



Influence of Parental Level of Involvement in School Activities on Learners' Performance in Kenya Primary School Education Assessment in Kajiado North Sub-County

By

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Abstract

This study examined the influence of parental level of involvement in school activities on learners' performance in the Kenya Primary School Education Assessment (KEPSEA) in public primary schools in Kajiado North Sub-County. Guided by Epstein's Theory of Parental Participation, the study sought to establish how parental involvement in school activities relates to learners' academic outcomes. A mixed-methods research approach using a convergent parallel design was employed, integrating cross-sectional and phenomenological designs for quantitative and qualitative strands respectively. The target population comprised 2,994 Grade Six learners, 15 head teachers, 350 teachers, 800 parents, and one Sub-County Director of Education (SCDE). A sample of 299 learners, 70 teachers, 6 head teachers, 40 parents, and 1 SCDE was selected using stratified random, simple random, systematic random, and purposive sampling techniques. Data collection instruments included questionnaires, interview guides, focus group discussions, observation checklists, and document analysis guides. Reliability was ensured through Cronbach's alpha for quantitative tools, while validity for qualitative tools was enhanced through member checking, triangulation, and peer review. Findings revealed that parental participation in school activities positively influenced learners' performance in KEPSEA. Specifically, 57.1% of parents who actively engaged in school functions contributed to improved learner motivation (51.4%) and enhanced performance outcomes (57.2%). However, gaps persisted in parental contact with teachers (50%) and involvement in school decision-making (44.3%), which limited the effectiveness of participation. The study concludes that active parental involvement in school activities significantly boosts learner performance, but limited engagement in teacher communication and decision-making hinders holistic academic support. The study recommends strengthening structured programs to enhance parental participation in school activities, particularly in decision-making processes and teacher-parent engagement forums. Inclusive strategies targeting less-involved parents should be prioritized to improve learners' academic outcomes in KEPSEA.

Key Words: Parental involvement, school activities, learners' performance, KEPSEA, primary education.

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INTRODUCTION

Parental involvement is widely recognized as a critical factor influencing children's academic success. From early childhood to the later years of schooling, parents shape the foundations of cognitive, social, and emotional development that affect educational outcomes. Choge and Edabu (2023) argue that parental participation in school-related activities such as assisting with homework, attending mentorship programs, and fostering effective teacher-parent communication enhances a child's overall academic trajectory. Parents who regularly attend teacher-parent conferences are generally more aware of their child's educational needs, which positions them to provide better support. Such engagement not only improves learners' academic performance but also builds confidence, social skills, and positive behavior (Liu et al., 2024; Khamidi et al., 2024).

Research in developed countries consistently demonstrates that parental involvement plays a central role in determining academic success. For instance, Wesarg-Menzel et al. (2023) emphasize that parents are the first agents of socialization, transmitting values, attitudes, and skills that form the foundation for formal learning. Similarly, Jensen et al. (2024) highlight that nurturing parental practices provide emotional support, which directly correlates with improved school performance. Bozzato (2024) notes that academic performance, often measured by external evaluations, is significantly enhanced when parents set academic expectations and actively participate in their children's education. However, evidence from the United States also shows that excessive parental pressure may lead to stress and burnout among learners, undermining their performance (Özyıldırım, 2024). Comparable findings in Australia suggest that parents' educational attainment strongly influences involvement levels, where higher-educated parents are more likely to support learning at home, while those with lower education face challenges in navigating curriculum requirements (Islam, 2021).

In Europe and North America, researchers have also linked parenting styles to academic performance. For example, Pečjak et al. (2023) found that authoritative parenting in Canada fosters self-regulated learning habits such as time management and study discipline, thereby improving academic outcomes. Similarly, Jeynes (2024) in the UK underscores the disparities faced by disadvantaged learners, stressing that insufficient parental involvement often results from limited educational background and socioeconomic constraints. These findings point to the importance of strengthening parental education and providing structured support programs, such as adult education or parenting workshops, to bridge gaps in learner achievement.

Across African contexts, the relationship between parental involvement and academic performance remains significant but is often influenced by structural challenges. In Nigeria, Echaune, Ndiku, and Sang (2023) observed that active parental participation, particularly in homework supervision and emotional support, improved children's summative academic outcomes. However, time and financial constraints hindered consistent engagement. Similarly, in South Africa, Sincuba and Buka (2024) established that higher parental education levels correlate with more school engagement, though socioeconomic inequalities and cultural barriers continue to limit effective participation. In Uganda, Asad (2023) highlighted that authoritative parental practices enhanced learners' study habits and academic performance, whereas permissive or authoritarian approaches undermined effective learning. Findings from Tanzania by Chahe and Mwaikokesya (2017) further reveal that socioeconomic status directly affects literacy development, with higher-income families better able to provide supportive home learning environments than lower-income households.

Within the Kenyan context, the Kenya Primary School Education Assessment (KPSEA) introduced in 2023 by the Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC) provides insights into the learning outcomes of Grade Six pupils. The framework evaluates learners' competencies, knowledge, and values, while offering feedback on areas requiring pedagogical improvement. According to KNEC (2023), parental involvement is a cornerstone of successful learning outcomes, with national policies emphasizing the need for parents to provide supportive home environments, monitor learner progress, and supply essential educational resources. Studies conducted in Kenya confirm this link. Kaptich, Kiplangat, and Munyua (2019) found a significant and positive correlation between parental involvement in school activities and pupils' academic

performance in public primary schools. However, challenges such as socioeconomic constraints, limited educational attainment of parents, and inadequate time due to work obligations often restrict meaningful participation.

In Kajiado North Sub-County, Njambi, Koros, and Piliyesi (2024) revealed that parental educational attainment plays a decisive role in learners' school enrollment and subsequent performance. Parents with higher education levels were more inclined to prioritize formal education and ensure consistent attendance of their children, while those with lower education often undervalued its long-term benefits, resulting in lower enrollment rates. Given these realities, effective parental involvement remains essential for improving performance in KPSEA. Evidence consistently shows that when parents attend meetings, supervise homework, and engage in communication with teachers, pupils record higher academic outcomes (Choge & Edabu, 2023; Liu et al., 2024; Smith et al., 2024). Nonetheless, barriers such as poverty, work demands, and low literacy levels necessitate interventions such as flexible school programs, community sensitization, and parental training initiatives. Strengthening these linkages between schools and families will enhance the quality of learning and performance in Kajiado North Sub-County and beyond.

Parents in developed countries oversee homework, provide mentorship programs, and actively participate in school events, all of which have a substantial positive impact on academic performance (Özyıldırım, 2024; Smith et al., 2024). Strong home-school relationships are fostered by this ongoing participation, which raises student achievement. However, the unequal parental involvement in Kajiado North Sub-County has drawn increasing criticism from educators, school administrators, and KNEC, among other education stakeholders. Due to financial limitations, illiteracy, or hectic job schedules, a sizable minority of parents continue to be disengaged, even though some attend school meetings and offer academic help. For example, according to recent school data, parents only attend 45–50% of important school meetings on average, which means that almost half of students do not receive regular parental follow-up. Additionally, according to KNEC (2023), schools with high parental involvement had KPSEA mean scores that were up to 15% higher than those with low involvement.

Since its implementation in 2021, there is little evidence that parental participation directly affects KPSEA performance; nevertheless, early KNEC studies indicate that involved parents help to enhance outcomes and facilitate competency building. Kajiado North's local education officials

caution that the performance difference between supported and unsupported learners would increase in the absence of more parental involvement. Disparities are already apparent: students from families who actively monitor their children's progress are more likely to achieve scores above 250, whereas students without parental support tend to fall short of this average. Students will struggle to adjust to junior school if these disparities continue, which could result in lower career opportunities and increased dropout rates, which are now estimated to be 12% in some public schools. Therefore, this study examined the influence of parental involvement on learners' activities in in KPSEA in public primary schools in Kajiado North sub-county, Kajiado county.

Using a meta-analysis approach, this study by Ates (2021) investigated the relationship between students' academic success and parental level of participation in Turkey. Based on criteria including correlation or regression data and the participation of primary, secondary, or high school students, 53 studies in all were chosen from databases such as Proquest, Web of Science, and ERIC. The study used Comprehensive Meta-Analysis V3 (CMA) software to calculate the average impact size and transformed correlation data into Fisher z values. The findings indicated that academic achievement is positively impacted by parental level of involvement, with no discernible variations among course areas, school levels, or geographic locations. Suggestions for improving parental participation and ideas for more research in this field are included in the study's conclusion.

Omar (2024) used a desk study methodology, which draws on data already available from published research and reports, to examine the impact of parental participation on the academic attainment of elementary school students in Australia. According to the study, students' academic performance is much improved by active parental involvement, which includes helping with homework, going to school functions, and keeping in touch with teachers on a regular basis. Children whose parents are actively involved likely to be more motivated, attend class more often, and achieve better marks. Furthermore, among elementary school pupils, parental participation was associated with improved social skills and cognitive development. These advantages were seen in a variety of socioeconomic contexts, highlighting the universal value of parental guidance in early childhood education. Regardless of their social or economic status, parents must actively participate in their children's education, as the study emphasizes that regular parental involvement promotes academic achievement and overall child development.

A study by Assefa and Sintayehu (2019) looked at the relationship between students' academic success and parental involvement at Haramaya University's Model Primary and Secondary School in Oromia, Ethiopia. Data was gathered using surveys, interviews, and document analysis using a correlational research methodology. 52 parents and 60 students were sampled for the study based on academic performance; 50% of the students were high achievers, and the remaining students received scores below 50% in grades 8, 10, and 12. Academic performance was evaluated using recorded scores from the previous three years, and parental engagement was examined using a 10-item questionnaire and eight interview guide questions. The results indicated a statistically significant positive correlation ($r = 0.64$, $p < 0.01$) between students' academic progress and parental participation. Parents were more supportive of high-achieving pupils than they were of low performers. The study concluded that parental participation was moderate and suggested more extensive research in other areas in the future to obtain a more thorough grasp of the problem.

A study by Kaptich, Kiplangat, and Munyua (2019) in Ainabkoi sub-county looked into the relationship between pupils' academic achievement in public primary schools and their parents' level of participation in their education. Targeting 2,404 Class 8 pupils and 61 instructors, the study used an ex-post facto research approach and was informed by Epstein's model of parental participation. Stratified random sampling was used to choose a sample of 331 students, and a census method was used to include all 61 teachers. Descriptive and inferential statistics, together with chi-square tests for hypothesis testing, were used to evaluate the data that was gathered through questionnaires and interviews. The results showed that students' academic achievement and parental involvement in school activities were significantly positively correlated ($X^2 = 22.619$; $p = 0.001$). Thematic analysis was used to examine the qualitative data. In addition to recommending government initiatives to increase awareness among parents and encourage them to actively participate in their children's education for better performance, the study indicated that increased parental involvement improves academic outcomes.

In Kesses Sub-County, Uasin Gishu, Kenya, Choge and Edabu (2023) investigated the impact of parental level of communication on pupils' academic achievement in public primary schools. The study used a descriptive survey research design and was based on Epstein's (2018) six-type learning model. It targeted 850 parents, 425 teachers, and 85 head teachers from 85 public

schools. Purposive sampling was used to select head teachers, while stratified random sampling was applied to choose 137 teachers and parents. Data was collected using questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) and inferential statistics (ANOVA, Pearson's Correlation, and Linear Regression) in SPSS Version 26. The findings indicated that parental communication significantly influences academic performance ($\alpha < 0.05$). The study suggested that in order to improve learning outcomes, education policymakers should strengthen the communication infrastructure in schools and raise parental awareness of the value of actively participating in their children's academic journeys.

The study was guided by this research question: What is the parental level of involvement in school activities and learners' performance in Kenya primary school education assessment? It was grounded on Epstein's (1995) Theory of Parental Involvement which provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how parental participation in education contributes to learners' performance. The theory emphasizes overlapping spheres of influence, home, school, and community, that interact to enhance pupils' achievement when collaboration is strong. Research affirms that active parental involvement improves motivation, discipline, and academic outcomes (Chen, Khan, Kanjanarat, & Puchatree, 2023). Through six dimensions, parenting, communication, volunteering, at-home learning, decision-making, and community collaboration, Epstein highlights diverse avenues for meaningful engagement. For instance, nurturing home environments, structured routines, and active homework supervision have been linked to improved test performance, including in the KPSEA. Additionally, participation in school activities and use of digital platforms for communication help bridge the gap between schools and families, ensuring consistent academic support.

A major strength of Epstein's framework lies in its adaptability across varied educational and cultural contexts. Schools can modify the six categories to fit community needs, thereby promoting inclusivity and deepening family-school partnerships (Ndwandwe, 2023; Liu, 2024). However, the theory faces limitations. It tends to assume that all parents have equal capacity to participate, which overlooks challenges related to socioeconomic constraints and cultural diversity (Chen et al., 2023). Moreover, the emphasis on formal involvement such as volunteering or decision-making may exclude families with time, financial, or resource constraints. In under-resourced schools, the lack of structures to support parental participation further reduces its

applicability. Critics also caution that heightened expectations may overburden parents, especially those already balancing multiple obligations (Ihmeideh et al., 2018; Newman et al., 2019). Therefore, while Epstein's model remains valuable in shaping strategies for parental involvement, enhancing its inclusivity and integrating parental support systems is essential for maximizing its impact on learners' academic outcomes.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a convergent parallel mixed-methods research design to provide a holistic understanding of how parental involvement influences learners' performance in KPSEA. According to Creswell and Creswell (2022), this design allows for the simultaneous collection of both qualitative and quantitative data, which are later analyzed separately and compared. The use of a cross-sectional design in the quantitative component enabled the researcher to gather immediate data on parental involvement patterns and their impact on academic achievement (Allen, 2017). Meanwhile, a phenomenological design supported the qualitative component by exploring the lived experiences of parents, teachers, and school leaders regarding their roles in supporting learners' performance (Alhazmi & Kaufmann, 2022). This combination ensured an in-depth and reliable understanding of the subject.

The target population included learners, parents, teachers, head teachers, and the Sub-County Director of Education, whose insights were essential in understanding school-level strategies that foster parental involvement. Sampling employed both probability and non-probability techniques depending on the target group. For example, stratified random sampling ensured proportional representation of learners and parents by gender, while purposive sampling was used for head teachers and the Sub-County Director of Education because of their specialized knowledge and administrative roles (Creswell, 2021; Mugenda & Mugenda, 2019). Such a structured approach enhanced representativeness and reliability while ensuring that both rural and urban perspectives in Kajiado North Sub-County were captured.

Validity, reliability, and ethical considerations were prioritized to enhance the trustworthiness of the findings. Validity was addressed by subjecting research instruments to expert review and aligning them with established standards in parental involvement research

(Johnson & Christensen, 2020; Kumar, 2022). Reliability was ensured through pilot testing and use of Cronbach's alpha, with triangulation further strengthening qualitative tools (Trochim, 2020). Ethical procedures included securing research permits from NACOSTI and consent from all participants, with confidentiality and anonymity strictly maintained (Creswell, 2021). By combining rigorous methodology with ethical safeguards, the study ensured credible and applicable insights into how parental involvement in school activities influences learners' academic performance in KPSEA.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Examining how parental level of involvement in school activities and learners' performance in the Kenya primary school education assessment was the aim of the first research question. Ten distinct statements on is the parental level of involvement in school activities and learners' performance in the Kenya primary school education assessment, were given to teachers, who were asked to rate their agreement with each one. This was done using a five-point Likert scale, where the choices were Strongly Agree (1), Agree (2), Neutral (3), Disagree (4), and Strongly Disagree (5). Table 1 presents the assessment's summarized findings in an organized manner.

Table 1

Teachers' Responses to Parental Level of Involvement in School Activities (n=70)

Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Std Dev
Parents frequently attend school meetings and academic days.	18 (25.7%)	22 (31.4%)	12 (17.1%)	10 (14.3%)	8 (11.4%)	3.46	1.33
Parents actively participate in school decision-making processes.	15 (21.4%)	16 (22.9%)	14 (20.0%)	11 (15.7%)	14 (20.0%)	3.10	1.44
Parental involvement in school activities enhances performance.	17 (24.3%)	23 (32.9%)	10 (14.3%)	11 (15.7%)	9 (12.9%)	3.40	1.36
Parents regularly communicate with teachers regarding their child's progress.	14 (20.0%)	21 (30.0%)	11 (15.7%)	10 (14.3%)	14 (20.0%)	3.16	1.43
Parents assist learners with homework and revision.	14 (20.0%)	24 (34.3%)	10 (14.3%)	12 (17.1%)	10 (14.3%)	3.29	1.35
Schools provide opportunities for parents to engage in their children's education.	17 (24.3%)	23 (32.9%)	12 (17.1%)	10 (14.3%)	8 (11.4%)	3.44	1.31
Learners perform better when parents monitor their academic progress.	16 (22.9%)	24 (34.3%)	10 (14.3%)	11 (15.7%)	9 (12.9%)	3.39	1.34
Parental involvement positively influences learners' motivation to excel.	14 (20.0%)	22 (31.4%)	14 (20.0%)	13 (18.6%)	7 (10.0%)	3.33	1.27
Teachers encourage parental participation in academic matters.	20 (28.6%)	24 (34.3%)	10 (14.3%)	12 (17.1%)	4 (5.7%)	3.63	1.23
Lack of parental involvement negatively affects learners' academic outcomes.	24 (34.3%)	18 (25.7%)	12 (17.1%)	8 (11.4%)	8 (11.4%)	3.60	1.37

Source: *Field Data (2025)*

Table 1 presents findings on the relationship between parental involvement in school activities and learners' academic performance. Attendance at school meetings emerged as a moderately strong factor, with 22 (31.4%) of respondents agreeing and 18 (25.7%) strongly agreeing, while 9 (12.9%) strongly disagreed. This produced a mean of 3.46 and an SD of 1.33, reflecting moderate agreement with some variability. These results suggest that meetings provide parents with important avenues for engaging with teachers and administrators, thereby enhancing learner outcomes. According to Epstein's framework, school-home partnerships established through meetings create shared accountability. Supporting this view, Ates (2021) in Turkey found a positive correlation between parental participation and student performance, confirming that school meeting attendance creates supportive environments for academic achievement.

Parental involvement in school activities was also viewed as an important determinant of learner outcomes. A total of 23 (32.9%) agreed and 17 (24.3%) strongly agreed that active parental engagement enhances performance, resulting in a mean of 3.40 with an SD of 1.36. Such activities, including school development projects, fundraising, or attendance at functions, were considered essential for building a supportive school environment. These findings align with Epstein's emphasis on school-based participation as a driver of improved academic results. Similarly, Choge and Edabu (2023) established in Uasin Gishu, Kenya, that parental participation in school-based activities significantly influenced student achievement. Thus, the results imply that parents who extend their involvement beyond classroom matters create favorable conditions that strengthen learner motivation and academic progress.

The results on communication between parents and teachers showed a moderate but varied endorsement. Specifically, 21 (30.0%) agreed and 14 (20.0%) strongly agreed that communication improves learner performance, although 14 (20.0%) strongly disagreed. The mean was 3.16 and SD 1.43, suggesting notable variability in responses. These findings highlight the fact that while many parents maintain regular dialogue with teachers, others remain disengaged. Attachment theory explains that communication fosters consistency and reassurance, which help boost learner confidence and outcomes. Omar's (2024) study in Australia similarly confirmed that consistent contact between parents and teachers significantly improved students' academic progress. Therefore, strengthening communication channels between home and school is crucial for identifying challenges early and enhancing support mechanisms for learners.

Helping with homework also emerged as a vital form of parental involvement. The data showed that 24 (34.3%) agreed and 14 (20.0%) strongly agreed, yielding a mean of 3.29 and SD of 1.35. These findings reflect that many parents recognize their role in guiding children academically beyond the classroom. Attachment theory suggests that such consistent involvement fosters motivation and emotional security. Omar (2024) further observed that parental assistance with homework in Australia significantly improved learners' outcomes. This finding also resonates with Epstein's "learning at home" component, where parents reinforce classroom lessons by supporting assignments. Overall, homework assistance extends the school experience into the home, building continuity in learning and enhancing subject mastery while instilling discipline in learners.

Monitoring learners' progress was equally highlighted as a crucial factor in shaping academic performance. The study revealed that 25 (35.7%) agreed and 13 (18.6%) strongly agreed with this item, leading to a mean of 3.34 and SD of 1.35. This indicates that close tracking of learners' academic progress, including reviewing report cards and providing feedback, promotes accountability and discipline. Social cognitive theory supports this finding, showing that learners model positive behaviors when parents demonstrate commitment to education. Kumah et al. (2024) in Ghana similarly observed that parental monitoring through visits and phone calls was positively correlated with academic performance. Therefore, parental tracking of progress reinforces the importance of education, increases learner motivation, and promotes better outcomes in both academics and behavior.

Responses also showed that parental involvement significantly enhances learner motivation, with 22 (31.4%) agreeing and 16 (22.9%) strongly agreeing. This produced a mean of 3.28 and SD of 1.37, indicating overall agreement though not without some variation. These results reflect the psychological impact of engaged parenting, where learners feel valued and motivated to excel when supported by their parents. Social cognitive theory explains this by emphasizing that children internalize the values and behaviors modeled by parents. In line with this, Ates (2021) in Turkey confirmed that parental encouragement was a strong driver of academic motivation. Likewise, Assefa and Sintayehu (2019) in Ethiopia reported a significant positive relationship between parental involvement and learner effort, underscoring the motivating role of parents in academic success.

Teacher encouragement of parental participation was also strongly endorsed, with 24 (34.3%) agreeing and 20 (28.6%) strongly agreeing. This produced a mean of 3.63 and SD of 1.26, the highest rating across items in the table. These findings highlight the central role of schools in promoting effective parent engagement. Epstein's model supports this by emphasizing collaboration between families and schools as a shared responsibility for learner outcomes. Similarly, Choge and Edabu (2023) found in Uasin Gishu that schools that encouraged parental involvement recorded better learner performance. This result suggests that teachers act as key facilitators in mobilizing parents, creating inclusive and supportive school environments that empower learners to succeed both academically and socially.

The study further established that a lack of parental involvement negatively affects learners' academic performance. A total of 24 (34.3%) strongly agreed and 18 (25.7%) agreed, yielding a mean of 3.60 and SD of 1.34. This reflects overall consensus that disengagement undermines student outcomes. Ates (2021) in Turkey and Kaptich et al. (2019) in Ainabkoi, Kenya, both reported similar findings, confirming that learners from uninvolved families consistently underperformed compared to their peers. Attachment theory also explains that lack of involvement weakens emotional support systems, leaving learners less motivated and more vulnerable to poor outcomes. Thus, these results emphasize that disengagement represents a serious challenge that schools and policymakers must address through targeted parental outreach programs.

Taken together, the results from Table 5 confirm that parental involvement, whether through meetings, communication, homework assistance, progress monitoring, or encouragement, significantly enhances learners' academic performance. The mean values, ranging from 3.16 to 3.63, consistently point toward moderate to strong agreement across the different dimensions of involvement. These findings are consistent with international evidence such as Assefa and Sintayehu (2019) in Ethiopia and Kumah et al. (2024) in Ghana, both of whom reported significant correlations between parental engagement and student achievement. By applying Epstein's framework, attachment theory, and social cognitive theory, the results affirm that proactive parental involvement is indispensable in fostering supportive environments, motivating learners, and ensuring academic success across diverse contexts.

Using the checklist, the researcher found that although a substantial number of parents attended school events like parent-teacher conferences and prize-giving days, their involvement was mostly passive. Although they attended events, they hardly ever had significant conversations with administrators or teachers. The majority of exchanges lacked the depth necessary for cooperative educational planning and were superficial. This discovery is consistent with survey results showing a modest level of agreement (44.3%) about parental engagement in decision-making. Furthermore, there were few documented cases of parents organizing school visits or volunteering for extracurricular activities, which supports the idea that involvement is still lacking in terms of integration into regular academic procedures and school governance.

The researcher examined student academic records, attendance registers, and minutes from school board meetings while doing the document analysis. According to these records, parental involvement was irregular and mostly restricted to talking about disciplinary issues or academic achievement. Few parents were mentioned as contributors in school committee reports, and attendance records from academic days revealed a gradual decline in attendance. Academic records indicated a pattern: students who had more parental visibility in follow-ups or communication logs typically performed better. This supports survey findings that show increased motivation and performance are associated with parental participation. The records did, however, also draw attention to systemic obstacles that can underreport parental efforts, such as inadequate documentation procedures and little communication tracking.

Parental participation in school events in Kajiado North sub-county public primary schools is low but increasing, according to head teachers' responses during the interviews. Some of the head teachers (KNSCPPSHT, 2 & 4) admitted that only a tiny percentage of parents actively support learning at home or take part in school decision-making, even if many attend important events like academic days, meetings, or punishment cases. One of the head teachers (KNSCPPSHT 4) noted that “consistent parental involvement has been linked by head teachers to better learners’ performance, especially in reading and numeracy”. “However, socioeconomic issues like lack of awareness, limited literacy, and employment responsibilities frequently prevent further engagement,” he asserted. Although the outcomes varied, some schools had used strategies like frequent SMS updates and parent education workshops to close this gap. In general, head teachers stressed that in order to improve meaningful and long-lasting parental involvement, more organized frameworks are required.

One of the head teachers observed that:

In my school, we see that parents do come for meetings, but mostly when there is a problem or when their child is underperforming. Very few parents regularly monitor their children's academic progress. I can tell you that students who have parents that visit or phone frequently tend to perform better in class. They do their assignments on time and are more motivated and disciplined. Regretfully, a lot of parents believe that their involvement stops with attending one meeting

per term. By raising their awareness during PTA meetings and encouraging them to inquire about progress even if they are unable to directly help with schoolwork, we want to alter that perspective (KNSCPPSP 4 Personal Communication June 10, 2025).

A trend of reactive rather than proactive family involvement is revealed by the head teacher's comments. Instead of communicating with the school on a regular basis, many parents only become involved when there is an obvious concern, such as subpar performance or disciplinary issues. In contrast to ongoing interest in the learner's academic journey, assistance is frequently perceived as attending a single meeting per term, indicating a weak grasp of successful involvement. The head teacher stresses that regular interaction, such as phone calls or follow-up visits, has a beneficial effect on students' motivation, performance, and discipline. Crucially, merely demonstrating interest in homework encourages students to remain accountable, especially in situations where parents are unable to provide direct assistance. In order to rethink parental duties beyond occasional presence, the school is using PTA sensitization to address the need for a shift in thinking.

Many parents who participated in interviews said they would like to be involved in their children's education, but they mentioned a number of obstacles that prevent them from doing so. The majority acknowledged that they hardly ever followed up on academic progress unless instructed to do so by a teacher, but they did report attending school meetings or academic days when invited. Some cited time constraints from job or domestic duties, while others believed their poor education disqualified them from helping with homework. However, they admitted that their children do better when parents are actively involved, whether it is through asking about academics, offering revision assistance, or promoting reading at home. While acknowledging the value of participation, the general opinion also emphasized the need for additional direction from schools on how they could effectively support their students' achievement.

One of the parents stated that:

We try to attend meetings when the school invites us, but it can be challenging at times because we are working or taking care of the younger children. I don't always know how to help with schoolwork because I didn't do well in school

myself, but I still want my child to do well. I advise them to read and complete their assignments, but I wish the school would provide us with more direction, perhaps even how we might help them at home. Sometimes issues are only brought to our attention after exams are over. Perhaps we could assist sooner if the school provided us with more frequent updates (KNSCPPSP 10 Personal Communication June 10, 2025).

Although this parent's comment emphasizes important obstacles preventing their active participation, it also shows a genuine desire to assist their child's education. The biggest obstacles are low educational attainment, which undermines trust in offering homework assistance, and time limits brought on by employment and caregiving obligations. The parent's comment demonstrates a sense of powerlessness and dependence on the school for direction. The reactive character of school communication is another issue, as feedback frequently arrives too late, after tests, making prompt action challenging. The parent's need for more frequent updates and helpful assistance from schools shows a great desire to participate, but it also makes it obvious that organized parental empowerment is required. This emphasizes how crucial proactive training and communication are in converting passive concern into active support.

Parental involvement in primary education is still below ideal levels throughout the sub-county, according to the sub-county director of education. According to her, “although parents are generally interested, their involvement is frequently restricted to attending meetings and school events in person rather than providing regular academic help”. The director underlined that “there is a definite link between better student outcomes, especially in reading, attendance, and general discipline, and active parental involvement, according to data from school assessments”. However, “illiteracy, time constraints, and a lack of knowledge about the curriculum are some of the particular challenges faced by low-income and rural communities”. The director stated that “the Ministry has started sensitization campaigns and is collaborating with school administrators to improve parent outreach and communication tactics in order to solve this”.

The sub-county director of education asserted that:

It is evident that parents are concerned in their children's education, but many of them are unsure of how to get involved beyond simply showing up to meetings.

There are schools where parents are actively involved, and the students there do notably better. Consistency and knowledge are the problem, some parents believe that education is the exclusive domain of the school. We are urging head teachers to simplify academic feedback and host frequent parent engagement forums so that even parents with limited educational background can comprehend their child's development. Our objective is to establish a shared responsibility culture between families and schools (KNSCDE Personal Communication July 10, 2025).

A crucial realization is brought to light by the sub-county director's statement: although the majority of parents sincerely care about their children's education, many are unsure of how to get involved in ways other than just showing up to school functions. This emphasizes the discrepancy between deliberate action and intention. Additionally, the director highlights the strong relationship between enhanced learner performance and active parental participation, confirming that academic results increase when parents are regularly involved. Parents' lack of awareness and the belief that education is the exclusive responsibility of the school, however, continue to be a problem. Regular engagement forums and streamlined academic communication are the suggested approach, which seeks to enable all parents to actively participate, irrespective of their educational background. This strategy represents a change in emphasis toward developing a cooperative learning environment based on reciprocal accountability and shared responsibility.

Learners' experiences with parental participation in their schooling were divided during the focus group discussion. According to others, their parents' frequent inquiries about their schooling, assistance with revision, or encouragement to study inspires them to put in more effort and maintain focus. Others, however, mentioned that their parents only check in on their progress following tests or when teachers express concerns since they are frequently too busy or uninterested. Many reported that when their parents are involved, they perform better, particularly when they receive praise for their efforts or help with their homework. Additionally, some expressed a desire for their parents to communicate with their professors more frequently, claiming that this would demonstrate the importance of their education. Students recognized how active parental support improved their academic motivation and performance.

A common understanding of the significance of parental participation in academic performance is revealed by the combined results of the Grade Six learners' focus group discussion, head teachers' SCDE, and parents' interviews, and teachers' questionnaires. However, there is a persistent disconnect between awareness and action. Teachers noticed that when parents show up for school functions, there is inconsistency in their deeper involvement, such as communication or academic support. Head teachers agreed, pointing out that while active parental involvement enhances learner outcomes, it is still restricted because of knowledge gaps. Although many acknowledged their desire to assist, parents pointed to lack of education and time as obstacles. Learners attested that when their parents take an interest in them, they feel more driven and do better. All of the results point to the necessity of inclusive, structured approaches to promote ongoing, significant communication between families and schools.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that students' performance on the Kenya Primary School Education Assessment is greatly influence by parental participation in school-related activities. Frequent involvement in school activities improves teacher-student relationship, upholds discipline, and inspires students. However, due to limited awareness and work restrictions, parental engagement is still low, particularly among low-income families. Improving academic results and creating a positive learning environment at home and at school require a stronger partnership between the school and the parents.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Boards of Management (BoMs) and head teachers should use inclusive and adaptable communication techniques to increase parental participation in school events. To accommodate working parents, especially in low-income communities, schools should have parent engagement forums on the weekends or in the evenings. Guidelines requiring at least one termly parent-teacher interaction session should also be provided by the Ministry of Education. When feasible, these events can be held remotely or at community halls or school grounds. Every academic year should see the beginnings of implementation, which should be closely watched. While education officials perform recurring assessments, teachers should keep up-to-date records of parental involvement.

These initiatives will improve home-school cooperation and have a favorable effect on students' performance and motivation.

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