PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN PRE-PRIMARY CHILDREN’S EDUCATION:
AN IMPLICATION ON THEIR PERFORMANCE IN KABARE EDUCATION
ZONE, KIRINYAGA COUNTY, KENYA

BY
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UNIVERSITY

DECEMBER, 2017
DECLARATION

I declare that this project is my original work and has not been presented in any other university for consideration. This work has been complemented by referenced sources fully acknowledged. Where text, data, graphics, pictures or tables have been borrowed from other sources, including the internet, these are specifically accredited and references cited in line with anti-plagiarism regulations.

Signature……………………………… Date……………………………………
Mututa Fredrick Gicobi E55/OL/22785/2012

Supervisor’s Declaration

I confirm that the work reported in this project was carried out by the candidate under my supervision as university supervisor.

Signature……………………………… Date……………………………………
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DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to the Almighty God for giving me the ability to complete this work and my family for standing with me throughout the entire project.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I thank God the creator who gave me a gift of life with a purpose which I fulfill through this study. I am very grateful to a number of people whose contributions, suggestions and encouragement were crucial in the writing of this research project. I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. Rachel W. Kamau Kang’ethe for her guidance and assistance in the writing of this research work. Secondly, I acknowledge the support that I received from my wife and our children. Lastly, I won’t forget the Kirinyaga Education Office, all the headteachers, preschool teachers, friends and colleagues who helped me when conducting this research. May God bless you all.
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<tr>
<td>CSO</td>
<td>Curriculum Support Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECDE</td>
<td>Early Childhood Development Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESS</td>
<td>Educational Socialization Scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOK</td>
<td>Government of Kenya</td>
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<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>Information Technology</td>
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<td>KCPE</td>
<td>Kenya Certificate of Primary Education</td>
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<td>KICD</td>
<td>Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development</td>
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<td>KIE</td>
<td>Kenya Institute of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOE</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>SCDE</td>
<td>Sub-County Director of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>Socio-Economic Status</td>
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<td>SPSS</td>
<td>Statistical Packages for Social Sciences</td>
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ABSTRACT

Parental involvement refers to parents and family members’ use and investment of resources in their children’s schooling and hence no one is more influential than parents in sending signals to their children on the importance of good performance in various school activities through role modeling, assistance and involvement. This study sought to assess parental involvement in their children’s education in selected public and private primary schools in Kabare Zone, Kirinyaga County, Kenya. The study adopted Epstein’s six types of parent involvement that entails parent education, communication, and volunteering, home visit, decision making and collaborating with the community. The methodology of the study was descriptive survey design. The target population was pre-primary teachers, children and their parents. A total of 410 respondents (300 children, 80 parents and 30 teachers) were selected. Qualitative data such as demographic information and parents’ involvement were coded, assigned tables to variables’ categories and fed into computer. The summarized data were analyzed using descriptive statistics with the help of Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS). Frequency tables, bar-graphs and pie charts were used to present the information. Qualitative data obtained from interview guides and existing records were organized into relevant themes and discussed based on research objectives. Inferences were then made from each theme, conclusions drawn, and recommendations made from the findings. Findings revealed that despite that more than half of parents always prepared time and space for their children at home, less than 40% would always assist their children in homework. Majority of the pupils reported that they parents did not always check their homework. The study concludes that there is a significant relationship between parental involvements on academic performance among children enrolled in ECDE centres. The study recommends parents should create time from their busy schedule to participate more in their children’s education activities if they expect improved academic performance. The study also recommended that therefore there is need for school managers and administrators to find ways of introducing programmes to ensure that fathers closely monitor and participate in; assisting their children with school work, buying children a present when they perform well, attending school meetings and discussing with teachers about their children’s progress. There is need for the ministry of education to start programmes where workshops and seminars are held in schools to sensitize fathers on the important role they play in boosting their children’s performance in school when they get involved in their children’s education.
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction
The chapter encompasses the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study and objectives of the study, research questions and significance of the study. It also covers limitations and delimitations, basic assumptions of the study, theoretical and conceptual framework and operational definition of terms based on parental involvement in their children’s education.

1.2 Background of the Study
During the pre-colonial period, free and universal primary education did not include African children leading to a big challenge in involving parents in primary education (UNESCO, 2005). With regard to this notion, curriculum for Africans was the most inferior unlike the one for the Europeans which reflected superiority. In the United States, Holloway, Yamamoto, Suzuki and Mindnich (2008) affirm that involvement of parents has an affirmative impact on the learners’ overall achievements because parents who are actively involved in the education of their children often are more knowledgeable with regards to the school’s objectives and procedures, assist children to learn ways of enhancing their perceptions of competence, communicate the significance of education to children and control over achievement outcomes and structure learning experiences that result in skill development. This implies that active parents make efforts to always be cognizant about their child’s school aims and objectives towards their children’s education and become active players in determining how the school should pursue them.
In South Africa, Phendla (2004) identifies that some learners’ parents are of the perception that school educators know and are capable of everything independently on their own and thus their involvement is unnecessary and pointless. Parental attitude influenced the kind of involvement the community will be willing to make (Parhar, 2006). Parental attitudes in turn shape the community’s ideology thus both become excluded or passive participants in improving learners’ academic performance. Such detrimental ideologies continue to be held by most stakeholders members such as the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), the government and churches yet they are retrogressive to children’s education.

In Namibia, most learners’ parents do not fully comprehend the obligations they have in improving their children’s academic performance (Kaperu, 2004). Most parents with limited educational backgrounds tend to shy away from getting involved because they perceive themselves as unqualified or illiterate to be able to make any impact even if they were involved (Zoppi, 2006). Moreover, such parents’ self-worth feelings suffer when they are unable to neither read nor comprehend any school forms that are sent to them through their children from school. Therefore, if such parents feel inferior, poorly equipped, uncertain of their ability to make an impact in the child’s education performance and lack the courage to participate in school activities, they will avoid any contact with the school and its teachers (Zoppi, 2006). Admittedly, as determined by Siririka, (2007) there are also parents who believe that their child’s education responsibility lies entirely on the school and not them hence they perceive their
involvement in any activities of the school only has the potential to be counter-productive.

In Kenya, the onset of transforming educational policies emerged during independence in 1964 following Ominde’s Report publication which proposed to Kenya an Educational System that would not only foster national unity but national development as well (Republic of Kenya, 1964). In 1976 Gachathi committee was tasked with reforming the country’s education structure. Subsequently, it was followed by the Mackey Report of 1981 whose recommendation led to the establishment of the 8.4.4 system of education (Republic of Kenya, 1981). Sessional Paper No.1 of 2005 established a policy framework which aimed to tackle the different factors hindering the effective delivery of education, training and research in the twenty first century. The framework provides government commitment towards increasing education opportunities for Kenyans. This explains why strategic education plan identifies education objectives and means by which the ministry in collaboration with other stakeholders including parents will have to adhere to the policies in place (Republic of Kenya, 2005).

The Kenyan government has established a policy framework and service standard guidelines for Early Childhood Development Education to ensure the realization of effective participation of stakeholders in early childhood programs. Therefore, parents have an important responsibility of providing for the needs that will support children’s holistic development. This notwithstanding, Swadener et-al (2002) and Koech (2010) cited in Kenya Institute of Education (KIE, 2006) currently rebranded Kenya Institute in
Curriculum Development (KICD) noted that research evidence indicates that parents and other caregivers are not stimulating and caring for young children as they used to do traditionally. This decline in parental care motivated by poverty levels, education level, their occupation and family size may greatly contribute to less parental involvement in children’s learning and development hence dismal performance.

Schools in Kenya were perceived as something outside the parents and the community. However, Farant (2004, cited in N zabonimpa, 2009) clearly opines that the closer the parent is to the education of the child, the greater the impact on child development and educational achievement. Studies have shown that learners whose parents do not turn up for school meetings not only have a lot indiscipline cases but also more often perform poorly in their exams (Fullan, 2001, cited in Reynolds, Creemers, Hopkins, Stoll & Bollen, 2009).

Studies in Kenya show that in some communities, for instance, fathers have no direct involvement with their children while in others, fathers’ involvement is confined to indirect support for childcare like providing financial support and that of an overseer (Koech, 2010; Maina, 2010; Mwoma, 2010). Ndani (2010) also conducted a study on community participation and preschool Microsystems in Thika district and revealed that children established withdrawal syndrome as a result of lack of support. These studies found that parents’ involvement in their children’s education influence children’s performance at preschool. However, the studies have not specifically focused on the frequency of parents’ involvement in the boy child’s education in pre-primary education.
where the foundation of learning is laid. Most of these studies majorly focused on the parents and only a few captured children and teachers. This study therefore, sought to fill this research gap by focusing on pre-primary school children, teachers and parents.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Parents involvement in enhancing learners’ achievement in pre-schools is very critical in ensuring children’s holistic educational development. Parents are expected to be involved in this cause by providing amenities, spiritual enrichment, security and basic teaching/learning materials. However, pre-schools have been faced with challenges of involving parents in ensuring effective children’s achievement due to lack of parental commitment, attitudes and goals set for parental participation by school administrators. Kabare Zone in Kirinyaga County is not an exceptional.

Research on parental participation concurs that participation extends beyond financial contributions and include their role in children’s cognitive, social, physical and emotional development. Studies based on conceptual and empirical constructs that question if the parents, have relinquished their responsibility on the children education in pre-schools is scanty and general. Again, whether differential parenting influences the performance characteristics of the pre-school children in the formative educational stages needs to be studied. This could explain the current low standards of education levels of the boy-child in class three. In this regard, the current study established the role of parental involvement on performance of early childhood education from selected public and private schools in Kabare Zone, Kirinyaga County, Kenya.
1.3.1 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to assess parental involvement in their pre-primary children’s education and performance in selected public and private primary schools in Kabare Zone, Kirinyaga County, Kenya. The study also sought to establish the strategies used to improve parents’ involvement in enhancing their children’s learning achievements.

1.3.2 Research Objectives

The study was guided by the following objectives:

i) To establish the frequency of parents’ involvement in pre-primary education in selected public and private schools in Kabare Zone, Kirinyaga County, Kenya.

ii) To assess the influence of parents’ involvement on learners’ performance in pre-primary education in selected public and private schools in Kabare Zone, Kirinyaga County, Kenya.

iii) To establish the activities of parents’ involvement in pre-primary education from selected public and private schools in Kabare Zone, Kirinyaga County, Kenya.

iv) To suggest strategies of improving parents involvement in improving learning achievements of learners of Kabare Zone, Kirinyaga County.
1.3.3 Research Questions

In line with the objectives of the study, the research was guided by the following research questions;

i) To what extent are parents involved in pre-primary education in public and private schools in Kabare Zone, Kirinyaga County?

ii) What is the influence of parents’ involvement on learners’ performance pre-primary education in selected public and private schools in Kabare Zone, Kirinyaga County, Kenya?

iii) What types of activities are parents involved in pre-primary education in public and private schools in Kabare Zone, Kirinyaga County?

iv) What strategies can be adopted to improve parents involvement in public and private schools in Kabare Zone, Kirinyaga County?

1.4 Significance of the Study

The study findings may be useful to teachers towards developing effective strategies of enhancing parental involvement. This integrates such methods as making families associated with both teachers and children. To the Ministry of Education and stakeholders, the findings may contribute to the establishment and implementation of curriculum which attempts to inclusively involve parents in teaching and learning. The study findings may assist other researchers in their mission of developing comprehensive literature and more relevant theories that may absolutely define the current situation of learners’ performance and parental involvement. This would add to the existing knowledge on the importance of parental involvement in early childhood education.
Finally, the study may enlighten parents of their roles in improving their children’s achievement in pre-primary schools.

1.5 Limitation and Delimitation

This section highlights possible challenges as well as the extent of the study.

1.5.1 Limitations

The following posed challenges to the study:

Inadequate finances, due to numerous financial obligations, finances posed a challenge even though the researcher developed a practical budget. Time factor, being a practicing teacher: the researcher encountered time limitations. This issue was however addressed by stipulating a workable schedule to guide the study. Suspicion, stakeholders especially private schools were unwilling to submit documents for fear of the unknown. However, the researcher presented all the research permits and allowed the respondents to sign an introduction letter. This ensured that only those willing participated in the study.

1.5.2 Delimitations

The study focused on parental involvement in their pre-primary children’s education in Kabare Zone, Kirinyaga County, Kenya. It was limited to selected private and public school in the same Kabare Zone and not any other. The choice was guided by the fact that Kabare Zone represented a rural setting with early childhood centres. Other categories of learners were not included in this study as this can form a basis for other studies to be
carried out. The study findings are representative of all schools in Kabare Zone, Kirinyaga County.

1.6 Assumptions of the Study

The study was guided by the following three assumption’s: first, that the selected sample would provide relevant and valid information for the study. Second, that the respondents would co-operate and provide correct information. Third, that all parents are involved in one way or another in enhancing performance of their children at pre-primary level.

1.7 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

This section presents the theory that supports the study as well as the diagrammatic expression of the relationship between independent and dependent variables.

1.7.1 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by Epstein’s theory, developed by Joyce Epstein in 1995 which involves a framework defining six different types of parental involvement. The theory describes the challenges that may emanate from each type of parent involvement as well as the expected results of implementing them for the learners, teachers and parents. Epstein notes that parenting involves parent education and other training for parents such as family literacy, family support programs to assist families with health issues, nutrition and other services. It also includes home visits at transition points to pre-school, elementary, middle and high school. On the other hand communicating incorporates designing of effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications
about school programs and children’s progress. Epstein identified conferences with every parent at least once a year and regular schedule of useful notices, memos, phone calls, newsletters and other communications as modes of communications that are useful.

Volunteering is another form of parent involvement (Epstein 1995). It involves recruiting and organizing parents help and support, school and classroom volunteer program to help teachers, administrators, students and other parents. It also entails family centre for volunteer work, meetings and resources for families. Learning at home also provides information and ideas to families about how to help learners at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions and planning. It involves information for families on skills required for students in all subjects at each grade, information on homework policies and how to monitor and discuss school-work at home and family participation in setting learners goals each year. Parents therefore need to dedicate their time to their children by giving them ample time for private studies and assisting in homework. This would assist in building confidence among children and hence enhance performance.

Decision making is another form of parent involvement that was identified by Epstein. It includes parents in school decisions, developing parent leaders and representatives. Also encompass active Parents Teachers Association (PTA) or other parent organizations, advisory council for parent leadership and participation, as well as independent advocacy groups to lobby and work for school reform and improvements. Lastly, the theory identifies collaborating with community as a form of parent involvement. This entails
identifying and integrating of resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices and learners’ learning and development. Such concerns as information for learners and families on community health, cultural, recreational, social support and other services are some of the issues involved in this form of parental involvement. Grolnick and Slowiaczed (1994) conceptualized parent involvement in education as a multi-dimensional construct that includes communication between families and schools. Based on this theory, involvement reflects academic socialization such as communicating the importance or value of education and linking school work to learners’ interests. The concept in the theory concurs with Epstein’s assertion. This study focuses on parental involvement on performance of pre-primary learners where the six types of parent involvement as noted by Epstein forms the basis of good performance in early childhood education. The theory therefore becomes useful in this particular study.

The Epstein’s theory is applicable to this study because it provides a comprehensive notion on how parents can be involved in school activities through pre-school functions, assisting children to do homework, modeling children’s behavior and preparing study time and space. The theory is relevant to the current study by involving parents in a number of different ways. Every state of involvement can be used throughout the children’s education to keep children, parents and teachers connected.
1.8 Conceptual Framework

**Figure 1.1: Impacts of Parental Involvement in Pre-Primary School Children’s Education.**

**Source:** Adapted from Orodho (2009: 120)

As indicated in Figure 1.1 it is hypothesized that learners would depict different performance depending on the level of parental involvement which was independent variable. Performance was the dependent variable which reflects positive or negative outcome.
1.9 Operational Definition of Terms

**Activities:** Refers to all undertakings by parents in enhancing performance of children in pre-school education.

**Involvement:** Refers to active participation in activities related to education of children in pre-primary schools.

**Level of involvement:** Refers to the extent to which parents engage in their children’s education both at home and in school.

**Parental involvement:** It is the active engagement of parents in activities that may enhance their children’s learning performance such as following up the children’s daily progress, helping them with homework and also ensuring it is done, attending meetings, open day forums, pre-school development activities and participating in the school’s policy-making initiatives and other important school agenda.

**Performance:** Progress shown by pre-primary school learners in activities. It may be effect of one thing or another.

**Pre-primary school:** Refers to the intermediate learning institution where children firstly build their basic education.

**Strategies:** Refers to approaches which can be adopted to enhance the level of parental participation in children’s education.

**Support:** It is the input by the parents, teachers and the preschool children to enhance performance.
CHAPTER TWO
REVIEWS OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

The chapter explores related literature that other researchers have established in regards to the role of parental involvement and the enhancement of performance of the pre-primary school learners. The chapter covers; overview of parental involvement, level of parental involvement on pre-primary children education, parental involvement and academic performance of children, activities parents involved in pre-primary school and strategies of involve parents in education of their children.

2.2 Parental Involvement

Different definition models and traditions underpin the understanding of parental involvement (Kertins & Greene, 2011). Adding to the confusion is the fact that the term “involvement” cannot be used synonymously with ‘participation,’ ‘collaboration or co-operation’. Forms of parental involvement as noted by Disgorger and Abouchaar (2003) in a review of their English literature identified ways in which parents can be involved. These include but not limited to: good parenting in the home, including; the provision of a secure and stable environment, intellectual stimulation; parent-child discussion; good models of constructive social and educational values; high aspirations relating to personal fulfillment and good citizenship. Contact with schools to share information, participation in school events, participation in the work of the school and participation in school governance. Most recently, the term parental engagement has been used in world-wide literature although differently on the basis of the source.
Good and Vorhaus (2011) use the phrase to mean learning in a home setting, communication from home and school respectively, decision making, in-school activities and partnership with the community. In a project focusing on enhancing the school readiness of disadvantaged pre-school children in the US, parental engagement is defined as comprising parental warmth and sensitivity, support for a child’s emerging autonomy and active participation in learning process (Sheridan et al, 2010). Based on the current study, parental involvement has been considered as a composite of all the support a parent gives to a child in perspective to educational foundation and achievement in pre-primary schools.

2.3 Level of Parental Involvement in Pre-Primary Education of their Children

In Latino, parental participation is only perceived as effective if they engage with their children outside of the school consistently on those activities that focus on the enhancement of their discipline and academic performance (Nye, Turner & Schwartz, 2006). Desforges and Abouchaar (2003) opine that parental involvement in learners’ academic performance refers to different activities which include: good parenting at home and providing the necessary assistance with homework. Zoppi (2006) concurs with this by positing that parental involvement in learner’s academic performance is a wholesome term that means they participate by responding to school obligations, giving encouragement, supervise their homework, model the desired behavior, and provide supplementary tutoring.
Subsequently, parental involvement in learners’ academic performance can be categorized into two; school-based and home-based involvement. Hoell (2006) determined that school-based involvement is further divided into two; explicitly school communication involvement which infers to direct contact with their child’s school particularly with the teachers. The second school involvement is actively participating and volunteering for activities within the school and school activities and establishing regular attendance of school functions and being active during decision making. According to Vogels (2002) the provision of material resources such as catering for teaching materials, school buildings or furniture and fittings maintenance constitute a vital part of school based involvement too.

Parhar (2006) emphasizes that parental involvement in children’s education leads to transformation of the parents from being passive education supporters to proactive members of the school community and society in general. Moreover, if learners can perceive their active participation and support towards their learning between home and school, they too become excited. As a result, they thus tend to realize the importance of learning, and consequently their intrinsic motivation for learning increases. Findings from research also show that if learners’ parents are actively involved in the education of their children then their attendance, achievement, discipline and health improve remarkably (Brooks, 2009). Vassallo (2001) confirms that parental involvement in their children’s education is a strong predictor of the learners’ overall academic performance. Therefore, if the child is to achieve more, the parent likewise must be more involved in their learning.
Involvement in children’s education is more if parents are confident they can be of help to the child and if they have high educational aspirations for the child (Eccles and Harold 1996). Ndani, (2008) and Epstein, (1990) noted that institutional policies and teacher practices also have great impact on the level of natural caregivers involvement in children’s learning. Parental involvement may also vary as a result of school characteristics, for example it tends to be better in smaller as opposed to large public institutions. Research has found that school factors greatly influence on parental involvement in their learners education (Ndani, 2008), Eccles and Harold, 1996), Epstein and Dauber, (1991). Crucial school aspects include whether it is a public or private institution, size of the school, its environment, established policies and practices as well as teachers attitudes and practices (Epstein & Dauber, 1991, Coleman & Hoffer, (1987). Ndani (2008) found that there was a remarkable difference in the level of involvement in pre-school activities among the communities in various pre-school sponsorships. She noted that higher involvement of parent was in private schools where the respondents with higher academic qualification took their children.

In private schools the most popular method of involvement was communication as most private schools required the guardians to make comments and append their signatures in their children’s home assignments. Other activities in private schools include one to one conference between the teacher and parents, suggesting places for field trips, accompanying children in trips and end of term discussion on children’s performance. Public schools in addition to attending meetings, parents were sometimes involved in deciding on matters related to provision of learning materials among others. Ndani,
(2008) noted that paternal and maternal parents in both two-parent and single-parent families are most likely to be highly involved if their children attend private as opposed to public schools. The policy framework in private schools makes parental involvement higher (Ndani, 2008, Eccles & Harold, 1996, Epstein & Dauder, 1991).

Desforges and Abouchaar (2003) opine that parental involvement in learners’ academic performance refers to different activities which include: good parenting at home and providing the necessary assistance with homework. Zoppi (2006) concurs with this by positing that parental involvement in learner’s academic performance is a wholesome term that means they participate by responding to school obligations, giving encouragement, supervise their homework, model the desired behavior, and provide supplementary tutoring. Zoppi (2006) discovered that most parents with limited educational backgrounds tend to shy away from getting involved because they perceive themselves as unqualified or illiterate to be able to make any impact even if they were involved. Moreover, such parents’ self-worth feelings suffer when they are unable to neither read nor comprehend any school forms that are sent to them through their children from school, besides they are unable to assist their children with homework even if they wanted. Therefore, if such parents feel inferior, poorly equipped, uncertain of their ability to make an impact in the child’s education performance and lack the courage to participate in school activities, they will avoid any contact with the school and its teachers (Zoppi, 2006).
Armento, Scafidi and Henderson (2011) argue that a teacher is a parent by extension and thus there must be a bond between parents and teachers in order to achieve an excellent academic performance in schools. Nevertheless, if the parents excuse themselves from teachers, learners tend to be left out in a cocoon of their own which trigger activities and behavior that kills the motivation of studying. According to Hornby (2011) people are equally talented and are therefore equally capable of benefiting from education but some make less effort than the others. The other provisions on this policy include free tuition to public school shall charge or cause any parent, guardians or any other person acting on behalf of the child to pay any fee. The parents/guardians have duties to ensure that other levies pertaining to school development are paid without involving the learners.

Zoppi (2006) opines that learning institutions naturally hinder parental and community involvement if the only chance of engagement is when a calamity strikes that they can’t handle own their own or there is a serious problem with a child. Moreover, the institution creates an unreceptive environment when they fail to inform ignorant parents of their rights and roles in improving their children’s education. Likewise, such institutional barriers also pose emotional and social challenges, acute and chronic stressors, cognitive lags as well as health and safety issues to the learners. Zoppi (2006) also attest to the fact that financial challenges greatly diminish the ability of parents to meaningfully get engaged in the education of their children because it often requires more financial support.
The reviewed studies show that despite the fact that parents take part in various education activities concerning their children, their participation has not been fully certified. Moreover, it varies from one setting to the other based on socio-economic status. According to the reviewed studies, although parents from varied ethnic backgrounds support their children’s education in unique means, the overall aim remains the same. This study sought to establish the frequency of parents’ involvement in pre-primary education in selected public and private schools in Kabare Zone, Kirinyaga County, Kenya.

2.4 Parents’ Involvement and Pre-schoolers’ Academic Performance

Parental involvement in children’s learning process has a positive correlation with improved academic performance (Cotton & Wikelund, 1989). Both indicate that the more intensively parents are involved in children’s learning, the higher the academic performance. This position holds truth for all types of parental involvement in children’s learning and cuts across all ages. The term parental involvement encompasses diversified modes of participation in education and with schools. The natural caregiver can support their sibling’s schooling by attending school functions and responding to parent-teacher meetings to exchange views. Most importantly the natural caregiver can improve their school work by encouraging them, ensuring proper study time and space, being role models of appropriate behaviour such as reading for pleasure, teaching their children at home and supervising them at home. Away from home setting, parents can advocate for the school programs. They can also offer themselves to help in school activities or even
play an instrumental role in governance and decision making relevant for planning, developing and providing for community’s children (Cotton & Wikelund, 2001).

By encouraging their children and assisting in homework, parents set examples for their child who are powerful and positive. Glanzero (2001) noted that when schools work together with families to support learning, children tend to succeed not only in school, but throughout life. Having appreciated the significance of parental involvement in school and performance, United States government enacted a federal legislation in 1994 that targeted the 2000 goals. The act stated that by the year 2000 every institution would encourage partnerships to enhance the role of parents in social, emotional and academic growth of children. Utah Education Association (2008) noted that when natural caregivers are actively involved in their children’s education at home their performance is better in schools.

Conway and Hountenwiile (2008) noted that when natural caregivers are involved there is a positive impact on learner’s achievement. Utah Education Association (2008) indicates that in whatever level of involvement, what is most important is the persistence to improve the child’s life. Though studies admit a strong direct correlation between socio-economic status (SES) and performances they also note that inspired families irrespective of their SES can assist their children to enhance their performance in school, studies documenting the impact of parental involvement both at home and school posits that the disparities in their achievement levels of working class and middle class children.
can better be explained by the nature of child-parent and parent-school interactions than by aspects of SES (Flouri and Buchanman, 2004; Conway, 2008).

Henderson and Berlia (1997) on the subject of parental involvement concluded that the most accurate indicator of learner’s performance in school is the extent to which families create a conducive home setting that promotes learning, communicate reasonable expectations for their children and become actively involved in their sibling’s schools. A program organized to foster networking between families and schools have been shown to supplement for the meager family resources and subsequently change the traditional relationships and school achievement. This was supported by Flouri and Buchanman (2004) that active participation by natural caregivers in children’s learning is a more powerful tool than other family factors such as family size, social economic status and even the level of parent’s education.

Melhnish, Sylvia, Sammons, Siray-Batchford and Taggart (2001) noted that where natural caregivers are involved in their children’s education, there is better performance, improved cognitive competence, greater school enjoyment and attendance as well as less behavioral challenges in school. Berkeley (2009) suggested that private schools have wide disparities in the level of active participation and therefore variations come into play from one private school to another. In private sector, parents provide financial resources to educate their children and hence become more involved in deciding what the school offer than parents whose siblings attend public school (Agbtogun, 2009). McMillan (2000) indicated that active participation of parents in their children’s learning strongly
determines their performance as measured through learner’s scores. Subsequently, natural caregivers positively influence the learning process of their siblings in all settings. Most of the studies indicate no room for underscoring parental involvement as it highly influences children for the later years. This assertion concurs with the researchers’ assumption that parents play a crucial role in enhancing performance of their siblings right from early years.

Active parents are also likely to solicit the support of others, become actively involved in community issues and even further their education (Becher, Henderson 1987). A variety of studies have been examined based on experimentation in relation to parental involvement (Berth 1979, Epstein 1987, Fehman, Keith and Reimers 1987; Karraker 1972; Walberg, Bole and Waxman 1980). Walberg-et-al (1980) tested a school-wide program in which natural caregivers signed a contract promising to set targets, ensure a conducive learning environment by discussing school work as well as work together with teachers in matters of discipline outcomes indicated that classes differed on the degree to which teachers embraced the program. In classes where tutors made more efforts to engage parents, classes gained about 1.1 grade level in reading. Along examining parent involvement indicators, researchers have explored the effect of children’s perceptions of their caregiver involvement on academic outcomes. Bempechat et-al (1989) advanced the Educational Socialization Scale (ESS) to assist pupils’ perceptions of their parent’s academic practices as well as natural caregivers control after school time. It was found that irrespective of social class or ethnicity, mathematics achievement had a positive correlation with views of frequent and intense educational socialization. Therefore,
evidence indicates that close monitoring and support for academic activities by parents are significant factors in that they enhance school achievement.

It is evident that the parents play a major role in school’s achievement and consequently to learners’ achievement. However, these studies failed to verify the extent to which parents take part in children’s education. The studies also used teachers and pupils in their samples. The current study sought to assess the influence of parents’ involvement on learners’ performance in pre-primary education in selected public and private schools in Kabare Zone by sampling all categories of school community, including parents, teachers and pupils.

2.5 Activities Parents’ Involvement in Education of their Children in Pre-Primary

In most cases home assignments are presented as a requirement meant to enhance learning where caregivers provide school-like establishments to support homework. This can work by organizing the surrounding and ensuring a routine for time usage. Disparities in these approaches have been connected to patterns of child-rearing values (for example, beliefs that the child should comply with the powers that give external orders, belief that biological caregivers should support the child’s individual differences (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992; Mc Desmontt, Goldman & Varenne, 1984; Scott-jones, 1987).

Similarly, Scott-Jones (1987) notes that caregivers seem to involve themselves in their siblings home assignments if and only if they are encouraged to get involved. Studies revealed that when parents are engaged in children’s education, there is a remarkable
difference in performance (Hoover-Dempsyey and Sandlerr, 1995 and 1997). Other studies on parental involvement in home assignments have examined the same using relatively general terminologies such as assisting, helping, tutoring and even doing home assignments with the learner. Studies have further investigated two more specific parental approaches to involvement that is structured; convergent (task-oriented) effort to assist the learner with assignments and informal student-responsive (often learner-centered) patterns of engagement in home assignment tasks. Some studies linked these strategies with variations in learners’ outcomes. For instance, a more structured strategy has been linked with poor learner outcomes while less structured approaches enhance performance.

Parents can be involved in their children’s education using a variety of techniques. These may involve parent school contacts during parent teacher conferences, parent training and parent involvement in school policy (Barth 1979; Becker and Epstein 1982; Moles 1982). During a survey of 3700, the first, third and fifth grade teachers, Beker and Epstein (1982) found that teachers’ techniques for involving parents in their children’s schooling fall into five categories (1) Reading activities, (2) Learning through discussion, (3) Suggestions for home activities (supervision and review of homework) (4) Contracts between parents and teachers (rewards and punishment) (5) Techniques to foster parents’ tutoring skills.

Epstein (1988) observed that an all-encompassing program of parent involvement should involve: First, ways to assist parents create a conducive learning environment at home.
Second, regular and clear communication from tutors to parents about learners’ progress. Third, use of parents as human resource in school as volunteers. Fourth, teacher aid with learning activities in the home, and fifth, active participation in school governance through parents Teachers Association (PTA) and/or Board of Management (BoM) under the new constitutional dispensation. Evidence indicates that parental involvement activities have positive effect on children’s achievement (Henderson, 1988). Natural caregivers who ensure a constant contact with the school have higher achievement levels than parents having erratic contact. Learning institutions that collaborate with the community tend to have higher achieving learners than schools with fewer ties. On the other hand, parents who actively participate in their children’s schooling are likely to develop positive attitudes towards their children’s teachers. They regard teachers in interpersonal and teaching skills, embrace them as wanting them too help their children as well as proposing ideas for home activities (Epstein, 1990).

Delgado-Gaitan (1992), Dermont et-al (1984) and Scott-Jones (1987) have noted that natural caregivers tend to utilize both general approaches to home assignment involvement, obviously responding to specific home assignment task demands and individual learner’s preferences (Hoover- Dempsey et-al (1995). A Kenya School Improvement Project Baseline Survey (2004) noted that a written institution home assignment policy has numerous advantages. Where schools have such polices, they tend to set guidelines for tutors to correct, grade and give feedback to their learners hence improving learning outcomes. Lack of concrete home assignment policy may place inadequate demands on the child and may not be expected to work effectively. Across the
board, where learners receive overwhelming assignments from different tutors at the same time in the evening, the same has negative impact on performance.

Furthermore, homework is highly preferred as an additional learning strategy extending beyond normal school schedule. This is important considering the scope of the syllabus to be implemented that requires extra time to be covered. However, the home assignments might be too demanding considering competing family daily chores and prevailing conditions in terms of physical facilities and learning environment. Where there is no written home assignment policy, tutors now and then give homework to learners mostly determined by available textbooks. This is regardless of the curriculum and whether learners have parental guidance or even working out the assignment alone. Schools should therefore come up with home assignment policy and explicitly communicate them to natural caregivers and families through appropriate media (Kenya School Improvement Project Baseline Survey, 2004).

Homework policy founded on home-school mutual agreement may promote completion of home assignments as well as parental involvement in the performance of the learners and a renewed interest in pupil’s learning process. This policy should consider the context of gender where homework completion is likely to be higher in boys than girls. Girls are most likely to be involved in domestic chores as opposed to boys. Subsequently, a good policy should not only be sensitive to socio-economic and cultural backgrounds but also to culture specific gender roles and what is expected of them by giving special attention to the girl-child (Kenya School Improvement Project Baseline Survey, 2004).
The current study sought to establish the activities of parents’ involvement in pre-primary education from selected public and private schools in Kabare Zone, Kirinyaga County, Kenya.

2.6 Strategies of Improving Parents’ Involvement in Learning Achievements of Learners

Following the aforementioned challenges related to parental involvement in children’s education, it is imperative that the requisite intervention and mitigation measures be taken accordingly. Such measures should aim at establishing an enabling environment that clears all the identified barriers to parental and community involvement in the improvement of learners’ academic performance. Moreover, the mitigation measures need to be designed to meet the challenges within particular context to be effective as no single measure can remedy the situation in all contexts. According to Desforges & Abouchaar, (2003), the measures can be based on conventional acknowledgement that every family is special and have strengths. Therefore, most parents can learn new techniques that can help them best assist their children because they are genuinely concerned about their overall well-being. Credence is further lend by Desforges & Abouchaar (2003) who concur that every parent has varying capacities on the extent to which they can be actively involved in the improvement of their children’s education. Capacity in this context of involvement implies an amalgamation of values, skills, and mentorship and motivation opportunities.
Although some capacity aspects are influenced by individual attributes, others are determined by the existing social structures. Therefore, most factors that influence parental involvement can easily be modified through education by being patient with parents and teaching them of what is expected of them. Desforges and Abouchaar (2003) further posit that the vital elements of respectful and positive parenting are teachable and learnable thus should be pursued.

According to Nye et al. (2006), focus should be shifted to initiation of training and education programs that promote parental empowerment by equipping them with the requisite abilities, knowledge, skills and material resources to help their children improve academically while at home. As a result, both Nye et al. (2006) and Desforges & Abouchaar (2003) in their studies propose that teachers should teach parents on how to play mathematics and reading games with their children. Also, parents should be encouraged to provide incentives and rewards to the children following good academic performance and improvement. Meanwhile, Parhar (2006) proposes a four based intervention approach which involves: the empowerment approach, the deficit approach, the political action approach and the conceptualization approach which ensures both the parents and the community are involved even in intangible ways. However, most of these studies only proposed strategies that might be effective in involving parents in children education but only a few focused on assessing the strategies being adopted by school administrators. Again, the studies were internationally based hence few studies exist to discover the strategies of involving parents. Therefore, this study sought identify ways of
improving parents involvement in improving learning achievements of learners in a local setting of Kabare Zone, Kirinyaga County.

2.7 Summary of Reviewed Literature and Gaps

According to the reviewed literatures, it is imperative to acknowledge the universal importance of any kind of parental involvement. Although the ethnic backgrounds of different parents may influence their involvement, the overall impact of their involvement on learners’ academic performance remains the same. The current study attempted to answer whether the situation is the same in public and private pre-primary schools in Kabare Zone by identifying the extent to which parents are involved in improving learning achievements of their children. It is evident from the literature that the parents play a major role in learners’ achievement. However, these studies failed to verify the extent of the participation. Therefore, this study sought to establish ways in which the parents are currently involved in improvement of learning achievements of primary school pupils in Kabare Zone by sampling all categories of school community, including parents, teachers, pupils and teachers. Also, in the study, the utility value of the approaches towards improving learners’ achievement was cross examined in regards to the research findings by seeking strategies of improving parents and community involvement in improving learning achievements of primary school pupils of Kabare Zone.
CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This section outlines the methodology which was used in carrying out the study. It entails the research design, location of the study, target population, sampling techniques and sample size, research instruments, pilot study, data collection techniques, data analysis, logistical and ethical issues.

3.2 Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey design which is used in preliminary and exploratory studies. Descriptive survey was appropriate because it enabled the researcher gather facts and produce statistical information that was easy to analyze and interpret. The study used both qualitative and quantitative approaches. According to Gall and Borg (2007) descriptive survey design is economical due to the little costs involved in questionnaires. This was an added advantage of this design to the research. Using both qualitative and quantitative methods gave in-depth explanation and hard data necessary for the required objectives respectively.

3.2.1 Variables

i) Independent Variables

Parent Involvement Frequency:-Was measured by establishing the frequency parents assist children in homework, attend school functions such as meetings, mould children behavior and preparing time and space for children at home with regard to private
studies. This was based on a 4-item scale of frequency level of ‘hardly, rarely, often and always’.

**Parent Involvement** Parental involvement-This was measured by interrogating parents on whether they assist children in homework, attend parents meeting, provide learning materials, encourage their children in studies and check performance in class work through questionnaires. Through focused grouped discussion, children were also asked to show whether their parents engaged in their education.

**Parental Involvement activities:**- This was measured by interrogating pre-school teachers on whether parents mould children’s behavior, buy learning materials to their children and motivate them through the use of questionnaires.

**ii) Dependent Variables**
Dependent variable of the study was Learners’ performance which was examined in terms of level of discipline, academic progress, completion of assignments and completion of homework through document analysis.

**3.3 Location of the Study**
This study was carried out in Kabare Education Zone of Kirinyaga County. Kabare is one of the 11 Zones in the county bordering Baragwi education Kabare Zone to the east and Inoi Education Kabare Zone to the Western side. Coffee and Tea farming is practiced in the upper areas of the Kabare Zone while the lower sides engage in horticulture and
grain farming in small scales. Kabare Zone was chosen because it has an average population of 40,088 people of which 41% of the population was classified below poverty line of Ksh.1300 per adult equivalent (Kirinyaga County Data Sheet, 2017). Moreover, the location has both public and private schools where both boys and girls are given preference in education. However, participation of women and men in early childhood is dismal leaving the role entirely to the teachers. It is therefore against this background information that the area was selected for this study.

3.4 Target Population

The study targeted 60 teachers, 800 parents and 760 pre-primary children from 46 pre-primary schools (20 public pre-schools and 26 private pre-schools) in Kabare Zone. The total populations of different respondents are as presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Target Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Target Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-primary Children</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.5 Sampling Procedures and Sample Size

The sampling techniques and sample size used in this study were described in the following sub-sections;
3.5.1 Sampling Procedures

Pre-primary schools were categorized into public and private schools to form the study strata. Stratified sampling technique was used to proportionately select 6 public and 7 private pre-primary schools leading to a total of 13 schools which represents 30% of the total schools. Stratified sampling technique ensured that both public and private pre-schools were involved in the study. Simple random sampling method was used to select at least 10% of each category of respondents. This was in accordance to Best, J.W. & Kahn, J. (2006) who argue that at least 10% sample is ideal for a bigger population and 30% for a smaller population. Hence, a total of 300 children, 80 parents and 30 teachers from the 13 sampled schools. The use of simple random sampling technique ensured that each member of each sample category had equal chances to be selected for participation in the study. This translated into a total sample of 410 respondents.

3.5.2 Sample Size

The study sampled a total of 410 respondents comprising 300 children, 30 teachers and 80 parents/guardians. The researcher considered to select a relatively smaller number of parents than children because comprehensive interview sessions were involved which required manageable number of parents within the time frame. This information is summarized in Table 3.2.
### Table 3.2: Sample Size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Target population</th>
<th>Sample size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pupils</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents/guardians</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>760</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,620</strong></td>
<td><strong>410</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 3.6 Research Instruments

The study employed questionnaire, interview schedule and document analysis as discussed below.

#### 3.6.1 Questionnaires for Teachers

A questionnaire was prepared in advance to be filled by pre-school teachers. It consisted of both open-ended and closed ended questions. The questionnaire was divided into two parts: the first section was concerned with general information of the respondents while the second section encompassed detailed information related to the study objectives. The questionnaire contained items to solicit for information on the general view of the teachers as pertains to pre-primary learners’ performance and parental involvement. Questionnaire was considered appropriate because it was time saving and cost effective. The use of questionnaire also enabled the respondents to give responses confidently since they were instructed not to include their names in the instrument.
3.6.2 Interview Schedule for Parents

Interview schedules were prepared in advance and administered to eighty randomly selected parents. The interview gathered information on the extent to which parents participate in their children’s education. The use of interview guide was appropriate because it allowed the researcher to seek for clarity in case of misconception unlike the use of questionnaire. Interviews also allowed the researcher to reach out to the semi-illiterate and illiterate people in the community since interviews were one on one encounter. The researcher ensured clarity of questions as well as use of a language of the catchment area.

3.6.3 Focused Group Discussion for Learners

A focused group discussion was designed for children based on groups of ten. The tool was made of 10 items eclosed in ‘Yes’ and ‘No’ answer options. Focused group discussion was appropriate because it enabled the researcher to triangulate the findings by comparing the data with those obtained from the interview guides for the parents.

3.6.4 Documentary Analysis

This involved reviewing the existing data in the pre-schools to establish the trend in performance of selected learners. Through the records, performance was assessed based on children’s progress, based on creativity in drawing and modeling, naming pictures, filling the blank spaces and presentability in class.
3.7 Pilot Study

Piloting of instruments was conducted in two pre-schools. It involved one from private and one from public not included in the study sample but having similar characteristics to those selected. This was specifically conducted in a school in the neighbouring Baragwi Kabare Zone since its characteristics were similar to the sampled schools.

3.7.1 Validity

Content validity was assessed to validate the content of the instruments. The researcher sought consultancy from experienced supervisor, graduates and research experts to establish the relevance of the content used in the instrument. Validity was thereafter enhanced by editing ambiguous items to make them clearer to the respondents. Irrelevant items were also discarded. More useful items were added to improve on the content of findings.

3.7.2 Reliability

The researcher employed a test-retest method to estimate the extent to which the same results could be obtained with repeated measure of accuracy of the same concept (Orodho: 2009). Test-re-test method was used whereby the developed questionnaires were given to the same group twice at an interval of two weeks. Focused group discussions were also administered based on the test-retest method. The responses obtained in the first and second tests were, categorized based on qualitative and quantitative data. The data was then analyzed and correlated using Spearman’s Correlation Coefficient formulae in which coefficient values range between 0<1. When
scores were computed, an average value of 0.73 was obtained for the instruments. Therefore, it is considered enough to judge the reliability of instruments. According to Best and Khaln (2006), a coefficient value of above 0.7 is ideal for questionnaires and interviews schedules.

3.8 Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was done based on the following phases:

3.8.1 Phase one

The researcher visited the selected pre-schools to seek permission from the head teachers and build a good rapport with the respondents prior to the study. It was also an opportunity to make appointments for necessary sessions to administer the questionnaires, interview schedule and focus group discussions. Subsequently, with the help of teachers, the researcher identified pre-primary learners whose parental involvement in academic activities was outstanding. This was followed by reviewing their performance for the past three terms.

3.8.2 Phase two

Questionnaires were personally administered to the sampled teachers to complete. Respondents were assured of confidentiality by instructing them not to write their names on the tools. Completed questionnaires were collected and later checked for errors with the help of trained research assistants. Meanwhile, interviews were carried out on the headteachers to get an in-depth information based on parental involvement. Schedule
sessions were prepared in advance in the simplest manner. Children were grouped into 10 and told to answer questions related to their parents’ contribution to their education. The questions were brief for the children to answer. This procedure was repeated for the rest of pre-schools sampled for the study within a time frame of 2 weeks. The collected data were safely kept and stored for analysis.

3.9 Data Analysis

The researcher used both quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques for this study because both approaches complement each other. Quantitative data such as demographic information, parents’ involvement were analysed using descriptive statistics. The data were coded, assigned labels to variables’ categories (i.e PIF for parental involvement frequency, PI for parental involvement, PIA for parental involvement activities and LPI for learners performance indicators) and fed into the computer with the aid of Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS). Frequency tables, bar-graphs and pie charts were employed to present the information. Qualitative data obtained from interview guides were organized into themes and discussed based on research objectives. Inferences were then made from each theme, conclusions drawn and recommendations made from the findings.

3.10.0 Logistical and Ethical Considerations

These entail the principles that were observed during the study and have been discussed under the following sub-topics:
3.10.1 Ethical Considerations

To establish confidentiality, the researcher assured the respondents that all data provided were only for academic purpose. Confidentiality was assured through involving only those who signed the consent forms during the study. The researcher also took care by not asking personal information which might provoke the participants based on embarrassment, irritation and negative labeling. Finally, the respondents were instructed not to include their names in the scripts or the questionnaires during the study.

3.10.2 Logistical Considerations

The researcher sought authorization from the Graduate School, Kenyatta University. The authorization letter was then used to apply for a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). Relevant permits were also sought from relevant authorities such as the Ministry of Education (MoE) through the Sub-County Director of Education (SCDE), the County Commission of Kirinyaga and Director of Education, Kirinyaga County which officially allowed access to sampled schools.
CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings, interpretations and discussions in line with the objectives of the study. The main purpose of the study was to assess parental involvement on their children’s education in pre-primary school in selected public and private primary schools in Kabare Zone, Kirinyaga County, Kenya. Both qualitative and quantitative data analysis techniques were used for this study. The analyzed data were presented using frequency tables, bar-graphs and pie-charts. Qualitative data generated from open-ended items from questionnaires and focused group discussions from pupils were organized into relevant themes and discussed. The study was specifically meant to meet the following objectives:

1. To establish the frequency of parents’ involvement in pre-primary education in selected public and private schools.
2. To assess the influence of parents’ involvement on learners’ performance pre-primary education in selected public and private schools.
3. To establish the activities of parents’ involvement in pre-primary education from selected public and private schools.
4. To suggest ways of improving parents involvement in improving learning achievements of learners.
4.2 General and Demographic Information of the Respondents

Demographic data were collected from teachers, parents and pupils. The results of the analysis are presented in the following sub-sections.

4.2.1 Response Rate

Table 4.1 presents the response rate of the respondents,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Response Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pupils</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>410</strong></td>
<td><strong>380</strong></td>
<td><strong>92.7</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As it can be seen in Table 4.1, all 300 pupils that were sampled participated in the study giving a response rate of 100%. Similarly, all the questionnaires that were administered to a total of 30 teachers were returned giving a response rate of 100%. However, out of the 80 sampled parents, only 50 were interviewed due to unavoidable circumstances giving response rate of 62.5%. The overall response rate was 92.7% which was considered excellent to give a valid data for making conclusions and recommendations based on the objectives of the study. This is in line with Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) who opine that a response rate of 70% is good.
4.2.2.0 Demographic Information

This section presents data based on the demographic information of the respondents in terms of age and gender.

4.2.2.1 Age of the Respondents

Teachers answered a question regarding their ages as presented in Figure 4.1.

![Distribution of Teachers by Age](image)

**Figure 4.1: Distribution of Teachers by Age**

As shown in Figure 4.1, majority 13 (43.4%) of the teachers were aged between 31-40 years, 10(33.3%) were 21-30 years while only 7(23.3%) were aged between 41-50 years. These findings imply that teachers were distributed in all brackets of age ranging from 21-50 years which is presumed and related to hostility age in terms of handling children. Hence, the age range is significant in playing role models in pre-schools that would assist children acquire adaptive skills in pre-schools.
Teachers were also asked to indicate their gender and their responses are as presented in Figure 4.2.

4.2.2.2 Gender of the Respondents

Figure 4.2: Distributions of Teachers by Gender

Results in Figure 4.2 indicate that majority 16(53.3%) of the pre-school teachers were females while 14(46.7%) were males. These findings imply that there is almost equal distribution of teachers in ECDE centres with respect to gender. This implies that both male and female teachers are equally represented in pre-schools. Lamb (2004) noted that both male and female teachers are equally important in providing basic education to children in all aspects.
4.2.2.3 Level of Education of the Respondents

The level of education of the teachers was investigated and the results are as presented in Figure 4.3.

**Figure 4.3: Distributions of Teachers by Level of Education**

As shown in Figure 4.3, teachers were distributed within all levels of education. Majority 13 (43.3%) had certificate, 7 (23.3%) were form four leavers, 6 (20%) were diploma holders, while 4 (13.3%) had degree. From these findings, it can be concluded that some teachers did not have adequate level of education. This implies that not all teachers could adequately boost the performance of children in pre-school since high level of achievement is attributed to high level of training among pre-school teachers.

4.2.2.4 Duration Served in the Current Work Stations

The study was also interested in knowing the duration teachers had served in their current work stations. The results are as presented as shown in Figure 4.4.
From the above results (Figure 4.4), 13(43.3%) of teachers had taught in their current school for more than five years, 12(40%) had taught for the period of between 2-5 years while 5(16.7%) had served for a period of below 2 years. This finding implies that majority had served long enough and this was helpful in the study as most teachers were well conversant with the characteristics of learners in relation to the extent to which their parents participated in their education. This is in accordance with Brown (2009) that a more experience teacher is more likely to use appropriate teaching methods and enhance performance of children in school than the one who has little experience in teaching.

4.3 Extent to which Parents are Involved in Pre-Primary Education

The first objective of the study sought to establish the frequency of parents’ involvement in pre-primary children’s education in selected public and private schools in Kabare Zone, Kirinyaga County, Kenya. Pre-school teachers were asked to indicate how frequent
the parents participated in certain activities related to education. The frequency was rated using a 4-item Likert scale (Hardly=1, Rarely=2, Often=3 and Always=4). The findings are as presented in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2: Frequency at which Parents Participate in Children’s Education**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Hardly</th>
<th></th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th></th>
<th>Often</th>
<th></th>
<th>Always</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending parents meetings</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>56.7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteering in school work</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>73.3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisting children in homework</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modeling children behaviour</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparing time and space</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>53.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As it can be observed in Table 4.2, majority 22(73.3%) indicated that parents rarely volunteered in school work. However, none of the teachers reported that parents always volunteered in school work. The findings further revealed that despite the high number 16(53.3%) of parents who always prepared time and space for their children at home, only 4(13.3%) would always assist their children in homework. The findings further indicated that a high proportion 17(56.7%) of teachers reported that parents rarely attended meetings in schools which are related to their children’s progress both socially and academically. Basing on modeling of children’s behavior, majority 15(50%) of teachers said that parents often corrected the behaviours of their children at home. However, 4(13.3%) reported that parents were not concerned on modeling children’s behavior.
These findings imply that a considerate number of parents who participated did not directly involve in their children’s education at pre-school level. The findings agrees with those of Larzelere (2013) who argues that discipline may be installed but less is done in ensuring that such installed discipline gives the expected performance in school.

4.4.1 Extent To Which Parents Assisted Children With Homework

Parents were also asked to indicate the extent to which they assisted their children in homework. Their responses are as presented in Figure 4.5.

![Figure 4.5: Extent to which Parents Assist their Children in Homework](image)

Results in Figure 4.5 revealed that majority 28(56.0%) of parents reported that they assist their children in homework less than two times per week. The findings further showed that 10 (20%) did it 2-3 times a week and 8(16%) daily. However, 4(8%) did not assist their children in homework at all. This finding implies not all parents were responsible in
helping their children in home work and hence not willing to enhance their children’s academic achievement.

In Focused Group Discussions (FGD), pupils were also asked to show whether their parents involved in their education. This was established by allowing a group of pupils (10 pupils per discussion) to provide answers to certain roles of parents related to education using ‘Yes’ and ‘No’. The responses are summarized as shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Pupils’ Response on the their Parents’ Involvement in their Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) My parents/caregivers always check the homework.</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) My parents/caregivers always want to know my progress in school.</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) My parents/caregivers help me on where to do my studies.</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) My parents/caregivers ask from me materials needed for my homework and provide</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) My parents/caregivers always ask me what is happening in school.</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) My parents/guardians encourage me to read always.</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=300

From Table 4.3, majority 172(51.3%) of the pupils reported that their parents did not always check their homework. Despite that majority 295(98.3%) of the children agreed
that their parents/guardians encouraged them to read always, 124(41.3%) reported that their parents did not ask from them materials needed for homework and 243(81%) disagreed that parents/caregivers always ask them what is happening in school. Findings further indicated that 90(30%) of the children disagreed that their parents/caregivers always wanted to know their progress in school. These findings imply that parents were not adequately involved in their children’s education and academic progress.

Interestingly, majority of children felt that their parents were not helping them in homework at all. The finding conform with the results from teachers in Table 4.2 which showed that despite the high number 16(53.3%) of parents who always prepared time and space for their children at home, only 4(13.3%) would always assist their children in homework.

The findings also imply that parents participate in children’s education through a range of activities both at home and in school. This is in line with finding by Zoppi (2006) which indicated that parent involvement is an inclusive ranging from actively teaching children at home, monitoring behavior, assisting in homework, attending school activities and functions, and responding to school obligations. The findings of this study also compliment Armento et al. (2011) argument that majority of parents will do anything not to offend teachers but do little towards what may lead to good grades. Such parents have great expectation of good grades but do not input good practices and materials to achieve those grades.
Findings of this study imply that parents were not fully involved in their children’s education and thus their participation was below average. The literature affirms and illuminates these findings. Hornby (2011) notes that some parents felt incapacitated to assist their children with homework completion. Some children are also denied leisure time which may be detrimental to academic performance since children need time to relax and reduce the mental fatigue experienced in school the entire week with Saturdays inclusive.

The current study concurs with the findings of, Flouri and Buchanman (2004) and Conway (2008) in their studies documenting the impact of parental involvement both at home and school posit that the disparities in their achievement levels of working class and middle class children can better be explained by the nature of child-parent and parent-school interactions than by aspects of Socio-Economic Status.

4.4 Parent’s Involvement in Education and Children’s Performance in Pre-Primary School

The second objective of the study sought to assess the influence of parents’ involvement on learners’ performance in pre-primary education in selected public and private schools in Kabare Zone, Kirinyaga County, Kenya. Parents were asked to agree or disagree whether their participation in their children’s academic work enhance the performance in school. Their responses are as presented in Figure 4.6.
Figure 4.6: Parents’ Perception on whether their Involvement in Children’s Education influence Performance

Results in Figure 4.6 indicated that majority 33(66%) agreed that their involvement in their children’s education influenced their academic performance, while 2(4%) disagreed. Interestingly, a high proportion 15(30%) of the parents did not know whether their participation in children’s education had impact on performance or not. This implies that a good number of parents lacked knowledge on the importance of parental involvement on their children’s learning achievement and therefore there is need to sensitize them basing on educative programmes in the community. On the other hand, the findings mean that majority of parents were aware that their contribution to children’s education had a positive impact on the children’s performance at pre-schools.
To establish the influence of parental involvement on performance, cross tabulation was done between the frequency at which parents got involved in children’s education and their children average score in tests. Mean scores of pupils’ previous end-term performance were calculated and presented alongside the frequency at which their parents were involved in their education. Table 4.4 summarizes the findings.

Table 4.4: Parental Involvement in Children’s Education and Pupils’ Performance with Quality of Training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Freq</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Mean score of the pupils in End term (0&lt;100)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My parents/caregivers always check the homework</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>42.7</td>
<td>61.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>51.3</td>
<td>46.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My parents/caregivers always want to know my progress in school.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>65.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>61.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My parents/caregivers help me on where to do my studies.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>95.3</td>
<td>75.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>74.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My parents/caregivers ensured that I have materials needed for my homework</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>58.7</td>
<td>56.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>43.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My parents/caregivers always ask me what is happening in school.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>61.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>57.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My parents/guardians encourage me to read always.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>98.3</td>
<td>69.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>44.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The result from Table 4.4 shows that pupils who agreed that their parents were involved in their education had a high mean score compared to those who reported that their parents did not participate in their education. The more the parents get involved in children’s education the higher the pupils’ mean score in academic performance. However, there was a slight difference in pupils’ mean score between pupils who agreed with the item, ‘My parents/caregivers help me on where to do my studies’ and those who disagreed. This means that guiding of children by parents on where they ought to execute their homework has a little impact on the child’s academic performance. This implies that parental involvement influence pupils’ performance. Therefore, the more the involvement of parents in children’s education the higher the pupils’ performance academically.

The findings agree with those of Fasina (2011) study in Nigeria on the role of parents in early childhood education which revealed that the extent of parental involvement in children’s education does have an impact on early childhood education. Some parents just don’t buy the idea of letting their kids experience early childhood education. More so, some parents who are illiterate do engage in practices like; if the child’s hand does not touch the other side of his/her ears then he/she can’t start school. These are kind of old beliefs that should be discarded. So therefore, the parental educational exposure has a very huge impact on the early childhood education.

The findings are in agreement with Conway and Hountenwiile (2008) who noted that when natural caregivers are involved there is a positive impact on learner’s achievement. As well, Melhinsh, Sylvia, Sammons, Siray-Batchford and Taggart (2001) noted that
where natural caregivers are involved in their children’s education, there is better performance, improved cognitive competence, greater school enjoyment and attendance as well as less behavioral challenges in school. McMillan (2000) indicated that active participation of parents in their children’s learning strongly determines their performance as measured through learner’s scores. Subsequently, natural caregivers positively influence the learning process of their siblings in all setting.

**4.5 Ways in which Parents are Involved in Pre-Primary Education**

The third objective of the study sought to establish the activities of parents’ involvement in pre-primary education from selected public and private schools in Kabare Zone, Kirinyaga County, Kenya. This section gives an analysis of how parents are involved in improving learning achievements of pre-primary school pupils. The results have been presented and discussed in the following sub-sections.

**4.5.1 Response on Whether Parents Visit School Whenever Pupils Do Any Exam**

Parents were asked to state whether parents visit schools whenever their children do any exam. The results are as presented in Table 4.5.
Table 4.5: Parents Response on whether they Do Visit Schools Whenever Pupils Do Any Exam

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 4.5 a big number 35(70%) of the parents reported that parents do not usually visit school whenever pupils do any exam, 15(30%) however said parents do visit schools whenever they do any exam. From the above results it is true to conclude that majority of parents of pupils schooling in Kabare Zone primary schools were less concerned with academic progress of their children. This can be attributed to ignorance on the part of parent or lack of awareness on their importance in improving academic performance of their children. Parents can also be said that they leave the role of academic achievement solely to the teachers and the school.

4.5.2 The Roles of the Parents on Children’s Academic Progress

Parents were requested to show their levels of agreement with the statement that ‘Parents enquire about academic progress of the children in school. The results are as presented in Table 4.6.
Table 4.6: Parents Response on whether they enquire About Academic Progress of the Children in School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results in Table 4.6 show that majority 42(84%) of parents disagreed with the statement, ‘parents enquire about academic progress of the children in school’, 5(10%) agreed with the statement while 1(2%) strongly disagreed with the statement.

Teachers were also asked to give activities in which they involve parents apart from supervising, reading and homework. Results of the study revealed that parents were involved during general meetings (which are usually one per term), prize giving ceremonies, and consultation or vising days which are held once towards the end of every term. Most participants singled out consultation or visiting days as the most effective engagement between parents and teachers. It was explained that during consultation or visiting days, parents or guardians visit schools and meet teachers of their children, where parents are shown their children’s writing books, and end term examination marks. Most of the activities in which schools involve parents were within Epstein’s six types of parent involvement practices.
These findings imply that even though there were activities in which parents were involved in towards strengthening of learning of their children in school, less emphasis was exerted on the progress. This has an adverse effect on children’s education especially at an early stage of growth and development.

In the focus group discussions a pupil said:

“....My parents will not allow me watch television even if the programme is educative...”

Another pupil lamented that:

“.....My parents do not allow me to have leisure time or play with my friends for my relaxation.....”

Parents further agreed that it was their critical duty to engage in their children’s education but were ignorant on how they were to be engaged in one parent reported that’

“...we have the duty, as parents, to do everything possible towards improving our children’s learning, but we do not know our specific roles”.

On the contrary to this, a parent in another group discussion reported that despite their limited education, they were certain things they could do to improve their children’s education. A response which epitomized this notion was:

“Although there is limited time for us, we can improve the learning of children through teaching them riddles and folktales related to good morals and this could brighten their thinking skills”.

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These responses clearly confirm that majority of parents felt incapacitated to take part in their children’s learning and academic progress since they lacked the knowledge on how to get involved. This means that the understanding of parents in relation to their involvement in children’s education was marginal and a comprehensive training and sensitization on the importance ought to be prioritized.

The findings in this section imply that majority of parents did not fully participate in their children’s education as expected of them. The literature affirms and illuminates these findings. Hornby (2011) notes that some parents felt ill-equipped to assist their children with homework completion. Some children are also denied leisure time which may be detrimental to academic performance since children need time to relax and reduce the mental fatigue experienced in school the entire week with Saturdays inclusive. However, the right combinations of these aspects should be ensured to promote academic growth as proposed by Becker et al., (2011).

These findings compliment Armento et al. (2011) argument that majority of parents will do anything not to offend teachers but do little towards what may lead to good grades. Armento et al. (2011) also argues that parents have great expectation of good grades but do not input good practices and materials to achieve those grades. Larzelere et al., (2013) argue that discipline may be installed but less is done in ensuring that such installed discipline gives the expected performance in school.
The findings of the current study correlate with other studies on parental involvement in which examined the same using relatively general terminologies such as assisting, helping, tutoring and even doing home assignments with the learner (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992; Mc Desmontt, Goldman & Varenne, 1984; Scott-jones, 1987). Delgado-Gaitan (1992) Mc Dermont et-al (1984) and Scott-Jones (1987) have noted that natural caregivers tend to utilize both general approaches to home assignment involvement, obviously responding to specific home assignment task demands and individual learner’s preferences (Hoover- Dempsey et-al (1995).

4.6 Ways of Improving Parents Involvement to Improve Learners’ Achievement in Pre-Schools

The fourth objective of the study sought to suggest ways of improving parents’ involvement in improving learning achievements of pre-primary learners of Kabare Zone, Kirinyaga County. In order to achieve this objective, challenges facing parental involvement and their possible solutions were established. In response to challenges facing parental involvement, teachers were asked to give challenges with respect to children’s education in their Zone. Results are summarized in Table 4.7.
Findings in Table 4.7 indicated that several factors hindered parental involvement in pre-primary schools as reported by the teachers. These included inadequate teaching staff 25(83.3%), poor infrastructure in schools 25(83.3%), lack of learners active involvement 25(83.3%), high death rate among parents 20(67.7%), lack of teachers involvement 15(67.7%) and lack of role models in the community 10(33.33%). This implies that children’s education still faces great challenges related to parental and community involvement.

These findings concur with Parhar’s (2006) study which affirms that parents exclude themselves from involvement in their children’s academic progress due to socio-economic reasons. As revealed by Kaperu (2004), parents were not particular in their roles towards improving their children’s achievement. According to Zoppi (2006) parents exclude themselves from assisting their children with homework due to lack of education and self-confidence.
Pupils were asked to give their opinions on how they thought their parents or guardians were concerned about the school. During the Focused Group Discussions with pupils in the first 10 groups in the Zone, some of the respondents denied that their guardians collaborated with the school management.

In the focused group discussions, conflicting responses emerged, while some parents anticipated that they were morally bound to engage in their children’s academic progress while others thought that school matters were best dealt with by teachers and heads of schools.

Parents also thought that their involvement was majorly dictated by proper communication from the heads of schools. However, they would not participate or attend any functions in pre-schools unless they were informed by the head teachers to do so. This was affirmed when one parent of a child in school B pertinently said:

“...we, as parents, absolutely depend on head teacher and teachers’ information related to our children’s achievement in school”.

Definitely parents without formal education were ignorant of what parent involvement entailed. This concurs with Siririka (2007) who notes that parents lack relevant skills to participate and help in their children’s education due to inadequate parental educational experience. Parents with higher degree of education are more likely to participate in school activities and attend parent meetings. These findings indicated that majority of the challenges were home-based such as financial constraints and level of education.
4.6.2 Suggested Ways of Improving Parents Involvement in Improving Learning Achievements of Pre-Primary School Pupils

The fourth objective of the study sought to suggest ways of improving parents involvement in improving learning achievements of learners of Kabare Zone, Kirinyaga County. Being that most data were qualitative, presentation of data has been done using texts and organized based on the following sub-topics with regards to respondent category.

4.6.2.1 Teachers’ Report on Strategies of Improving Parents Involvement

Teachers were asked to explain how they would like to involve parents in their children’s education so as to ensure that they all perform excellently in school. Majority of teachers reinforced these strategies by adding that:

“Our relationship with the parents of the learners must be enhanced by linking the class teachers directly to the pupil’s parents. In this way, parents will be in a position to get feedback on the children’s academic progress and monitor their behaviors”.

These findings imply that children’s education revolves around both teachers and the parents. This is in conformity with the findings of a study by Desforges and Abouchaar (2003) which revealed that even though some aspects of capability are determined by personal characteristics, others are determined by social combinations. Most variables related to parent involvement are dependent on learning process and leads to building a strong relationship between parents and teachers.
4.6.2.2 Pupils’ Report on Strategies of Improving Parents Involvement

Pupils were asked to state what their parent/guardian could do for them in order to improve in their academic performance. During the focused group discussion with pupils from the sampled schools, majority of them lamented that orphans and needy pupils had no special treatment in the school and in the community.

4.6.2.3 Parents’ Report on Strategies of Improving Parents Involvement

Parents were asked to suggest what could be employed to improve their engagement with the school so as to improve children’s performance. In one of the statement, one parent spoke for many when she suggested that:

“Parents should believe in themselves as far as their children’s academic performance and discipline are concerned”.

It is therefore significant to assist parents possess self-ability and confidence to enhance the achievement of their children’s education. The parents of the female pupils who participated added that girl-children were more vulnerable group hence must be taken care of through proper guidance and counseling. Desforges and Abouchar (2003) argue that children’s achievement, based on active learning and academics, can be enhanced through giving rewards for school performance. The measures can be based on conventional acknowledgement that every family is special and have strengths. Therefore, most parents can learn new techniques that can help them best assist their children because they are genuinely concerned about their overall well-being.

The findings are also supported by Nye et al. (2006) that focus should be shifted to initiation of training and education programs that promote parental empowerment by
equipping them with the requisite abilities, knowledge, skills and material resources to help their children improve academically while at home. Parhar (2006) proposes a four based intervention approach which involves: the empowerment approach, the deficit approach, the political action approach and the conceptualization approach which ensures both the parents and the community are involved even in intangible ways.
CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This section presents the summary of the findings. Additionally, conclusions and recommendations, made in line with study objectives, are given. Finally are suggestions for further studies.

5.2 Summary of Findings

Findings were summarized based on the objectives of the study.

The first objective of the study sought to establish the frequency of parents’ involvement in pre-primary education in selected public and private schools in Kabare Zone, Kirinyaga County. Findings revealed that despite the high number of parents who always prepared time and space for their children at home, only 4(13.3%) would always assist their children in homework. The findings further indicated that a high proportion 17(56.7%) of teachers reported that parents rarely attended meetings in schools which are related to their children’s progress both socially and academically.

The second objective of the study sought to assess the influence of parents’ involvement on learners’ academic performance in pre-primary education in selected public and private schools in Kabare Zone, Kirinyaga County, Kenya. Findings of the study indicated that majority 172(51.3%) of the pupils reported that they parents did not always check their homework. The more the parents get involved in children’s education the higher the pupils’ mean score in academic performance. The results show that the
relationship between parental involvement and pupils’ performance was significant. This implies that parental involvement influence pupils’ performance. Therefore, the more the involvement of parents in children’s education the higher the pupils’ performance academically.

The third objective of the study sought to establish the activities of parents’ involvement in pre-primary education from selected public and private schools in Kabare Zone, Kirinyaga County, Kenya. It was found that a big number 35(70%) of the parents reported that parents do not usually visit school whenever pupils do any exam. Parents perceived themselves as incapable of being involved in the education of their children because they either were ignorant of how to be involved or because they felt incapacitated due to the little education they had. Therefore their understanding of parent involvement in education was clearly limited.

The fourth objective of the study sought to suggest ways of improving parents’ involvement in improving learning achievements of learners of Kabare Zone, Kirinyaga County Challenges such as inadequate teaching staff, poor infrastructure in schools and lack of learners’ active involvement were majorly reported to be barring parents from involving in children’s education. Parents emphasized more on self-efficacy in upbringing and education of their children. It is thus necessary to assist parents have self-worth in order to assist their children with the necessities of education.
5.3 Conclusions

Parent involvement in children’s education at early stages is characterized by different levels of interactions between educators and parents. However, all teachers and parents do not engage in all activities on all types of involvement simultaneously. It is evident that parents do not always engage in helping their children with homework at home.

The study concludes that there is a significant relationship between parental involvements on academic performance among children enrolled in ECDE centres. Therefore, effective academic improvement requires educators, parents and the community as a whole to engage in parenting, communicating, volunteers, learning at home, decision making and collaboration with the community. Thus parental involvement in their children’s education is a strong predictor of the learners’ overall academic performance. Therefore, if the child is to achieve more, the parent likewise must be more involved in their learning.

Involving parents in each type of involvement has certain challenges, which have been highlighted in the theoretical framework. Several reasons can explain the insufficient involvement based on home based challenges such as low level of education and poverty. Therefore, stakeholders need to be cognizant of such challenges first before designing measures aimed at fostering productive parental and community involvement in learners’ academic performance.
5.4 Recommendations of the Study

Various recommendations were suggested drawn from the study findings for various stake holders and for future research.

5.4.1 Recommendations for Parents

i) Findings revealed that parents were involved in the children’s academic performance but at different frequencies. It is therefore recommended that parents in particular should create time from their busy schedule to participate more in their children’s education activities if they expect improved academic performance.

5.4.2 Recommendations for School Managers and Administrators

i) Findings indicated that involvement of parents in children’s education is absolutely significant yet the level of parental participation in school activities is wanting. Therefore there is need for school managers and administrators to find ways of introducing programmes to ensure that fathers closely monitor and participate in; assisting their children with school work, buying children a present when they perform well, attending school meetings and discussing with teachers about their children’s progress. This is likely to motivate children to work harder and to do their school work better. This can be achieved if open days can be introduced in school where once in a term fathers come to school to view children’s work and discuss with teachers.

ii) There is also need for school managers and administrators to have programmes where once in a term or in a year they have a special day for fathers and their children to
educate them on the important role they play in their children’s education and development.

iii) It is evident that parents were not fully involved in children’s education due to lack of knowledge on the importance of parental involvement. Schools therefore need to design special parent education programmes that cater for the needs of the parents with parenting skills. Schools are not averse to having parents volunteering their services. They therefore need to provide some form of training to parents, so that the assistance provided will have a meaningful impact on the child’s development.

iv) It emerged from the study that several challenges hinder effective involvement of parents in improvement of learning achievements of pupils in pre-primary schools. In order to curb the challenges, both parents and teachers should collectively explore alternative avenues and measures that circumvent the problem appropriately to eliminate unrealistic expectations and strain on parental involvement. The teachers should therefore empower parents if they feel incapacitated due to their low education level.

5.4.3 Recommendations for Policy Makers in the Ministry of Education

i) Parents’ belief in their role with their children was found to be significantly related to their involvement in their children’s education. There is need for the ministry of education to start programmes where workshops and seminars are held in schools to sensitize fathers on the important role they play in boosting their children’s performance in school when they get involved in their children’s
education. This may motivate fathers to want to try to be able to support their children.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

i) The current study was confined to a small area (Kabare Zone). Hence a more comprehensive study should be done in the schools in the whole Kirinyaga County. This will generate more interesting results.

ii) There should also be a research to help provide information on the impacts of modern methods of parenting and technologies on the social aspect of a pupil.

iii) One of the main shortcomings, which came to light during this study, is the lack of skills of among parents. This suggests a shortcoming in the preparation of educators for the task in their training. There is a need to improve this situation and it is suggested that a study be undertaken to develop a suitable course by means of action research, which will then fulfill this need. This course could be adapted to train educators in the field by means of workshops.

iv) A finding of this study lifts out problems arising from the phenomenon of parents volunteering their help and support at school. This phenomenon has so many facets, which are not clear and give rise to uncertainty around its organization and implementation that it warrants further research.
REFERENCES


monitoring report. Paris: UNESCO.


APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: A QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PRE-SCHOOL TEACHERS

The questionnaire is aimed at assisting the researcher to conduct a study on parental involvement and pre-school performance. Kindly, provide responses to the questions in the spaces indicated. Any information given here will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

(Tick where appropriate)

1. Age

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>20-30</th>
<th>31-40</th>
<th>41-50</th>
<th>51-60</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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2. Gender

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
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3. Qualification

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</table>

4. For how long have you been a teacher in this pre-school?

- Below 2 year □
- 2-5 years □
More than 5 years  □

5(a) Are your children performing well?

Yes  □

No  □

(b) What are the major reasons for your response above?

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

6.(a) What kind of activities are the parents involved in towards their children’s education?

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

(b) How frequently do parents participate in activities mentioned below?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Hardly</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Always</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attending parents meetings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteering in school work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisting children in homework</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modeling children behaviour</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparing time and space</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

7. How would you like parents be involved in their children’s education so as to ensure that they all perform excellently in school?

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

Thank you for your co-operation
APPENDIX II: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PARENTS

1. Do you visit the school to follow on your child’s academic progress?
   Yes □           No □

2. If called upon by your school do you participate in volunteer work?
   Yes □           No □

3. Are there other activities that you are called upon to do? State some of them?
   Yes □           No □

4. Does your child’s teacher call you to school?
   Yes □           No □

5. How frequent do you help your child in their homework?
   Daily □          2-3 times a week. □
   Less than twice a week □               None □

6. In your opinion, does your participation in your child’s academic work enhance
   the performance in school?
   Yes □           No □

7. How do you help your child to develop good behavior?
   Punishment □            Rewards □
   Guidance and counseling □  All □

8. Lastly any suggestion you think could be employed to improve your engagement with
   the school so as to improve children’s performance?

   Thank you for your co-operation.
1. My parents/caregivers always check the homework.
   Yes □ No □
2. My parents/caregivers always want to know my progress in school.
   Yes □ No □
3. My parents/caregivers help me on where to do my studies.
   Yes □ No □
4. My parents/caregivers ask from me materials needed for my homework and provide them.
   Yes □ No □
5. My parents/caregivers always ask me what is happening in school.
   Yes □ No □
6. My parents/guardians encourage me to read always.
   Yes □ No □
7. Does your parent give you an ample time to study?
   Yes □ No □
8. If your answer in Q7 is No. Why do you say so?
9. In your own opinion, how do you think your parent or guardian is concerned about the school?
10. What can your parent/guardian do for you in order to improve in your academic performance?
    ………………………………………………………………………………………………………
    ………………………………………………………………………………………………………

Thank you for your co-operation
APPENDIX IV: DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
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<th>Mid term exam</th>
<th>End-term exam</th>
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</table>
APPENDIX V : AUTHORISATION LETTER FROM GRADUATE SCHOOL

KENYATTA UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL

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

P.O. Box 43844, 00100
NAIROBI, KENYA
Tel. 8710901 Ext. 57530

Our Ref: E55/OL/22785/2012
DATE 13th June, 2017

Director General,
National Commission for Science, Technology
and Innovation
P.O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI

Dear Sir/Madam,


I write to introduce Mr. Mututa Fredrick Gicobi who is a Postgraduate Student of this University. He is registered for M.Ed degree programme in the Department of Early Childhood Studies.

Mr. Mututa intends to conduct research for a M.Ed Project Proposal entitled, “Parental involvement in Pre-primary school children’s performance in Kabare Education Zone, Kirinyaga County, Kenya”.

Any assistance given will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

[Signature]
MRS. LUCY N. MBAABU
FOR: DEAN, GRADUATE SCHOOL
APPENDIX VI: APPROVAL LETTER FROM GRADUATE SCHOOL

KENYATTA UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL

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

P.O. Box 43844, 00100
NAIROBI, KENYA
Tel. 810901 Ext. 4150

Internal Memo

FROM: Dean, Graduate School
TO: Mututa Fredrick Gicobi
     C/o Early Childhood Studies Dept.

DATE: 13th June, 2017
REF: E55/OL/22785/2012

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF RESEARCH PROJECT PROPOSAL

This is to inform you that Graduate School Board at its meeting of 7th June, 2017 approved your Research Project Proposal for the M.Ed Degree Entitled, “Parental involvement in Pre-primary school children’s performance in Kabare Education Zone, Kirinyaga County, Kenya”. Subject to clearance with the Office of the Director, Ethical Committee, Kenyatta University.

You may now proceed with your Data Collection, Subject to Clearance with Director General, National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation.

As you embark on your data collection, please note that you will be required to submit to Graduate School completed Supervision Tracking Forms per semester. The form has been developed to replace the Progress Report Forms. The Supervision Tracking Forms are available at the University’s Website under Graduate School webpage downloads.

Thank you.

HARRIET ISABOKE
FOR: DEAN, GRADUATE SCHOOL

c.c. Chairman, Early Childhood Studies Department.

Supervisors:

1. Dr. Rachel W. Kamau-Kang’ethe
   C/o Department of Early Childhood Studies
   Kenyatta University
APPENDIX: VII AUTHORISATION LETTER FROM NACOSTI

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,
TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Telephone: +254-20-2213471,
2241349,3310571,2219420
Fax: +254-20-318245,318249
Email: dg@nacosti.go.ke
Website: www.nacosti.go.ke
When replying please quote

Ref: No. NACOSTI/P/17/98481/18011

Date: 7th July, 2017

James Gicobi Mututa
Kenyatta University
P.O. Box 43844-00100
NAIROBI.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on “Parental involvement in pre-primary children’s performance in Kabare Education Zone, Kirinyaga County, Kenya,” I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in Kirinyaga County for the period ending 7th July, 2018.

You are advised to report to the County Commissioner and the County Director of Education, Kirinyaga 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.

GODFREY P. KALERWA MSc., MBA, MKIM
FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO

Copy to:

The County Commissioner
Kirinyaga County.

The County Director of Education
Kirinyaga County.
APPENDIX VIII: PERMIT LETTER FROM NACOSTI

CONDITIONS

1. The License is valid for the proposed research, research site specified period.
2. Both the Licence and any rights thereunder are non-transferable.
3. Upon request of the Commission, the Licensee shall submit a progress report.
4. The Licensee shall report to the County Director of Education and County Governor in the area of research before commencement of the research.
5. Excavation, filing and collection of specimens are subject to further permissions from relevant Government agencies.
6. This Licence does not give authority to transfer research materials.
7. The Licensee shall submit two (2) hard copies and a soft copy of their final report.
8. The Commission reserves the right to modify the conditions of this Licence including its cancellation without prior notice.

National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
RESEARCH CLEARANCE
PERMIT
Serial No: 14815
CONDITIONS: see back page

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:

MR. JAMES GICIOI MUTUTA of KENYATTA UNIVERSITY, 43844-100 NAIROBI, has been permitted to conduct research in Kirinyaga County
on the topic: PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN PRE-PRIMARY CHILDREN’S PERFORMANCE IN KABARE EDUCATION ZONE, KIRINYAGA COUNTY, KENYA
for the period ending: 7th July, 2017

Applicant’s Signature

Permit No: NACOST/P/17/98481/18011
Date Of Issue: 7th July, 2017
Fee Received: Ksh 1000

Director General
National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation