

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELECTED PARENTAL
BEHAVIOURS AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AMONG
PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS IN RONGENA EDUCATIONAL
ZONE, BURETI DISTRICT-KENYA**

BY

CHERUIYOT TOO ANTHONY

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Requirements for the Award of Master of Education
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Cheruiyot too
*Relationship between
selected parental*



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DEDICATION

To my late grandparents, Kipsang Arap Chepkwony and Bornes, for the informal education they offered and the formal education they enable me to obtain

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ABSTRACT

The major purpose of the present study was to determine whether the frequency of parental praise, reprimands and involvement influence academic achievement of primary school pupils. The study also aimed at finding out the extent to which pupils' gender, and parental level of education influence the frequency of parental praise, reprimand, and level of parental involvement.

The target population was class 6 and class 7 pupils attending schools in Rongena educational zone of Bureti district. The study sample were class six and seven pupils (n=120) and their teachers (n = 4) in a randomly selected school in the zone. Simple random sampling technique was used to select one school out of nine (9) schools in the zone. Stratified random sampling procedure was used to select 30 boys and 30 girls in each class.

An Ex Post Facto design was adopted in the study. Research instruments consisted of school records and questionnaires for pupils and teachers. The independent variables were frequency of parental praise and reprimands, and parental involvement. The dependent variable was academic achievement.

The t-test, ANOVA, and chi-square test were carried out in testing the various hypotheses. Teachers' responses were analyzed using content analysis.

It was found that there was no significant difference in mean scores of pupils who reported to be frequently and those who were occasionally praised by their parents for satisfactory performance. The results revealed that class six pupils who reported to be occasionally reprimanded had significantly higher mean score than those who are frequently or never reprimanded by their parents for unsatisfactory performance. However, no significant differences were found in the mean scores of class seven pupils in the three groups. It was also found that pupils whose parents were reportedly highly involved had significantly higher mean scores than those whose parents were reported to be less involved. However, no significant differences were found in the frequency of parental praise, reprimand, and involvement towards boys and girls.

The various implications of the results were discussed and recommendations for parents, teachers, and other stakeholders were made. Suggestions for further research were also made.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Education has become an important force for achieving a better standard of living in Kenya. It is seen as a key to social mobility. Therefore, pupils' expectations for the future have a lot to do with what they are achieving in school in terms of academic achievement. As a result there is stiff competition among pupils through various tests and examinations. For primary school pupils there is competition to secure places in reputable secondary schools, which have adequate learning facilities and provide high chances of success in secondary school examination.

Since much emphasis is placed on good examination results in our society, poor performance is of great concern to pupils, parents, teachers, and the public in general. Some stakeholders blame the examining system, but examinations are indispensable in an educational system. This means that there is need to investigate the causes of poor performance among pupils.

This study was guided by the fact that pupils come from different home environments and therefore differ in their motivation to succeed in school. While some parents can afford to provide adequate learning facilities, others

have difficulties in providing basic learning facilities like stationery. However, with the introduction of free primary education by the government from January 2003, at least all primary school pupils in Kenya can access essential learning materials.

Nevertheless, studies have shown that parent- child interaction patterns, not socio-economic status, are important in determining academic achievement of children (Clark, 1984; Tamara, Kurtz-Costes, & Mahoney, 1997). While some parents in poverty are able to foster their children's intellectual development, others are not (Tamara, Kurtz- Costes, & Mahoney, 1997). Children's cognitive development depends more on modelling and intellectual stimulation they get from parents than on mere presence of material possession (Clark, 1984).

Since children experience different parenting practices, these variations eventually influence their academic achievement. Whereas authoritative parents maintain an effective balance between high levels of demandingness and responsiveness, praise achievement, and use no punitive methods for undesired outcome; authoritative parents are demanding and irresponsible, emphasize obedience and order, and use punitive methods for undesired outcome. Permissive and neglecting parents do not monitor their children's behaviour or interests (Bee, 1995).

It is against this background that the present study was set to investigate the extent to which selected parental behaviours influence academic achievement among primary school pupils in a rural setting. The selected parental behaviours were; parental praise for satisfactory performance, parental reprimands for unsatisfactory performance, and parental involvement.

Parental praise and reprimand were of particular interest in the present study because they have been neglected in previous studies, and yet they have been identified as important in home-based reinforcement (Nord, 1998). Parental involvement which includes supervision of homework, consultation with teachers on child's progress and attendance of school meetings has also been ignored especially by local researchers. Yet, it enables parents to monitor child's behaviour and progress at home and at school. It also enables parents to obtain reliable information on the child's progress from teachers and therefore reinforce performance appropriately.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The primary cycle of education is the basic and the most vital in the Kenyan education system. However, a large proportion of pupils who enrol in standard one of primary education do not complete the primary cycle in the prescribed eight-year period and a significant number do not complete at all (Achola, &

Shiundu , 1994). Out of the total enrolment in standard one, only 47% of girls and 48% of boys complete the primary cycle. Repetition rate is as high as 15% and transition rate is poor especially for girls with only 27% proceeding to secondary level of education (Kathuri, 2005) This scenario has been attributed to, among other factors, lack of parental concern with their children's education (Durojaiye, 1983) or excessive parental control and demands for superior achievement, which may lead the child to resent schoolwork for the oppression it brings to home life (Wlodkowski & Jaynes 1990).

Parents who show little or no interest in their children's education have children who are frequently absent from school, perform poorly, repeat classes and may dropout of school (Gitonga, 1997). Yet pupils whose parents make unrealistic demands on the child to perform may resent schoolwork. The aim of the present study was therefore, to determine whether parental praise and reprimand, and school involvement are associated with academic achievement of class 6 and class7 pupils.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The aim of the study was to;

- (i) Determine whether there was an association between the selected parental behaviours and academic achievement.

- (ii) Find out whether differences in parental behaviours were associated with the sex of the children.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

- i) To determine whether the frequency of parental praise and reprimand are associated with academic achievement.
- ii) To determine whether there is an association between parental involvement and academic achievement.
- iii) To find out whether the frequency of parental praise, and reprimand and parental involvement towards boys and girls differ significantly.

1.5 Research Questions

From the above objectives, the following research questions were formulated.

- a) Is the frequency of parental praise related to academic achievement?
- b) Is the frequency of parental reprimand related to academic achievement?
- c) Is there an association between parental involvement and academic achievement?
- d) Are there significant differences in the parental behaviours towards boys and girls?

1.6 Significance of the Study

In order to develop the child's full potential, it is necessary to be aware of the factors that may enhance or frustrate the child's efforts to do well in school.

The current study, it is hoped, will reveal some of the parental behaviours that may influence children's motivation to learn, and hence, their academic achievement. It is also hoped that the findings of the study may provide useful information to be utilized by parents, teachers, and educators. The results of the study may also help in understanding the role of parents' active involvement in the children's academic achievement.

Further, the study findings may stimulate interest of future researchers on parental behaviours that may influence children's academic performance. The study findings may also add to the existing body of knowledge on parental influences on academic achievement.

1.7 Basic Assumptions

For the purpose of this study, it was assumed that all the pupils gave correct information on the parental behaviours under investigation and that pupils' progress records were a reflection of their abilities.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

Like any other study, the present study faced some limitations. Some of them were;

- (i) Lack of control over extraneous factors, which no doubt contributes to performance of the pupils such as intelligence, number of books at home, among other factors.
- (ii) Due to limited time, finances, and nature of the study, not all the children in the zone were recruited for the study.

1.9 Definition of Terms as Used in the Study

Parental Involvement: This is defined as parents' participation in the following: attending school meetings and scheduled or unscheduled meetings with class teacher in order to consult on the child's progress as well as supervising homework.

Unsatisfactory Performance: This refers to failure by the child to attain an expected score as perceived by the child's parents.

Satisfactory Performance: It refers to the attainment of an expected score by the child as perceived by the parents.

Praise: It is a verb appreciation of the child's attainment level or effort. For example, telling the child "Well done" when he/she does well in a test or comes among top pupils in class or telling the child "Good, keep on improving", when there is an improvement in performance.

Verbal Reprimand: This is to tell the child that something done is wrong or unaccepted. For example, telling the child that, “your score is poor! I don’t want this!”

Supervision of Homework: This is to avail adequate time for doing homework and ensuring that the time is utilized.

In the next chapter, a review of related literature is presented and analysed

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter, a review of related literature is presented. The review is on motivation and academic achievement, parent-child interactions and academic achievement, and parental involvement. At the end of the chapter, research hypotheses are stated.

2.1 Motivation and Academic Achievement

Children's success in school is the outcome of a myriad of influences. Intelligence undoubtedly plays a key role in children's academic achievement. Additionally, school achievement appears to be influenced by parenting practices. Favourable parental behaviours enhance children's academic motivation from an early age and hence their academic achievement.

Dara, Nessedroade, and Schmitz (2002) on the basis of their research with 152 German children in grade 4 (10 years olds) and grade 6 (12 years olds) suggested that achievement motivation may predict school achievement even if ability is held constant, since achievement motivation is related to responses

such as curiosity, interest, persistence, and effort exertion. Children who are motivated to achieve see problems as obstacles to be conquered and challenges to be met. They have persistence of effort, and tend to work hard academically in school (Durojaiye, 1983).

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Achievement Motivation Theory

The construct, achievement motivation, as a personality trait has been used by researchers to mean the need to achieve or drive towards achievement of success in an activity. According to Atkinson (1964), the tendency to achieve success is dependent on one's motive to achieve success, the probability of success in the activity, and the incentive value of success. The motive to achieve success is the individual's stable personality trait which does not vary from situation to situation, whereas the probabilities of success and incentive value of success are specific situational influences on an activity. The probability of success is the person's subjective expectancy that the performance of a certain activity will be followed by success, while the incentive value of success is the attractiveness of the success at the activity.

The tendency to avoid failure is also dependent on three variables: the nature to avoid failure, the probability of failure, and the incentive value of failure (Atkinson 1964). The motive to avoid failure can be conceived as the person's

capacity to react with shame and humiliation after failure in an activity. When this predisposition is aroused in a person, the result is anxiety or fear of failure and a tendency to withdraw from the situation.

The theory of achievement motivation assumes that all individuals have a motive to achieve success and a motive to avoid failure. That is, all individuals have some capacity for interest in achievement and anxiety about failure. These two are expressed in any situation when it is apparent that the individual performance will be evaluated in reference to some standards of excellence.

The theory further assumes that individuals with stronger motive to achieve than the motive to avoid failure are motivated to achieve success, while those with stronger motive to avoid failure than the motive to achieve are not motivated to engage in achievement- oriented activities.

An individual with stronger motive to avoid failure than the motive to achieve success finds all achievement- oriented activities unattractive and will avoid them unless constrained by external sources of motivation. However, a person who is constrained by such external factors to undertake an activity will perform them inefficiently (Atkinson & Litwin, 1966).

In connection with this, it is important that parents develop the need to achieve success in their children from an early stage. It is through the family interaction

patterns that a child's personality is shaped (Erickson, 1963). According to McClelland (1961) achievement motives are developed in children through conditioning process involving the application of rewards and punishment by parents and teachers. Achievement motives also develop in homes which emphasize high achievement by word and deed, and the parents also set high expectations for their children. This assertion is supported by Hall & Lindsay (1970) by noting that achievement needs are learned through cultural experience and triggered by an external determinant of behaviour. Brophy and Good (1995) further assert that motivation to learn is a competence acquired through general experience but stimulated most directly through modelling, communication of expectation and socialisation by significant others especially parents and teachers. Children imitate interest and values of those they admire (Bandura, 1962). Since parents are the first model children observe they are initiated by the children. This implies that parents who are interested and value their children's education will have children who have favourable attitudes towards school.

In regard to family, Wlodkowski and Jayne (1990) argue that parents appear to be important in influencing a child's motivation to learn. Healthy, effective parent-child interaction, positive attitudes and behaviours towards their children help them to succeed in school. When children are raised in a home that nurtures sense of self-worth, competence, and self-efficacy they will be more apt to persevere through the learning process. Conversely, when children do not view

themselves as basically competent and able, probably due to frequent parental reprimand, their freedom to engage in academically challenging pursuits, the capacity to tolerate failure is diminished. Parent – child interaction in which a child's parents communicate their expectations, reward success, and discourage laziness is of paramount importance (McClelland, 1985).

Parenting behaviours that have been associated with children's academic achievement include parenting styles, verbal interaction, helping with homework, and school involvement (Tamara et. al., 1997; Epstein, 1983 etc). Much of these researches however have been conducted not only on children first entering school, but also in foreign contexts. Yet, most researches in the area, especially local ones (e.g. Muola, 1990; Maundu, 1988) use comparisons of performance among rural and urban or socio- economic classes. This approach ignores important processes and context variables that hinder or enhance performance within each group e.g. literacy and poverty levels. The present study was set to investigate association between parental praise, reprimands and school involvement and academic achievement of class 6 and 7 pupils within a rural setting.

2.3 Parent –Child Interactions and Academic Achievement

The form in which motivation is acquired is dependent on the style of upbringing by parents and the values they inculcate through their examples (McClelland, 1985). Parental use of rewards and punishments with their children depends on parenting styles. Authoritative parents will most probably use encouragement and sparingly use sanctions and verbal reprimands (Walters & Gruesec, 1977). Bee (1995) has described four parenting styles as follows: Authoritarian parents are those with high levels of control and demand but low level of warmth and responsiveness to their children. Their children do less well in school, are less likely to take responsibility, and are somewhat immature in their behaviour in school. Authoritative parents are high in both control and warmth, set clear limits, but also respond to the child's individual needs. Their children have high self-esteem, are achievement -oriented in school and get better grades. Neglecting parents are uninvolved type and low in control. Their children are impulsive and much less achievement- oriented in school.

A longitudinal study of over 8,000 high school students carried out in California and Wisconsin by Sternberg ,Peterson, Dornbush, and Darling (1992) measured three out of 4 parenting styles (Neglecting type was left out). They asked the students to complete a questionnaire about their relationship with their parents. Students were asked how their parents would react if they got bad grades or good grades. An authoritarian response was scored if a student said that the

parent would punish him if he got bad grades, and tell him to do better if he got good grades. If a student reported that the parent does not care if the student got bad grades or that the parent did not attend school functions was rated as high in permissiveness. Parents who were reported to praise good grades and offered help after bad grades and urged the student to try harder were rated as authoritative.

The researchers then looked at the relationship between the parenting styles and the student performance. The results showed that pure authoritative style (high scores in authoritative items) and low scores on permissive and authoritative items is associated with the best grades, with the mixture of authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive styles second, and pure permissive or authoritarian or a combination of the two associated with poorer grades.

Parents-child discipline situations have also been cited as important contexts for children's cognitive and social development (Hoffman, 1983). Through discipline, children learn right from wrong, and distinguish appropriate from inappropriate behaviour. As such, discipline provides a vehicle through which children internalize parental values and goals. Research has demonstrated a positive relationship between children's evaluations of parental discipline and their academic performance. Children who perceived their parents as authoritative performed better in school compared to those who perceived their parents as permissive (Johnson, Schulman, & Collins, 1991). However,

Wlodkowski and Jaynes (1990) argue that unrealistic demand for achievement may cause children to resent schoolwork.

A study by Kent and Davies (1974) investigated the relationship between parental encouragement and intellectual development among a sample of primary school pupils in Britain. The homes of the children were classified as; 'Normal', 'unconcerned' and 'demanding'. Normal parents were found to be tolerant, patient but firm, making reasonable demands on the child. The 'unconcerned' parents were indifferent to the child's progress, without ambition for the child, and made few demands upon them. However, the 'demanding' home was regarded as effective home. Parents set high standards from an early stage; were ambitious for the child, rewarded frequently without generosity, and approval and affection were conditional upon achievement

A study by McClelland (1961) to investigate the relationship between achievement motivation levels of children and the child-rearing practices adapted by their parents showed that, the parents who value achievement are responsible for children with high achievement motivation. This study finding is consistent with that of Clark (1984) and Parkerson (1984) where it was found that high achievers come from homes with strong parental encouragement,

constant limit- setting, and frequent parent-child dialogue. Parental values are inculcated by conditioning, through the application of reinforcements. The child associates achievement with approval in the conditioning process and comes to value achievement for its own sake. Parental disapproval of their laziness or poor performance strengthens further the development of achievement motivation. (Eysenck, J. & Eysenck, M., 1985).

However, for parental encouragement to be effective it should be accompanied by proper supervision, monitoring of progress and behaviour, and appreciation by parents when the child does well in school.

Parents are the most important adults in the child's life. Whatever the parents say or do regarding the child's cognitive ability will have a major impact on the child's level of motivation (Nord, 1998). This view concurs with Coombs and Davies (1966) where they have noted that the informal or formal evaluation of scholastic ability by significant others provide a mirror by which students come to view themselves and gear their behaviour accordingly.

Deci (1972) in a study on external rewards and intrinsic motivation concluded that when subjects receive external rewards for engaging in an interesting activity they later perceive themselves as performing the activity for the reward itself thus discontinuing their own personal interest in the activity in favour of the external reward. . However, in a subsequent study Deci (1975) found that

intrinsic motivation of subjects who received positive verbal reinforcement tended to increase relative to non-reinforced controls. Sex differences were reported in the study. Interestingly, Dolinger and Thellen (1978) using preschool children reported an increase in intrinsic motivation as a function of positive verbal reinforcement but with no differential sex effects.

In an experimental study on the effects of positive and negative feedback on subsequent performance, Shanab, Peterson, Dargahi, and Deroian (1983) recruited sixty (60) undergraduate students. The subjects were then randomly assigned into three groups; positive feedback, negative feedback, and control group. They were then asked to solve some puzzles. In a positive feedback group when a subject gets it right the experimenter response was 'that's very good,' in a negative feedback group 'you took long to solve', and in control group "here is the next puzzle". When a subject gets it wrong in positive feedback group the response was 'fine, most people can't solve it', in negative feedback group 'Oh, most people solved it', and in control group 'here is how its done'. The numbers of correctly solved puzzles were compared. The results showed that there was no significant difference between the two groups.

In addition to the researcher's suggestions that college students may not be influenced by the external feedback, the artificial nature of experiments coupled

with possible experimenter bias might have influenced the results. The source of the feedbacks may also be significant in influencing performance. In the present study, the source of reinforcements was the child's parents and the recipients were primary school pupils, but the variables were studied after their interaction.

Research has however shown that there are positive effects on academic achievement when parents provide verbal rewards for improvement on class assignment (Witt, Hannafin, & Marlens, 1983). Children who believe that they are not acquiring new skills or knowledge cannot be expected to value their experience in school since the experience of schooling will have reduced rather than enhanced their self-concept. Tucker, Harris, Brady, and Herman (1996) studied the association between parental grade expectation, parental praise, and the consequences commonly used by parents for unsatisfactory grades and academic achievement among African-American and European-American children.

The sample consisted of 102-second grades, 89 fourth grade, and 75 eighth grade African-American and 146-second grade, 147fourth grade, and 121 eighth grade European-American children and their caregivers. A structured interview questionnaire was administered to the caregivers, which included questions that determined the occurrence of the parent behaviours. Grade point average

(GPAs), and scores on Metropolitan achievement test (MAT) which tests reading and arithmetic were used as measures of academic achievement.

The result indicated a significant relationship between consequences of unsatisfactory grades and academic achievement. Pupils whose parents used restriction had low GPAs and those whose parents used verbal reprimand had low MAT scores. There was also a significant relationship between parental praise and academic achievement. Pupils who were frequently praised for satisfactory grades had significantly higher MAT scores than those who were occasionally praised. The never praise response was not included in the comparisons.

However, self-report data on parental behaviours might have been influenced by social desirability. In the current study, which was set to investigate the association between frequency of parental praise, reprimands and involvement, data were collected from the child's point of view. That is, pupils reported on their parents' behaviours.

So far, the reviewed literature indicates that parent-child interaction patterns depend on the parenting styles adopted by parents and this eventually determines whether children will be success-oriented or failure-oriented and that parental responses to children's accomplishments influence children's academic achievement among other factors. However, parents should not wait to

give summative evaluation without providing favourable environment for learning and being actively involved in the child's schooling.

2.4 Gender Differences

Perceptions of disciplinary situations seem to differ for boys and girls. Kagan and Lemkin (1990) investigated gender differences in perceptions of discipline situation of children ranging from 3-8 years of age. The results indicated that boys perceived power assertions and love withdrawal as representing parental sensitivity and fairness compared to girls who rated inductive reasoning more favourable than power assertion and love withdrawal. This finding may imply that parental response to children's unsatisfactory performance should differ depending on the sex of the child.

Okwir-Acana (1983) in a study of 426 primary seven pupils in Gulu district of Uganda found parental encouragement and attitudes of parents towards education to be significantly related to the child's academic achievement. It was also found that parental encouragement had more influence on the performance of boys than of girls. The researcher attributed the difference to the possibility that the attitudes of boys and girls on education differ and therefore, even when they are equally encouraged the effect on performance may be more for boys than for girls. Africa societies also tend to attach more importance on the education of boys than that of girls and have different expectations for each sex.

The social attitudes towards education of boys and girls are likely to have influenced their attitudes differently.

Although many studies have reported a significant positive relationship between academic achievement and parental encouragement, Osire (1983) found no such relationship between these two variables. The study was conducted in a rural area where most of the parents are of low educational level and therefore may be unable to motivate the child optimally. However, the studies were carried out two decades ago and therefore attitudes towards education of girls may have changed.

2.5 Parental Involvement and academic achievement

The importance of parental involvement to a child's progress at school seems to be firmly established. Yet parental involvement is a nebulous term because there is an array of parental behaviours that these could include. As Ascher (1988) has stated 'of all educational issues, parental involvement is one of the vaguest and shifting in its meaning' (p 109). Because of this, many theorists have concentrated their efforts more on specific categorization of the different types of parental involvement.

Wendy (1997) categorised parental involvement into three: behavioural, cognitive-intellectual, and personal involvement. Behavioural involvement included participation in activities such as attending school meetings, cognitive-intellectual involvement included exposing the child to intellectually stimulating activities e.g. going to the library , while personal involvement concerned knowing about and keeping abreast of what is going on with the child at school.

In the current study, parental involvement was operationally defined as the frequency of parents' attendance at school meetings, consultations with teachers on the pupil's progress, and supervision of homework. According to Wendy's categories, the present study was concerned with behavioural involvement.

Hewison (1982) points out that parental involvement improves children's academic achievement as long as it is well planned, long lasting, and serves to integrate pupils experiences at home and at school. This implies that the practice must be regular and purposeful in order to have the intended impact. Coleman Report (1966) as well as Rhine (1981) has reported that parental involvement variables are at least as important as school-based variables in accounting for the total amount of pupil achievement variance. Examples of parental involvement could include having the parents monitor their children's homework.

According to research conducted by Cooper, Lindsay, & Nye (2000), the more homework pupils complete, the better they do in school. The research also demonstrated that parental attitude towards homework play an important role in their children's education. The study related teacher, pupil, and parent reports of the amount of homework teacher assigned and the proportion of homework pupils completed to pupils' standardized test scores and class grades. The researchers obtained data sets from over 700 triads which consisted of a teacher, at least one pupil in a teacher's class, and one parent of that pupil. Homework behaviour was analyzed from the pupils in second grade through twelfth grade. While the amount of homework completed by the pupils was positively related to their achievement, the study demonstrated that the relationship between homework completed and achievement was strongest at upper grades (classes). It was also noted that parental attitudes with respect to study at home have direct positive effects in their children's attitude towards homework and at upper grades, on their children's classroom achievement.

This implies that attitudes about homework may be transmitted from parents to child, and parental involvements in the homework process positively influence their children's academic achievement. The present study investigated the influence of parent's supervision of homework on child's academic achievement.

Many studies have shown a strong correlation between parental involvement and children's success in school (e.g., Kapila, 1976, Hickman, Greenwood, & Miller, 1995). However, the studies included parental instruction as a measure of parental involvement. The present study attempted to focus on parental involvement strategies that can be practised by all parents regardless of their educational levels or socio-economic statuses. Research has documented a significant impact of parental involvement on student achievement in individual school subjects. Hickman, Greenwood, & Miller, (1995) have reported significant impact of parental involvement in areas of mathematics, reading, and music. The interventions ranged from parent- teacher consultations to formal meetings to train parents on how to work effectively with their children. The finding concur with Henderson and Berla (1994) who posits that when parents participate in their children's education the result is an increase in student achievement, increased attendance, fewer discipline problems, and higher aspirations. Zill (1994) also notes that parents who consult with teachers will be able to deal with any behavioural problems earlier than those who are not involved. This implies that parents who are involved are able to deal with discipline problems like truancy earlier than those who are not involved.

Cooper (1986) investigated causes of persistent school absenteeism among adolescents. Seventy six (76) adolescents attending special school were subjects. It was found that those who refuse school did not feel that their parents had high

regard for them, reported a general lack of parental concern for them, and the parents were never involved in the children's schooling. A survey carried out among 4,000 primary secondary school children in Nigeria found that 86% of the children who were described as lazy or unwilling to work were children whose parents expressed no interest in their children's schooling (Durojaiye, 1983).

Absenteeism is usually associated with poor performance and school dropout. Research suggests a negative correlation between parental involvement and dropout rate. In a survey, Rumberger, Ghatak, Poulous, Ritter, and Dornbush (1990) found that students who drop out of school reported that their parents rarely attend school events or checked their books, and that the parents were more likely to respond to poor grades with punishment. The students also reported that they rarely consulted their parents when making educational decisions.

The importance of attending parents-teachers meeting has been studied by Payne (1986). The sample consisted of one hundred and fifty (150) teachers and the same number of parents in the Caribbean Islands. The parents had to be non-teachers and had at least one child attending primary school. The results of the survey suggested that parental participation in school meetings increased children's interest in school. However, the change in children's interest may be

partly attributed to increased teacher attention as Zill (1994) observes that teachers tend to give greater attention to those pupils whose parents are highly involved and tend to identify problems that may inhibit the pupils' learning at an earlier stage. Furthermore, Epstein (1983) reported that parents who were involved understood more about what their children were being taught in school, and rated the teacher higher in overall teaching ability. Epstein suggested that with the perception that the school is more effective, it is more likely that the child's achievement will increase.

Epstein (1987) argues that there is a relationship between the age of the child and parental involvement, noting that teachers of young children are the most frequent users of parental involvement techniques and that at the middle school levels involvement practices decline due to adolescents' developmental needs for autonomy and greater responsibility. However, with the social and emotional changes during adolescence, there is need for guidance and support from reliable adults such as parents and teachers.

The reviewed studies show that when parents participate in their children's education, the result is an increase in academic achievement, increased attendance, fewer discipline problems, and improved pupil attitudes towards school. However, most of the reviewed studies have not identified specific involvement strategies.

In conclusion, the studies indicate that children may develop the need to achieve in school if their parents begin to challenge them at an early stage, expect them to meet the challenges and reinforce their achievements. Parents who set reasonably high expectations for their children, praise satisfactory performance, occasionally reprimand for unsatisfactory performance, and are actively involved with the child's school have children who do well in school.

On the other hand, parents who are indifferent to their children's performance and are never involved in their children's school may have children who perform poorly in schoolwork. Further, parents who are interested and value their children's education will have children who have favourable attitudes towards school and hence do well in school. Parents' interest in school may be shown by their frequent attendance at school meetings, consultation with teachers on child's progress, and allowing children adequate time to do homework.

2.6 Summary of Literature Review

The reviewed literature can be summarized as follows:

- (a) Parental praise positively influences academic achievement
- (b) Frequent parental use of reprimands leads to low self-esteem and hence, poor academic achievement.

- (c) Parental involvement improves academic achievement; however, most of the reviewed studies have not identified specific involvement strategies.
- (d) Gender differences were inconclusive on the influence of praise and reprimand except with parental involvement where no attempt was made to compare frequency of parental involvement towards boys and girls. It should be observed that, most of the studies were carried out in developed countries where social and economic situations are different and therefore the findings reported may not be applicable to the Kenyan context. The present study aimed at providing data on the influence of parental behaviours in the local context.

2.7 Hypotheses

Based on the findings of some of the reviewed studies the following hypotheses were formulated.

H_{a1}: The mean tests scores for pupils who are frequently praised are significantly higher than for those who are occasionally or never praised.

H_{a2}: The mean scores for pupils who are frequently reprimanded by parents are significantly lower than for those who are occasionally reprimanded.

- H_{a3}: The mean scores for pupils whose parents are highly involved are significantly higher than for those whose parents are less involved.
- H_{a4}: The frequency of parental praise is significantly higher towards boys than girls.
- H_{a5}: The frequency of parental reprimand is significantly higher towards boys than girls.
- H_{a6}: Parental involvement is significantly higher towards boys than girls.

The next chapter presents the methodology used in the study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The following are discussed in this chapter; research design, sampling procedures, instrumentation and data analysis procedures.

3.1 Research Design

An ex post facto design was used in the study. Ex Post Facto research is aimed at discovering possible causes of behaviour patterns by comparing subjects in whom this pattern is present with similar subjects in whom the pattern is absent or present to a lesser degree.

In Ex post facto design, the causes of behaviour are studied after they have presumably exerted their influence on another variable. It is used in psychological research to test hypotheses about cause and effect relationships because many relationships we wish to study do not permit experimentation.

Kerlinger (1973) has supported the use of ex post facts design by saying:

“Despite its weakness, much ex post facto research must be carried out in Psychology, sociology and education. Simply because many research problems in the social science and education do not lend themselves to experimental inquiry. A little reflection on some of the important variables in educational research e.g. Intelligence, aptitude, aspirations,

home background, parental upbringing, personality, and school atmosphere will show that they are non-manipulable. It can even be said that ex post facto research is more important than experimental research and that the most important scientific educational research do not lend themselves to experimentation, although many of them do lend themselves to controlled inquiry of ex post facto kind." (Pp 391 – 392)

In this study, pupils were grouped into 3 sub-groups depending on the frequency with which their parents were reported to praise and reprimand their children (frequently, occasionally, never) and 2 sub- groups: those with parents who are highly involved and those with parents who are less involved. In Ex post facto design it is not possible to have balanced and randomised groups because subjects are self- selected.

The independent variables were; frequency of parental praise, and reprimand and parental involvement. The dependent variable was academic achievement.

3.2 Study Location

Bureti district is within Rift valley province. It borders Kericho, Bomet, and Nyamira districts. It is one of the tea growing districts. However, Rongena zone is one of the areas in the district where tea is not grown. The main activities are maize growing and dairy farming.

3.3 Target Population

The study targeted class 6 and class 7 pupils in Rongena educational zone of Bureti district. There were nine (9) well-established public co-educational day schools in the zone. Other schools were recently founded and have few classes. There were no boarding primary schools in the zone.

3.4 Sample Selection

Nine (9) schools were targeted in the main study. Out of the nine schools, one school was selected which represented 11.1% of the schools in the zone and this concurs with Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), who posits that a sample of at least 10% is appropriate representation in a study. Pupils in one school participated so that differences between schools were controlled. Borg and Gall (1974) argue that in studies that are concerned with giving a better understanding complex behaviour patterns such as school achievement, it is important to select a group of subjects drawn from a narrowly defined population, otherwise the

relationship between variables may be obscured by the presence of subjects who differ widely from each other. The aim of selecting one school was to ensure homogeneity of the group.

To select a school, simple random sampling technique was employed. Names of the eight schools in the zone were written in small pieces of paper of equal sizes, folded and put in a container. One paper was then picked at random, name of school read and the school was chosen.

Class six (6) and class seven (7) pupils in the selected schools participated in the study. The two classes were purposely chosen because of their ability to read, understand, and write in English. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select 30 boys and 30 girls in each class. The mean ages were 12.4 years and 13.6 years for class six and class seven pupils respectively.

3.5 Research Instruments

Questionnaires for pupils, and teachers and school academic records were used to collect data.

3.5.1 Questionnaire for Pupils

The questionnaire contains two sections. Section A contains items that provided essential information about the pupil whereas section B contains items that provided information on their parents' behaviours investigated. The questionnaire items were forced-choice type, where subjects were required to

indicate the frequency of occurrence of an event ranging from 1(never) to 3(always), while some items are dichotomous, where the subjects were to answer YES or NO. Most of the items in the questionnaire were developed from the review of literature while some were adapted from Maundu (1988) and Muola (1990).

Scoring Procedure: A composite score for parental involvement was obtained by adding scores for items number 8, 9,12,15,16, and 18 (see Appendix 1). The maximum and minimum scores were 24 and 6 respectively. Parents' level of involvement was regarded as low if the total score was 12 or less, and as high if the score was greater than 12. Items numbers 11 and 13 gave scores for frequency of parental praise and reprimand respectively. The scores were 3 (frequently), 2(occasionally), and 1(never).

3.5.2 Questionnaire for teachers

The questionnaire contains objective and open-ended items, which are meant to solicit information on pupil's completion of homework, parent-teacher consultation and seek their opinion on parental involvement.

3.5.3 Academic Achievement Measure

Academic information was obtained from official school records with the permission of the school administration. Scores of end-of-term tests for two successive school terms preceding the study were used as a measure of academic

achievement. Mean score in five examinable subjects (as per Kenya National Examinations Council regulations) gave an index for academic achievement.

It was assumed that using two-term test scores reduces the effects of chance factors such as condition within the examined, character of the test, and the conditions of scoring (Thorndike, 1997).

3.6 Administration of Questionnaires

The researcher administered pupils' questionnaire in the pupils' class. The instructions were read aloud and clearly explained by the researcher. Pupils were allowed to ask questions where they did not understand. They were given adequate time to complete the questionnaire. Teachers' questionnaires were left with the teachers so that they fill at their own free time. The researcher collected the questionnaires later.

3.7 Pilot Study

The researcher carried out a pilot study. One school in the zone was chosen for the study and was excluded in the main study. The study consisted of 12 boys and 12 girls in each class. The pilot study was conducted so as to determine whether there are items which are ambiguous and also to check whether the language level is appropriate to the pupils participating in the study. It was also

meant to check the efficiency of sampling and data analysis procedures. These allowed the researcher to make any necessary corrections before the main study thereby enhancing the reliability and validity of the instrument. Results of the pilot study are presented in appendix iii.

3.8 Data Analysis Procedure

Data from each class were collected and organized for entry into a data file. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the sample, measures of academic achievement, frequency of praise, reprimand and parental involvement.

The following null hypotheses were tested:

- H₀₁: There were no significant differences among mean scores of pupils who are frequently, occasionally or never praised by parents.
- H₀₂: There were no significant differences among the mean scores of pupils who were frequently, occasionally, and never reprimanded by parents.
- H₀₃: There was no significant difference between the mean scores of pupils whose parents were highly involved and of those with parents who were less involved.
- H₀₄: There were no significant differences in the frequency of parental praise towards boys and girls.

- H₀₅: There were no significant differences in the frequency of parental reprimand towards boys and girls.
- H₀₆: There were no significant differences in parental involvement towards boys and girls.

A t-test was done to test the first hypothesis (H₀₁). This is because there were only two groups. To test the null hypothesis that there were no significant differences among mean scores of pupils who are frequently, occasionally and never reprimanded (H₀₂), one-way analysis of variance for independent samples was carried out. This method was appropriate since the test scores were in interval scale and the comparisons involved more than two groups. In cases where F-ratio was statistically significant, pair-wise comparisons were done to determine where differences lie.

The t-test for significant differences between means scores of pupils whose parents were highly involved and of those whose parents were less involved was carried out. To determine whether there were significant differences in parental behaviours towards boys and girls (H₀₄, H₀₅ and H₀₆), chi-square test was used. Content analysis was applied to teachers' responses.

In the next chapter, results of the study are presented and described.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

4.0 Introduction

Data collected were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. In this chapter, the results of the study are presented. For each pair of variables considered, results of descriptive analysis are first presented followed by those of inferential analysis. Results are presented based on the research hypotheses.

4.1 Relationship between frequency of parental praise and academic achievement.

Hypothesis 1: The mean test scores of pupils who were frequently praised are significantly higher than those of pupils who are occasionally or never praised.

The results are presented below.

Table 4. 1(a). Percentage of class six and class seven pupils who reported to be frequently, occasionally or never praised by their parents.

	Class 6	Class 7
Frequency of praise	%	%
Frequently	67.67	46.67
Occasionally	38.33	50.0
Never	0	3.33
Total	100	100

The results presented in table 4.1 (a) above reveal that majority of class six pupils are frequently praised (61.67%), 38.33% are occasionally praised and none of them reported to be never praised. However, in class seven, 3.33% of the pupils reported that they are never praised while 50% of them reported that they are occasionally praised. The remaining 46.67% reported that they are frequently praised.

Table 4.1(b) Mean test scores of pupils who reported to be frequently, occasionally and never praised.

Frequency of praise	Class 6		Class 7	
	M.S	SD	M.S	SD
Frequently	49.90	6.24	62.23	6.54
Occasionally	45.35	6.66	56.34	6.22
Never	-	-	56.1	6.30
Overall	48.15	6.85	59.6	6.34

From the data presented in the table 4.1 (b) above, it is shown that the mean score for class 6 pupils who reported that they were frequently praised had a higher mean score than those who were occasionally praised. Similarly, class seven pupils who were frequently praised had the highest mean score (62.2%) followed by those who are occasionally praised (56.34%) and those who were never praised (56.1%). However, only 3.33% of the class seven pupils reported that they were never praised.

Further analysis involved testing the null hypothesis that there was no significant difference between the mean test scores of pupils who were frequently praised and those occasionally praised. The never praised group was not included in the analysis because of the small number of pupils in the category.

The t - test for equality of means was performed and it showed that the differences between the mean scores were not statistically significant at $\alpha = 0.05$ in both classes. ($t=2.653$, $df=58$, for class six, and $t=3.439$, $df=58$, for class 7). Hence, the null hypothesis was not rejected and therefore the alternative hypothesis that the mean scores of pupils who are frequently praised were significantly higher than those of the occasionally praised group was rejected.

4.2 Relationship between frequency of parental reprimand and academic achievement.

Hypothesis 2: The mean test scores for pupils who are occasionally reprimanded were significantly higher than for pupils who are frequently or never reprimanded.

The results are presented and described below.

Table 4.2(a) Percentage of pupils who reported to be frequently, occasionally and never reprimanded by parents.

Frequency of reprimand	Class 6	Class 7
Frequently	28.33	38.33
Occasionally	46.67	38.33
Never	25.00	23.33
Total	100	100

The results presented in table 4.2(a) above show that most (46.67%) of the class six pupils reported that they are occasionally reprimanded, while 28.33% of them are frequently reprimanded and 25% were never reprimanded. For class seven pupils, 38.33% of them reported that they were frequently reprimanded by parents whereas 23.33% reported that they were never reprimanded for unsatisfactory performance.

Table 4.2(b) Mean test scores of pupils who are frequently, occasionally, or never reprimanded.

Frequency of reprimand	Class 6		Class 7	
	M.S	SD	M.S	SD
Frequency	47.5	5.36	59.2	5.96
Occasionally	51.4	5.85	61.0	6.07
Never	43.0	4.98	55.7	6.24
Total	47.3	5.87	59.3	6.41

Results from table 4.2 (b) above revealed that in both classes the occasionally reprimanded group had the highest mean score and the never reprimanded group had the lowest mean score.

ANOVA was carried out to test the null hypothesis that there were no significant differences among the mean scores. The results are presented below

Table 4.2(c) F- value on the mean test scores of class six pupils.

Source of variation	Sum of square	df	Mean score	F	Sig.
Between groups	683.45	2	341.725	9.13	0.000
Within groups	2132.40	57	37.41		
Total	2815.85	59			

The results from table 4.2(c) indicate that there were significant differences among mean test scores of class 6 pupils who reported to be frequently, occasionally, or never reprimanded. . Pair-wise comparisons using Tukey method revealed that all the group means were significantly different at $\alpha = 0.05$ level. In this case, the null hypothesis was rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis that the occasionally reprimanded group had significantly higher mean scores compared to the other groups.

Table 4.2(d) F- value on the mean test score and of class seven pupils

Source of variation	Sum of square	df	Mean score	F	Sig.
Between groups	249.96	2	124.98	2.624	0.079
Within groups	2715.01	57	47.63		
Total	2964.77	59			

The results from table 4.2 (d) show that there were no significant differences among mean test scores of class seven pupils in the three categories. The null hypothesis, in this case, was not rejected. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis that the occasionally reprimanded pupils had significantly higher mean score than the other groups was rejected.

Table 4.2(e) Overall mean test scores by gender

	Class 6		Class 7	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Mean	47.1	49.2	60.83	57.33
SE	1.30	1.16	1.07	1.39

In table 4.2(e) above, it is shown that in class six girls had slightly higher mean scores than boys but in class seven girls had lower mean scores than boys.

Further analysis of the mean scores revealed that there were no significant differences between the mean scores of boys and girls in both classes. ($t=1.201$, $df=58$, $P>0.05$, for class six, and $t=2.001$, $df=58$, $P>0.05$, for class seven

4.3 Relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement.

Hypothesis 3: The mean scores of pupils whose parents are highly involved were significantly higher than for those whose parents are less involved.

The results are presented below.

Table 4.3(a) percentage of pupils who reported that their parents are highly or less involved.

	Class 6	Class 7
Level of involvement	%	%
High	26.67	48.33
Low	63.33	56.67
Total	100	100

Results from table 4.3(a) show that most (63.33%) of class six pupils reported that their parents are highly involved and only 26.67% of the pupils indicated that their parents are less involved. For class seven, 56.67% of the pupils reported that their parents are highly involved, while 48.33% indicated that their parents are less involved.

Table 4.3(b) Parental involvement levels and mean test scores of pupils

Level of involvement	Class 6		class 7	
	MS	SD	MS	SD
Low	45.37	5.9	56.41	6.6
High	49.77	6.2	61.12	6.2
Total	48.16	6.1	59.08	6.4

The results in table 4.3 indicate that the mean test scores were higher for those pupils whose parents were reported to be highly involved than for those whose parents were reportedly less involved. This was the case in both classes.

The hypothesis that there was no association between parental involvement and academic achievement was tested using the t-test. The results revealed that there were significant differences between the mean scores of pupils whose parents are highly involved and those whose parents are less involved at $\alpha = 0.05$.

($t = -2.680$, $d.f=58$, $p < 0.05$, for class seven, and $t = -2.584$, $df = 58$, $p < 0.05$, for class six.) Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis that pupils whose parents were highly involved had significantly higher mean score than those whose parents were less involved.

4.4 Relationship between pupils' gender and frequency of parental praise.

It was important in this study to find out whether there were significant differences in the frequency of parental praise towards boys and girls.

Hypothesis 4: There are significant differences in the frequency of praise towards boys and girls.

The results are presented and described below.

Table 4.4 Percentage of pupils by gender and frequency of parental praise.

Frequency of praise	Class 6		Class 7	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Frequently	60.0	63.33	50.0	43.33
Occasionally	40.0	36.67	43.33	56.67
Never	-	-	6.67	-
Total	100	100	100	100

Most of the respondents in class six (boys and girls) indicated that they are frequently praised and none of the respondents reported that they are never praised. However, in class seven 50% of boys compared to 43.33% of girls reported that they are frequently praised by parents for satisfactory performance. However, 56.67% of girls compared to 43.33% of boys indicated that they are occasionally praised. Unlike the case of class six where none of the respondents reported to be never praised, 6.6% of boys in class seven indicated that they are never praised for satisfactory performance (see table 4.4).

The null hypothesis that there were no significant differences in the frequency of parental praise towards boys and girls was tested by use of the chi-square test. The results revealed that there were no significant differences in the frequency of parental praise towards boys and girls at $\alpha = 0.05$ ($\chi^2 = 2.176$, $df = 1$) in the

case of class7. Similar results were found in the case of class 6 ($\chi^2 = 0.071$, $df=1$). Therefore, the alternative hypothesis stated earlier was rejected.

4.5 Relationship between pupils' gender and frequency of reprimand.

The study further sought to establish whether there are significant differences in the frequency of parental reprimand for unsatisfactory performance towards boys and girls.

Hypothesis 5: The frequency of parental reprimand is significantly higher towards boys than girls.

The results are presented as follow;

Table 4.5 Percentage of pupils by gender and frequency of parental reprimand.

Frequency of reprimand	Class 6		Class 7	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Frequently	33.33	23.33	36.67	40.00
Occasionally	36.67	56.67	43.33	33.33
Never	30.00	20.00	20.00	26.67
Total	100	100	100	100

The results in table 4.5 above show that 33.33% of boys in class six compared to 23.33% of the girls are frequently reprimanded. Conversely, 56.67% of the girls were occasionally reprimanded compared to 36.67% of the boys in the same class. Furthermore, 30% of the boys reported that they are never reprimanded, while 20% of the girls reported the same. In the case of class seven, 43.33% of the boys indicated that they are occasionally reprimanded while 33.33% of the girls reported the same. More girls (26.67%) than boys (20%) reported that they are never reprimanded by parents for unsatisfactory performance.

The null hypothesis that there were no significant differences in the frequency of parental reprimand towards boys and girls, was tested using chi-square test.

The results revealed that there were no significant differences in the frequency of parental reprimand towards boys and girls at $\alpha = 0.05$. The chi-square results were as follows: For class 6, $\chi^2 = 2.514$, d.f=2; $p > 0.05$ and $\chi^2 = 0.72$ d.f=2; $p > 0.05$ for class seven. The null hypothesis was not rejected in both cases and therefore, the alternative hypothesis stated earlier was rejected.

4.6 Relationship between pupils' gender and parental involvement.

Hypothesis 6: There was a relationship between pupils' gender and parental involvement.

The results are presented below.

Table 4.6 Percentage of pupils by gender and level of parental involvement

Involvement level	Class 6		Class 7	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
High	73.3	53.3	60	53.3
Low	26.7	47.7	40	47.7

The results from table 4.6 show that more boys than girls indicated that their parents are highly involved. Conversely, a larger percentage of girls reported that their parents are less involved with their education.

The null hypothesis that there were no significant differences in level of parental involvement towards boys and girls was tested using the chi-square. In the case of class seven, $\chi^2 = 0.2715$, $df = 1$, $p > 0.05$, and for class 6, $\chi^2 = 1.7763$, $df = 1$, $p > 0.05$. The null hypothesis was not rejected at $\alpha = 0.05$ in both cases. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis stated earlier was rejected.

4.7 Relationship between parental level of education and parental behaviours

It was also important in this study to find out whether there was a relationship between parents' level of education and their frequency of praise and reprimand,

and level of involvement with their children's education. The results of the study are presented below;

4.7.1 Relationship between parental level of education and frequency of praise.

Table 4.7(a) Percentage of pupils in each category of parental praise and corresponding level of mother's education

Frequency of praise	Mother's level of education			
	No formal education	Primary	Secondary	Post - secondary
Frequently	31.58	58.82	51.85	83.33
Occasionally	63.16	38.24	48.15	16.67
Never	5.26	2.94	-	-
Total	100	100	100	100

Results from table 4.7(a) above show that most of the pupils (63.16%) whose mothers had no formal education reported to be occasionally praised for satisfactory performance while only 5.26% of the pupils reported to be never praised.

A larger proportion (58.82%) of pupils whose mothers had attained primary level of education reported to be frequently praised and only 2.94% of them indicated that they were never praised. More than half (51.85%) of the pupils whose mothers had attained secondary level of education were frequently praised. Most (83.33%) of those whose mothers had post-secondary education reported to be frequently praised.

Further analysis was carried out to test whether there were significant differences in the frequency of praise in relation to mother's level of education. The results showed that the frequency of parental praise was not significantly different at 0.05 for the different levels of mother's education ($\chi^2=6.313$, $df=3$, $P>0.05$). The never praised category was not included in the comparison because two cells were empty.

Table 4.7(b) Percentage of pupil in each category of parental praise and corresponding father's level of education

Frequency of praise	Father's level of education			
	No formal education	Primary	Secondary	Post-secondary
Frequently	40.0	42.11	65.12	70.59
Occasionally	40.0	57.89	34.88	29.41
Never	20.0	-	-	-
Total	100	100	100	100

Results from table 4.7(b) above show that the proportion of pupils who reported to be frequently praised increased as level of fathers' education increased. It is also notable that none of the pupils reported to be never praised for satisfactory performance, except for those pupils whose fathers had no formal education, Further analysis of the differences in frequency of praise with regard to father's level of education revealed that there were no significant differences at $\alpha = 0.05$ ($X^2 = 5.97$, $df = 3$, $P > 0.05$). The never praised category was excluded because three cells were empty.

4.7.2 Parental level of education and frequency of parental reprimand

Table 4.7(c) Percentage of pupils in each category of parental reprimand and corresponding mother's level of education

Frequency of praise	Mother's level of education			
	No formal education	Primary	Secondary	Post - secondary
Frequently	21.05	36.76	33.33	33.33
Occasionally	31.58	44.12	40.74	66.67
Never	47.37	19.12	25.93	-
Total	100	100	100	100

Results from table 4.7(c) reveal that 47.3% of pupils whose mothers had no formal education reported to be never reprimanded for unsatisfactory performance while only 19.12% and 25.93% of pupils whose mothers had primary and secondary education respectively reported the same. Chi-square test was used to test whether there are significant differences in the frequency of parental reprimand in relation to mother's level of education. It was found to be non-significant at $\alpha=0.05$ ($\chi^2=9.067$, $df=6$, $P>0.05$).

Table 4.7(d). Percentage of pupils in each category of parental reprimand and corresponding father's level of education

Frequency of praise	Father's level of education			
	No. formal education	Primary	Secondary	Post - secondary
Frequently	-	36.84	37.21	35.29
Occasionally	-	39.48	41.86	58.82
Never	100	23.68	20.93	5.89
	100	100	100	100

Results from table 4.7(d) show that all (100%) of the pupils whose father had no formal education reported that they are never reprimanded for unsatisfactory performance. A larger proportion (58.82%) of pupils whose father's had attained post-secondary education indicated that they were occasionally reprimanded compared to 5.89% of the pupils who reported that they are never reprimanded for unsatisfactory performance by parents.

Chi-square test was carried out to determine whether the difference in the frequency of parental reprimand in relation to the level of fathers education were statistically significant. The results showed that the differences were not significant at $\alpha = 0.05$ ($\chi^2 = 3.099$, $df = 4$, $P > 0.05$). The category of no formal education was not included in the comparison because two cells were empty.

4.7.3 Relationship between parental level of education and parental involvement

Table 4.7(e) Percentage of pupils according to their mothers' levels of education and parental involvement.

Mother's education	Level of involvement	
	High (n=55)	Low (n=65)
No formal educ.	10.91	20.00
Primary	56.36	56.92
Secondary	25.45	20.00
Post-secondary	7.27	3.08
Total	100	100

To determine whether there were significant differences in the level of parental involvement in relation to the mother's level education, chi-square test was carried out. The results showed that there were no significant differences in the level of involvement with respect to the level of mother's education at $\alpha = 0.05$ ($\chi^2 = 9.024$, $df = 3$, $p > 0.05$).

Table 4.7(f) Percentage of pupils according to their fathers' levels of education and parental involvement.

Father's level of education	Level of parental involvement	
	High (n=62)	Low (n=41)
No formal education	3.23	7.32
Primary	27.42	48.78
Secondary	46.77	36.58
Post-secondary	22.58	7.32
Total	100	100

The results from table 4.7 (f) show that most pupils whose fathers have attained secondary level of education and above indicated that their parents are highly involved than those with lower levels of education. The total number of pupils in this case is 107, implying that 13 of them were either from homes with single or widowed mothers.

Further analysis involved testing whether the difference in level of parental involvement was statistically significant at $p=0.05$. This was done using chi-square test.

The results showed that there were no significant differences in parental level of involvement with respect to father's level of education at $\alpha = 0.05$. $\chi^2 = 7.395$, d.f = 3.

4.8 Teachers' attitudes towards parental involvement.

It was important in this study to find out the opinions and the attitudes of teachers towards parental involvement. This is because parent - teacher consultations depend on teachers' discouragement or encouragement of the same. Also, homework has to be given by the teachers.

All the teachers sampled were qualified teachers and most of them were in the age bracket of 31 to 40 years and teaching experience of between 5 and 10 years. Most of them indicated that they give homework to their pupils regularly and that some pupils do not complete or do homework because of lack of adequate time, quiet place for study, or just negligence on the part of the pupils. A large proportion of the teachers reported that they usually involve parents when they have discipline problems and in discussing pupils performance. An analysis of their responses to the attitude statements showed that the teachers had positive attitude towards parental involvement and that parents regardless of their occupation or education levels can be involved in one way or another in their children's education.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

The study investigated relationship between the frequency of parental praise for satisfactory performance, frequency of parental reprimand for unsatisfactory performance and parental involvement. In the preceding chapter results of the study are presented. In this chapter the major findings of the study are discussed. Conclusion, implications, and recommendations are also presented.

5.1 Discussion

The discussion of the study findings centre around the major research questions starting with the first one as follows:-

1. Is frequency of parental praise for satisfactory performance significantly related to pupils' academic achievement?

An attempt to answer this research question was made by testing the null hypothesis that there were no significant differences among the mean test scores of pupils who are frequently, occasionally, or never praised. None of the respondents reported to be never praised, therefore only two mean scores were compared for significant difference. The null hypothesis failed to be rejected and it was concluded that there was no significant difference between the mean test score of pupils who reported that they are frequently praised and that of those

who indicated that they are occasionally praised. This was the case in both classes.

The findings seem to contradict the findings of Tucker, Harris, Broady, and Herman (1996) who found that pupils who were frequently praised had significantly higher MAT (Metropolitan Achievement Tests) scores than those who were occasionally praised.

Deci (1975), using experimental design, also found that subjects who received positive verbal reinforcement performed at a higher level in subsequent assignment than those who received no reinforcement.

In the present study none of the respondents reported to be never praised for satisfactory performance by their parents and a larger proportion of the pupils indicated to be frequently praised. The variations in findings may be due to the restriction of range of frequency of parental praise. There is a possibility that the pupils were influenced by the need to give socially accepted responses. The variations may also be due differences in data collection procedures and settings. Tucker and associates (1996) collected data from pupils' parents and the study was carried out among urban families in the United States of America.

Witt, Hannafin, and Marlens (1983) also reported that there were positive effects in academic achievement when parents provide verbal rewards for improvement in class assignments.

The study also investigated the hypothesis that there were no significant differences in the frequency of parental praise towards boys and girls.

Table 4.4 presents the results of the study. The null hypothesis was not rejected at $\alpha=0.05$. The results suggest that, with regard to the frequency of praise for satisfactory performance, parents treated their children equally regardless of the child's sex. The current study findings are inconsistent with that of Okwir-Acana (1983) in which he reported that parents tend to attach more importance to the education of boys than girls. A comparison of mean scores of boys and girls revealed that there was no significant difference between the scores (see table 4.2 (e)). These findings concur with those of Shanab, Peterson, Dargahi, and Deroian (1983). In their experimental study with undergraduate students they found no sex differences in subsequent performance when subjects received positive feedback. Deci (1975) also found no sex differences.

2. Is the frequency of parental reprimand for unsatisfactory performance related to pupil's academic achievement?

The study investigated the hypothesis that there were no significant differences among mean test scores of pupils who were frequently, occasionally, and never reprimanded by their parents. This hypothesis was tested using the F-test for equality of means. The null hypothesis was rejected at $\alpha=0.05$ in the case of class six and it was concluded that the means scores for the three groups were significantly different. Post-hoc comparisons using Tukey test statistic revealed

that the mean scores for the frequently, occasionally, and never reprimanded groups were significantly different. However, there were no significant differences among the mean scores in the case of class seven pupils.

The present study findings partly concur with those of Tucker and colleagues (1996) where it was found that pupils who were frequently reprimanded had significantly lower GPAs (Grade point Averages) than those who were occasionally reprimanded by their parents. The never reprimanded groups were not included in the comparisons. However, the current findings partly contradict those of Shanab, Peterson, Dargahi, and Deroian (1983) in which they reported no significant difference in subsequent performance between students who were reprimanded and those who were never reprimanded. These variations in findings are expected due to methodological and subject differences. Shanab and associates carried out an experimental study with undergraduate students while the present study was non-experimental and subjects were primary school pupils. This study finding seems to confirm Shanab and colleague assertion that older students may not be influenced by external feedback. There were no significant differences in group means in the case of class seven.

The current study also investigated the hypothesis that there was no difference in the frequency of parental reprimand toward boys and girls. The hypothesis was

rejected at $\alpha=0.05$ and it was concluded that there was no difference in the frequency of parental reprimand towards boys and girls.

These findings contradict those of Okwir-Acana (1983) who found that parental encouragement had more influence on performance of boys than girls. In this study the mean scores of boys and girls were not significantly different ($\alpha=0.05$). Therefore, it can be inferred that parental reprimand had same influence on performance of boys and girls, since they were equally reprimanded. Parental level of education was found to have no significant relationship with the frequency of parental reprimand.

3. Is the level of parental involvement related to pupils' academic achievement?

The current study investigated the relationship between parental involvement and pupils' academic achievement. Parental involvement was operationally defined as parents' attendance to school meetings, supervision of homework, and consultation with teachers on pupils' performance.

The hypothesis of interest was that of no significant difference between mean scores of pupils whose parents were highly involved and those whose parents were less involved. The hypothesis was tested using the t-test for equality of means.

Table 4.3(b) presents mean test scores of pupils in relation to the level of parental involvement. From the table it can be observed that the mean test score for the pupils whose parents are highly involved is higher than for those whose parents are less involved in both classes.

The null hypothesis of no significant difference between the mean scores was rejected at $\alpha=0.05$ and it was concluded that pupils whose parents were highly involved had significantly higher mean scores than those whose parents were less involved in their schooling.

The present study findings are consistent with previous work. Kapila (1976) in a study with urban primary school children, found a strong correlation between parental involvement and academic achievement. Hickman, Greenwood, and Miller (1995) reported a significant influence of parental involvement in performance in individual school subjects. The findings also concur with a survey carried out in Nigeria (Durojaiye, 1983) in which it was found that majority of the children who were described as lazy and disliked schoolwork were from homes with parents who expressed no interest in children's schooling. Cooper, Lindsay, and Nye (2000) in their research reported that the more homework pupils completed, the better they did in school. Furthermore, a study carried out in Caribbean Island by Payne (1986) found that children's interest in schoolwork increased when parents participated in school meetings.

However, Zill (1994) observed that there may be no direct relationships between parents' attendance at school meetings and children's interest in school, but it is that teachers tend to give greater attention to those pupils whose parents are highly involved and identify the pupils learning problems earlier than those whose parents are less involved. No significant difference in the level of parental involvement towards boys and girls was found. This showed that parental involvement in their children's schooling was the same regardless of the child's sex.

Contrary to the expectation that learned parents are more involved in their children's schooling, no significant difference was found in the level of parental involvement in relation to the level of education of the parents. This showed that with regard to the forms of involvement studied, parents participated regardless of their level of education. However, most of the parents had attained primary level of education, therefore the range of level of education was restricted.

5.2 Conclusion and Implications

This was a study on the relationship between the frequency of parental praise for satisfactory performance, frequency of parental reprimand for unsatisfactory performance, and parental involvement and academic achievement. A sample of 120 class seven and class six pupils and their teachers (N=10) from a randomly

selected primary school in Rongena educational zone participated in the study.

The major findings of the study are as follows:-

- (a) There was no significant difference in the mean test scores of pupils who were frequently praised and those who were occasionally praised. This seems to show that there was no significant relationship between the frequency of parental praise and academic achievement. However, according to McClelland (1985), motivation to achieve in school is dependent on the parental style of upbringing. Parents who are indifferent to children's performance have children who perform poorly. The results of the present study show that parents may be aware of the importance of praise for satisfactory or improved performance. The fact that none of the respondents reported that they are never praised indicated that most parents are aware of the importance of their verbal feedback on their children's performance. The results obtained in the current study may imply that some parents are too generous in their praise without accurate information on how the child performs relative to peers. It may also imply that some parents can provide adequate learning resources and favourable environment, but not be available to provide verbal reinforcement for satisfactory performance.
- (b) There were significant differences among mean scores of class 6 pupils who reported that they are frequently, occasionally and never reprimanded. Post-hoc comparison using Tukey statistic showed that all the three groups means

were significantly different at $\alpha=0.05$. The mean score for the occasionally reprimanded group was highest, followed by that of the frequently reprimanded group and then that of the never reprimanded group. There were no significant differences among mean scores of class 7 pupils. This finding implies that adolescents are more peer oriented, such that they may be considering parental comments to be less important than those of peers.

Social needs theory states that achievement needs are learned through cultural experience and triggered by an effective press. Children may develop the need to achieve in school if their parents begin to challenge them at an early stage and reinforce their achievements. However, parents should not make unrealistic demands on the child. Wlodkowski and Jayne (1990) have noted that unrealistic demand for achievement may cause the child to resent schoolwork. The results of the study imply that parents should occasionally reprimand their children as frequent reprimand may affect their academic self-concept. Yet, those parents who never reprimand are sending the wrong message to the child, that poor performance is accepted and therefore the child will not see the need to work harder.

(c) There was significant difference between the mean scores of pupils who reported that their parents are highly involved and those who indicated that their parents are less involved. The mean scores of pupils in the highly involved group were significantly higher than those of pupils in the less involved group.

The results of the study showed that parents who are interested and value their children's education have children with favourable attitudes towards school and do well in school. Bandura's social learning theory states that children learn through imitation. Children imitate interests and values of their parents. Therefore, parents should show that they actually value their children's education by not only providing adequate learning resources but also ensuring that their children do homework, finding out from teachers how their children are doing at school and attending school meetings among other activities. Coleman Report (1966) showed that parental involvement variables are as important as school variables in influencing pupils' achievement.

Absenteeism is usually associated with poor performance and school drop-out. Parents who are highly involved are able to deal with discipline problem such as truancy earlier than those who are less involved. The results of the current study imply that when parents are highly involved the result is an increased school attendance, fewer discipline problems, and better academic performance.

(d) There were no differences in the frequency of praise, reprimand, and level of involvement towards boys and girls. This implies that most parents even in rural areas have realised the importance of educating the girl child just like they do for boys. The change in lifestyle may have led to this realisation. With more than 50% of the Kenyan population being women, some of them remain single. Therefore, by educating the girl child parents are building a successful future for the child.

(e) There was no difference in parental behaviours in relation to parental level of education. The results imply that most of the learned parents who may be in formal employment do not afford adequate time to see what the children have done in school thereby reinforcing their achievement. They may also be considering the forms of involvement studied as unimportant.

5.3 Recommendations

The following recommendations can be made on the basis of the results and implications of the study.

- (i) Parental reinforcements and involvement are potential predictors of academic achievement as suggested by the findings of this study. Therefore, teachers should consider these factors when approached by parents on the academic performance of their children.
- (ii) As much as parents are busy fending for their families in their daily work routine, they should spare some time for their children and find out how they are doing at school.
- (iii) With the provision of free primary education (FPE), education field officers should educate the parents on their role in the education of their children. Parents need to be informed on how they can become effectively involved in the learning process. This can be done through PTA meetings, seminars, and radio programmes.

- (iv) There is need to enlighten parents especially in rural areas on the most effective forms of involvement to enhance school success of their children. Parents should encourage their children to take pride in their efforts irrespective of their absolute level of achievement.

5.4 Suggestions for further research

Although the findings of the current study are not conclusive, they suggest that children perform better in school when parents not only provide the necessary learning resources but also supervise homework, consult with teachers, attend school meetings and reinforce children's achievements. However, more research needs to be carried out to establish the most effective forms of involvement.

In line with the recommendations made and the findings of the study the following suggestions are made for consideration in future research.

- a) The study involved one primary school in Bureti district. Teacher-made tests were used as measure of academic achievement. A similar study can be carried out using a common achievement test and covering the whole district so as to allow for generalisation of results.
- (b) A study similar to this one can be carried out to investigate other parental behaviours that influence children's learning.

REFERENCES

- (c) The need to give socially desirable responses may have influenced the results of the study. Therefore, similar future studies should collect data from the points of view of pupils, parents and teachers.
- (d) The present study focused on parental behaviours in relation to academic achievement among pupils in a rural, public, day primary school. Similar future studies should be conducted in urban boarding, and private schools.
- (e) Observational studies of parental behaviours with children who evidence high achievement versus children who evidence low achievement should be conducted.

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APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PUPILS

Instructions

Below are questions about you and your parents/guardians. You are requested to answer all questions truthfully. Note that there are no correct or wrong answers.

The information you give will not be made available to anybody else.

SECTION A

Fill in blank spaces and tick [] against the word or sentence that is appropriate.

1. Write down your name _____
2. Indicate your sex Male [] Female []
3. Date of birth _____
4. With whom do you live most of the time?
 - A. Both father and mother []
 - B. Father []
 - C. Mother []
 - D. Relatives []
 - E. Other,

Specify _____

5. What level of education have your parents/guardians reached?

	Mother/Female guardian	Father/male guardian
A. Do not know	[]	[]
B. Did not attend	[]	[]
C. Primary	[]	[]
D. Secondary	[]	[]
E. Post-secondary	[]	[]

SECTION B

Tick [✓] against a word or sentence that is most applicable to you.

6. How often do your parents/guardians check your books to see how you perform in your schoolwork?

- A. Never []
- B. Once a month []
- C. Once a week []
- D. Everyday []

7. Do you have a quiet place where you can do your homework?

- A. Yes []
- B. No []

8. How often do your parents/guardians ensure that you do your homework?
- A. Never []
 - B. sometimes []
 - C. Always []
9. How much time do your parents/guardians allow you to do your homework?
- A. enough []
 - B. little []
 - C. very little []
10. Do your parents/guardians give you a gift when you do well or improve in your examination?
- A. Never []
 - B. Sometimes []
 - C. Always []
11. How often do your parents/guardians get angry with you when you perform poorly in examination?
- A. Always []
 - B. Sometimes []
 - C. Never []

12. Do your parents/guardians advise you on what to do in order to improve in your schoolwork?
- A. Yes []
- B. No []
13. How often do your parents/guardians praise or congratulate you for doing well or improve in your schoolwork?
- A. Never []
- B. Sometimes []
- C. Always []
14. Do your parents/guardians punish or deny you some things when you perform poorly in school?
- A. never []
- B. sometimes []
- C. Always []
15. How often do your parents/guardians discuss school events with you?
- A. very often []
- B. Rarely []
- C. Never []

16. How often do your parents/guardians visit school to talk with your teachers on how you are doing in school?

A. Every term []

B. Once a year []

C. Never []

17. Is your parent/guardian a member of the school committee?

A. Yes []

B. No []

18. How often do your parents/guardians attend school meetings?

A. Never attend []

B. Rarely attend []

C. Always attend []

6. At the time of assessing the homework, do you find all the pupils to have done or completed the work?

Yes []

No []

If your answer above is No, what are some of the reasons they give for not doing or completing the home work?

.....
.....
.....
.....

7. Have you ever tried to find out from parents why their children do not complete or do homework?

Yes []

No []

8. If the answer above is yes, what are some of the reasons parents give?

.....
.....

9. Using the checklist below, rate the number of parents who have consulted you concerning their child's progress? (Tick one)

Many []

Few []

Very few []

None []

10. Indicate ways in which you have tried to involve parents in their children's schoolwork.

.....

.....

11. The statements below points out some of the factors that may determine the level of parental involvement. Please put a tick (☐) to indicate whether you strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Undecided (U); Disagree (D); or Strongly Disagree (SD) with the statements.

Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD
Parents are very busy to be involved					
Teachers find it difficult to involve parents					
My school does not allow parents to be involved					
Most of the parents are not interested					
Educated parents are least involved					
Illiterate parents are highly involved					
Employed parents are not able to get involved					
Unemployed parents are highly involved					
Single parents are highly involved					

APPENDIX III: RESULTS OF PILOT STUDY

The pilot study was carried at the beginning of the third school term. The purpose of the study was to:

1. Pre-test the research instruments
2. Determine the efficiency of the data analysis procedures that were proposed.
3. Determine the coding and scoring procedures

SAMPLE

The sample for the study consisted of 48 pupils (24 girls and 24 boys) drawn from classes 6 and 7, and their teachers (n=4). They were drawn from a parallel primary school to the one that was used for the main study.

RESULTS

The instructions in both questionnaires were clear. The average time required to administer the pupil's questionnaire was 30 minutes. Teachers required more time because they not only had other important duties to attend to, but also had to refer to some school records.