

Effects of Home - Based Parental Involvement Practices in Promoting Quality of Education in Public Day Secondary Schools in Igembe Sub County, Meru County - Kenya

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Abstract

Universally, institutions of learning are charged with the task of producing quality human resource which can adapt to the ever-changing global environments. Secondary schools provide the youth with opportunities to acquire human capital that enable them to pursue higher education and also improve their knowledge and skills. The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of home - based parental involvement practices in promoting quality of education in public day secondary schools in Igembe Central Sub County, Meru County- Kenya. Convergent design was used. This study comprised 28 principals, 266 teachers, 6912 students and 144 parents' representatives. This made a total target population of 7312 subjects from the public day secondary schools of Igembe Central Sub County. Out of this target population, a sample of 8 principals, 48 teachers, 32 parents and 352 students, making a total of 440 subjects, was drawn using both probability and non-probability sampling procedures. The researcher collected both qualitative and quantitative data using interview schedules for principals, questionnaires for teachers' and students', parents' focus group discussions and document analysis guide. The results obtained led to the conclusion that improving home based involvement of the parents can lead to improvement in children's school attendance, homework completion, improved learning behaviors and even better learner's discipline. This indicates that parents' involvement in education of their children at home is a powerful force in enhancing the quality of education offered in public day secondary schools. The study recommends that parents be enlightened on the home-based activities that either directly or indirectly affect the quality of education that their children receive so that they may know how to invest their energies and resources to improve education in their children's schools. It was also recommended that parents should monitor their children's security in addition to the improvement of home- school relationships.

Keywords: Home-based involvement, Human capital, Parental involvement, Public day secondary school, Quality of Education

1. Introduction

Home-based involvement denotes the kind of interaction that parents can have with their children at home with an intention of enhancing their education and consequent school performance. This kind of

involvement demands that parents utilize their resources to support their children's academic accomplishments. Parents can engage in various home-based involvement activities so as to help their children. For instance, parents can engage children in cognitively-stimulating activities at home, creating a conducive learning environment at home for their children, exposing children to community resources that enhance their educational experience or even getting involved with additional parenting activities like, monitoring the activities that their children engage in, varying from television watching to going out and the selection of friends (Bakker & Denessen, 2007; Harris & Goodall, 2007; Patrikakou, 2008).

Home-school cooperation may be linked to better learning, healthy self-esteem and more positive attitudes and behaviour in life. According to DePlanty, Coulter-Kern, and Duchane (2007), strong relationships between home and school environments have positive effects on adolescents. To them, there are various parental activities that play a very important role in the social and emotional achievement of their children. These activities include communication between parents and children about school, helping the child with homework, setting school-related rules at home, and sharing with the child school-related aspirations of the parent. Furthermore, taking children to events and places that foster academic success (for example, museums and libraries), and creating a conducive learning environment at home (for example, making educational materials accessible, such as books, newspapers, educational toys;) are part of home-based involvement practices (Bakker et al., 2007; Hill & Tyson, 2009; Henderson & Mapp, 2002, and Jeynes, 2005).

Universally, institutions of learning are charged with the task of producing quality human resource which can adapt to the ever changing global environments. Secondary schools provide the youth with opportunities to acquire human capital that enable them to pursue higher education and also improve their knowledge and skills. Education plays a significant role in leading to higher labour market productivity. Students develop knowledge, skills, and abilities (human capital) during their secondary school education, that provide to them private benefits, as well as, social benefits to the larger society over their lifetimes (Haveman, Bershadker & Schwabish, 2003). Human capital development of any country is determined by access to quality basic education among other determinants.

Among the many indicators of quality of basic education that students receive are higher successful completion of classes, lower drop-out rates, higher completion rates, higher grades and test scores, higher rate of transition to institutions of higher learning and improved enrolment in higher level programmes. Other indicators of quality of education associated with home based parental involvement include regular school attendance, better social skills and adaptation to the school environment, improved behaviour, increased social capital, a greater sense of personal competence and efficacy for learning, greater engagement in school work, and a stronger belief in the importance of education (Gonzalez, Doan Holbein, & Quilter, 2002; and Henderson et al., 2002).

The Government of Kenya has made several strides towards the provision of quality education at all levels. The government's strategy in the Basic Education Act 2013, the Sessional Paper No.14 of 2014 on Reforming Education and Training, and the National Education Sector Plan (NESP) 2013- 2018, emphasize the provision of quality basic education from early childhood to secondary education. The

emphasis on improvement of quality of education mainly aims at improving; schooling and learning outcomes, relevant skills, efficiency, and effectiveness in the use of available resources (Republic of Kenya, 2013a; Republic of Kenya 2013b). The government's efforts to improve quality of education aims at producing Kenyans with global competitive skills which will then produce the manpower required to turn the country into a middle income status by 2030.

The ultimate goal of quality secondary education is to develop the individual's mental capacity and character for higher and useful living within the society (Republic of Kenya, 2008b). However, studies done on the status of secondary school education in Kenya have pointed out glaring gaps in the quality of education across the sector, especially in public day secondary schools. The quality of education in Kenya has stagnated even though there is increased access to education (Uwezo Kenya, 2012). It is for this reason that commitment to promote quality of education by all education stakeholders, parents included, is essential so as to facilitate changes in students' intellectual capacities and skills, values, attitudes, habits and even mental health.

Research Question

What are the effects of home-based parental involvement in promoting quality of education in public day secondary schools in Igembe Central Sub County?

2. Literature review

The concept of Home Based Parental Involvement

Parents' genuine interest and active engagement in their children's learning (OECD, 2011) by spending quality time with them give rise to improved educational outcomes. Consequently, the influence of the home environment to quality of education depends on parents' guidance and encouragement to their children in learning (Bakker et al., 2007). Outside of the school, parents can create a rich learning environment which eventually contributes to better educational outcomes for their children (Jeynes, 2005). Moreover, parents can discuss possibilities for higher education with their children, stress the value of education in general, provide learning resources, and take their children to social events and places that contribute to learning (Hill et al., 2009). These interventions are crucial in enhancing quality of education offered in schools.

Some parental and home life factors that impact students achievement include daily family conversations, monitoring of television viewing times and programmes, open displays of affection, learning to delay gratification, print and literacy activities that are engaging, and high parental interest in the child's academic and character growth. These factors are high predictors of school success than socio-economic status. Other parental behaviours that support academic growth are high expectations and a structure for homework completion and school preparation (Bakker et al., 2007; Patrikakou, 2008).

Dubois, Eitel, and Felner (1994) conducted a two-year longitudinal study of 157 adolescents who were aged 10-12 years in small public schools in predominantly poor and rural areas of Southeastern United States. They found out that home-based parental involvement activities had significant effects on student's achievement. Some of the effects included nurturing children through warm and responsive

parenting, as well as, assuming additional roles as their children matured. Parents would also discipline their children, teaching them, modeling language, providing stimulating materials, and serving as managers of family routines and schedules (Brooks-Gunn & Markham, 2005). From the foregoing, it is evident that the home learning environments influence social development of children and are important factors contributing to quality of education at all the levels of learning (Bull, Brooking & Campbell, 2008; Kendall, 2007). A conducive home learning environment with a variety of educational resources and positive reinforcement of the value of education by parents is essential not only in making learning enjoyable and rewarding but also fundamental in intellectual and social development in children of all ages (Brooks-Gunn et al., 2005). In addition, this environment contributes to the standards that children set for themselves and their aspirations for education (Jeynes, 2005).

Good parenting at home has positive effects on children's educational achievement (Duckworth, Akerman, Morrison, & Vorhaus, 2009). Communication is a feature of this style of parenting which supports a child's academic progress, places value on learning, and determines behaviours that are suitable for education achievement (Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, Sandler, Whetsel, Green, Wilkins, & Closson, 2005). Through communication, children can be aware of the expectations and educational aspirations of their parents. For example, parents can discuss subjects' selection and choices with their children and also their aspirations after secondary school education (Pomerantz, Moorman, & Litwack, 2007).

Osei-Akoto, Chowa, and Ansong (2012) investigated the extent of parental involvement in academic performance in Ghana using randomized cluster sampling of 100 schools from eight out of ten regions. They found out that majority of the parents (83%) hardly assisted children in homework. In Namibia, Guolaung (2010) conducted a qualitative survey study on the extent of parental involvement in students' academic performance. The study involved seven parents of students who had achieved high grades in examinations. All parents involved reported very high level of involvement in their children's education. This is an indication that parents can help their children in maintaining positive attitudes towards their own abilities and support them through problems at school (Henderson et al., 2002).

Forming culturally aware school-family collaborations is important in that it helps schools to reduce cultural gaps, create diverse learning opportunities, improve ethnic and racial perceptions and attitudes, and foster interethnic friendships (Harris et al., 2007). As such, creating a positive home-school climate results to more learning opportunities and students can be better prepared to acquire knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to interact positively and productively with people in a multicultural society. When schools and families work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer and like school more.

The degree of parental involvement in home based activities vary by parent to parent. Usually there is no general consensus on how parents can be engaged in the education of their children. Free secondary education in Kenya, which increased access to secondary school education did not sufficiently improve the quality of education. It is for this reason that the researcher sought to find out how home-based parental involvement can be used to improve quality of education in public day secondary schools of Igembe Central Sub County.

3. Research Methodology

The study covered all the public day secondary schools in Igembe Central Sub-County, Meru County-Kenya. It was delimited to these schools since they are direct beneficiaries of government support in the provision of secondary school education. The informants were school principals, teachers, students, and parents of the selected schools. There are several other stakeholders whose role affect quality of education in public day secondary schools, but the study focused on home – based parental involvement activities only.

Convergent (parallel) design which is a mixed methods design was used. In this design, the researcher collected both quantitative and qualitative data concurrently, analyzed both sets of data separately, and then compared the results with the intent of comparing two different perspectives on home - based parental involvement practices in enhancing quality of education in Igembe Central Sub County. The researcher laid emphasis on both Qualitative and Quantitative data (Hesse-Biber, 2010; Hesse-Biber and Johnson, 2015).

Igembe Central Sub County has a total of 28 public day secondary schools. The target population in this study comprised of all the 28 school principals, 266 teachers, 6912 form one to form four students, and 144 PTA representatives, making a total of 7350 subjects. Igembe Central Sub County was curved out of Igembe North and Igembe South Sub-Counties. Schools belonging to Igembe Central Sub County have been under the management of either Igembe North or Igembe South Sub Counties' Education officers depending on where the school belonged before 2013. Therefore, the researcher could only get information related to Igembe Central Sub County schools from the two mother- Sub Counties, though currently (2017), the Sub County has its own education officer. A summary of the target population is shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Target Population

Ward	No. of Schools	No. of principals	No. of Teachers	Total No. of Students	Total No. of PTA representatives
Akirang'onde	5	5	64	1459	32
Athiru Ruujine	6	6	42	1253	28
Igembe East	6	6	48	1322	24
Njia	5	5	40	1056	20
Kangeta	6	6	72	1822	40
Total	28	28	266	6912	144

**Source: Igembe North and Igembe South Sub Counties' Education Offices,
(March, 2016)**

This research employed both probability and non-probability sampling procedures to get informants. Probability sampling was done to ensure that each case in the population had an equal chance of being included in the sample. Non-probability sampling was used to select certain cases non-randomly in situations where very few cases were included in the sample (Orodho, 2009). Krejcie and Morgan (1970) suggest that if the researcher were devising a sample from a wider population of 30 or fewer, then he or she would be well advised to include the whole or the wider population. Therefore, all the principals were to be included as respondents as per Krejcie and Morgan's table with respect to the 28 schools. The researcher further sampled principals of schools from the sub county that had done Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) examinations for four or more years consecutively. A total of eight principals from schools that had met this criterion were selected purposively and were interviewed.

In addition, parents, who were class representatives from form one to form four of the selected schools participated in the study. In cases where some of the sampled schools had more than one stream, simple random sampling was used to pick only one parent to represent the class. Eight (8) focus groups of four (4) parents each were formed from the selected schools. A total of thirty two (32) parents formed focus group discussions. 48 of the teachers who were in session at the time of the research and were willing to participate in the study were conveniently sampled.

Form three and form four classes in each selected school were the classes of the study since they had been in the school for a longer period. In addition, students at this level were expected to be concerned about the quality of education they received from their schools, hence, would have invaluable contribution towards addressing the research question. Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table was used to determine the sample size of these students. Further, stratified random sampling was used to select both boys and girls from the form three and form four classes who were to respond to the questionnaire. To get these students from form three and form four classes, the researcher obtained class registers from the class teachers involved. This was used as a sampling frame. According to Orodho (2009), systematic sampling is used where lists of the members of population are available and arranged in some order. From the class registers, the researcher prepared separate lists for all boys and girls in form three and form four classes and then got a sampling interval (K) by dividing the population size by the sample size. The researcher then established a random start so as to take random samples of students from each subgroup in relation to their class and gender. A total of forty four (44) students per school were selected. The total sample size was obtained by summing up all the chosen samples of the informants. Generally, a total of four hundred and forty informants (440) were included in the sample.

The researcher used various methods of data collection in the study to enhance the reliability of the research findings. Both qualitative and quantitative data was collected using students' and teachers' questionnaires, principals' in-depth interview, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) guide for parents and documents analysis guide.

During data collection, data was checked for completeness and gaps were immediately filled before leaving the research site. Ratification was sought from the respective informants in cases where gaps were identified. Furthermore, verification was done every evening in order to correct any irregular information provided. Thereafter, the instruments were serialized in readiness for data entry and analysis.

The quantitative data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 20.0 (SPSS 20.0), a computer software programme, to produce some basic statistics from the data: frequencies for categorical data and the mean and standard deviations for interval level data. The results obtained were presented in frequency tables, ANOVA tables, graphs and percentages.

In addition, qualitative data analysis was done by summarizing recorded qualitative data into daily briefs after each interview or FGD session. Thereafter, the researcher went through the transcripts to identify sections that were relevant to the research questions. Analysis of qualitative data collected was done through thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a qualitative analytic method which emphasizes, pinpointing, examining, and recording patterns (or themes) within data. The researcher read through data continuously identifying patterns, developed categories and codes. This helped to organize and describe data set in (rich) detail (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The original transcripts were reviewed continually throughout the analysis in an effort to ensure that an adequate and accurate picture of parental home based involvement in education and the experiences of the informants were revealed. Finally, a write-up containing informants’ views in relation to the research question were compiled.

4. Results and Discussion

Table 2 gives a summary of the instruments return rate:

Table 2: A Summary of Instruments Return Rate

Category of Informants	Number Sampled	Instrument Used	Number Completed	Return Rate
Principals	8	Interview schedule	8	100%
Teachers	48	Questionnaires	41	85.40%
Students	352	Questionnaires	315	89.50%
Representatives -parents association	32	Focus group discussion guide	8 FGDs	100%

Coding was done for the informants who responded to interviews and participated in FGDs as follows: SC stands for schools and the figure 1 the school number, hence, there were 8 schools. P1 - P8 stands for the principals in the respective schools. Similarly, PT1A stands for the first parents’ representative in school 1, respectively up to PT8D which stands for the fourth parent from the eighth school.

Characteristics of the Informants

The informants targeted in the study included school principals, teachers, students, and parents who were PTA representatives. This section presents background data of the indicated informants:

The Principals

Table 3 summarizes Principals’ characteristics:

Table 3: A Summary of Principals’ Characteristics

Principal	Age	Gender	Marital status	Highest academic qualification	Teaching experience (in years)	Number of years as a principal
P1	48	Female	Married	Bachelor’s degree	24	5
P2	48	Male	Married	Master’s degree	22	10
P3	49	Male	Married	Bachelor’s degree	24	10
P4	58	Female	Married	Diploma in Education	33	12
P5	46	Male	Married	Bachelor’s degree	15	3
P6	48	Female	Married	Master’s degree	20	4
P7	50	Male	Married	Bachelor’s degree	24	12
P8	49	Female	Married	Bachelor’s degree	22	4

The Teachers

A total of 41 teachers responded to the questionnaires. An examination of the data captured in Table 4.4 reveal that 43.9 % (18) of teachers involved in the study were aged between 25- 30 years. 24.4% were aged 31 to 35 years. The rest were above 35 years. Only 4.9% (2) of the teachers fell in age bracket of 46 – 50 years. The results indicate that all the age groups between 25 and 50 years were adequately represented.

Table 4: Teacher's Age (in Years)

Age group	Frequency	Percent
25-30	18	43.9
31-35	10	24.4
36-40	5	12.2
41-45	6	14.6
46-50	2	4.9
Total	41	100

With regard to the gender of the teachers who responded to questionnaires majority (61%) were male, while the rest (39%) were female. Hence, each of the gender was adequately represented as none was more than two thirds of the total number of informants as shown in Figure 4.1.

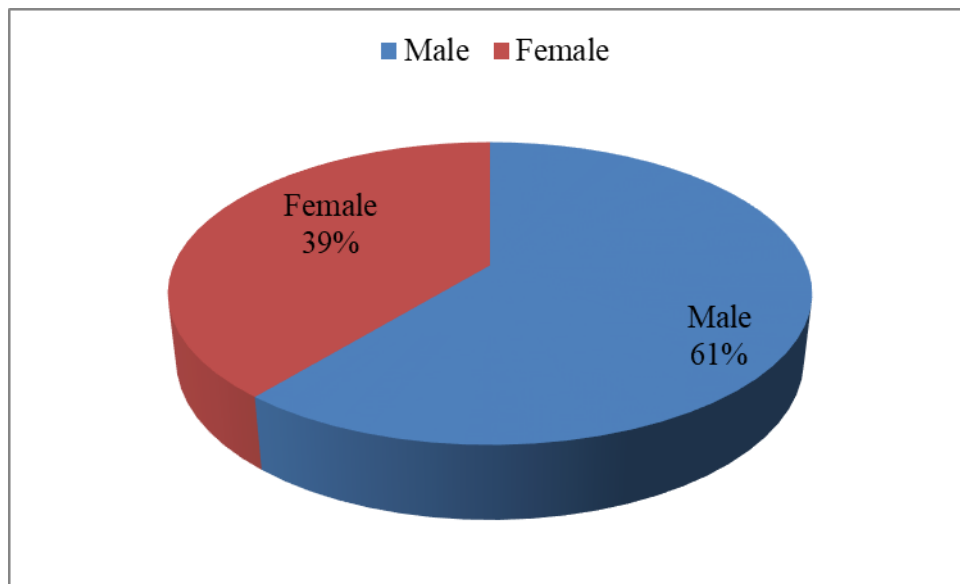


Figure 1: Distribution of teachers by gender

It was further established that a high majority of the teachers (61%) were married while the rest (39%) were single. Hence, the composition of teachers in regard to marital status was good for the study, especially as pertains to their views on parental involvement in their children’s education.

The study established that all the teachers who responded to the questionnaires were trained. Majority of the teachers (75.6%) had a first degree qualification, 14.6% had diploma qualification, while 9.8% had post graduate qualification. This showed that more than four fifths of the teachers who participated in the study had a university degree an indication that the teachers in public day secondary schools were qualified professional teachers as shown in Figure 2:

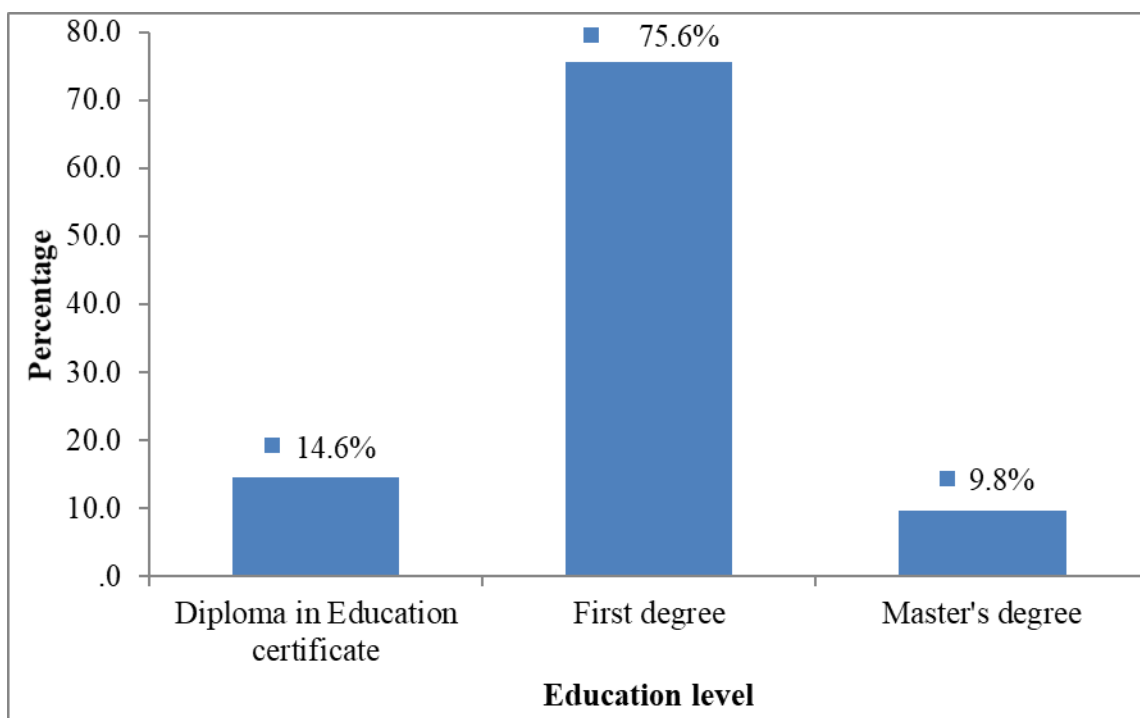


Figure 2: Teachers education level

The teachers involved in the study had remained in the teaching profession for a sufficient period of time to be able to comment on parental involvement practices that promote quality of education in public day secondary schools. Figure 3 shows a summary of

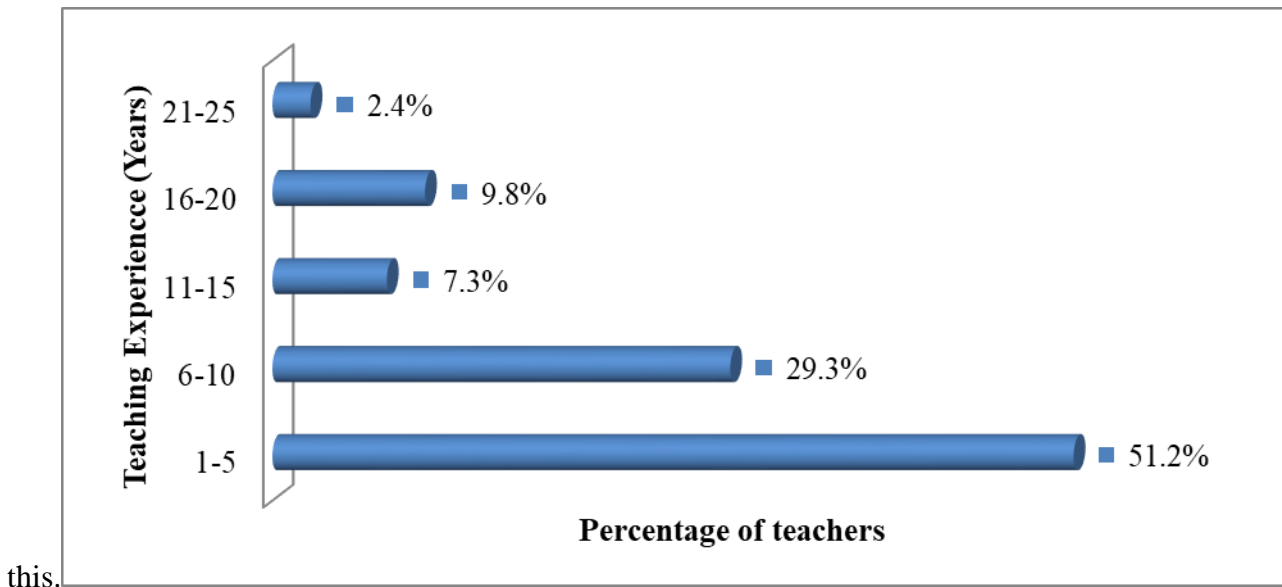


Figure 3: Teachers’ teaching experience

Students’ characteristics

From the research findings, it was established that out of 315 students who returned their questionnaires, 50% were boys, while 50% were girls. This means that gender parity was realized in as far as the students’ responses were concerned. Hence, the outcome of the study would be impartial in terms of views of either gender. The respondents were equally distributed amid the form three and form four classes, which were the classes of concern to this study. The students in these two classes were considered to have adequate stay in public day secondary schools and would be able to examine the quality of education in the aforementioned schools.

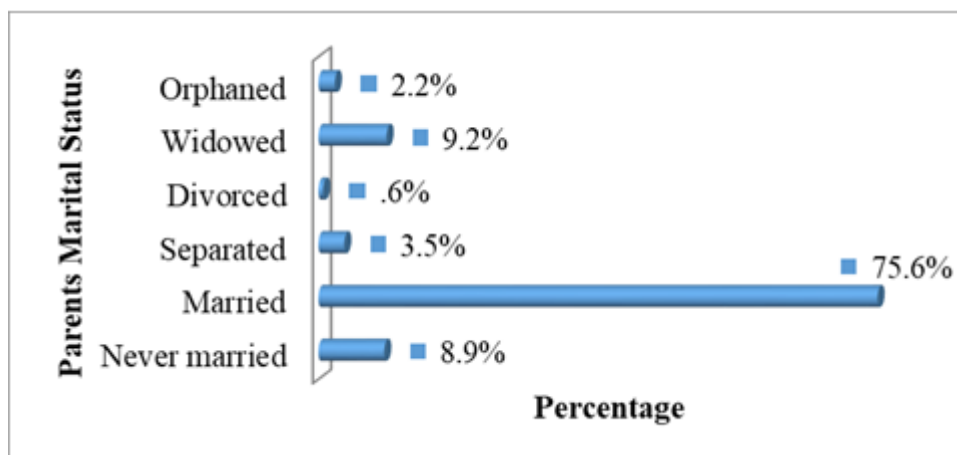


Figure 4: Marital status of students’ parents

In regard to marital status of the students' parents, a high majority of the students (75.6%) reported their parents' married status, 9.2% stated widowed status, and 8.9% indicated never married status. In addition, 3.5% pointed separated status, 2.2% said they were orphaned while .6% indicated divorced status of their parents. This pointed to a significant number of the students whose parents were not living together as approximately a fifth of the students reported.

On analyzing information about the type of family that students came from, the study revealed that 216 of the students (68.6 %) belonged to a nuclear family and lived with both parents. The study also showed that 58 students (18.4 %) lived with single parents, 34 students (10.8 %) lived in polygamous setups, while seven (2.2 %) of them were taken care of by guardians who were not their biological parents. From the FGDs, parents from SC2 and SC5 observed that some students in their schools were orphaned, others were from single parent families, while others were from polygamous families. They further noted that some of these students were committed, obedient and disciplined, though some attended school irregularly or dropped out altogether.

PT2A also had this to say:

Children of this school are so committed to their studies that they are always in school by 6.30am each school day. However, some are discouraged by the nature of problems they encounter at home since some have no parents and others have absent and / or irresponsible parents. Ninety percent of the students in this school come from extremely poor homes where parents cannot afford boarding school fees.

The above finding revealed that learners' family backgrounds varied. It was reported that some students joined school through support from their local churches, while others through non - governmental organizations (NGOs), self-help groups, CDF bursaries and their area member of parliament (MP).

PT4C described the students in these words:

Children are very obedient, disciplined and committed to studies but discouraged by parents' behaviour. They are always punctual and commit themselves to private studies even late in the evenings. If you pass by the school in the evenings, you will find them there doing their private studies.

PT1C, PT3A, PT3C, PT4B, PT5A, PT6B, and PT7D had similar sentiments. However, PT1A, PT2D, PT5D and PT8C had a different opinion. According to them,

Most students are hardworking while others are negatively aggressive. For example, they fight, insult, and have no courtesy towards teachers and other students. This puts their schools' discipline at stake. Some are however obedient.

If students possessed such negative traits as described, this would most likely affect quality of their education. More information regarding the effects of students' characteristics and quality of education they received was obtained from teachers' questionnaire.

From the documents analyzed, the researcher noted that there was irregular school attendance especially in form four classes. The school principals affirmed that there was chronic absenteeism from schools, especially after national examinations registration in the schools' first term.

These students would only resurface towards the examination period. Having not studied throughout the year, such students perform so poorly in national examinations.

From the students' questionnaire on academic performance only 4.4% achieved A related grades (A, A-) while 41.3% achieved Bs (B+,B, B-), more than half of the students (53%) reported that they achieved C related grades (C+, C and C-), while 1.3% achieved D related grades (D+,D, D-) as shown in Table 5. None of the students reported to have achieved an E grade.

Table 5: Students' Performance

Grade	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Mostly A related	14	4.4	4.4
Mostly B related	130	41.3	45.7
Mostly C related	167	53	98.7
Mostly D related	4	1.3	100
Total	315	100	

The FGDs supported the fact that there was value addition in terms of their children's ability to use positive social skills in their day to day life. According to parent PT3D;

My daughter is in form two and I am happy that she has learnt the importance of cleanliness and neatness. When she is at home, I am always a very happy person. During her free time in the evenings and over the weekends, she sweeps the house and the entire compound. She has even planted some flowers in our homestead!

Parents' characteristics

The researcher had discussions with eight parental focus groups of four parents each. Generally, all the FGDs echoed similar sentiments on the parents' characteristics. In addition, they mentioned extremely poor backgrounds of some students where parents could not afford the required school levies. The groups noted that such vulnerable and needy children were barely consistent in school attendance for they were usually sent home to get the said school levies. Most of the students' parents were in the age bracket of 36-40 years (100 mothers and 49 fathers) and 41-45 years (61 mothers and 60 fathers) representing 51.3% and 34.6% of mothers and fathers, respectively. Only seven (7) mothers compared to twenty seven (27) fathers who were aged over 60 years, had children in secondary schools. Thirteen of the students involved in the study had no mothers, while 65 of the students had no fathers.

This study revealed that 58.7 % (185) of the students' mothers had no steady job but worked on a part time basis. It was also evident that a large percentage of the parents (75.6%) were self-employed. Only 2.2 % (7) of the mothers had full time jobs. 3.8 % of the students had no mothers while 19.7 % of students had no fathers. A small percentage of mothers and fathers (1.6%) were engaged in other jobs like casual labour. More fathers (4.8 %) were on a full time job compared to the mothers. 32.1 % of the students' fathers worked on a part time basis, while 41.9 % were self-employed.

Additionally, some of the parents never attended school completely (34 fathers and 68 mothers. They were either illiterate or semi-literate. Eighty one fathers and 111 mothers had dropped out of school. In addition, 55 fathers and 68 mothers were primary school leavers. This showed that literacy level among parents of children in public day secondary schools in Igembe Central Sub County was quite low.

Home Based Parental Involvement Practices

The kind of interaction that parents have with their children at home affect quality of education offered in public day secondary schools of Igembe Central Sub County. Parents engage in a variety of home – based activities to help their children. For instance, parents provide a home environment for their children’s learning, though at varied degrees. This is consistent with Jeynes’ (2005) views that parents can create a conducive learning environment which eventually contributes to better educational outcomes of their children. The researcher endeavoured to relate home based-involvement practices with both the students’ gender, and the various family types that the students came from, and their effects on quality of education that students received in public day secondary schools.

Relationship between home - based parental involvement and students’ gender

A t – test was performed to assess the relationship between home based parental involvement and gender of the students. It was established that the mean home based parental involvement score of females was 54.08 (SD = 15.237) while that of their counterparts was 53.73 (SD = 17.453). This indicates that the home based parental involvement for females was higher than that of the males. However, the difference between the home based parental involvement scores between the genders was not found to be statistically significant as the p – value was greater than .05 (Table 7).

Table 6: Home Based Parental Involvement and Gender Group Statistics

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Home Based parental involvement	Male	157	53.73	17.453
	Female	158	54.06	15.237

Table 7: Home Based Parental Involvement and Independent Samples Test

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					
F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	
Equal variances assumed	3.989	0.047	-0.183	313	0.855	-0.337	1.846

Equal variances not assumed	-0.183	306.9	0.855	-0.337	1.847
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Relationship between home - based parental involvement and family type

One way ANOVA was done to examine the relationship between home - based parental involvement and family type.

Descriptive statistics

The home based parental involvement mean for nuclear family type was 55.63 (SD = 15.17, N = 217) followed by polygamous family type with a mean of 51.53 (SD = 20.19, N = 34). Single parent family type recorded a mean of 51.34 (SD = 15.66, N = 58), while other family types registered home based parental involvement mean of 29.33 (SD = 19.97, N = 6) as shown in Table 8

Table 8: Descriptive Statistics for Home Based Parental Involvement versus Family Type

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Single parent	58	51.34	15.66	2.06
Nuclear	217	55.63	15.17	1.03
Polygamous	34	51.53	20.19	3.46
Other	6	29.33	19.97	8.15
Total	315	53.9	16.35	0.92

ANOVA

There is much difference between the two Mean Squares (1612.62 and 254.47), resulting in a significant difference (F = 6.337; p - value < 0.001) as shown in Table 9. Hence the means of home based parental involvement for nuclear, polygamous, single parent and other family types are not all equal.

Table 9: Home Based Parental Involvement and Family Type

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4837.87	3	1612.62	6.337	.000
Within Groups	79141.7	311	254.47		
Total	83979.5	314			

Table 9 shows the results of ANOVA test which reveal that family type has significant effects on home based involvement (P = 0.001 which is less than 5% level of significance). The model is, therefore, relevant and can be used to predict home based involvement of parents into their children’s education.

Post Hoc testing

Multiple comparison procedures looked at all possible pairs of means to determine whether each individual pairing is the same or statistically different. The table ‘Multiple Comparisons’ shows that three out of six pairs vary:

Single parent versus other family type (P - value < 0.05 which is lower than the significant. level of 0.05. Therefore, the family types vary in terms of contributing to home-based parental involvement.

Nuclear family versus other family type, P value < 0.05, which is lower than the significant level of 0.05. These groups also varied in their home based involvement.

Polygamous family versus other family type, P = 0.002, which is lower than the significant level of 0.05. These groups too varied as shown in Table 10.

The study found out that parental involvement with their children at home varied from one family type to another. From the family background, students were socialized differently and this possibly explains parents’ behaviours that have an influence on the quality of education that their children received.

Table 10: Multiple Comparisons on Home - Based Parental Involvement and Family Type

(I) Type of family	(J) Type of family	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Single parent	Nuclear	-4.282	2.358	.070
	Polygamous	-0.185	3.446	.957
	Other	22.01149*	6.841	.001
Nuclear	Single parent	4.282	2.358	.070
	Polygamous	4.097	2.942	.165
	Other	26.29339*	6.602	.000
Polygamous	Single parent	0.185	3.446	.957
	Nuclear	-4.097	2.942	.165
	Other	22.19608*	7.064	.002
Other	Single parent	-22.01149*	6.841	.001
	Nuclear	-26.29339*	6.602	.000
	Polygamous	-22.19608*	7.064	.002

Various informants’ views on the extent of parental involvement in home based activities

Out of the 15 items posed to the students on home based parental involvement practices, 8 items registered a mean of between 3.62 and 4.22 meaning regular involvement, 6 items enumerated a mean of between 3.23 and 3.43 implying occasional involvement while one item recorded a mean of 2.49 inferring infrequent involvement. Reviewing high correlations among responses from the fifteen items led the researcher to use one summated scale in looking at home based parental involvement activities. The answers from the fifteen questions were summed to create a home based parental involvement scale as shown in Table 11.

Table 11: Students' Responses on Parental Involvement in Home Based Activities

Home based Item	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Parents ensure I go to school everyday	315	4.22	1.29
Parents talk with me about my future	315	4.05	1.34
Parents tell me importance of secondary school education	315	4.03	1.38
Parents talk with me about plans for college after secondary education	315	3.99	1.35
I talk to my parent about school	315	3.94	1.31
Parents discuss with me about work after school	315	3.86	1.38
I discuss grades on tests with parents	315	3.63	1.46
Parents provide personal effects for my comfort in school	315	3.62	1.55
I talk about my homework assignment	315	3.43	1.46
I get my parents home when I return from school	315	3.43	1.36
Parents help me plan for homework, chores and other responsibilities	315	3.37	1.48
Parents buy me relevant text books	315	3.31	1.45
I discuss news and talk about current events with parents	315	3.30	1.36
Parents limit television watching time	315	3.23	1.48
My parent(s) help me with homework	315	2.49	1.54

When describing the home activities of parents of her school, principal P6 said,

Some parents lack responsibility towards their children. For example, some allow their children to live with relatives, especially grandparents from where they get to school. Child labour is rampant and more so to girls who are expected to do so much of household chores after a school's day. These children lack basics at home, like beddings, lighting and even food.

Echoing sentiments from parent PT8A, majority of the parents were less concerned with their children at home. There was inadequate provision of food especially breakfast and supper, and lack of shelter all of which had very adverse effects on the learners' education. He claimed that,

Some children seek shelter from neighbourhood since their parents are less interested with them, especially after circumcision / initiation for boys and female genital mutilation (FGM) for girls. After such a rite of passage, parents consider their children as grown-ups who should fend for themselves.

The study showed that students had no time to do their studies at home. Majority, especially girls were overburdened at home since they were expected to help with household chores like fetching water and firewood and even cooking. In addition, a lot of freedom, especially to young boys often misled them. For example, most school boys visited shopping centres in the evenings and spent better part of their evenings outside their homes. Some got involved in drugs, illicit sex, attending night clubs, betting and even chewing of "miraa" (khat). In such instances, issues not related to education were discussed. These young people hardly got time to do schoolwork at home. Eventually, the students registered poor results which consequently made them drop out of school. Principal P8 reported that,

Children in public day secondary schools have a lot freedom but misuse it, for instance, some watch television from dawn to dusk, use cell phones for chatting on WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter. Some other students misuse religion, for example, youth gatherings as excuses to exit the home. This permissiveness has negative implications on quality of education that they get from day secondary schools.

This practice was contrary to research findings by Bakker et al., 2007; and Patrikakou (2008) who suggested that some parental behaviours such as daily family conversations, monitoring of TV viewing times and programmes, as well as, a structure for homework completion and school preparation, were high predictors of academic success than socio- economic status.

According to principal P5 some students are lured by “bodaboda” (motor cycle) operators, especially girls – offered “lifts” to school. On the other hand boys get ‘squad’ (a turn to ride passengers in the motor cycle and get something in return) in “bodaboda” business which they saw as lucrative instead of wasting time in education. This failure of parents to monitor and control the movement of their children to and from school contributed largely to high dropout rate and irregular school attendance.

PT5C and PT7A were of the view that the level of involvement of parents with their children’s education at home depended on the setting of the family. For instance, some parents gave duties to their children like cleaning the house, cleaning utensils, cooking and other chores around the home. In some other families, children helped at home, especially during the holidays in chores like digging, fetching water and firewood, and cooking (PT2C PT3D and PT8C). Such engagements enabled parents to monitor their children’s behaviour and company as they worked in their homes. Such children were likely to display good behaviour and excel both academically and socially. Bakker et al. (2007), was of the same opinion that the contribution of the home environment to education quality depends on how parents guide and encourage their children in learning.

The research showed that even for parents who made an effort to be involved in many home-based activities with their children, majority were not able to help with homework. Parents reported that they frequently found themselves unable to help their children with homework because they did not understand the topics. The principals’ interviews also established that parents showed little concern about their children’s homework. Because of this, holiday assignments were shoddily done. From the principals’ interviews:

Some parents feel intimidated by their children’s school work and feel inadequate in helping with their studies. This is because majority of the parents are either illiterate or semi-literate. Due to this challenge many parents do not get involved with their children’s homework.

The principals felt that children from such families were demotivated since they got little support from their families. Similar sentiments had been highlighted from a study by Jeynes (2011) and Chen (2011), who observed that, parents may be less confident being involved in their children’s education since subject material becomes more challenging as their children progress through secondary schools.

Other parents felt that secondary school students were mature and responsible enough, hence, needed freedom to do their homework assignments. In addition, some other parents were very busy fending for the family and hardly had time to supervise or help their children with homework.

From the FGDs, it was clear that parents are the main determinants of their children's behaviour at home and subsequently at school. According to PT4B, parental involvement at home included activities like, buying paraffin to be used for lighting, providing personal effects' to the children, allowing children time to socialize with others, giving pocket money, buying clothes, providing food and also offering advice on who to befriend and giving counsel on expected behaviour.

The study showed that parents mostly showed their support by being financiers of their children's education (though sluggish), offering security, providing basic needs and school uniform. It was, however, noted that parents relaxed when it came to disciplining their children and would opt to report discipline problems to the teachers for they expected them to be more powerful.

Effects of Home - Based Parental Involvement Practices on Quality of Education

To most parents indicators of quality education included students' academic performance, good discipline, improved relationships among people, reduction in poverty levels, and improved economic welfare of community members. When asked of their views on quality of education offered in their schools, some parents considered performance in examination as an indicator of quality of education. To them quality of education was poor in most public day secondary schools since most students performed poorly in national examinations. The parents held that none of the students from their schools ever scored A related grades since their schools began. On average, it was reported that most students got C related grades, a few B related grades, and others grade D and below, though not many scored grade E. It was also reported that school dropout was still prevalent in these schools. Other parents, however, considered education to be of high quality if children were disciplined, and the school was well developed, with good infrastructure, qualified teachers and adequate teaching and learning resources.

The school principals considered quality education as that which added value to the learner. To the principals, the indicators of quality education included, feedback from those who have absorbed students from their schools, good discipline, quality grades, uptake in higher education institutions, students of high integrity, honesty and were preferred products in the job market. Principal P1 testified;

Our students are very good, virtuous and disciplined, and are quite complimented by the public.

Some are in gainful employment working as teachers, nurses, others in the disciplined forces, and prison wardens, among others.

The research revealed many parents' opinions that the education of their children was the sole responsibility of schools and teachers. A small percentage of parents believed that they too had a responsibility in ensuring quality of their children's education.

The study found out that the quality of home learning environment was very important, socially and even cognitively. It was concluded that parents could be directly involved in learning activities at home by taking an active interest in what their children engaged in after a school day. However, many argued that they could not help with their children's homework assignments as they were challenging. Majority of the parents had been described as illiterate by the schools' principals interviewed; with many having dropped out of primary school; and some having never attended school at all. This fact might rightfully have limited the extent of involvement of such parents in their children's school work. However, other

home based practices like parents supervising the behaviour of their children, allocating and supervising chores, as well as, creating a conducive environment for studying, was seen to impact positively on the children's discipline and study habits; which would see improvement in quality of education as a reinforcement to what they would get in school.

Conclusion

Education is a vital tool for our country's development. Therefore, to involve parents in their children's education is extremely important. The purpose of the study was to explore home based parental involvement practices in promoting quality of education in public day secondary schools in Igembe Central Sub-County, Meru County-Kenya.

From the study, it was noted that home-based activities of the parents were significant to quality of education offered in public day secondary schools. Furthermore, it was clear that all parents could be involved in their children's education regardless of their children's gender, family type and other background variables, as long as they knew the importance of their involvement.

Furthermore, improving home based involvement of the parents can lead to improvement in school attendance, homework completion, improved learning behaviours and even better learner's discipline. This indicates that parents' involvement in education of their children at home is a powerful force in enhancing the quality of education offered in public day secondary schools.

Recommendations

From the findings, most parents consider education to be important for their children though ignorant of the benefits of their involvement in secondary school education. Consequently, the following were derived from the study;

- a) Parents should be enlightened on the home based activities that either directly or indirectly affect the quality of education that their children receive so that they may know how to invest their energies and resources to improve education of their children.
- b) Additionally, teachers should encourage parents to supervise their children's schoolwork, because children waste valuable time at home instead of doing their homework assignments.
- c) Parents should assume the responsibility of protecting their children by monitoring when they get to, and from school.

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