

# Relationship between Parents' Attitude towards Educational Involvement and Academic Performance of Day Secondary School Students in Samia - Kenya

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## ABSTRACT

The study attempted to establish the relationship between parents' attitude towards educational involvement and academic performance of day secondary school students in Samia district. The theoretical framework of this study was derived from functionalist and learning theories. Data for this study was collected from primary sources. The research instruments were questionnaires for students and parents, interview schedules for parents and teachers. The study population comprised of 1804 students, 80 parents representatives and 51 teachers. Cross-section survey design was adopted based on a sample drawn from five secondary schools in the study area. Purposive sampling was used to select a sample 18 teachers and 36 parents while stratified random sampling was used in the selection of 180 students. Spearman Brown Prophecy coefficient formula was used to test the internal consistency of all research instruments. Content validity of research instruments was ascertained by thesis supervisors. Reliability coefficients of the research instruments were approximately 0.70 at 0.05 level of significance. Data collected was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical analysis. ANOVA was used with the help of SPSS to carry out inferential analysis. Descriptive statistics (frequency counts, means and percentages) were used in analyzing data. The findings of the study show that parental attitude towards education involvement affects academic performance of day secondary school students in Samia district. The study concluded that parental attitude towards educational involvement affects students' performance. The study recommended that school administrators and policy makers find ways of enhancing parental involvement towards education.

**Key words:** Academic performance, Attitude, Educational involvement, Parents, Relationship

## Abbreviations

K.C.P.E- Kenya certificate of primary education

K.C.S.E- Kenya certificate of secondary education

## INTRODUCTION

The term attitude refers to a favorable or unfavorable evaluative reaction towards something or someone exhibited in one's beliefs, feelings, or intended behavior. It is a social orientation - an underlying inclination to respond to something either favorably or unfavorably. Parents' attitude towards education influences their involvement in education matters. Parental involvement in education is the participation of parents in regular meaningful communication that involves student academic learning and other school activities including ensuring that parents play an integral role in assisting their children's learning at home and at school (Starkey & Kleir, 2000).

The input of a parent's involvement on individual student is of great significance because students benefit a great deal if school and home complement each other in their education and socialization (Rao, 1991).

The academic performance of day secondary students has remained dismal for a long time. Strategic plans by Board of Governors (B.O.G), Parents Teachers Associations (P.T.A) and staff meetings have failed to improve academic results over years. Parents seem to be carefree on matters concerning education and less effort has been put in by schools administration, to change the apparent negative attitude of parents towards education. Indeed, parental attitude could be responsible for the poor academic performance of day secondary students. (District Education Office, 2011).

Almost all students who join Samia day secondary schools score 250 marks and above in (K.C.P.E) which is an equivalent of mean grade C. Primary schools in Samia district annually post good results in (K.C.P.E). Samia district was ranked number 4 countrywide in 2012 (K.C.P.E) examination. Pupils from primary schools join day secondary schools in Samia district only to end up with (K.C.S.E) grades which are usually dismal. Most students' results in (K.C.S.E) depict a negative index in value added progress (V.A.P). This is a pointer to the fact that most students fail to add value to the grades they get in (K.C.P.E) when they join Samia day secondary schools. In 2010 the district registered a (K,C.S.E) mean score of 5.631 and in 2011 the district had a mean score of 4.930 in KCSE exams. From the above statistics, academic performance has been on decline with many schools in the district posting a negative index in their mean grades over the last three years (District Education Office, 2011)

When parents fail to be involved in education of their children to specified levels, the law considers that to be parental negligence. According to Kafas (2009), parental negligence is the failure of a parent in meeting a child's basic, physical or psychological needs likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development. Kafas (2009) argues that if a parent fails to provide adequate food, shelter, clothing plus offering protection for the child from physical harm or danger, or failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment then that particular parent has neglected his or her duty. A parent should be able to meet educational, emotional, psychological, physical, material, social and spiritual needs of the child under his or her care (Chrispell & River, 2001).

Moreover, Hountenvilli and Conway (2008) conducted a research on how parental involvement impacts on academic achievement. The results showed that parental involvement in education has a strong positive effect on student achievements. Hountenvilli and Conway (2008) used national data from more than 10,000 eight-grade students in public and private schools, their parents, teachers and school administrations. They were particularly interested in how frequently parents discussed activities or events of particular interest to the child, discussed selecting courses or programs at school, attended school meetings and volunteered at the child's schools programmes. Hountenvilli and Conway (2008) based at the University of New Hampshire observed that higher academic achievement of students was due to parents spending more time talking to their children during dinner time to understand their worries and fears. The research proved that the most effective forms of parent's involvement are those which engage parents in working directly with their children in learning activities at home. Decades of research by Hountenvilli and Conway (2008) showed that when parents are fully involved in education process; students get higher grades, graduation rates are high, better school attendance is realized, increased student motivation to self driven academic orientation is realized, students have a better self esteem, lower rates of suspension are evident, use of drugs and alcohol is decreased, and we have fewer instances of violent behaviour.

Thus, Hountenvilli and Conway (2008) also confirmed that the more parents participate in schooling in a sustained way at every level in advocacy, decision making and oversight roles as fund raisers and boosters as volunteers and para-professionals and as a home teachers, the better for student achievement. They also proved that families whose children are doing well in school have a daily family routine, monitor out of school activities of their children, model the value of learning, self discipline and hard work, express high but realistic expectations of achievement, show interest in children progress by helping or looking at their homework, discuss the value of good education and possible career options and they also stay in touch with their children, teachers and school staff.

Poor parental participation in education in Samia district is best reflected in a report in Education News that in the year 2010 thirteen students in Samia district primary schools dropped out of school due to early pregnancies. The District Children Officer reported that girls who got pregnant were: six from Buburi primary school, five from Bukeko primary school, one from Nanderema primary school and one from Bunandi primary school (Ochieng 2010). Interestingly, Mwiwawi (2008) blamed parental negligence for pregnancies and drop out rates in schools. He pointed out that parents have refused to play their rightful role and do not even bother to offer guidance to the daughters and sons. Furthermore, Were (2007) observes that teenage pregnancy in Busia should be viewed within broader socio-economic and socio-cultural environment in which adolescents operate. For instance, lack of parental guidance on issues of sexuality and sex education which is reinforced by cultural taboos that inhibit such discussions. According to Were (2007), adolescents should be equipped with relevant knowledge to enable them make informed choices about their sexuality.

Applying to this study, attitude meant a series of tangible actions (involvements) which are

derived by a personal belief; the belief and the sequence of actions can be evaluated through interviewing individuals (Oppenheim, 1992). Thus, in this study parents' attitude means a combination of parents' beliefs and involvement where it could be reflected through parents' actions, and may influence their children's reactions. The reason behind this conservative combination is that there is no way one can measure the effectiveness of parents' attitude towards education of their children without having these parents interviewed about their inner beliefs regarding education of their children. This would include either asking for evidence that reflects their personal beliefs or having their children interviewed or observed in a classroom. There is no guarantee that belief alone, without involvement is beneficial. Therefore, the study explored links between parental attitude towards education involvement and academic performance of day secondary school students.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The main objective of the study was to establish the relationship between parental attitude towards education involvement and academic performance of day secondary school students in Samia district. In order to achieve the purpose of this study, functionalist theory and learning theory guided the study. Daniel Katz (1938), proposed a functionalist theory of attitude which states that attitude is determined by functions it serves for us. People hold given attitude because it helps them achieve their basic goals.

This study utilized cross-sectional survey design based on a sample drawn from secondary schools in Samia district. This design was preferred because it is efficient for collecting a lot of information within a short time; moreover, Kerlinger (2003) argues that it gives accurate information. The study population included all (Teachers Service Commission) teachers, students and parents from Nanderema, Odiado, Ganjala, Nyakhobi and Namboboto day secondary schools in Samia district. The five day schools under study had 51 teachers employed by (Teachers Service Commission) and a student population of 1804 students from form one to form four and rough estimate of 80 parents representatives in the PTA from the five day schools under study. The study sampled 30% of teachers employed by the Teachers Service Commission, 45% of parents' representatives were picked and 10% of students population was picked. Therefore, the researcher sampled 18 teachers, 36 parents and 180 students from the entire district. The study adopted purposive sampling on parents and teachers. Purposive sampling means the researcher picked teachers' and parents' sample basing on respondents who had convenient characteristics to assist in the study. The study made use of questionnaires and interview schedules to collect data from the participants. Data analysis entailed processing the bulky data collected, organizing it, coding it, tabulating it, analyzing and drawing inferences from it. Quantitative analysis of data was done using descriptive statistics for example use of percentages and mean of responses. Data from questionnaires and interview schedule was sought and presented in tables. Descriptive statistics (frequency counts, percentages and mean of data) were calculated and implications sought. Inferential statistics was carried out using bivariate analysis to establish the relationship between parental attitude and academic performance of day secondary school students. Bivariate analysis was used to

test for measures of association between variables by the use of (ANOVA). The One way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test the hypothesis because the researcher analyzed variations within and between the three groups of student-respondents.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study sought to investigate the relationship between parental attitude towards educational involvement and academic performance of day secondary school students in Samia district. The respective frequency and percentages were calculated as evident in Table 1.

**Table 1. Overall responses and mean scores of responses concerning parents' attitude towards educational involvement.**

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean
1. Parents check academic homework given to you by teachers	14	21	10	72	64	3.8
2. Parents attend school academic programmes when invited	16	19	29	63	54	3.7
3. Parents advise you on education matters	8	20	12	83	58	3.9
4. Parents encourage you to aim for a higher mean grade	12	15	22	84	48	3.8
5. Parents advise you on how to relate with members of opposite sex	10	16	17	72	66	3.9
6. Parents advise you on study habits	12	18	30	65	56	3.7
7. Parents come to school to discuss your academic progress	5	7	15	83	71	4.1
8. Parents appreciate teachers for their hard work	2	7	11	92	69	4.2
9. Parents monitor your out of school activities	14	5	22	76	64	3.9
Parents allow you to attend Saturday remedial	23	12	15	34	97	3.9
10. Parents support educational activities	12	25	2	10	132	4.2
11. Parents allow you to attend holiday tuition	6	21	37	66	51	3.7
12. Parents supervise your morning studies	10	27	33	51	60	3.7
13. Parents find out if you are carrying out evening studies	17	25	26	66	47	3.6
14. Parents appreciate your good performance at school	8	18	31	52	72	3.9
<b>Mean</b>						<b>4.1</b>

Source: Field data (2012)

Table 1 shows the distribution of students according to how their parents participated in education. It is evident from the table that a mean of 4.2 out of five of the students, indicated that their parents appreciate teachers for their hard work, followed by a mean score of 3.9 of students who expressed that their parents advise them on education matters, parents advise them on how to relate with members of the opposite sex, parents monitor their out of school activities, parents monitor their out of school activities, parents allow them to attend Saturday remedial program and also parents appreciate their good performance at school. The findings of the table reveal a mean score of 3.8 out 5 for parents checking academic homework given to respondents by teachers and also parents encouraging them to aim for a higher mean grade.

Table 1 further reveals a mean score of 3.7 which expresses that respondents' parents attend school academic programs when invited, respondents' parents wake them up for morning studies and find out whether they carry out evening studies and respondents' parents advise them on their study habits. The table further shows that majority of students expressed that their parents were significantly involved in education. It is evident from table 1 that the overall mean score of the responses concerning parent's attitude towards educational involvement is 4.1 out of 5. This showed that parents had a positive attitude towards their children's education and participated well in education issues.

A further examination of table 1 reveals that 72.8% of the responses by students were 'strongly agree' and 'agree', 15.6% of the responses to statements were 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree' and 11.4% of the responses were neutral in that the responses were placed under 'unsure' category. These findings reveal that majority of the student respondents expressed that parental involvement towards education was positive.

An examination of parents and teachers interview responses pertaining to parents' involvement towards education revealed that involvement of parents boosted examination grades in schools. Most teachers were of opinion that learners develop a negative attitude towards education due to non-challant attitude of their parents. Parents representatives and teachers said that most parents do not always check the daily academic homework given to their children by teachers.

Responses from parents and teachers indicate that the most effective forms of parents' involvement are those which engage parents in working directly with their children on learning activities at home. It was also confirmed that the more parents participate in schooling in a sustained way at every level in advocacy, decision making and oversight roles as fund raisers and as a home teachers, the better for student achievement. These findings replicate the findings of Hountenvilli and Conway (2008). Responses from parents and teachers during interviews also showed that families whose children are doing well in school have a daily family routine, monitor out of school activities of their children, model the value of learning, self discipline and hard work, express high but realistic expectations of achievement, show

interest in children's progress by helping or looking at their homework, discuss the value of good education and possible career options and they also stay in touch with students' teachers and school staff.

Bivariate analysis of the relationship between parents' attitude towards educational involvement and academic performance was done. Student respondents' data was examined with a focus on objective of this study. Data on students' responses on parental attitude towards educational involvement and respondents' academic performance evident in examination scores were significant. The researcher formed three groups of respondents from table 1: those that expressed parental attitude towards educational involvement as positive, those that expressed parental attitude towards educational involvement as neutral and those that expressed parental attitude towards educational involvement as negative. The overall academic performance of each respondent was sought from the questionnaires.

A one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) statistical technique was utilized to establish the association between the study variables and to find out if there were significant differences of the respondents' overall scores within and between the fore mentioned groups as well to test the first research hypothesis. The One way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was chosen because the researcher sought to analyze variations within and between the three groups (Fraenkel and Wallen 2000). The results of this test are presented in table 2.

**Table 2 Results of the ANOVA showing differences in students' marks between those who expressed parental attitude as negative, neutral and positive towards educational involvement.**

Marks	sum of squares	df	M.S.	F
<b>F- limit</b>				
Between groups	4549.193	2	2274.512	2.144
Within groups	188772.420	177	1060.519	
Total	190321.613	179		

Source: Field data (2012)

Results of the ANOVA test shows differences in students overall scores between those who expressed parental attitude towards educational involvement as negative, neutral and positive is provided in Table 2. Basing on table 2, the calculated F. value is greater than the tabled F. value at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This meant that we had significant differences in the sample means of the three groups of students' respondents.

The findings imply that there were significant differences in the scores of students who expressed parental attitude towards educational involvement to be negative, neutral or positive. The findings reveal that parental attitude towards educational involvement affects student's performance. The findings on parents involvement in a child's education are consistently found to be positively associated with a child's academic performance (Hara & Burke, 1998; Hill & Craft, 2003; Marcon, 1999; Stevenson & Baker, 1987).

Specifically, children whose parents are more involved in their education have higher levels of academic performance than children whose parents are involved to a lesser degree. The influence of parent involvement on academic success has not only been noted among researchers, but also among policy makers who have integrated efforts aimed at increasing parent involvement into broader educational policy initiatives. Coupled with these findings of the importance of early academic success, a child's academic success has been found to be relatively stable after early elementary school (Entwisle & Hayduk, 1988; Pedersen, Faucher & Eaton, 1978). Therefore, it is important to examine factors that contribute to early academic success that are amenable to change.

Researchers have reported that parent-child interactions, specifically stimulating and responsive parenting practices, are important influences on a child's academic development (Christian, Morrison, & Bryant, 1998; Committee on Early Childhood Pedagogy, 2000). By examining specific parenting practices that are amenable to change, such as parent involvement, and the mechanisms by which these practices influence academic performance, programs may be developed to increase a child's academic performance.

The results are an indication that students from homes where parents support the academic studies of their children might achieve better test scores, higher grades, have better attendance at school, complete more homework, demonstrate more positive attitude towards their academic work, graduate at higher rates and more likely to enroll in higher education to pursue their career opportunities than children from homes lacking parental support. In the light of these findings, the need arises for parents to provide support which could contribute to the academic achievement of their children. These findings agree with the findings of Steinberg and Silverberg (1986), Thomas (1986) and Steinberg (1993) that parents remain a main contributor to their children's socialization, attitude formation and career aspirations.

The findings suggest that enhancement of parental involvement will have positive effect on students' academic performance of day secondary school students in Samia district. These findings concur with those of Epstein (1989) that suggest that successful students come from a nurturing and supportive home environment. In addition, it does not appear to matter what socioeconomic background the students come from. This findings bear a similarity to Epstein's other research that states that parental involvement affects students' academic achievement irrespective of age, socioeconomic background, racial and ethnic background. The objective of the study was achieved.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The findings of the study show that there were significant differences in scores among students whose parents had negative, neutral and positive attitude towards educational involvement. In conclusion, parental attitude towards educational involvement affects students' performance. The study recommended that school administrators and policymakers should find ways of enhancing parental involvement towards education. It was also recommended that the ministry of education uses these findings to sensitize teachers about

the importance of parental involvement in education and how it is important for every child's educational achievement.

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