

Type of Preschool an Important Factor in Determining Fathers' Support for their Children's Education

Teresa Bitengo Mwoma

School of Education, Early Childhood Studies Department, Kenyatta University
PO box 22546 00400, Nairobi, Kenya

* E-mai: tmwoma@gmail.com

Abstract

Research has shown that father's involvement in children's education influence how children perform in education. While this is critical, the type of school the child attends is of great importance in determining whether fathers get involved in children's education or not. This paper therefore presents research findings of a study conducted in Gucha District of Kisii County with regard to type of school and fathers' involvement in children's education. A sample size of sixteen preschools drawn from public and private sponsored and both from rural and urban set up were selected for this study. Further a sample size of 160 children and 160 fathers to the selected children were sampled for the study. Fathers were given a self report questionnaire with items requiring them to indicate their involvement in children's education. Findings revealed that fathers with children in private sponsored preschools were more involved their children's education than fathers with children in public sponsored schools. Fathers were involved more in checking whether children have done homework, buying books, paying school fees and attending school meetings.

Keywords: key words, fathers' involvement, type of school and fathers' involvement, public and private preschools

Acknowledgement

I acknowledge the support I got from organizations and individuals during this study. I wish to thank Kenyatta University and DAAD for funding this study. Many thanks go to Dr. Barbara Koech, Professor Daniel Kiminyo and Dr. Rachel Kamau-Kang'ethe who supervised and guided me during the study. I thank the head teachers, preschool teachers and parents who participated in this study for their cooperation.

1. Introduction

Mwoma (2013) noted that fathers with post secondary education in Gucha get more involved in children's education than fathers without that level of education. However, with the introduction of free primary education (FPE) in 2003, more children were enrolled in public primary schools in Kenya especially those whose parents were not able to pay for their education. Due to this high enrolment, the teacher child ratio in public primary schools also went high prompting some parents to take their children to private schools. FPE also opened a window of opportunity where all children aged six years and above would join primary schools with or without going through preschool. This encouraged some parents to keep their children below six years at home to avoid taking them to preschool where they were required to pay some fee to facilitate children's learning and payment of teachers' salaries. This move is likely to deny children an opportunity for a proper education foundation in their formative years of development especially between three and six years.

Research has shown that, parents have an option of becoming more involved if public schools under perform. They can spend more time helping their children in the home, provide the school with more resources, or they can complain directly in a bid to improve quality what Hirschman (1970) termed as voice. Mwoma (2010) in her study established that fathers in particular get involved in their children's education specifically in buying school uniforms, books and paying school fees. This kind of support according to her helps children stay in school and learn especially when others are sent home for the same items.

Ndani (2008) revealed that there was a significant difference in the level of participation in preschool activities among the communities in the various preschool sponsorships. She noted that highest participation of parents was in private schools where respondents with higher academic qualifications took their children. In private schools the most common mode of participation was communication, as most private schools required that parents make comments and sign in their children's home work books daily. One to one conferences between the teacher and parents suggesting places for field trips, accompanying children in trips and end of term discussions on children's performance comprised the other activities in private schools. Public schools in addition to attending meetings parents were sometimes involved in deciding on matters related to provision of learning materials, fees to be paid, construction of facilities and their maintenance (Ndani, 2008). However, in his research Koech (2010) established that there was no significant difference in means of parental involvement in public and private schools.

Coleman and Hoffer (1987) noted that fathers and mothers in both two-parent and in single-parent families are more likely to be highly involved if their children attend private as opposed to public schools. Private schools often make parental involvement a requirement, and thus, part of the higher involvement may be due to school policies. Although research has shown that parental involvement is higher in private than public schools, there is no specific indication of whether; fathers with children in private schools support their children more than those in public schools. This paper therefore highlights findings of a research on fathers' involvement in children's education in relation to type of preschool the child attends.

Methodology

The study was conducted in Gucha District Kisii County Kenya. A sample size of 16 preschools was selected from two divisions of the District, eight representing private preschools in both urban and rural set ups and eight representing public preschools in both urban and rural set ups. A further sample size of 160 preschool children aged 5-6 years were selected from 16 preschools consisting of 10 children from each preschool, top 5 and bottom 5 in the preschool activities according to the teachers' rating. Fathers to the selected children also formed a sample of the study that was given a questionnaire to fill on their involvement with children. Twenty eight fathers declined to participate in the study leading to a drop of their children from the sample. Due to the drop, a final sample size of 132 children and 132 fathers participated in the study.

A questionnaire was utilized to collect data from fathers on their involvement in children's education in terms of communication, teaching, monitoring, providing and doing shared activities. The questionnaire had two sections designed to capture information on the different variables of the study. Section A of the questionnaire gathered information on type of school the child attended. Section B had 26 self report items gathering information on fathers' involvement in children's education.

Data was collected in two stages:

- First, the researcher met with preschool teachers from different preschools to brief them on the research and type of information required for the study. Through the teachers' assessment of children's performance on preschool activities, top 5 and bottom 5 children were selected from each preschool. The preschool activities examined included; Mathematics, Language, Art and craft, Environmental, Science and Music and movement.
- Once children for the study were identified, the researcher organized to meet with each head teacher of the selected preschool to request him/her to invite fathers to the selected children to preschool where they were given a self report questionnaire by the researcher to fill and collect the same day. The head teachers for specific schools organized and invited fathers through their children specified dates. Prior to the distribution of the questionnaire, the researcher explained fathers the purpose of coming and sought their consent to participate in the study. Those who had a problem to read the questionnaire in English were provided with the questionnaire translated in Ekegusii. Different preschools were visited on different days for this purpose. Where fathers for selected children never turned up to fill the questionnaire, appointment to meet them was organized by the head teacher in writing or on phone requesting them to come to school at their convenience to meet with the researcher. The head teachers informed the researcher when fathers who did not fill the questionnaire would come to school for data collection from the individual fathers.

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was utilized to prepare and organize data for analysis. Data analysis consisted of both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive analysis consisted of the calculation of various measures of central tendency involving means, frequencies and standard deviations. Inferential statistical analysis involved testing the statistical hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Chi – square was utilized to test the hypothesis to determine whether fathers' involvement in children's education significantly related to type of preschool the child attended.

Results and Discussions

Children who participated in this study were selected depending on the type of preschool they attended whether public or private. Table 1 presents findings according to the type of preschool the child attended.

Table 1: Type of preschool child attended.

Type of school	Frequency	Percent
Public	65	49
private	67	51
Total	132	100.0

Table 1 indicates that out 132 children who participated in this study slightly more than half of the children attended private preschools while less than half of the children attended public preschools. This clearly shows that almost an equal number of children attended either public or private preschools. The difference could be as a result of the children who were dropped out of the study since their fathers declined to participate in the study. Initially it was expected that an equal number of children from public and private preschools were to participate since an equal number had been sampled.

The main objective of the study sought to establish whether there was a significant relationship between fathers' involvement and type of preschool the child attended. Table 2 presents the expected and observed counts of fathers on their involvement according to the type of preschool the children attended.

Table 2 Expected and observed counts of fathers' involvement and type of preschool child Attend

Type of school		Involvement level			
		High involvement	Moderate	Low Involvement	Total
Public	Count	12	15	38	65
	Expected Count	20	21	24	65.0
private	Count	29	27	11	67
	Expected Count	21	21	25	67.0
Total	Count	41	42	49	132
	Expected Count	41.0	42.0	49.0	132.0

Table 2 indicates that 20 fathers having children in public preschools were expected to be highly involved in their children's education but only 12 fathers in that category were highly involved showing that less fathers than was expected were highly involved. Twenty four fathers having children in private preschools were expected to be highly involved but 29 fathers were highly involved showing that more fathers than was expected in that category were highly involved. Twenty four fathers having children in public preschools were expected to be lowly involved but 38 fathers in that category were lowly involved showing that more fathers than was expected were lowly involved. Twenty five fathers having children in private preschools were expected to be lowly involved but only 11 fathers in that category were lowly involved showing that less fathers than expected were lowly involved. Twenty one fathers having children in public preschools were expected to be moderately involved but only 15 fathers were moderately involved showing that less fathers than expected were moderately involved. Twenty one fathers having children in private preschools were expected to be moderately involved but 27 fathers in that category were moderately involved showing that more fathers than was expected were moderately involved in their children's education. The finding suggest that more fathers with children in private preschools were highly involved than fathers having children in public preschools. This indicates that the type of preschool the child attend influence fathers' involvement in their education.

The relationship between fathers' involvement and type of preschool was computed using Chi-square to test the hypothesis that stated:

There is no significant relationship between fathers' involvement in their children's education and type of preschool the child attend

Table 3 presents findings on Chi-square computation for the above hypothesis.

Table 3 Chi-Square computation on father involvement and type of preschool

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	25.330 ^a	2	.000
N of Valid Cases	132		

Table 3 indicates that the calculated Chi-square was 25.330 at 2 degrees of freedom with a significance value $p=0.000 < 0.05$. The calculated p value was less than the critical value 0.05. This shows that there was a significant relationship between fathers involvement and type of preschool the child attended. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected based on this finding. This shows that fathers' involvement is influenced by the type of preschool the child attends.

Findings in this study were consistent with the findings of Coleman and Hoffer, (1987) who established that fathers in two parents and in single parent families were more likely to be highly involved if their children attended private as opposed to public schools. This is because private schools often make parental involvement a requirement, and thus, part of the higher involvement may be due to school policies. Coleman and others have also argued that private schools, particularly private, religiously affiliated schools, have greater amounts of social capital due to the greater sense of community present in these schools. Parents may be more willing to become involved when they know and are friendly with other parents in the school. Coleman and Hoffer also found that school size may be another important influence on parental involvement because it may be easier to establish ties with administrators, teachers, and other parents when schools are not very large. If that is the case, parents may feel more comfortable and more welcomed by smaller schools. High involvement by fathers in two-parent families is greater in smaller as opposed to larger schools.

The findings were also consistent with findings of Hirschman 1970 who established that parents have an option of becoming more involved if public schools under perform. They can spend more time helping their children in the home, they can provide the school with more resources, or they can complain directly in a bid to improve

quality what Hirschman 1970 termed as voice. This voice channel applying pressure on school providers provides an alternative to existing private schools. Once parental pressure and competition are allowed to influence school conduct, the productivity impact of greater competition depends on whether parental pressure is reinforced or undermined by greater competition.

The findings were also consistent with findings of Ndani (2008) who established that there was a significant difference in the level of participation in the preschool activities among the communities in the various preschool sponsorships. She noted that highest participation of parents was in private schools where respondents with higher academic qualifications took their children. She noted that, in private schools the most common mode of participation was communication, as most private schools required that parents make comments and sign in their children's home work books daily. One to one conferences between the teacher and parents suggesting places for field trips, accompanying children in trips and end of term discussions on children's performance comprised the other activities in private schools. Public schools in addition to attending meetings parents were sometimes involved in deciding on matters related to provision of learning materials, fees to be paid, construction of facilities and their maintenance. In the current study, fathers got more involved in paying fees for their children, selecting and purchasing books and uniform for their children. The findings were also consistent with findings of Koech (2010) who established that there was a significant difference in means of parental involvement in public and private schools.

Conclusion

Type of preschool the child attends was found to be significantly related to fathers' involvement in their children's education. This implies that fathers who had children in private pre schools were more involved in their children's education than fathers who had children in public pre schools. There is a possibility that administrators in private pre schools may be having mechanisms in place to ensure that parents get involved in their children's education than administrators in public preschools. There is therefore need for administrators in public pre schools to find ways in which they can ensure that parents are effectively involved in their children's education.

References

- COLEMAN, JS and HOFFER, T (1987). *Public and Private High Schools: The Impact of Communities*. New York: Basic Books.
- HIRSCHMAN, AO (1970). *Exit Voice and Loyalty. Responses to decline in firms, organizations and states*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Koech, PK (2010). *Parent teacher partnerships for enhancing holistic development and learning in early childhood education in Uasin Gishu District, Kenya*. Saarbruken : VDM Publishing House Ltd.
- Mwoma, TB (2013). *Are educated fathers more involved in children's education? Research findings on fathers' involvement in Gucha District, Kenya. Prim. J. Soc. Sci. 2(1): 185-189*.
- Mwoma, TB (2010). *Father involvement in children's education: A case of Gucha District Kenya*. Saarbruken : VDM Publishing House Ltd.
- Ndani, M (2008). *Relationship between community participation and preschool microsystems in Thika district, Kenya*. Un published Ph.D Thesis. Kenyatta University.

This academic article was published by The International Institute for Science, Technology and Education (IISTE). The IISTE is a pioneer in the Open Access Publishing service based in the U.S. and Europe. The aim of the institute is Accelerating Global Knowledge Sharing.

More information about the publisher can be found in the IISTE's homepage:

<http://www.iiste.org>

CALL FOR JOURNAL PAPERS

The IISTE is currently hosting more than 30 peer-reviewed academic journals and collaborating with academic institutions around the world. There's no deadline for submission. **Prospective authors of IISTE journals can find the submission instruction on the following page:** <http://www.iiste.org/journals/> The IISTE editorial team promises to review and publish all the qualified submissions in a **fast** manner. All the journals articles are available online to the readers all over the world without financial, legal, or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the internet itself. Printed version of the journals is also available upon request of readers and authors.

MORE RESOURCES

Book publication information: <http://www.iiste.org/book/>

Recent conferences: <http://www.iiste.org/conference/>

IISTE Knowledge Sharing Partners

EBSCO, Index Copernicus, Ulrich's Periodicals Directory, JournalTOCS, PKP Open Archives Harvester, Bielefeld Academic Search Engine, Elektronische Zeitschriftenbibliothek EZB, Open J-Gate, OCLC WorldCat, Universe Digital Library, NewJour, Google Scholar

