THE CONTRIBUTION OF CHILDREN’S INVOLVEMENT IN HOUSEWORK TO ACADEMIC COMPETENCE DURING EARLY CHILDHOOD AT CITY PRIMARY SCHOOL, NAIROBI COUNTY

BY

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JUNE 2015
DECLARATION

I confirm that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented in any other university/ institution. The thesis has been complemented by referenced works duly acknowledged. Where text, data, graphics, pictures or labels have been borrowed from other works-including internet, the sources are specifically accredited through referencing in accordance with anti-plagiarism regulations.

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I dedicate this work to my parents, Stephen and Millicent Weche Ambetsa and siblings Reddie, Maggie, David the late Miriam and Philip, who are my constant source of encouragement and strength.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I thank the almighty God for granting me the ability to do this work and to the Higher Education Loans Board (HELB) Kenya, for awarding me the scholarship to undertake this course. My sincere gratitude goes to my supervisors Dr. Gladwell Wambiri and Dr. John, T. Ng’asike for their constant guidance, direction and encouragement throughout this research. I am sincerely grateful to the administration and staff of City Primary School Nairobi, where this research was conducted. My sincere thanks also goes to the administration and staff of Karen Christian College, Nairobi where the report was prepared. Last but not least, I give gratitude to my friends, Kassim Owino, Josh Amwago, Lucy Gatavi, Keziah Mien, James Singila among many others for their unwavering moral and material support.

May God bless you all abundantly.
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### Abbreviations and Acronyms

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<tr>
<td>DEO</td>
<td>District Education Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECDE</td>
<td>Early Childhood Development and Education</td>
</tr>
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<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labor Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOEST</td>
<td>Ministry Of Education Science and Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>NACOSTI</td>
<td>National Council for Science and Technology</td>
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<td>UNCRC</td>
<td>United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
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ABSTRACT

Early childhood education is now recognized as critical in laying the foundation for holistic development of young children during the formative years. Research in early childhood emphasizes the interplay between the home and the school in enhancing quality holistic experiences in children in the early years. However, the rise in industrialization and technological advancements in modern day society have led to a lot of changes in child rearing practices especially in the urban areas. These changes include: a greater number of mothers seeking employment, employment of domestic servants in the homes, a more demanding education system and so on. These changes have had tremendous effects on childhood experiences that have all along been significant to the development of children including the participation of children in housework. Participation of children in housework is a traditional practice that has been imperative in the holistic development of school children including academic competences. However, current research does not show whether this practice is still being upheld, especially in the urban households where the effects of modernity are the greatest. This gap in knowledge was the basis for conducting this study. This was a descriptive survey, whose purpose was to find out whether or not school children in urban households are being involved in housework and how this relate to their academic performance in the school activity areas. Qualitative methods of data collection and analysis were used during the study. Purposive sampling was used to select the specific settings and respondents relevant to the study. It was done among six to eight year old children, parents and teachers in City Primary School, Nairobi County. The sampling frame was 77 respondents which was 30.08% of the population. Naturalistic observations of the children at home and at school and in-depth interviews and questionnaires were the primary sources of data. In addition, document analysis, and field notes provided additional secondary data. A pilot study was conducted among children and parents at Ngara Road primary school, to test the validity and reliability of the instruments. Qualitative analysis procedures were used to analyze the data collected and the generated theory was compared to existing theory. The findings showed that most children in urban areas did not participate in housework. Children’s main activities at home included doing school assignments, play and watching television. Schoolwork was a major competing force to children’s participation in housework. The recommendation is that parents, teachers and policy makers should be enlightened on the role of housework in developing academic competence in early childhood.
1.1 Background of the study

The focus of early childhood education worldwide is to promote holistic development of a child where cognitive, physical, social, emotional and spiritual aspects of the child are promoted and sufficiently enhanced. A report by UNESCO (2010), underscores that the early years of a child’s life are a time when the child acquires concepts, skills and attitudes that lay the foundation for lifelong learning. According to Kabiru and Njenga (2007), the period from birth to nine years in one’s lifespan has been recognized as the period of fastest brain development and by six years, the child has acquired ninety percent of adult brain weight. The quality of learning experiences at this age at school and at home, have lifelong effects on the holistic development of an individual. It is therefore imperative to give children as many opportunities as possible to promote their learning and performance in school, in the family, at home and at the community.

Studies by Rosmann, (2008) and Bazley and Ennew, (2006), show that one way of enhancing children’s holistic development is involving them in activities done at home as a means of family growth and survival such as housework. Work at home, constituting housework/household chores, are activities that children can naturally get involved in as they observe and role play their parents, older siblings, relatives and others. Cunningham and Stromquist (2005) indicate that this has been a traditional practice in many households throughout the world where children would take part in maintaining the home through performing housework. Children as early as preschool age would accompany their parents as they engaged in household duties and helped in tasks that are developmentally appropriate to
their age. This constituted activities such as planting and harvesting, herding cattle, caring for young ones and preparing meals for the family.

Engaging in housework has numerous benefits for the holistic development of the child. Rutherford (2001) explains that, the knowledge and skills children acquire as they interact with home materials, equipment and with more experienced adults are key in increasing their exposure and experience. While engaging in housework, children develop important abilities and concepts. These include, observation, computation, analysis and creative skills which they naturally apply to all learning areas such as; mathematics, science, creative and other learning activities.

According to Coy (1999), involving children in housework is important to enhance the development of values such as responsibility, competence, self-reliance and self-esteem. When children acquire responsibility and self reliance from performing housework, they in turn become responsible in carrying out classroom assignments effectively without being pushed by the teachers. Self reliant children are not heavily dependent on the teacher for assistance in handling tools, carrying out practical tasks and so on. In addition, once a child feels a sense of satisfaction after successfully performing a chore, this builds self esteem which is naturally translated in class work activities thus promoting academic excellence (Rossman, 2008). This traditional practice suggests that most cultures throughout the world recognized that learning begins at birth and involved children in housework as a stepping stone to the development of essential skills critical for holistic development. These traditional practices were affirmed by the Jomtien conference on Education for All (Jomtien conference, Thailand, 1990) which
asserted that learning begins at birth and early learning experiences are recognized as critical in early childhood.

From the mentioned studies, it is clear that the school alone cannot develop all the competences that children require for academic excellence. Familial activities such as housework have a major part to play in development of the child. Stephens and Schaben (2002), point to the complementary role of the school and the family in holistic child development. However, while children who are involved in housework are shown to be likely to do better academically, recent reports documenting child rearing practices in urban families, suggest that there appears to be several emerging issues that are challenging the occurrence of this traditional practice.

Firstly, there are a lot of misconceptions on the UNCRC against child labour. Efforts to eradicate child labour have been misconstrued to mean that work is inappropriate for the child. Activists arguing on the basis of the ratification of the labour conventions believe that children’s work is likely to lead to ‘child labour’. As a result, Wambiri (2012) opines that the consequence of the child right activism is that child rights organizations are agitating for the elimination of child work at all levels of the society. While it is true that some forms of work are harmful to children and there is widespread agreement on the need to bring to an end the abusive or “worst forms” of work following the ILO Convention 182 and Recommendation 190 (ILO, 2006), Rosmann (2008) shows that not all work is harmful and some forms of work such as housework, are an important tool for enhancing children’s learning. The reports on the media and the numerous campaigns against child labor, a term whose parameters are still not
yet clearly understood by local parents and caregivers, continues to threaten the involvement of children in housework.

Secondly, globalization and industrialization in the past 30 years has brought about a change in lifestyles in child rearing practices especially in urban families. According to Garcia (2005), because of the rising cost of living and introduction of a cash economy, parents have to engage in economic activities outside the home. Consequently, Tumuti (1982) notes that most households in urban areas have resorted to hiring house helps or ayahs. Having a house help in the home means in some cases that all the housework is done by such a helper. Children then venture into other activities to occupy themselves. As a result, involvement in activities such as playing computer games, watching television and movies which are very appealing to children, have drastically increased in urban households.

In Kenya, the 8.4.4 system of education is very demanding and thus overstretching to children. Schooling has become a more demanding task, taking a significant proportion of children’s time at home. Muremo (2006) indicates that, there is a lot of pressure on children to perform well in examinations therefore making children to spend long hours in the classroom or doing school assignments while at home. It has become a common practice for children at all levels of education including early childhood to attend remedial / tuition classes during the school holidays and weekends, until very recently when it was banned by the Ministry of Education (Daily Nation, 2012). However what is not certain is whether this ban will be adhered to by parents. Parents and teachers alike are going into very extreme practices such as overemphasizing on academic work and drilling students, in an effort to enable them compete
with others for slots in reputable primary schools for preschoolers and secondary schools for primary school children.

The emerging issues mentioned thereof, continue to threaten the involvement of children in housework and it is not known whether children in urban areas are participating in housework and to what extent they are doing so. Research on the status of children’s participation in housework is lacking in Kenya. It was therefore important to establish the extent of children’s involvement in housework because it is a fundamental aspect of holistic child development and acquisition of knowledge, skills and values. It was also important to establish the contribution to the child’s academic competence at school at a time when changes in child rearing practices continue to threaten such involvement.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The early years of an individual are considered the basis of development of every aspect of the human being. This requires focusing on competency that takes into account the cognitive, social and physical abilities. Early childhood education meets these goals through approaches that are both family and school based. This, therefore, requires a combined effort by teachers and parents in child upbringing that builds on family values and school related functions that build on academic competence without compromising the child’s holistic development.

Bazley and Ennew (2006) indicate that taking part in housework is one strategy for teaching competent personalities, values, skills and a way of socializing children into adult roles critical for holistic development of the child, which the school alone cannot develop. Children in traditional African families have been involved in supporting the family by participating in
housework. However, modern life appears to have promoted ways of socializing children which are likely to focus on schooling to the neglect of skills that children used to develop at home through participating in house work. For example, families are employing house helps to free children to do homework at home. At school, Otieno (2004) further highlights that teachers insist on academic tasks at the expense of holistic development of children.

In as much as research (Rosmann, 2008) indicates that children who are likely to be successful are those that received early childhood programs that target the development of a holistic individual, it has not been established whether children in modern day society are taking part in housework and how this is affecting their academic performance at school. This is critical in ensuring holistic development of children in early childhood education. There are other studies that have been done on children and work but not particularly household chores. This study carried out an investigation to establish whether families in Nairobi involve children in housework and the reasons thereof, the contribution of this phenomenon on children’s academic performance, and the opinions and perspectives of children and parents towards engaging children in housework.

1.2.1 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which school children from urban families were being involved in housework and how such involvement contributed to children’s academic competence in school activity areas. It also sought to find out children’s and parent’s perspectives on children’s participation in housework.
1.3 Objectives of study

The study aimed to achieve the following objectives:

i. To find out children’s views on participation in housework.

ii. To find out parent’s views on their children’s involvement in housework.

iii. To determine the level of involvement in housework of school children aged six to eight years in urban areas.

iv. To establish the extent to which children’s involvement in housework enhances their academic performance at school.

1.4 Research Questions

i. What are children’s perspectives of their involvement in housework?

ii. What are the parent’s perspectives towards involving their children in housework?

iii. To what extent do children from urban households in Kenya take part in house hold chores such as cleaning dishes, mopping and sweeping?

iv. To what extent does children involvement in housework enhance their academic performance at school?
1.5 Significance of the Study

The significance of the study was to bring out the relevance of the family in enhancing holistic development of the child and in particular the familial practices that are relevant in developing competence in children such as housework. It critically looked at the role of the family in the promotion of holistic development of the child by redefining the idea of housework to children’s holistic development. It will stimulate researchers into looking at research into education where the role of African values and practices are significantly explored in developing holistic development.

The findings of this study will provide useful information to teachers and parents on the place of housework in developing holistic development for the child. It will be of use to teachers as it will enable them to work in partnership with parents to ensure that children have opportunities for doing essential tasks at home such as in creating tuition schedules and homework assignments that allow time for children to engage in housework while at home. Parents will understand the role of housework on learning and the need to provide favorable conditions for children to engage in household chores. The findings will guide educational policy makers in formulating an education system which incorporates the family in education. Curriculum developers will make use of the study findings to structure the curriculum in such a way that it allows for children’s engagement in other essential tasks at home such as housework.
1.6 Limitations of the study

Home observations were part of the methods of data collection. This was a limitation because the sample collected from the parents was not randomly selected as this relied on the willingness of the parents to allow the research to be conducted in their homes. This had an influence on the validity of the results as the sample collected was not representative enough. In order to overcome this, the researcher was very selective and selected parents from different backgrounds in order to enhance the representativeness of the sample selected.

1.7 Scope of the study

The study focused on young children aged six to eight years living in urban areas because, the early years of a child’s life is a time when they acquire concepts, skills and attitudes that lay the foundation for lifelong learning. The totalities of the learning experiences at this level are very critical and it is imperative to give children as many opportunities as possible to promote their learning and performance in school, in the family and in the community.

It was limited to children and parents in urban areas. This was because, as described by Garcia (2005), most of the challenges surrounding involvement of children in housework such as industrialization and the employment of house helps were observed mostly in the urban areas and were likely to have major effects on urban households rather than the rural households. It also included the role of house helps in housework with children either facilitating skill acquisition or hindering the child from participating in this work. It focused on parents because they are the owners of the households and are the primary caregivers and they therefore determine most of the activities done by children at home. The teachers at school
were also involved in giving information on children’s academic performance in the activity areas.

1.8 Assumptions of the Study

The study was guided by the following assumptions:

i. Parents had a role to play in determining whether children participate in housework or not

ii. Parents’ perspectives on children’s involvement in work are important for understanding children’s participation in work

iii. Urban lifestyle may have an influence on parental attitudes towards their children’s involvement in housework

iv. Children’s perceptions on involvement in housework are likely to be influenced by both family and school environment

1.9.1 Theoretical Framework

The theory of Erik Erikson on human psychosocial including personality development formed the framework of this study. This theory emphasizes the role of society in shaping the child’s psychosocial development during the early stages of development. According to Erikson (1979), each individual undergoes eight stages of development each posing a conflict that should be resolved before proceeding to the next stage. These stages follow a sequence and are influenced by biological changes and environmental experiences in the individual child’s context.
In early childhood, these stages are; basic trust versus mistrust (0-1 year), autonomy versus shame and doubt (2-3 years), initiative versus guilt(4-5 years), and industry versus inferiority (6-11 years). The resolution of the conflicts in one stage enables the individual to have the capacity to resolve the next conflict in the preceding stage. If positive social conditions prevail during a particular stage of development, it leads to acquisition of a number of social and cognitive skills appropriate for that stage. Njagi (2009) further explains that, if the child does not receive the psychosocial needs of that particular stage such as encouragement and psychosocial support, it leads to lack of development of the relevant skills. The focus of this study are the six to eight year old children who are fall in the fourth stage of Erikson’s psychosocial theory which is industry versus inferiority. The stage that comes before this is; initiative versus guilt; three to five years.

**Initiative versus guilt (3-5years)**

A child at this stage has developed self-control and regulation and begins to exhibit active purposeful behavior. The refined developmental abilities make the child initiate their own activities. They come up with their own games and ways of performing their own activities both at home and at school. They begin to stimulate their own creativity and start to explore the world around them. The positive outcome of this stage is a sense of initiative. Kabiru & Njenga (2007), point to the fact that, parental reinforcement such as encouragement through giving positive comments and involvement in activities such as housework will encourage such initiative and prompt purpose and goal directedness. Parental restrictiveness on the other hand through discouragement in expressing their actions and desires is likely to prompt a sense of guilt whenever the child seeks to discover the world on their own and explore their
creativity. This translates to poor academic performance because the child is fearful, lacks confidence, creativity and originality. Resolving this conflict successfully develops the virtue of ‘purpose’.

**Industry versus inferiority (6-11 years)**

Once children have successfully acquired the virtue of purpose in the previous stage, they are now faced with the next conflict which is industry vs. inferiority. This is the stage that forms the framework of this study. At this stage children are in the transitional period between early childhood and middle childhood (6-8 years), they attend school and learn academic skills such as reading and writing. They direct their energy towards mastering knowledge and other skills that are important in life. They seek to engage in meaningful activities to increase their knowledge and skills both at home and at school (Erikson, 1979). Social experiences that encourage children in the acquisition and development of these skills enable them to develop a sense of industry and the virtue of ‘competence’. A child that develops the virtue of competence grows up with an inner motivation to perform tasks effectively. The child is likely to carry this motivation to all tasks s/he does including schooling such that; a child with a virtue of competence will make efforts to perform learning tasks more thoughtfully, carefully and systematically (Njagi, 2009). This in turn translates into better academic achievement.

Involving children in housework is one way in which parents can enhance the development of a sense of industry and consequently the virtue of competence in their children. Simple household chores such as setting the table, clearing the table after meals, mopping the house and so on, are favorable experiences for developing industry. Through participation in
housework, they become competent in many areas and acquire knowledge and skills which are useful to them in classroom activities. The satisfaction achieved gives them self-confidence and a feeling of usefulness and relevance at home and in society. This attitude, when transferred to school activities leads to better academic performance. If they fail to get opportunities to be productive, they develop a sense of inferiority. Children who feel inferior do not perform well in school because they lack a lot of skills and competencies that are required in the classroom. They suffer low self esteem and feelings of low self worth. Children should therefore be given challenging tasks at home and reinforced to carry out these tasks to completion in order to develop competence.

1.9.2 Conceptual Framework

This model is a diagrammatic representation of the study variables. It shows the visual relationship between the study variables, the extent of children’s involvement in housework, children’s and parents views in housework and the non-study variables at home such as the presence of househelps and the availability of time for involvement in household chores. The resultant outcome is achievement of overall academic competence. This is shown in figure 1.1
Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework

**ACADEMIC COMPETENCE**
- Resilience
- Independence
- Creativity,
- Problem solving skills,
- Scientific and analytical skills

**KEY**

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<tr>
<td>White coloured areas</td>
<td>Non-study variables</td>
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**EXTENT OF CHILDRENS INVOLVEMENT IN HOUSEHOLD CHORES**

**AVAILABILITY OF TIME FOR INVOLVEMENT IN HOUSEHOLD CHORES**

**HOME FACTORS**
- Presence of house helps

**PARENTS VIEWS ON HOUSEWORK**
- Parents perspectives on child work
- Parents awareness about the importance of housework
- Parents interpretation of the child labour laws
- Parents definition of the child’s role in the home

**CHILDREN’S VIEWS ON HOUSEWORK**

EXTENT OF CHILDRENS INVOLVEMENT IN HOUSEHOLD CHORES
1.10 Operational definition of terms

**Academic competence**: A measure of good performance in the classroom tests in subject areas like science, mathematics, language, physical exercises, social studies and creative activities and life skills

**Activity area**: the subjects taught at school such as science, mathematics, creative, language and social activities

**Child labour**: child work that is developmentally inappropriate that is likely to be harmful to the child

**Child work/housework/household chores**: school, family and household survival chores in which children participate together with adults and are developmentally appropriate and are likely to enhance the quality of life of the family and the children. For example, cleaning, sweeping, helping in the garden and so on.

**Code**: a word, abbreviation or phrase which represents the link between raw data and the researchers theoretical concept

**Domestic workers**: includes the maids, ayahs, house helps who are paid to perform household chores at home

**Personal self care activities**: chores/activities that involve only personal care and well being and not the wellbeing of the whole family such as spreading one’s bed, polishing one’s shoes, cleaning one’s bedroom, handkerchiefs and so on.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviewed literature related to the research topic. The literature addressed in detail aspects of the study related to the children’s involvement in housework, Children’s involvement in work and academic performance and emerging issues surrounding involvement of children in housework.

2.2 Children’s involvement in housework

Studies by Boyden (1997) and Woodhead (1999) have revealed that, since the 18th century, childhoods in western societies have been progressively structured as an extended period of dependency, protected innocence, and preparation for adult life regulated by natural and universal processes and enhanced through compulsory schooling. Whilst education might be thought of in terms of participation in more formal school situations, the historical and socio-cultural contexts of childhood inform us that education goes way beyond a modern western concept of schooling (Woodhead, 1999). The rising economy demands that young people leave school with strong abilities to read, write, calculate and apply disciplined thought to the solution of problems. From birth to age thirteen, children spend a significant portion of their time at home. Thus, it is not surprising that many factors outside the school environment significantly influence children’s prospects for academic success in school. These factors are in play both during the years before children begin formal schooling and while they are actually enrolled in pre-school and primary school.
As schools have been pressed to be more effective and more productive, out-of-school influences on academic learning have escalated in importance. It has been discovered that it is not simply traditional in-class instruction that impacts academic achievement. Stephens & Schaben (2002) show that schools do not exist in a vacuum, a host of factors contribute to children’s prospects for academic success. The way children choose to spend their free time has significant effects on their school performance. A study by the U. S. National Institute of Education (2006) revealed that students who participate in co-curricular activities are three times more likely to have a grade point average of 3.0 or better than students who do not participate in co-curricular activities. There is a growing body of literature that sees child development as a social activity. Children learn, and acquire a place in society, by taking part in a variety of activities. One such activity is housework at home.

All over the world, housework has historically occupied an important place in children’s time and development. Generational skills and knowledge have for a long time been imparted to the young generation outside formal institutions through observing, experimenting and supplemental instructions from seniors. In traditional African households, children start to work at an early age, by the time they are three or four years old, their contribution in the household is needed or somewhat expected, however small it may be. Statistics based on the UNDP report (1998) indicate that at least 80 per cent of African child work is related to subsistence agriculture. Throughout African literature, farming together has been a joint struggle for survival, giving a strong feeling of belonging and strengthening group solidarity. In some places, farming together is a lifestyle and an important part of what it means to be in a
family. The more farmland a peasant family has, the more likely it is that the children of that household will work.

The most common work activities of children aged six to fourteen years in most rural Kenyan households include: childcare, bringing grain to mill, fetching water, doing dishes, laundry and helping in the house. In rural Kenya, childcare is a primary example of the type of task by which children substitute for women in most traditional households, enabling their mothers to be occupied with something else within or outside the household. When a new child is born, the second youngest, often as young as one or two years, is commonly passed on to the care of the other children in the household. It is common to see children as young as five or six carrying their younger siblings on their backs. Studies carried out by Mweru (2011) on sibling teaching have shown that, learning to look after younger siblings is a good experience which has for a long time taught children to be responsible at an early age and instills leadership skills. The complexity of the tasks that children are expected to learn and perform seem to increase as children get older.

According to Mweru (2011), elder sisters play a critical role of teaching this task to their younger siblings. Among the Ameru people of Kenya, for example, girls as young as five or six years old begin learning from their elder sisters how to perform household chores such as grinding maize, cooking and washing utensils. On the other hand, boys of this age among the Ameru learn from their older brothers how to feed domestic animals. Among the Kalenjin community of Kenya, by the time girls are seven or eight years old they are expected to be able to light a fire on their own using firewood.
2.3 Children’s involvement in work and school performance

There exists a variety of appropriate household chores which children can participate in while at home. Pantley (2006) points out to some of the chores identified for children aged six to eight years. These include: watering the garden and indoor plants, cleaning utensils such as cups, cutlery and plates, helping to carry garden refuse, cleaning the bathroom sink, wiping kitchen benches, helping to wash and hang out clothes, mopping floors, putting away crockery and cutlery, dusting, taking out rubbish, helping with meal preparation and serving, caring for a family pet, setting the table, folding and putting away clothes, clearing and cleaning the table after meals, among many others.

Involvement of children in housework has been identified to have potential benefits for the child’s performance at school. According to Rosmann (2008), participating in housework has a significant impact on a child’s overall academic performance. Assigning children household chores is an important way to build a feeling of competence. Regular chores establish helpful habits and good attitudes about work. Having chores also teaches valuable lessons about life and creates an understanding that there are activities that must be done to run a household. When children engage in these chores, they manipulate a variety of materials and equipment and relate with other children and more experienced adults. As a result of this, they acquire numerous skills and concepts which are useful in learning activity areas such as science, mathematics, language, social studies, life skills and psychomotor abilities. These benefits are explained in this section.
2.3.1 Science & Mathematics

As children manipulate materials and equipment such as utensils, soap, furniture, brooms and so on, they discover in them concepts such as shape, colour, size, mass, density, volume and capacity. They count objects such as plates when setting the table, divide amounts of washing powder when cleaning, measure and subtract amounts of water, flour, salt and so on. Gugel (2004) points to this as an important avenue for acquiring computation and measurement skills. This knowledge, if applied in performing mathematical experiences in measurement and computation such counting, multiplication, division, addition and subtraction, helps children to acquire these concepts more easily because they have prior knowledge and can practice these skills at home while doing housework.

Children also develop creativity and original thinking as they plan menus, sweep the house, clean and so on, which is necessary for thinking and reasoning out scientific and mathematical equations. While performing housework, children make use of all their senses. They can see, touch, feel, smell and even taste the materials and equipment with which they are using and this is multisensory learning.

Children explore the environment around the home as they work enabling them to develop discovery and exploratory skills (Gugel, 2004). This is an important skill in science activities in the classroom which requires them to discover ideas, concepts and scientific explanations to natural phenomenon. When they go for nature walks and other educational tours, they can employ these discovery skills which they have learnt at home. Children also develop spatial skills, sensitivity and observation skills as they work at home. They observe objects, are
sensitive to time and processes such as cleaning, cooking and how machines work and so on. These skills are vital when doing scientific experiments and carrying out projects.

2.3.2 Language

Language is an effective tool for communicating feelings, emotions and ideas. Through language, human beings are able to discuss about their interests and their surroundings. According to Njagi (2009), language is a skill that is most effectively developed during out of class activities where children can freely communicate with one another. The teacher alone cannot effectively instill language if children do not get opportunities to interact freely with each other and with adults (Njagi, 2009). If language is to be effectively acquired, learning in the classroom should be reinforced with a lot of other out of class activities because effective language is developed during social interaction. When engaging in housework, children speak, listen and communicate to one another and to more experienced adults. Thus, participating in housework can be a major way of instilling language in children because they get opportunities to practice their communication skills with other children. The more experienced adults in the home also correct them in their speech to get the proper vocabulary, pronunciations and grammar.

2.3.3 Social Studies

Through working with other family members in a group or a team, children learn interdependence, team work and social skills of interaction. They realize that they are part of a household and they see their work as part of something bigger since everyone is working together and doing his part. Bazley and Ennew (2006) highlight that, this ability will help the
child to take part in class group work activities, class discussions, group tasks and so on effectively, because they will be willing to share and also learn from others which will greatly enhance their academic success.

Children also learn organizational abilities as they perform various chores. For instance, when cleaning up, they will be required to plan on how to carry out the task effectively which will involve collecting the equipment and clearing up the area. These skills enable them be effective in performing academic tasks such as doing homework, performing experiments, working on projects which require organizational skills. They also learn self care skills such as personal hygiene, table manners and general cleanliness as a result of performing chores such as cleaning the utensils, cleaning the table, folding clothes and so on.

2.3.5 Life skills and virtues

Fay (2003) explains that, getting a chore done and doing it well gives child a major sense of accomplishment which builds confidence and self esteem. Self esteem is a very important life skill which determines the overall academic performance of children. Without a good self esteem, children cannot perform well in school because they do not believe in their abilities. Participation in housework also leads to the discovery of talents which also build self awareness and self esteem.

In addition to building self esteem, Rutherford (2001) further explain that the routine and pattern that comes out of engaging in a household chore eventually builds values of resilience, patience and commitment. For instance if a child’s duty is wiping the table after dinner, he will develop resilience, patience and commitment in doing it because the chore becomes a part of
his life. These abilities, when incorporated in school work, enables them to be patient to learn, be committed to class projects and be resilient in going through the school routine, they will take learning as part of life and be willing to put all the efforts in learning activities and be patient to await for the results.

Children when working, have to learn the concept of time such as when to sweep the house, to clean the utensils, to feed the pets, wipe the tables and so on (Pain, 2004). They acquire the concept of time and time management because every chore has a specific time to be done. This ability, if employed into academic work, will enable them to understand the concept of time better in mathematics classes and their personal time management now and in future which leads to overall good performance.

Children learn to be responsible when they realize that the performance of a certain chore depends on them. It has been discovered, Pantley (2006), that children who are given responsibilities have an easier time making the transition from childhood into adulthood. Children who grow up perceiving housework as a normal part of life will find the transition into adulthood much easier than those without responsibility (Pantley, 2006). Using measures of individual's success such as IQ, completion of education and getting started on a career path, the best predictor of young adults' success in their mid-20s is their participation in housework during their early childhood years. However, Rosmann (2008) highlights that if they do not begin participating in housework until they are fifteen or sixteen years, the participation does not change them much. The indication is that responsibility learned through household chores is best learnt when children are still young.
When performing household chores, children learn to be independent. They learn how to perform simple tasks on their own such as setting the table and cleaning and therefore become less dependent on their parents or caregivers in performing these chores for them. Children start seeing themselves as useful and start developing self-reliance at an early age (Rutherford, 2001). When in school these children will be less dependent on the teacher. For instance, they can tidy up after an activity, they can clean themselves up, they can try to solve mathematical problems by themselves first and only go to the teacher when they are stuck and so on. Such children will therefore give the teacher easy time as they also struggle to perform academic tasks by themselves. This builds a strong basis for hard work and determination in these children.

2.3.6 Psychomotor skills

Taking part in housework engages the use of almost all muscles in the body and this enables children to be active and energized. This promotes physical health and is one way of preventing conditions such as childhood obesity. In addition to being physically active, children talk and laugh with others and they feel a sense of accomplishment once they complete a chore. Pantley (2006) describes this as a good strategy for children to relax from their academic duties and release pent up emotions and stress which is important for their physical, mental and emotional health.
2.4 Emerging issues surrounding involvement of children in housework

While it is clear that taking part in housework has numerous benefits for the holistic development of the child, there appears to be several emerging issues in modern day society that are threatening the occurrence this phenomenon. Some of these issues are discussed here.

2.4.1. International child labour regulations

Regular exposés in the media remind us that many children are abused and deprived of education in homes and workplaces around the world which has lead to numerous campaigns to eradicate ‘child labor’. The ILO (ILO, 2006), has called for urgent action to eliminate the ‘worst forms of child labor’. In the recent global report on child labor (ILO, 2006), the introduction focuses on harmful work stating: ‘The ILO and its partners advocate for a world where no girl or boy is forced to work at the expense of their health and development and their future prospects of decent work’. This stand appears to justify a campaign to eliminate ‘child labor’ which includes all forms of forced labor, prostitution and other illicit activities, whether or not they involve formal employment. Even when the term is redefined as ‘harmful work’, it creates an association between work and harm, however it is not always agreed which particular types of work fit this category of ‘worst forms’.

There is widespread agreement on the need to bring to an end the abuse of children in the ‘worst forms’ of work, following ILO Convention 182 and Recommendation 190. On the other hand, few if any would deny that some forms of work, particularly light work in the home and on family farms, are acceptable. However a gap occurs principally on these issues; whether or not there are any forms of work that are appropriate for childhood and if there are,
what forms of work are appropriate, or, whether or not housework and school can be combined without harming the child. The issue concerns the disputed place of work and responsibility in the process of growing up.

In practice, the media and civil rights activists have portrayed ‘child labor’ with the connotation of harmful work and or paid employment. A common assumption made by the “anti child-labor” activists is that the best way of protecting children from harmful work is to keep them away from engaging in any form of work. As a result there are a lot of media and civil rights campaigns as cited by Ennew (2005), aimed at preventing children from taking part in all forms of work, which is implied as ‘child abuse’. This issue has resulted into media watch on the practices of caregivers in the home, at school and in the community to identify cases of child labor, which is termed as a form of child abuse. While it is true that some forms of work are particularly detrimental to children’s growth and development, it is also true that some forms of work such as housework have immense benefits for the child. To prohibit such work which is beneficial to children is to deprive children of valuable opportunities for growth and development.

2.4.2 Technological advancements and children’s work involvement

According to Goessi (2007), the last 30 years have seen the pace of technological change throughout the world increase tremendously. Technological advancements have vastly improved our daily lives and have constantly changed how we live. In today’s modern age we can now connect to each other in a vast number of ways. With devices such as smart phones, tablets and laptops we can now connect to each other much faster and more
conveniently. Technological advances have led to innovations such as live video conferencing to help businesses collaborate and communicating with family and friends across the world face to face through mechanisms such as Skype. The progress that has been made throughout the years has been growing and it is certain that the standard of living throughout the world will continue to improve.

This technology has had a significant effect on children. Children in the current generation especially from urban areas, are enamored with technology endeared by the simple fact they have never lived without it. Technology offers children a sense of empowerment and provides them with the tools needed to solve problems. Children today especially from urban areas, would have a difficult time imaging life without items such as video games, internet, cell phones and iPods. Parents are fearful to let their children escape to the adventures of the outdoors alone especially due to security concerns and as an alternative have encouraged technical devices in their houses as a replacement for entertainment.

Technology, specifically the internet, offers a vast amount of knowledge and children have access to absorb much of this information. Coles (2007) points out that, computer softwares, designed specifically for learning, are a good tool to utilize in developmental learning and creativity. Video games offer ways for children to collaborate and take turns and learn basic principles of teamwork and sharing. This is not to exclude motor skills and eye hand coordination that is improved due to the movements needed to effectively navigate a mouse or play a video game. All these benefits point out the invaluable impact that technological advancements have on children’s learning and development.
Nevertheless, in as much as technological advancements provide an endless resource for learning; what is not known is whether this technology will help them to use their minds as they mature into adults. Garcia, (2005) argues that, in days past, children did not have any electronic toys to keep them occupied. They spent their days running around the neighborhood, playing with their peers or assisting their parents in running the home. In addition, parents did not have to worry nearly as much as they do today when sending their children out to play. However, it is common today to find children in urban households sitting around and watching television or playing computer games almost throughout their free time and it is not known whether these children take part in household chores. The fact that there is a problem with children being obese shows that there is a problem with children sitting around playing video games and watching television instead of doing some practical activity such as playing outside or performing household chores.

2.4.3 Domestic workers and children’s involvement in household chores

The role of housekeeping and care giving has traditionally been a preserve for mothers in the family. According to a recent survey done among British children (Rutherford, 2001), British children earn about 700 million pounds a year doing chores and errands for their mothers. This is because, they are very busy working, looking for money in order to make ends meet and the existing labor laws consider housework for children a form of child abuse. However, in the past, parents didn't feel the need to bribe children because they were confident chores benefited their children by making them feel both responsible and an active part of family life. Added to which, children of the past would not have expected to be bribed because their parents taught them to take pride in a job well done.
During the pre-colonial days in many of the societies in Kenya, it was the father’s responsibility to teach his sons the various skills they needed so they could fit in the society. Mothers likewise had to educate their daughters on the skills women needed in order to be able to play their roles in the society. According to Boudillion (2006), in traditional Africa, mothers would stay at home to do domestic duties and to take care of the young ones. However nowadays, most parents have to work away from their homes and many leave very early in the morning and return late at night, therefore they may not spend a lot of time with their children (Mweru, 2005). Globalization and industrialization in the modern day society has led to the rising economy and higher cost of living, forcing even the mothers to go out and search for employment in order to make ends meet. This has seen mothers go in search of employment outside the home including other towns and cities often away from home. With the current socioeconomic changes and with more women attaining education, the number of working women is increasing rapidly. Tumuti (1982) points out that more women have entered the job market than ever before. Most of the working women are of childbearing age and have both preschool and school-age children. While women have to work, it is becoming rather difficult for them to get good substitutes for child rearing. Poor child rearing has been associated with poor child development.

In these circumstances, it has become common practice to find domestic workers employed to assist in running the home in most urban households including African households such as in Kenya. These workers commonly referred to as ‘maids’ or ‘house helps’, are employed to assist in household chores when the mother and other members of the family go out to work in the formal and/or informal sectors. Since these workers are being paid; most employers expect
them to do all the household chores that have been stipulated to them in order to get value for
their money. Even with the employment of these workers being inevitable due to the rising
cost of living and the existing labour laws, what is not certain is the effect of this emerging
trend on children’s involvement in household chores. The effect of the current child rearing
practices has not been questioned in Kenyan society. Its effects should be of major concern not
only to parents but also to employers, educators, and the society at large if children are
expected to grow normally (Tumuti, 1982). Research is not telling us the effect of employing
house helps on children’s involvement in household chores and the cumulative effect of this
phenomenon on their academic competence.

2.5 Summary

Review of literature on the involvement of children in housework has shown that such
involvement has numerous benefits. Those benefits form an important basis for child’s
education through promoting holistic development. Historically, involvement of children in
housework is considered a norm in most households where children would automatically take
part in maintaining the home together with their parents and siblings. However, current
research is showing that there are emerging issues which are appearing to challenge the
involvement of children in housework. Notably, these emerging issues will have a profound
effect on the involvement of children in housework. These issues include; misconceptions on
existing labour laws, industrialization of the developed and developing countries, rising
technological advancements, changes in childrearing practices, the employment of domestic
workers and the 8.4.4 system of education in Kenya which has been shown to be exam
oriented.
There is very little research that has been done to investigate the effect of these changes on children’s involvement in housework and consequently on achieving academic competence. Research is not telling us whether children in urban households are taking part in housework under the prevailing circumstances mentioned thereof. The voices of children are not heard in research pertaining to children and work and we do not know the opinions of children towards participating in housework. While considerable research has been done on the negative effects of child labor, far less has been done on the positive effects of involving children in work, and in particular housework. The participation of children in research is also a case that has traditionally been ignored resulting into development of policies that have no views of children being factored in. Backed with the literature above, this study investigated whether urban children were taking part in household chores. In addition, it investigated the influence of housework on developing academic competence and the factors that affect this phenomenon.
CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the design and methodological procedures that were used in conducting this study. The tools and methods used for data collection and the data analysis procedures are discussed. In addition the ethical and logistical procedures employed in the study are described.

3.2 Research Design

This was an exploratory descriptive survey which was concerned with narration of facts and characteristics concerning individuals and situations in the study. Qualitative methods of data collection and analysis were used. The researcher’s choice to use a qualitative paradigm to conduct this study was encouraged by the views of Maxwell (2005) who explains that the aim of qualitative research is to understand the meaning of the situations, experiences and actions of participants in the study, and to give an in-depth analysis of the participants’ perspectives of the subject under study. This approach was therefore the most appropriate way to investigate the problem at hand and answer research questions.

It used questionnaires and interviews to provide in-depth descriptions as given by children and parents about their attitudes and lifestyles concerning the involvement of children in housework and the impact of this to the development of academic competence in children. It employed an inductive, open ended strategy whereby the underlying motives and desires of the subjects were brought out, using in depth interviews for the purpose.
This qualitative research was interested not only in the physical events and behavior that were taking place, but also in how the participants made sense of these and how their understanding influenced behavior. These qualitative approach generated results and theories that are understandable and experientially credible, both to the subjects and to others. The researcher was also able to conduct formative evaluations that were intended to help improve existing practices and also in engaging in collaborative or action research with practitioners or the research participants.

3.2.1 Variables

The independent variable was involvement of children in housework which included: varieties of chores done at home such as; washing dishes, dusting, sweeping, setting the table and so on, and the frequency of performance of each chore per week. The study challenged the emerging views that work in the family can be a waste of study time. The study used various mechanisms to establish whether work in a family was a positive or a negative thing.

The dependent variable was the quality of the engagement of the child at school in his/her academic work. The researcher was interested in whether children who appeared to indicate active participation in family household chores also indicated good records in academic performance as measured by their classroom tests in all the learning activities such as science, mathematics, language, physical exercises, social studies and creative activities and life skills. Participation in school did not just reflect academic performance but also how the teachers rated the child in general involvement with school activities. For example leadership skills, pro social activities and willingness to takes risks in learning.
3.3 Location of study

The study was carried out in City primary school in Nairobi County, Kenya. Nairobi is the capital and largest city in Kenya. Nairobi County was purposively selected because it is a highly populated urban area, consisting of a predominantly cosmopolitan population which was the main focus of this study. It is the most populous city in East Africa. According to the 2009 population census, 3,138,295 inhabitants live in Nairobi. The growth rate of Nairobi is currently 4.1% (Travel discover Kenya, 2011-2012). Most parents in this city were found to have acquired basic literacy skills and were enlightened on the existing labor laws. Majority of the parents were also in full time work (employed/self employed) and engage the services of house helps at home.

The challenges of modern life and the pursuit of respect for children rights were issues that required research in modern parenting. In African culture children perform household chores and the family considers this as a measure of competence and a way of socializing children to be productive members of society. Whether families living in Nairobi were still respecting this African beliefs and values was a critical issue of research and Nairobi location was suitable for this study.

City Primary school is located within the city centre. It was purposively selected because it is a highly populated public school consisting of a heterogeneous population of children from a variety of tribes, cultural backgrounds and socioeconomic classes. It attracts children from all over the city making it to have the most appropriate population of
children that come from a variety of homes. In addition, being a public school, it was easier for the researcher to gain legal access from the relevant authorities to conduct the study in the school.

3.4 Target Population

The target population in this study was lower primary school; standard one to three children in City Primary school, Nairobi County, Kenya, teachers and parents. Children in this age group were relatively independent physically, mentally and socially thus were capable of taking part in some housework. They also fell into the theoretical framework that formed the basis of this study. The children and parents gave firsthand information on their practices, opinions and beliefs related to the involvement of children in housework while the teachers gave information on the children’s academic competence.

The targeted population were the 150 six to eight year old children of both genders in the lower primary section, classes one to three, 1 parent/guardian of one or more children (100 parents/guardians) and 6 teachers, giving a total population of 256.

3.5 Sampling techniques and sample size

3.5.1 Sampling techniques

The researcher purposively sampled City Primary School because of the unique nature of the school in that it had children from a variety of socioeconomic background and cultural groups. With the assistance of the class teachers, the researcher selected children based on their academic abilities, socioeconomic characteristics (slum families representing the lower
socioeconomic class, middle income earners such as employed civil servants and so on) and cultural backgrounds (represented by ethnicity of the children). Parents/guardians were selected.

3.5.2 Sample size

Of the total population, 30.08% (77 respondents) were selected. Fifteen children from each class were purposely selected giving a total of forty five children. As a result, one of the parents/guardian of the selected children each, was also purposively selected based on those who were likely to be readily available and willing to participate, from different socioeconomic classes, those that had and had not employed services of house helps in their homes and those whose homes were easily accessible to the researcher giving a total of thirty parents/guardians. Two teachers formed the sample.

Table 3.1: Total population of lower primary children, teachers and sample frame of the respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESPONDENTS</th>
<th>TOTAL POPULATION OF CHILDREN,PARENTS, TEACHERS, CLASS 1-3</th>
<th>SAMPLE</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children (class 1-3)</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>77</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.6 Construction of research instruments

The primary data collection instruments included; oral interview schedules and questionnaires. In addition data was taken through naturalistic observation, and document analysis and descriptive field notes in a journal to capture any other information that was relevant to the study but which was not included in the research instruments. The instruments (oral interview schedules and questionnaires) were administered to collect information on involvement in housework, perspectives of parents and children towards involving children in housework and the performance of children in the various activity areas.

3.6.1 Questionnaires

Each questionnaire had one section where each item was developed to address the specific objectives and research questions. However, only the eight year old children were allowed to fill in the questionnaires because they had better literacy skills than their younger counterparts. This is found in appendix C.

3.6.2 Document Analysis

With provision from the class teachers, the researcher critically analyzed the children’s progress reports and portfolios to find out their overall performance in all the activity areas and behavior.

3.6.3 In-depth oral interviews schedules

In depth oral interviews (appendices B, D and E) were conducted upon all the respondents (children and parents) to capture firsthand information as the researcher documented the
responses in the interview schedules. Interviews to children were done at school while for parents; they were done at home. With the assistance of the teachers, the researcher arranged with the parents on a convenient time to conduct the home interviews with them. The interviews were on a one on one basis.

3.6.4 Observation schedule

An observation schedule (appendix F), was prepared containing the items that the researcher wanted to observe in children in their natural environments at school and at home. All the children were observed. The observations took place throughout the research period (12 weeks). The researcher observed each class at time beginning from class 1 to class 3. The particular day for home observation of each child was agreed upon by the researcher and the parents.

At home, the researcher observed the activities which the child got involved in, the instructions given to the child by the parents/guardians regarding household activities to run the home and the influence of a house help if there was, on the child’s activities. In school, the researcher observed the participation and contribution of the child in classroom activities, social interactions with other children and overall behavior among other items. As similar studies done by Mweru (2005) revealed, the respondents were uneasy and behaved differently at the beginning but with time through researcher’s frequent presence and rapport, they got used to her presence and behaved normally.
3.7 Data collection procedure

The researcher conducted the study per class for 12 weeks i.e., 4 weeks per class. (1, 2 and 3). All the instruments were administered to each class at a time. Each class took at least 4 weeks (20 days) every day from 9am to 3pm (6hrs) which is approximately 120 hrs. per month. The researcher began by first observing each child in school then conducting the home observation at the scheduled time. The children were observed in their respective classes and homes as individuals. Each child was observed for approximately 8hrs when they were in school. The home observations and in-depth interviews to parents were done simultaneously. The researcher paid atleast 2 visits per home, the first visit was for familiarization visit while the second visit was for data collection. The observations continued up to the 4th week. The questionnaires and document analysis were distributed in the 2nd week and the interviews were conducted in the 3rd and 4th weeks. This exercise was repeated for all the 3 classes beginning with class 1, class 2 and finally class 3.

3.8 Pilot study

A pilot study was conducted at Ngara Road Primary School to find out if the research instruments were viable. It was selected because the population was not very different from the study population. It was done among fifteen school age children aged six to eight years and their parents/guardians. In the pilot, the research instruments were administered to the respondents. The feedback from the pilot group in relation to the questions, the overall layout and design, the usefulness of the instructions and the length of time it took to complete the
questionnaires were critically looked into. The instruments were found to be viable and reliable and the researcher went ahead to use them to conduct the study.

3.9.1 **Validity**

To promote accuracy of the data obtained, the researcher used methodological triangulation techniques whereby information was obtained using different methods namely; observation, interviews, questionnaires and document analysis. Maxwell (2005) points out that this strategy reduces the risk of chance associations and of systematic biases due to a specific method and allows better assessment of the generality of the explanations that are developed.

Regular member checks or respondent validation was carried out from time to time to systematically solicit feedback from the participants about the data collected and the conclusions made. This was done at least 3 times for each respondent throughout the research period. This ruled out the possibility of misinterpreting the meaning of what participants said and did and the perspectives they had on what was going on (Kothari, 2004). It was also an important way of identifying the researchers own biases and misunderstanding of what was observed.

In addition, questionnaires were only administered to the older eight year old children who had relatively better literary and communication skills and were therefore able to give logical responses than their six and seven year old counterparts.
3.9.2 Reliability

Repeated long term observations and interviews were carried out on the respondents at school and at home in order to provide more specific information about the specific situation. The researcher remained in the field for a longer time and modified the questionnaires from time to time. This sustained presence of the researcher in the setting to be studied helped rule out spurious associations and formation of premature theories. Both the long term involvement and intensive interviews enabled the researcher collect rich data, data that was detailed and varied enough to provide a full revealing picture of what was going on. This not only provided variety in data about the specific situation at hand but also the data was more direct and less dependent on inference (Maxwell, 2005). In the interview, the researcher obtained the verbatim transcripts in addition to the field notes on what was significant. In the observations, the rich data was a product of detailed, descriptive note taking of the specific concrete events observed.

In addition, the researcher rigorously examined both the supporting and the discrepant data to assess whether it was more plausible to retain or modify the conclusion. Identification and analysis of discrepant data and negative cases was done to identify instances that could not be accounted for by a particular interpretation or explanation. This was done through asking for feedback from other researchers doing similar studies on child development in order to check the researcher’s own biases, assumptions or flaws in her logic or method.
3.10 Data analysis

Qualitative data analysis procedures were used to analyze the data obtained. This involved uncovering and discovering themes that ran through the thick narratives in the raw data and interpreting the implication of those themes for research questions. As explained by Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), it involved generation of themes, categories and patterns through the process of coding, annotating and searching for interconnections.

The researcher began by reading the interview scripts, observational notes and documents that were to be analyzed. During the reading, the researcher wrote notes and memos on what she read and heard and developed tentative ideas about likely relationships and categories in the information. After this the researcher organized this raw data from the field notes and narratives into various codes by identifying the various categories in the data which were distinct from each other and then established the relationships among these categories. This coding process fractured the data and rearranged them into categories that facilitated comparison between ideas in the same category and eventually helped in the organization of data into broader themes and theoretical concepts.

Once the themes, categories and patterns were identified, the researcher used descriptive statistical methods and measurement scales to present the information. It involved measures of central tendency such as the mode, mean and median which were calculated and presented in form of frequency distribution tables, bar charts, curves and line graphs.
3.11 Logistical Considerations

The researcher acquired a letter of introduction from Kenyatta University Graduate School and a research permit from the National Council of Science and Technology to conduct the study. The identified school (City Primary School) was contacted to deliver copies of the introductory letter and research permit to inform the head of the institution about the purpose of the study. The researcher made a preliminary visit to the school to familiarize with the study site i.e. the location of the school, access, the class teachers, pupils and so on, before commencement of the study.

3.12 Ethical Considerations

The researcher first established rapport with the respondents by introducing herself and letting them know that she was there to study their daily activities. She was an active participant in classroom and outdoor activities to further establish and maintain rapport. A consent form was prepared and given to all parents to give permission for their children to participate in the study. In the school, data was collected during the normal working days and hours; Monday to Friday from 9am – 3pm. Participation of the study was on voluntary basis and respondents were allowed to leave the study at any point. The researcher assured the respondents of confidentiality and anonymity on all the information provided.
CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS, INTERPRETATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of this study based on the objectives and research questions. The focus of the data was to provide answers to the following objectives drawn from the study; i) to determine the level of involvement of six to eight year old children in housework in urban areas, ii) to find out children’s perspectives on participation in housework, iii) to identify the extent to which children’s involvement in housework enhances their academic performance at school and iv) to find out parent’s perspectives on their children’s involvement in housework.

The findings of the study are presented and discussed according to the thematic areas derived from the research objectives. The findings are drawn from the teachers, parents and children’s responses based on the narratives and verbatim expressions. Numerical data is presented and discussed using descriptive statistics.

4.2 OBJECTIVE 1: To determine the level of involvement of 6-8 year old children in housework in urban areas

4.2.1 Activities done by children at home

The researcher conducted interviews with children in school and observed the activities that children engaged in at home. The various activities are presented in fig 4.1.
Fig. 4.1 Activities done by children at home

How children spend their time at home

- Doing homework: 51.1%
- Watching television: 24.4%
- Play: 20.0%
- House chores: 4.4%
According to these results shown in figure 4.1, majority of the children mainly spend their time at home doing home work (51.1%). In addition to homework, many children were found sitting around watching television and computer games (24.4%) or engaging in active play (20.0%) almost throughout their free time. Very few children were observed doing household chores (4.4%). Children’s engagement in household chores was minimal as homework took the priority of children’s home time.

Discussion

All over the world, housework has historically occupied an important place in children’s activities. Generational skills and knowledge have for a long time been imparted to the young generation outside formal institutions through observing, experimenting and supplemental instructions from their seniors. However these results suggest that this traditional trend is rapidly being eroded and an upcoming lifestyle where children’s activities in the home have changed considerably has emerged.

The activities done by children in the urban areas show a big contrast from what their counterparts in rural areas are doing. They show a contrast from the findings on studies done on children in rural areas where the most common work activities done by children aged six to fourteen years included: taking grain to mill, fetching water, doing dishes, laundry, helping in the house and childcare (Mweru, 2011). In rural Kenya for example, childcare is a primary example of a type of task, which children substituted for women in most traditional households, enabling their mothers to be occupied with something else within or outside the household (Mweru, 2011).
According to Pantley (2006), because of modern lifestyle, children in urban areas are gaining very little from household chores and are missing out on the major benefits that include gaining computation skills, life skills, organizational skills, values and others which are vital for academic competence and their overall development. Housework is a very integral requirement for the holistic development of children but it is clear that these children are not engaging much in this important practice.

### 4.2.2 Types of household chores that children perform in urban families

The few children (4.4 %), who got involved in house chores were investigated to find out the kind of the household chores that they engaged in. The researcher administered the questionnaires on the types of chores that children engaged. These are presented in table 4. 2 ;
Table 4.2 Household chores performed by children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Number of children</th>
<th>Children (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Washing dishes</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polishing my shoes</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>24.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweeping</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking after the baby</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making my bed</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleaning my room</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleaning the house</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleaning/wiping the table after meals</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking dishes to the kitchen after meals</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folding my clothes</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting the table for meals</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washing personal items such as handkerchieves</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooking</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>45</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4 shows that household chores in general are part of the family activities even in urban areas. However, the findings show that, children tend to engage more on personal self care tasks. These are responsibilities which were focused on caring for themselves, rather than entire household tasks that were for the benefit of the whole family. For example, high responses were reported in self caring tasks such as polishing shoes (24.6%), cleaning their room (11.1%), folding own clothes (17.8%) and washing personal items (11.1%). On the contrary tasks such as washing dishes (4.4 %), sweeping (4.4 %), cleaning the house (2.2%), cleaning the table after meals (4.4%) and cooking (0.0%), reported fewer frequencies.
Thus, the minimal household chores children did mainly centered on their needs and benefits rather than general family support.

**Discussion**

The findings presented here are a reflection of the individualized nature of children’s contribution to the daily running of the home. Instead of children being involved adequately in all the household chores at home, they mostly performed their personal self care tasks. According to Bazley and Ennew (2006), lack of involvement in socially oriented activities could deny children important social and life skill benefits such as; social skills of interaction, teamwork, time management, a sense of togetherness, sharing, cooperation and turn taking, all of which are necessary for academic competence. Thus, children in this study are likely to develop self oriented as opposed to socially oriented skills such as teamwork and cooperation related skills. They are likely not to be mindful of the needs of others and may not be able to work with others effectively both in the family and in school.

**4.2.3 House helps and children’s participation in housework**

This study established that, house helps were a common phenomenon in the urban households. Majority of the households, (84%), had employed the services of a house help. Since they were being paid, most employers expected them to perform all the chores in the household in order to get value for their money. The major reason for this trend was that, the current economic situation has seen most of the mothers go to search of employment outside the home including other towns and cities.
According to Garcia (2005), because of the rising cost of living and introduction of a cash economy, parents have had to engage in economic activities outside the home. Tumuti (1982), also points out that more women have entered the job market than ever before. Most of the working women are of childbearing age and have both preschool and school-age children. This called for the need to have house helps to take care of the household while the mothers are away working. The effect of this trend on children’s participation in household chores was that in most households children did not perform housework because there was already somebody employed to do the work. Studies that focus on the house helps and child development were missing, pointing to an area that needs to be further explored.

4.3 Objective 2; To find out children’s perspectives on participation in housework

4.3.1 Children’s perspectives on engagement in household chores

Children’s views and ideas about engaging in housework were explored using questionnaires and through face to face interviews. Children had varied perspectives concerning being involved in household chores. Figure 4.2 shows the proportions of various perspectives.
Fig. 4.2  Bar Graph showing children’s perspectives about engaging in housework
The findings demonstrated in figure 4.2 shows that, most children (73.3%), had positive perspectives towards house chores. A small proportion of them had negative perspectives (17.8%) while another smaller group had mixed feelings (8.9%).

4.3.2 Reasons for children’s views and perspectives on housework

From the previous findings, a very small proportion of children performed housework; most were engaged in doing homework. Surprisingly, from these findings, the few who got opportunities to perform household chores enjoyed doing it. A good proportion of them gave positive views towards housework.

4.3.2.1 Reasons for positive perspectives

Positive perspectives were expressed in a variety of ways including descriptions of work as good, fine and enjoyable. A close look at the children’s responses showed that children with positive perspectives towards work gave three categories of reasons;

a. Health related reasons

b. Enjoyment related reasons

c. General reasons
a) Health related reasons

Reasons in this category related to the contribution of work towards their physical health and wellbeing. This included statements such as;

“It makes me strong and healthy.”
“It is like exercising and helping someone like cleaning the house, wash the dishes and helping.”

b) Enjoyment related reasons

These reasons related to children’s experience of fun and enjoyment in doing the tasks. This included statements such as;

“I feel happy and nice when working.”
‘I enjoy working.’

c) General reasons

These are reasons that were positive but did not specifically relate to a given experience or benefit. They found working to be just okay, they had no problem engaging in it. They were proud to contribute to their own livelihood and that of their families. This was reflected in statements such as;

“it is fine to do housework.”
‘it is okay to help in work at home.’
4.3.2.2 Reasons for negative perspectives

A few children (8.9%), had negative perspectives about housework. These reasons related to:

a. Interference with schoolwork

b. Lack of interest

c. Boredom

a) Interference with schoolwork

These reasons were in relation to their school work. They found it a distraction that hinders them from concentrating in their homework. This included statements such as;

‘Housework is not good because it can negatively affect my education.’
‘I will be unable to do homework.’

b) Lack of interest/ Dislike

Some children were simply not interested in housework and said;

‘I do not think I love the idea.’
‘ I dislike housework, It is not fun.’

c) Boredom

These reasons related to how the work experience made them feel. Some felt that housework was a boring activity and said;
“I get bored because there are usually other more fun activities that I can do like playing with my friends and watching television.”

‘It is boring to do housework.’

4.3.2.3 Reasons for mixed feelings

A small number of the children (8.5%), were not completely sure of their feelings towards housework. Their perspectives depended on their moods and the activities they had to do.

They gave responses such as:

“Sometimes I feel good sometimes I feel bad when doing housework”.

‘When I am idle I feel good, but when doing homework I feel bad and distracted.’

Discussion

The children in this study see the value of being involved in work at home and desire to be involved in it. Yet, their level of involvement was rather low. This suggests that children's perspectives do not get reflected in their work involvement. The children are not getting enough opportunities to engage in housework. From previous findings, this is mainly because, there was a lot of homework from school that took most of their time. School work is therefore a major competing force against time for housework.
In addition, these findings are an indication that children did not really have a say in matters that concern them. They did not have a say in choosing to do the activities that are of interest to them and make them happy such as housework. Children are viewed as passive about their interests, likes and situations. Studies carried out by Boyden and Ennew (1997), show that most of the current research concerning children have been carried out through the perspectives and understanding of adults who speak on behalf of children and in most cases the voices of children are not heard.

Article 12(1) of the UNCRC asserts, state parties shall assure that; ‘the child is capable of forming his or her own views, has the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child and the views of the child to be given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child’ (UNCRC, 2006). This means moving away from perceptions of children as passive victims, and rather recognizing them as active participants, capable of analyzing and responding to their situations and problems, and as citizens with both rights and obligations in society.

4.4 Objective 3; To identify the extent to which children’s involvement in housework enhances their academic performance at school.

4.4.1 Housework and children’s academic competence

The researcher carried out content analysis of children’s progress records and conducted a survey with children and teachers to find out the relationship between involvement in housework and their academic competence. The following pie chart presents these findings;
From the findings, majority of the children (64.4%) thought that housework had positive effects on their schoolwork. Few children (13.3%), did not know the effects of housework on their academic competence while others (22.2%), said that housework had no effect on their academic competence.

**Results from documentary analysis**

From the documents analyzed, it was observed that there was strong relationship between engaging in housework and performing well academically. From the records and documents
analyzed, the few children who engaged in household chores were found to perform well in school and had good academic performance.

4.4.2 Reasons why children gave positive responses on the contribution of housework on their schoolwork

Most children (64.4%) were of the opinion that the few times they engaged in housework and the few chores they did had a positive impact on their school work. Children gave four categories of reasons related to; acquisition of virtues, development and mastery of skills and concepts, language skills and opportunities for exercise/relaxation.

a) Acquisition of virtues

Housework enabled them to develop virtues which were important to their learning at school such as responsibility and self reliance. These children were observed to be less dependent on the teacher. For instance, they could tidy up after an activity, they could clean themselves up, they could try to solve mathematical problems by themselves first and only go to the teacher when they were stuck and so on. Such children therefore gave the teacher easy time as they also struggled to perform academic tasks by themselves.
Some verbatim expressions given by children include;

‘It makes me stronger.’
‘I learn to be hard working, clean.’
‘I learn to take care of my property.’

These statements imply that assigning children household chores is seen by some children as an important way to build responsibility and self reliance. Children start seeing themselves as useful and start developing self reliance at an early age (Rutherford, 2001). This is a strong basis for hard work and determination in these children.

b) **Development and mastery of skills and concepts**

Children reported that, when they engaged in the chores, they manipulated a variety of materials and equipment and related with other children and adults. As a result of this, they acquired numerous skills and concepts which were useful in learning activity areas such as science, mathematics, language, social studies, life skills and psychomotor abilities. They explored the environment around the home as they worked enabling them to develop discovery and exploratory skills. This was an important skill in science activities in the classroom which required them to discover ideas, concepts and scientific explanations to natural phenomenon.

Children also reported that when they go for nature walks and other educational tours, they are likely to employ these discovery skills which they have learnt at home. They are also likely to observe objects, and processes such as cleaning, and how machines in the home worked and so on. These skills are vital when doing scientific experiments and carrying out projects.
Participating in housework also gave them vivid images of some concepts learnt at school.

They gave remarks such as;

‘housework helps my mind to be active in class.’

‘it makes me clever.’.

This was because, while performing housework, they made use of all their senses. They could see, touch, feel, smell and even taste the materials and equipment with which they were using and this is enhanced multisensory learning. They developed important abilities and concepts which they naturally apply on their school work. These included; observation, counting, subtraction, and creativity which they naturally applied to all learning areas such as; mathematics, science, creative and other learning activities.

c) Language skills

Some children also attested to the fact that they acquired a lot of language when engaging in housework, they spoke, listened and communicated with one another and to adults. They gave remarks such as;

“I have learnt new words”

‘I can say the names of the tools I use’

‘We talk and say stories as we work’
d) **Opportunities for exercise/relaxation**

In addition, some children reported feeling a sense of relaxation as they worked. They talked and laughed with others and they felt a sense of accomplishment once they complete a chore. They gave responses such as:

- ‘It keeps me happy’
- “I feel nice and enjoy myself when washing my handkerchiefs”
- “I feel happy when we talk and chat with my sister as we polish our shoes.”

Pantley (2006) describes this as a good strategy for children to relax from their academic duties and release pent up emotions and stress which is important for their physical, mental and emotional health.

**Discussion**

From these responses and expressions, it is clear that the engagement of housework had a major impact on their academic work at school. It is important to note that children were able to relate their work involvement to positive benefits for themselves as these findings suggest. Engagement in housework enhanced their learning at school. This confirms studies by Rutherford (2001) who explains that, the knowledge and skills children acquire as they interact with home materials, equipment and with more experienced adults are key in increasing their exposure and experience. Stephens and Schaben (2002), point to the complementary role of the school and the family in holistic child development. Familial
activities such as housework have a major part to play in development of the child the school alone cannot develop all the competences that children require for academic excellence.

However, it was noted that in most circumstances, children did not get a chance to perform household chores. These benefits of housework were only perceived by the few who got the opportunities to work at home. From previous findings in this study, this phenomenon is attributed to the large amount of work being given at school as homework and restrictions from parents. Schooling has become a more demanding task, taking a significant proportion of children’s time at home.

These responses ascertain studies by Muremo (2006) who noted that the fact that the syllabus is heavily crowded meant that few children had the time or inclination to broaden their knowledge and skills by taking part in other extra curriculum activities at home and at school, including household chores. Muremo (2006) indicates that, there is a lot of pressure on children to perform well in examinations therefore making children to spend long hours in the classroom or doing school assignments while at home. The situation was compounded by the fact that the final grade obtained by students is the sole criterion for furthering ones education.

This pressure on children to perform well in examinations made children to spend long hours in the classroom or doing school assignments while at home having very little time for other activities such as housework. It was a common practice for children to attend remedial / tuition classes during the school holidays and weekends. The crippling number of hours that pupils from a very tender age had to put in, manifested in the pressure to have them perform well in
final examinations, illustrated a sad reality of an education system stuck in the rut of rote learning (Muremo, 2006).

4.5 Objective 4; Parent’s views on their children’s involvement in housework

4.5.1 Activities which parents involve their children in at home

Parents were the heads of the households and the primary caregivers. Thus, one of the major assumptions of the study was that parents determined most of the activities done by children at home and therefore had a key role to play in determining whether children participated in housework or not. Their views regarding their children’s participation in housework were important in order to further understand children’s participation in housework. The researcher interviewed parents on the activities which they involve their children in to determine the influence that parents had over the activities of their children.
4.5.2 Reasons for parents perspective on low involvement of children in housework

Parents reported that it was their role to determine what kind of work children did at home. According to the responses from the parents, homework (57%) and play (26%) are the major activities which parents engaged their children in. When it came to household chores, only 17% reported to be engaging the children in housework. They reasons given for this are mainly in two categories;

Interference with schoolwork

Housework is not developmentally appropriate for children

a) Interference with schoolwork

Most of the parents had a negative opinion and did not favor the idea of engaging children in housework because it did not allow time for study and play. They argued that priority should be given to school work and if there is free time, children should be left to play. Among the remarks from parents included;

“The workload from school gives them very little time for housework.”

“Children need time to play and study.”

“work should not be excessive, in order to have time for homework.”
They reported that although children needed the balance, in most cases it was not practical because children got home late and had a lot of homework so it was unfair to expect them to do housework most of the time.

b) **Housework is not developmentally appropriate for children**

Some parents felt that housework was generally not appropriate for the children. They also felt that their children were still very young to work. Some of the remarks from parents included:

“Children can assist but not too much, they can be exposed to it gradually.”

“Housework should only be done for relaxation and remembering what has been taught in school and it is not a must for children to work.”

“Some work is too heavy for children.”

“The children are still young.”

“Some equipment used requires adult attention.”

Other parents said they would not want children around when they are doing housework because children are a great distraction; they wanted their attention and were disturbing. This was a major distraction to parents as they performed their chores thus they preferred their children doing their homework, playing outside or watching television.

4.5.2 **Parents’ perspectives on the role of the house help and children’s participation in housework**

Very few parents (17%) opined that children could work when there was a house help. Most (83%) parents were of the opinions that work between the house help and the child should be separated. They said children should only take part in light duties and mostly in activities
involving self care and the house help should always help them in what they are doing. These remarks included comments such as;

“Children should only help the house help but not do the work alone themselves.”

“They can be given simple duties that concern them such as spreading beds, washing personal effects, inner wears, handkerchiefs and socks and polishing shoes.”

“House helps have a part to play children should only help where they can”.

“Such work should be left to the house help, I am paying her for it.”

Very few parents (17%) said they can be involved in doing other chores such as sweeping, washing dishes, clearing the table, setting the table because this should be left to the house help. This phenomenon greatly hindered children’s engagement in housework. This situation compounded the effects of hindering children from benefiting from all the housework in the home.

4.5.3 Parent’s perspectives regarding the 8.4.4 system of education

Because most parents (57%) attributed their children’s lack of participation in housework on the amount of home work given to them, the researcher also sought to find out their opinion on the education system, 8.4.4. These parents argued that the education system did not allow children time to engage in housework because the workload from school gave them very little time for housework. According to them, the system is too theoretical and did not factor in development of all aspects, meaning it was not holistic. The perspectives from parents included responses such as:
‘Teachers always talk of homework but they do not teach them life skills such cleanliness, previous subjects such as art, home science and agriculture have been excluded’.

‘There is too much pressure from school work that creates pressure in the house and stress and it does not allow enough time for children to rest therefore they do not have time to be involved in housework.’

“it is very demanding and tiring to children with subjects that may not help them in future.”

“it needs to integrate some skills to children and co-curriculum activities should be enhanced too.”

“It is tasking and demanding and should include some practical lessons and reduce theory.”

‘There is a lot of emphasis on formal education and this has taken too much attention at the expense of other activities at home.’

Discussion

These views and responses point out the priority of homework and play as far more important than housework. The parents did not know the positive effects of housework on the development of children’s academic competence and this could have been the reason why they did not emphasize it. Parents were very ignorant to the academic benefits of housework. They did not appear to link work to learning at school. This is further explained by those who had employed house helps whom they expected to perform all the chores. For those who engaged their children in housework it was mostly work that involved their personal self care such as polishing shoes, spreading their beds and so on.

Parents perceived the education system to be highly demanding in terms of time thus leaving no room for children to engage in housework. This further explain why they were not involving children in household chores. They did not have a choice but the only way to
support their children in their education was to give them ample time to do the heavy homework from school. They therefore did this by excluding their children from any other activity such as housework which may pose as a big hindrance to home work. This says that they did not have the knowledge on the important contribution of housework to their children’s overall holistic development.

According to Erik Erikson in Eriksson’s psychosocial theory of human development which is guiding this study, at this stage, children are in the transitional period between early childhood and middle childhood (6-8 years) corresponding to the industry versus inferiority stage of development. They direct their energy towards mastering knowledge and other skills that are important in life (Erikson, 1979). The positive outcome of this stage is a sense of competence.

Parental restrictiveness at this stage through discouragement in expressing their actions and desires is likely to prompt a sense of inferiority whenever the child seeks to discover the world on their own and explore their creativity (Kabiru & Njenga, 2007). However, most parents in this study denied children opportunities to learn skills through activities such as housework. They were observed to be, and reported to restricting the children’s activities even when they showed interest in household chores. This was a major hindrance to children’s development of competence in many areas because the children in such circumstances lacked the skills, concepts and values that they would have easily acquired through housework.
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This section presents a brief summary of the key findings of the study conclusions. Relevant recommendations regarding policy and suggested areas for further research will be given.

5.2 Summary of key findings

The following is a summary of the key findings of the study as per the research objectives.

i. Children’s engagement in household chores was very minimal. A minority (4.4%) of the children engaged in some housework. However, they engaged more on personal self care tasks rather than overall household tasks that were for the benefit of the whole family.

ii. Most of the households (83%), had employed the services of a house help who performs the daily chores of running the home. In such homes, the house help was expected to do most of the work.
iii. Majority of the children (73.3%) had positive perspectives about engaging in work, few had negative perspectives (17.8%) while a minority had mixed views (8.9%).

iv. The positive responses were that housework contributed to their health, enjoyment and they generally liked working. Negative responses included; interference with homework, lack of interest and boredom. For the mixed views; work had both positive and negative effects on them.

v. Most children (64%) who got opportunities to perform housework perceived it to have positive influence on their schoolwork. Housework contributed to acquisition of values, skills, concepts, language and offered opportunities for relaxation and enjoyment.

vi. Homework was a major competing force to engaging in housework. Children did not get enough time for housework because there was a lot of homework to be done. Consequently children were left with very little room for involvement in household chores.

vii. Majority of the parents preferred their children to engage in homework (57%) as compared to housework (17%). This was majorly attributed to a lot of homework given at school. The parents found the system of education very demanding and exhaustive to their children. Other reasons were that they felt their children were still young and children lacking the skill and the ability to perform and use the equipment.

viii. Parents could not relate the connection between household chores and academic work. They therefore did not give housework priority. Homework and play took more
priority that housework. Thus, they excluded children from house chores in order to give them ample time to do their school work.

5.3 Conclusion

The findings of this study show that children’s participation in housework in urban households was very minimal. Majority of the children spent their time at home doing homework or play. In most homes, there was a house help who took up most of the housework which denied children opportunities for housework. The few times that children engaged in housework, were shown to be mostly for their own personal wellbeing and not to the wellbeing of the whole family.

However, the few children who got opportunities to work, enjoyed it, they felt good when taking part in the maintenance of the home and were willing to take part in it. They appreciated the contribution of housework to their academic competence. It contributed to the skills and concepts learnt at school, and had a tremendous impact on their school work. However, they lacked enough opportunities to engage in it. Teachers were aware of the importance of housework but mainly on its contribution to values enhancement. They were not aware of its benefits on academic skills and concepts.

The curriculum was exam oriented where emphasis was on passing examinations and not on the holistic development of children, it did not offer opportunities for housework because of the heavy workload, emphasis on performance in examinations and the long hours that children spend at school. There was no interplay between the home and the school in learning.
Thus, children were missing out on basic learning opportunities at home such as housework which is fundamental to their academic competence and indeed their overall holistic development.

Parents did not give children enough opportunities to engage in housework. To parents, homework and play took more priority that housework and viewed housework as a distraction to school work. Thus, children lacked opportunities to develop initiative and self driven actions. There was ignorance among both parents and teachers on the contribution of housework on development of academic skills and concepts and to knowledge as a whole.

5.4 Recommendations

With view of the above findings and conclusions the researcher gives the following recommendations;

5.4.1 Policy Recommendations

The researcher recommends the government, relevant ministries and stakeholders to set up policies on the following areas;

i. Research concerning child development should incorporate children’s ideas and views. Their voices should be heard on matters that concern them such as their interest in engaging in family housework activities.
ii. Partnership between teachers and parents / home and the school should be enhanced so that the home and the school can work together to promote the involvement of children in household chores.

iii. Awareness campaigns through both electronic, print media and parents meetings at school should be carried out intensively to enlighten parents and other caregivers on the importance of housework on child’s success in school related tasks.

5.4.2 Recommendations for further research

The following areas can be studied to give further education on the contribution of housework to academic competence:

i. Incorporating the role of housework as a form of teaching and learning into the ECDE teacher training curriculum and preschool syllabus.

ii. A similar study should be done in the rural areas for comparative study

iii. The place of the house help in the home where the role of the house help on housework and on children’s lives is explored further in order to come up with child care practices that promote holistic child development.
REFERENCES


Daily Nation (2012) Education times effects of ban on holiday tuition by MOEST pgs.43-44.


Wambiri.GN (2014). *Compatibility of work and school: Informal school work arrangements in central Kenya in the place of work*. Dakar; Codesvea

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A:

INTRODUCTION LETTER

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Esther Kulundu Ambetsa. I am a post-graduate student at Kenyatta University in the School of Education, Department of Early Childhood Studies. I am conducting a research which is aimed at investigating children’s daily activities and the contribution of this on child development. I kindly request you for your participation in responding to the research questions needed to meet the objectives of the study. I wish to assure you that all the information given here will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will only be used for research purposes.

Thanking you in advance,

AMBETSA ESTHER

Student, Kenyatta University

Department of Early Childhood Studies
APPENDIX B; CONSENT FORM

The parent/guardian of each child will be required to fill in the consent form to allow the researcher conduct the research upon their children.

Dear Parent/Guardian,

This is a research whose purpose is to determine the extent to which school children from urban families are being involved in housework and how such involvement contributes to children’s academic competence in school activity areas. It also seeks to find out children’s and parent’s perspectives on children’s participation in housework.

In order for this research to be completed, you and your child’s contributions on this subject will be highly appreciated which will involve interviews, questionnaires and observations at school and at home.

Name of parent/guardian:  .................................................................

Name of child/children: .................................................................

Class/level: ..................................................................................

I ...................................................... accept / do not accept (underline where appropriate) for me and / my child ........................................... to participate in this study.

Signature;  .................................................................

Date  .................................................................
APPENDIX C:

CHILDREN’S ORAL INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CHILDREN’S VIEWS ON INVOLVEMENT IN HOUSEWORK

1. Do you normally do some work at home?

2. Should children get involved in helping to do work at home?

3. If yes, why do you think children should be involved in doing work at home?

4. If no, why do you think children should not be involved in doing work at home?

5. What do you think about your work at school?

6. Which type of work do you like most? school or home?

7. Explain the reason for your answer in question 6 above
### APPENDIX D:

**CHILDREN’S QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CHILDREN’S VIEWS ON INVOLVEMENT IN HOUSEWORK**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHORE LIST</th>
<th>TICK THE ONE YOU DO</th>
<th>HOW MANY TIMES DO YOU DO IT IN A WEEK?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Washing dishes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Polishing my shoes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Sweeping</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Taking out rubbish</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Making my bed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Cleaning my room</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Cleaning the house</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Cleaning/ wiping the table after meals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Taking dishes to the kitchen after meals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Folding my clothes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Setting the table for meals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Washing personal items such as handkerchiefs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Cooking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX E:

ORAL INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS' VIEWS ON INVOLVEMENT OF CHILDREN IN HOUSEWORK

1. What activities do your children regularly engage in while at home?

2. What are your views regarding children and housework?

3. Explain the reasons for your views.

4. In your opinion what role should children take in the home, when there is a house help?

5. Do you find it reasonable to separate work between household and the children?

6. Explain the reasons for your views.

7. What would be your recommendation regarding children being involved in housework and work at school?

8. Do you also believe that children should work in the house despite the pressure for school work? Why explain?

9. In your opinion should children be involved in housework? If yes why in your opinion should a child be involved in housework?

10. If no why in your opinion do you think a child should not be involved in housework?
APPENDIX F:

OBSERVATION SCHEDULE FOR CHILDREN AT SCHOOL AND AT HOME

A. OBSERVATION SCHEDULE AT SCHOOL

The researcher will observe the following key skills related to different learning activity areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TASK</th>
<th>TALLY</th>
<th>FREQUENCY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation in class activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressing themselves</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passing information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem solving</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concentration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attention</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working in groups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence in use of tools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement in physical activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Document analysis

The researcher will also analyze the progress reports and portfolios of children activities.
## B. OBSERVATION SCHEDULE FOR HOME OBSERVATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TASK</th>
<th>TALLY</th>
<th>FREQUENCY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interaction of the child with the parent</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• instructions to participate in housework</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Children’s obedience to engage in housework</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activities the child is doing while at home</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• house chores</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Active play</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Watching television</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Doing homework</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Presence of a house help</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activities of the child in the presence of a house help</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Absence of a house help</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activities of the child in the absence of a house help</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX G

RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION FROM KENYATTA UNIVERSITY

KENYATTA UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL

E-mail: dean-graduate@ku.ac.ke
Website: www.ku.ac.ke

Our Ref: E35/20350/2010

DATE: 26th November, 2013

The Permanent Secretary,
Ministry of Higher Education, Science & Technology,
P.O. Box 30040,
NAIROBI

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION AMBETA ESTHER KULUNDU— REG. NO. E35/20350/2010

I write to introduce Ms. Ambeta Esther Kulundu who is a Postgraduate Student of this University. She is registered for M.Ed degree programme in the Department Early Childhood Studies.

Ms. Kulundu intends to conduct research for a M.Ed proposal entitled, “Contribution of Children’s – Involvement in Housework on Academic Competence in Early Childhood at City Primary School, Nairobi County”

Any assistance given will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

MRS. LUCY N. MBAABU
FOR: DEAN, GRADUATE SCHOOL
APPENDIX H

RESEARCH CLEARANCE FROM NACOSTI

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,
TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

9th January, 2013

NACOSTI/P/14/4084/532

Esther Kulundu Ambetsa
Kenyatta University
P.O.Box 43844 - 00100
NAIROBI.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on
“Contribution of children’s involvement in housework on academic
competence in early childhood at city primary school, Nairobi County,” I am
pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in
Nairobi County for a period ending 31st December, 2016.

You are advised to report to the County Commissioner and the County
Director of Education, Nairobi County before embarking on the research
project.

On completion of the research, you are expected to submit two hard copies
and one soft copy in pdf of the research report/thesis to our office.

DR. M. K. RUGUTU, PhD, FSC.
DEPUTY COMMISSION SECRETARY
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Copy to:

The County Commissioner
The County Director of Education
Nairobi County.

National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation is ISO 2008:9001 Certified
APPENDIX I: RESEARCH PERMIT

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT: 
MISS. ESTHER KULUNDU AMBETA of KENYATTA UNIVERSITY, 
has been permitted to conduct research in Nairobi County on the topic: CONTRIBUTION OF CHILDREN’S INVOLVEMENT IN HOUSEWORK ON ACADEMIC COMPETENCE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD AT CITY PRIMARY SCHOOL, NAIROBI COUNTY for the period ending: 31st December, 2016. 

Applicant’s Signature

Secretary
National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation