents' behaviour. Parents who actively engage in educational activities, demonstrate positive attitudes towards learning, and provide academic support, serve as the role models who shape their children's beliefs, self-efficacy, and motivation towards academic success. The social learning theory relates to the view that parents have roles to play in their children's academic success through different activities done at home, as well as at school. Additionally, a positive parent-teacher relationship plays a great role in shaping and nurturing pupils. It has been demonstrated to be an effective tool for understanding the behaviour, interactions, and attitudes of children.

8. METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted in selected public primary schools in Dar es Salaam. The study applied the qualitative approach. Kothari (2004) maintains that the qualitative approach puts emphasis on qualities, processes and meaning that cannot be experimentally examined. Descriptive research design was employed because it accurately and systematically describes a situation or phenomenon. The study targeted a sample of 102 individuals, where 90 were parents and 12 were teachers. They were selected through random and purposive sampling techniques. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and documentary review and coded based on themes and presented according to research questions.

Thematic analysis was used in data analysis because it looks across all data to identify the common issue that recur, and identify the main themes that summarize all collected views from the study (Brick and Green, 2007). This analysis enabled the researchers to put together meanings from statements of the informants within their particular perspective as presented by Joffe and Yardley (2004). One advantage of thematic analysis is that it provides more valuable outcomes when analyzing interviews. This is because it is a flexible tool (Mohamed and Rajab, 2026). Cohen et al (2000) assert that the criteria for deciding which form of data analysis to undertake is governed by both fitness for purpose and legitimacy.

9. VALIDITY

Validity is a key criterion in evaluating the quality of a research. According to Osaki (2000), validity refers to how well a research work measures what it intends to measure, and how accurately, it reflects the reality of the phenomenon it is studying. To ensure validity, the researcher designed interview guides in line with the objective of the study. Pre-test was done at a nearby school which enabled the researcher to eliminate ambiguities and questions that were not clear to the informants. For instance, Kombo and Trompo (2006) maintain that after designing data collection instruments, it is very important to test them on a small sample of the population in order to address clarity of words, researcher's biases and participants' responses to ascertain if the instruments can provide relevant information.

10. RELIABILITY

Reliability refers to whether a research method can reproduce the same result. It is important because it measures the quality of the research. It has to do with the extent to which the measurement of a phenomenon provides stable and consistent results (Brick and Green, 2007). In this study, reliability was ensured by comparing the data obtained with those obtained during the pilot study. It was found out that results from the two, answered the research questions as expected. However, both validity and reliability are essential for producing high-quality research that can be trusted and used by others.

11. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In this study, ethical issues were put into consideration. All participants were asked for consent after being informed of the objective of the study and methods involved in collecting data. Participants' anonymity and confidentiality have been upheld, and all data securely stored as well. The researchers abided by the ethical values and laws established by the necessary organizations and authorities. In addition, the researchers secured a research permit from the Directorate of Postgraduate Studies and Research at Kampala International University in Tanzania. For ethical consideration, names of the respondents and the selected schools were not mentioned in this study.

12. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study examined parents' involvement in children's academic success in selected public primary schools in Dar es Salaam. Data was collected through in-depth interviews and documentary review. Findings are presented according to the research questions as follows:

12.1 Does the level of education of parents contribute to their children's academic success?

The study investigated whether parents' level of education contributed to pupils' academic success at the selected schools. Data from the study showed that five parents had primary education, sixty-two had secondary education, twenty-three had college or university education, and nine had primary education. The results indicate that majority of the parents had secondary education followed by those who had college or university education. This implies that the parents are educated to different levels but some did not assist their children at home. It was expected that since most of the parents had secondary school education, their education could contribute to their children's academic success at school. It was strange to find out that pupils performed poorly despite the fact that their parents were educated. Results are similar to those of Davis-Kean (2006) which are that the majority of the parents with secondary education did not provide enough assistance to their children's academic activities.

The study also investigated the extent to which parents were involved in their children's educational activities at home. The result showed that sixty-eight parents were sometimes involved, sixteen were never involved, while sixteen were frequently involved. This finding indicates that sixty-eight parents were only involved to some extent in their children's educational activities. Since parents were only partially involved in the children's activities, and in consequence, the pupils were not expected to have a good performance. The presence of sixteen parents out of ninety who were frequently involved might not be enough to show an impact in pupils' academic success at school. This finding is in contrast to that of Li and Hamlin (2019) which showed that most of the parents were

involved in their children's academic activities, and that the pupils performed well. This is evidence that parents' involvement in children education fosters a better academic performance.

In another development, the study investigated whether parents' visits to schools contributed to pupils' academic success at the selected schools. The results indicated that seventy-nine parents visited between 1-2 times, ten parents visited 3-4 times, one parent never visited. This implies that most of the parents visited their children's school 1-2 times per year to keep track of their development and communicate with teachers on academic matters as well as the challenges facing them. In Tanzania, parents' visit to school is mandatory although not all parents comply as required as some parents send their relatives or older children to represent them. Having a high number of parents in the study who visited school 1-2 times per year did not show much impact on pupils' academic success in English and Mathematics subjects. This finding contradicts that of Mauka (2015) where parents visited their children's schools by participating in different school activities such as school meetings, construction activities, concerts like school marathons and graduation ceremonies. This enabled parents to monitor their children's progress and to enhance their performance at school.

12.2 Do parents attend meetings at school?

In this question, parents were asked if they attended school meetings as stipulated in the Education and Training Policy. Data indicates that seventy-seven (77) parents attended school meetings 1-2 times per year, nine (9) attended one time, and four (4) never attended at all. This finding indicates that most of the parents attended meetings 1-2 times per year at the school to discuss children's educational progress and discipline. It is evident that parents' meetings with teachers at the school has a role to play in pupils' success. On account of the fact that parents' participation at school gatherings provides opportunities for valuable interaction between teachers and parents on issues linked to the academic well-being of children (Timkey, 2015), there is a need for schools to organize regular meetings and strategies that will foster parent-teacher relationship.

Furthermore, this study investigated whether parents listened to their children when reading at home. Findings revealed that fifty-three (53) parents never listened their children when reading, thirty-three (33) listened sometimes, and four (4) frequently listened. From the findings one can note that more than fifty percent of the parents did not listen to their children when reading at home. Only a few of them listened and assisted their children when reading. This might be one of the reasons the pupils performed poorly at school.

12.3 Do parents assist their children with homework?

The question sought to find out if parents played a role in assisting children with their homework. Data from the study showed that seventy-one (71) parents assisted their children, while twenty-eight (28) only assisted occasionally. Due to the high number of

parents that assisted their children at home, there was a high expectation of improvement in their performance but this was not the case, as shown in the statement of the problem. These findings contradict Suizzo and Stapleton (2007) where parental engagement in school events and support including help with homework and parental expectations significantly increased children's arithmetic test results. They added that parental supervision, parental participation at home and parental goals for their children's education all had a beneficial impact on their academic success, including grades and performance on standardized tests.

12.4 Is parent's involvement important in children's education?

The study went further to investigate whether parents' involvement was important in children's education. Data was collected through interview guide. Here is what some of them said:

Parent 1: Yes, it is important because I have to know what my child is studying at the school.

Parent 2: It is important because I am the one who is responsible for all education matters of my children.

Parent 3: As a parent, I have to know what is happening at the school.

Parent 4: To me it is important because when I attend school meetings, I know the progress of my child through the class teacher.

Parent 5: My involvement gives me a picture of how my child is progressing at school.

Parent 6: Because education is the key to success, I make sure that my child attends school regularly.

Parent 7: I am responsible for buying all educational materials needed by my children.

Parent 8: Yes, I know my involvement enhances the good academic results of my child.

Parent 9: I monitor my child's homework to enhance good academic results.

Parent 10: My involvement encourages my son to study hard.

Parent 11: Yes, it is important because my children depend on me for all educational materials.

From the responses, it is crucial for parents to be involved in their children's education because they have a role to play. These findings concur with those of Kayombo (2017) that parents being involved in children's education is important because it enhances their work at school by providing inspiration, planning for proper study time

and space, displaying desired behaviour such as reading for pleasure and enhancing good academic results, and active tutoring that led to good academic results.

Based on the study findings, the social learning theory suits the study which emphasizes children learning through interactions between individuals, their environment, and personal factors. From the theory, it can be said that parental involvement in education has a role to play in improving academic performance of children. However, the findings from this study contradict that of Uwezo (2013) that majority of parents were not involved in their children's learning process in secondary schools.

12.5 Do parents and teachers communicate on pupils' performance?

The researchers also investigated whether teachers and parents communicate on pupils' performance at the selected schools. Data was collected through interviews. Ninety three percent of the parents admitted that they communicate with teachers on pupils' performance. Here is what some of them said:

Parent 1: Yes, I communicate with teachers at the school on my child's performance particularly the class teacher. She gives me details of my child's performance. This two-way communication has contributed to my child's improvement. I appreciate it.

Parent 2: I communicate with teachers during parental school meetings. That is where I get the report of how my child is performing. I am glad that she is proceeding well.

Parent 3: Sometimes I miss parents' meetings but I do communicate with teachers through phone to inquire on my child's performance.

Parent 4: I regularly communicate with teachers to check how my child is proceeding.

In addition, teachers made the following comments:

Teacher 1: I communicate with parents when the needs arise.

Teacher 2: It is good that we have a good relationship with parents concerning pupils' academic performance.

Teacher 3: We share some of the strategies planned by the school with parents in order to improve our pupils' academic performance.

Teacher 4: Some parents do not care even if information is communicated to them.

It is evident that there is communication between parents and teachers on pupils' academic performance even if they do not perform as expected. This finding is similar to that made by Castro et al., (2015) who also observed that there were communications between parents and teachers on pupil's academic matters. However, results differ in the sense that parents volunteer on different activities and services which the school requires to ensure good performance. They added that parents can stand as good advisors on what should be done to promote academic performance, and this occurs when they are provided the chance to participate in making decisions.

12.6 What are the challenges contributing to the poor performance of pupils at school?

Question number four examined challenges that contributed to pupils' poor performance at school. Data was collected from parents and teachers through interview guide. The following are responses from teachers:

Teacher 1: Some of the parents do not assist their children when given homework.

Teacher 2: Parents do no guide children properly and that leads to indiscipline.

Teacher 3: Some of the parents are educated but they do not have time to help children at home.

Teacher 4: Poor parents are unable to buy educational materials for their children.

Teacher 5: Our classes are overcrowded and that affects our quality of teaching as well as performance.

Teacher 6: Our teaching and learning environment is not conducive.

Teacher 7: We do not have enough textbooks.

Teacher 8: Student's truancy contributes to their failure.

Teacher 9: Student's poor attendance is one of our challenges.

Teacher 10: We teachers are occupied with other responsibilities here at the school.

Teacher 11: Frequent interruptions is also a challenge to teaching effectively.

Teacher 12: Poor physical classroom environments demotivate pupils from learning.

The information collected from parents were as follows:

Parent 1: Teachers do not cooperate with parents. It gives us difficult time to tress our children's progress.

Parent 2: I do not have time to help my child with homework.

Parent 3: I assign my house girl to help my child in doing homework because she is able to help my child.

Parent 4: I am not able to give my child money every day to buy something to eat during lunch time. So, I am not expecting much from him in terms of performance.

Parent 5: I am educated but the problem is the business I do. It takes most of my time.

Parent 6: Busy with daily activities to earn bread for the family.

These findings indicate there are many factors that affect pupils' performance at school including parental level of education, poor teaching and learning environment, pupils not being guided on how to do their homework, poverty, frequent interruptions, overcrowded classrooms and shortage of teaching and learning materials. These findings align with those of Mpiluka (2014) that low parental education and poor family living standards lead to poor performance of pupils in school. In fact, one cannot expect pupils to do wonders while faced with such challenges.

13. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

13.1 Conclusion

The study concludes that parents have a role to play in their children's academic success, and this requires careful planning and communication. For instance, the study found that although the majority of parents were educated, they did not have the time to help their children to do their homework because they were engaged in other activities, including earning a livelihood for their families. Additionally, some of the parents did not show interest in their children's learning activities by listening to their reading. Poor teaching and learning environment, poverty, frequent interruptions, and overcrowded classrooms, shortage of teaching and learning materials were among the challenges that contributed to pupils' poor performance in English and Mathematics subjects at the school. Therefore, the involvement of parents should be viewed as important and a continuous process.

13.2 Recommendations

The study recommends that parents should spare more time to help their children in their education by guiding and assisting them in their homework, and meeting other requirements. Parents should attend school meetings to avail themselves of the opportunities for feedback from teachers, and collaboration to improve the academic performance and wellbeing of pupils. In addition, parent-teacher cooperation and other strategies can provide a mutual ground for solving the challenges pupils face in school. Moreover, communication and interaction between parents and teachers should be encouraged for the benefit of not only the pupils but the school as well in terms of performance. Lastly, to ensure effective parental involvement, schools may introduce varieties of activities that require the presence or involvement of parents in the school.

REFERENCES

- Ates, A. (2021). The relationship between parental involvement in education and academic achievement: A meta-analysis study. *Journal of Education and Instruction*, 11(3), 50-66.
- Bandura A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioural change. *American Psychological Association*, 1(4), 191–215.
- Bicer, A., Capraro, M. M., & Capraro, R. (2013). The effects of parent's SES and education level on students' mathematics achievement: Examining the mediation effects of parental expectations and parental communication. *The Online Journal of New Horizons in Education*, 3(4), 89-97.
- Brick, N., & Green, J. (2007). A guide to using qualitative research methodology. <http://hdl.handle.net/10144/84230>.
- Castro, M., Expósito-Casas, E., López-Martín, E., Lizasoain, L., Navarro-Asencio, E., & Gaviria, J. L. (2015). Parental involvement on student academic achievement: A meta-analysis. *Educational Research Review*, 14, 33-46.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2000). *Research methods in education*. (5th Ed.). New York: Routledge Falmer.
- Cosmas, J. (2018). Parents and Community Engagement in Literacy Skills Learning. *Papers in Education and Development*, (35), 17-32
- Dahie, A. M., A. A. Mohamed, and R. A. Mohamed. 2018. "The Role of Parental Involvement in Student Academic Achievement: Empirical Study from Secondary Schools in Mogadishu-Somalia." *International Research Journal of Human Resources and Social Sciences* 5 (7): 1–24.
- Davis-Kean, P. E. (2006). The Influence of Parent Education and Family Income on Child Achievement: The Indirect Role of Parental Expectations and the Home Environment. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 19(2), 294–304.
- Dis (2023). The role of parents in supporting their child education: Nurturing life long learning. <https://www.dynamics.edu.sg/resources/role-of-parents-in-supporting-childs-education.html#>
- Epstein, J. (1991). Effects of student achievement of teachers' practice of parent involvement. In S.B. Silvern (Ed), *Advanced in reading/language research: A research manual*, Vol. 5. Literacy through family, community, and school interaction (pp. 261-276).

- Epstein, J. (2001). *School, family, and community and community partnership: preparing educators and improving schools*. Boulder, CO: Westview.
- Epstein, J. (2002). Epstein's framework of six types of involvement. Baltimore, MD: Centre for the Social Organization of Schools, 3505 North Charles Street Baltimore, MD 21218-3843.
- Epstein, J.L. (2009). *In school, family, and community partnerships: Your handbook for action* (3rd Ed.). USA: Corwin Press.
- Epstein, J. L. 2018. *School, family, and community partnerships: Preparing educators and improving schools*. New York, Taylor & Francis.
- Gestwicki, C. (1996). Relationship between parents' involvement and student's success at secondary school level. <https://researchgate.net>.
- Goodall, J., and C. Montgomery. 2014. Parental involvement to parental engagement: A continuum. *Educational Review*, 66 (4): 399–410.
- Harb, N. & El-Shaarawi, A. (2006). Factors affecting students' performance. <http://www.researchgate.net>.
- Haris, A & Goodall, J. (2008). *Do parents know they matter? Engaging all parents in learning*. London centre for leadership in learning institute of education. UK. Educational Research: Routledge 3, 277-289, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131880802309424>
- Holloway, D. (2013). *Zero to eight: Young children and their internet use*. <https://eprints.lse.ac.uk>
- Joffe, H. & Yardley, L. (2004). *Content and thematic analysis: Research methods for clinical and health psychology*. California: Sage Publications.
- Kabir, S. M. S. (2016). Basic guidelines for research. An Introductory Approach for all Disciplines, 4(2), 168-180.
- Kayombo, C. (2017). The role of parents' involvement towards student's academic performance among public primary schools in Tanzania: A Case of Selected Primary Schools in Ilala Municipality (Doctoral dissertation, The Open University of Tanzania).
- Kassim, A. (2011). Parents' education, occupation and real mother's age as predictors of students' achievement in Mathematics in some selected Secondary Schools in Ogun state, Nigeria. *International Journal of African Studies*, 4, 50-60, <https://scholars.fhsu.edu/alj/vol9/iss1/38>

- Kombo, K. D. & Trompo, L. A. D. (2006). *Proposal and thesis writing: An introduction*. Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa.
- Kimaryo, L. A. (2011). Integrating environmental education in primary school education in Tanzania: Teachers' perceptions and teaching practices. Åbo Akademi University Press.
- Kothari, C. R. (2004). *Research methodology. Methods and techniques*. 2nd revised Edition. New Delhi: New Age International Publishers.
- Li, A., & Hamlin, D. (2019). Is daily parental help with homework helpful? Reanalyzing national data using a propensity score-based approach. *Sociology of Education*, 92(4), 367-385.
- Long, C. (2007). Parents in the picture: Building relationships that last beyond back to school night. *NEA Today*, 3(26), 26-31.
- Masabo, L. P., Muchopa, E. D. & B. G. Kuoth, B. G. (2017). Parental Involvement in School Activities in Kibondo District, Tanzania: Challenges and Remedies. *International Journal of Education and Research*, Vol. 5 No. 10, pp. 89-96.
- Mauka, A. M. (2015). Parental involvement and its effects on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Korogwe, Tanzania. Doctoral dissertation, The Open University of Tanzania.
- Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (2023). Curriculum for primary education standard 1-VI. Tanzania Institute of Education, Dar es Salaam.
- Mohamed, M. & Rajab, M. (2016). *Qualitative analysis methods*. College of Business Technological: University of Dublin.
- Mosha, M. A. (2014). Factors affecting students' performance in English language in Zanzibar rural and urban secondary schools. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 5(35), 64-76.
- Mpiluka, A. A. (2014). Assessing parental involvement and its effect on pupils' academic performance in Primary Schools in Matamba Ward, Makete District. Doctoral Dissertation, The Open University of Tanzania.
- Msengi, P. F. (2017). Effects of parents' participation in children's academic performance: A case of community secondary schools in Arusha District Council. Unpublished Master Dissertation, The Open University of Tanzania, Dar es Salaam.
- Ngwaru, J. M. (2014). Promoting children's sustainable access to early schooling in Africa: Reflections on the roles of parents in their children's early childhood care and education. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, 2014(146), 61-76.

- Osaki, K. M. (2000). Quality of education in Tanzania: A focus on curriculum, standards and accountability in schools. In Headmasters Conference on Education held at Arusha (pp. 11-12).
- Necşoi, D. V. & Porumbu, D., (2013). Relationship between parental involvement/attitude and children's school achievements. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 76, 706-710.
- Sheldon, S. B. (2009). *School, family, and community partnerships: Your handbook for action*, (3rd Ed.). New York: Corwin Press.
- Suizzo, M. A., & Stapleton, L. M. (2007). Home-based parental involvement in young children's education: Examining the effects of maternal education across US ethnic groups. *Educational Psychology*, 27(4), 533-556.
- Timkey, S. (2015). The influence of parent attitudes and involvement on children's literacy achievement. Master's Thesis, State University of New York.
- United Republic of Tanzania (2001). *The education and training sector development programme document*. Ministry of Education: Dar es Salaam.
- Uwezo. (2013). Are our children learning? Annual learning assessment Report 2012. Retrieved September 10, 2024, from <http://www.twaweza.org/go/uwezo-tanzania-2012ala>.
- Vavrus, F., & Moshi, G. (2009). The cost of a "Free" primary education in Tanzania. *International Critical Childhood Policy Studies Journal*, 2(1), 31-42.
- Valez, W. & Jones, T. G. (1997). Effects of Latino parent involvement on academic achievement. <https://files.eric.ed.gov>.
- Walker, J. M., Wilkins, A. S., Dallaire, J. R., Sandler, H. M., & Hoover-Dempsey, K. V. (2005). Parental involvement: Model revision through scale development. *The Elementary School Journal*, 106(2), 85-104.