

INFLUENCE OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF PRESCHOOL CHILDREN IN KANGETA DIVISION, MERU COUNTY, KENYA

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**A Research thesis report submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of degree of Masters of Education in Early Childhood Education in the Department of Educational Communication and Technology, University of Nairobi.**

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## DECLARATION

This research thesis is my original work and has not been submitted for award of degree in any other university.

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This thesis report has been submitted for examination with the approval of the University supervisor.

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## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to Almighty God for enabling me to go through the course. To my husband Mwirichia, daughter Makena and sons Victor, Ben and Oliver for their support and encouragement throughout the course.

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## ABSTRACT

Parents of preschool children are often faced with unique challenges that hinder them from meeting the learners' needs. These include; insufficient time, job type, home rules, level of education, order of priority, set home environment, opinion to voluntary work at school, time taken to respond to school activities, buying instructional materials, attending parents meetings, conferences, sports ,academic clinic day, and discussing the academic progress of the child. If the above needs are not attended to, the child may not perform well because of inadequate parental support. The purpose of the study was to establish the influence of parental involvement on academic performance of preschool children in Kangeta division, Meru County, Kenya. The research study addressed the following specific objectives: To find out whether home environment has an influence on academic performance of preschool learners, establish whether the parent-school communication has an influence on academic performance of preschool learners, investigate whether parents' participation in educational activities at home have an influence on academic performance of preschool learners and find out whether parents' participation in educational activities at school have an influence on academic performance of preschool learners. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The following research instruments were used; interview schedules, questionnaires and documentary analysis. The sample size was 166 which comprised of parents, teachers and children. The data was analyzed using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 16.0. Descriptive statistics was used for analysis since the study was descriptive in nature. Presentation of data involved frequency, mean scores, data tables and bar graphs. The study established various forms of parents' participation in educational activities at school; education activities at home, parent-school communication and home environment had an influence on the academic performance of preschool learners. Home environment was found to have influence on academic performance of preschool learners both positively and negatively. Parents' involvement in educational activities at school was found to have indirect influence on academic performance of preschool learners, while involvement in educational activities at home had direct influence. Parent-school communication was found to be influencing academic performance of preschool learners to some extent. The study came up with the following recommendations: Parents should set study rooms which provide conducive home environment for doing home study, parents should set home rules to govern their children home study behavior, teachers should establish partnerships with parents to support learners' learning, parents and teachers should adopt modern method of communication such as mobile phone to enhance communication, parents' involvement in schools' activities should be encouraged and the government should consider developing and implementing policies that support this.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

A.E.O	- Area Education Officer
D.E.O	- District Education Officer
ECE	- Early Childhood Education
ESL	- English as Second Language
KNEC	- Kenya National Examination Council
NAEP	- National Assessment of Educational Progress
NAEYC	-National Association for the Education of Young Children
NNPS	- National Network of Partnership Schools
PTA	- Parent Teachers association
PTO	- Parent Teachers Organization
SPSS	- Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SEDL	- Southwest Educational Development Laboratory
UNESCO	- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USA	- United States of America.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the study

When schools, families, and community groups work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more. Parental involvement over the past decade, indicates that regardless of family income or background, "students with involved parents are more likely to earn higher grades and test scores, enroll in higher-level programs, be promoted, pass their classes, earn credits, attend school regularly, have better social skills, show improved behavior, adapt well to school and graduate to postsecondary education" (Henderson & Map, 2002: 67).

In the United States, data from the 2000 administration of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) showed that, nationally, 90 percent of 4th graders were in schools where a school official reported that more than half of parents participated in parent-teacher conferences. Among 8th graders, though, that proportion dropped to 57 percent. A report from the U.S. department of educational cites several reasons for the decline in involvement as pre-school children grow older. Parents of middle students often report feelings that children should do homework alone, and that the parents shouldn't try to help if they're not experts in the subject. The structure of many schools can also deter parents from helping students. Organizing a nursery school so that at least one person knows each child well, keeping a "parent room" in the building, and sponsoring parent-to-parent communication and events are key parts of an effective parent-involvement program (Berla, Henderson, & Kerensky, 1989). According to the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS), for parent involvement to flourish, it must be meaningfully integrated into a school's programs and community. The network developed a framework of six types of parental involvement that schools can use to guide their efforts.

NNPS says schools can; help families with parenting and child-rearing skills, communicate with families about school programs and student progress and needs, work to improve recruitment, training, and schedules to

involve families as volunteers in school activities, encourage families to be involved in learning activities at home, include parents as participants in important school decisions and coordinate with businesses and agencies to provide resources and services for families, students, and the community (Epstein, 2001).

Parental participation in pre-school activities includes a wide range of behaviors but generally refers to parents' and family members' use and investment of resources in their children's schooling. These investments can take place in or outside of school, with the intention of improving children's learning. Parental involvement at home can include activities such as discussions about school, helping with homework, and reading with children. Involvement at school may include parents volunteering in the classroom, attending workshops, or attending school plays and sporting events (Rain and William, 2011).

A parent is the child's first and most important teacher in life and he or she is expected to play an active role in the child's preschool journey because it is believed a parent and child should grow together and have a rewarding preschool experience. This follows subsequently by school life where academic performance is expected to be high. The parent is supposed to be supportive to the child in all aspects which include socially, physically, mentally and also emotionally (Epstein, 2001). Studies have indicated that children whose parents and/or other significant adults share in their formal education tend to do better in school. Some benefits that have been identified that measure parental involvement in education include; higher grades and test scores, long term academic achievement, positive attitudes and behaviors and more successful programs (Epstein, 2001).

The ideology of "motherhood" portrays mothers as being the ultimate caregivers. They invest most if not all of their time on their children which sometimes affects their job and role in the labor market. Although "stays at home moms" are less common, women are seen as spending more time with children than men. They are commonly the nurturers of the children and support emotional growth and stability. Fathers now more than ever are spending more time with their children. Whereas in the past, fathers were the breadwinners and the mothers stayed at home to cook, clean and take care of children. The roles are starting to reverse. Fathers are participating more in parenting roles and taking on responsibilities such as bathing, dressing, feeding, changing

diapers and comforting children (Rain and William, 2011). In the morning, the first thing before the child report to school, he or she has to take breakfast, which gives him or her energy to stay in class comfortably. The child needs to take another snack at ten o'clock since energy is highly required. At lunch time the child is expected to take a well balanced diet. At 3 or 4 o'clock the child need to have a bite again for example a snack can be provided. When the child is comfortable and not hungry he/ she can listen to the teacher well and follow the instructions hence performs well when given an examination.

The other requirement the child needs is playing materials. Parent must provide some of demonstration and instructional materials. These materials are important because they help the child to be able to play, assist in concept building, promotion of discovery and creativity and enhance interaction with others as they play. These playing materials include the balls, track suits, toys, Picture books, clay ,paints, blackboard, beads,, large blocks, medium blocks, dishes, flower title, concentric figures, nest of eggs, nest of dolls, nest of rings, nest of trays, cars, puzzles, pyramid, wooden animals, balls, pull toys, cars, trains, trucks, wagon, seesaw and slides (Frost, Wortham & Reifel, 2008). Research clearly demonstrates that there is a direct relationship between parent engagement and children's language and reading skills, ability to relate to and interact with others, they may be peers or adults, and their feelings of positive self-image (Berla, Henderson & Kerewsky, 1989)

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

Parents of preschool children are often faced with unique challenges that hinder them from meeting the learners' needs. They include; insufficient time, career or job type, level of education, order of priority, set home environment, opinion to voluntary work at school, time taken to respond to school activities for example buying instruction materials, attending parents meetings, conferences, sports ,academic clinic day, disciplinary cases and also discussing the academic progress of the child. If the above needs are not attended to, there is a likelihood of child not performing well because he or she is not adequately supported. Insufficient parental involvement may lead to poor performance of the child academically (K.N.E.C Report, 2006).

Parents from private primary schools have been found to be more involved than parents from public primary schools in areas such as attending academic clinic day, parents meetings, paying motivation fees, buying reading materials and buying television, radios, computer for computer games while in public primary schools this is taken as extra expenses. The parents from public schools tend to be reluctant and therefore, the preschool children are not exposed to varied learning opportunities. This affects their acquisition of learning skills such as numeracy and literacy skills as compared to children from private preschools. Underachievement at school or failure to reach a satisfactory level of literacy and numeracy is a national problem and its caused by various factors such as poor parental involvement as reported by research done by Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC, 2009) on learners' achievement. Reading, counting, grouping, pairing, sorting, comparing, matching, writing, designing, speaking and listening are among the skills inadequately acquired at early childhood education level. This is a common problem found in the results examined by Kangeta divisional evaluation tests results analysis. A difference in performance has also been noted between the public and private schools in the same area whereby public school record a lower mean grade compared to private schools. Academic performance in Kangeta division has remained very low for a very long time as compared to other educational divisions in the district (Igembe south district evaluation tests results analysis, 2010; 2011). The study therefore sought to establish the influence of parental involvement in the academic performance of preschool children in the division.

### **1.3 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of the study was to establish the influence of parental involvement on the academic performance of preschool children in Kangeta division, Meru, County, Kenya.

### **1.4 Broad Objective**

The broad objective was to establish the influence of parental involvement on the academic performance of preschool children in Kangeta division, Meru County.



### **1.4.1 Specific Objectives**

The research study addressed the following specific objectives:

- i) To find out whether home environment has an influence on academic performance of preschool learners.
- ii) To establish whether the parent-school communication has an influence on academic performance of preschool learners.
- iii) To investigate whether parents' participation in educational activities at home has an influence on academic performance of pre-school learners.
- iv) To find out whether parents' participation in educational activities at school has an influence on academic performance of pre-school learners.

### **1.5 Research questions**

The study addressed the following research questions:

- i) How does the home environment influence academic performance of preschool learners?
- ii) To what extent does parent-school communication influence academic performance of preschool learners?
- iii) How does parents' participation in educational activities at home influence academic performance of preschool learners?
- iv) To what extent does parents' participation in educational activities at school influence academic performance of preschool learners?

## **1.6 Significance of the study**

Parental involvement plays a significant role in academic performance of preschool children. The findings of this study will assist in improving parental involvement in academic performance of pre-school children. The findings could also be useful in managing education of the learners and to identify the types of parental involvement such as parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making and collaborating with the community that impact on improvement of preschool children acquisition of academic performance. The study will also provide intellectual inputs for future researchers in search for knowledge on parental involvement on academic performances. This will form a foundation for further studies too. The findings can be helpful to teachers and the parents in developing programs to upgrade their skills, knowledge, positive attitude and competencies of handling children.

## **1.7 Limitations of the study**

The researcher was not able to control various aspects of parental involvement or other environmental factors such as socio-economic status which could affect the academic performance of the preschool children.

## **1.8 Delimitations of the study**

The study focused on the influence of parental involvement on academic performance of preschool children in Kangeta division, Meru County. The study dealt with home environment, parent –school communication, parental activities at home and school. The study was done in Kangeta which is one of education division in Meru County and therefore the findings may not apply in other geographical region outside the county unless prevalent circumstances exist.

## **1.9 Basic Assumptions**

The study assumed that the respondents had relevant knowledge and information on the role of parental involvement in the preschool activities on academic performance of preschool learners. It was also assumed

that variables being measured were distributed evenly in the general population. The study assumed that parental involvement has an influence preschool children performance.

### **1.10 Definition of terms**

- Academic performance** -The outcome of education, the extent to which a student, institution has achieved their educational goal
- Communication** - Home to school communication regarding children's academic development and other academically relevant information.
- Child** - A young human being who is not yet an adult i.e. under 18 year.
- Parental involvement** - Refers to participation of parents in every facet of children's education and development from birth to adulthood, recognizing, parents are the primary influence in children's lives.
- Preschool education** - Provision of learning of children before the commencement of statutory and obligatory education. Usually between the age of zero and five depending on the jurisdiction.
- Parental volunteering** - Refers to parental attendance in a variety of school events ranging in scope from class room activities to school wide event.
- Parental participation** - Refers to the level of involvement that a parent has in their child's education and school.
- Home environment** - Refers to space and its surrounding where the preschool child lives with the parent or guardian for example at home.

**Study area** - A room where the preschool child spend time when studying.

**Parent -school communication** – refers to passing of information from either from parent to the teacher or teacher to the parent.

**Educational Activities at home** – Refers to all activities supporting education at home.

**Educational activities at school** – Refers to all activities supporting education at school.

**Development** – A specified state of growth or advancement.

**Frequency** - The fact of being frequent or happening often

### **1.11. Organization of the Study**

The study comprises of five chapters. Chapter one includes the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, broad objective, specific objectives, research questions, significance of the study, limitations of the study, delimitations of the study, basic assumptions, definition of terms and organization of the study. Chapter two comprises of a review of literature on parental involvement in preschool learning, theoretical framework and conceptual framework. Chapter three deals with research methodology, research design, target population, sample and sampling procedures, research instruments, data collection procedures and data analysis. Chapter four consists of data presentation and analysis. Chapter four presents a summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE RREVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviews literature on parental involvement and its influence on academic performance of preschool children. The literature is presented under the following sub-headings: Home environment, parent- school communication, education activities both at home and at school. Finally, the chapter presents the theoretical and conceptual framework of the study.

#### **2.2 Parental Involvement**

Parental involvement is defined as the level of participation that a parent has in the child's education and school. Many parents are tremendously involved, often volunteering to help in their child's classroom activities, communicating well with their child's teachers, assisting with homework, and understanding their child's individual academic strengths and weaknesses. Unfortunately, there are also many parents who are not directly involved with their child's education. Many schools have programs aimed at increasing parental involvement such as games and sports, home activities, and assorted opportunities for volunteers. The variables which will be addressed in this study are; home environment, parent- school communication, education activities both at home and at school. This has been studied in USA and African countries like Nigeria and Uganda (UNESCO, 2000).

Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL), found out that, when schools, families, and community groups work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school (Kurdek, Fine & Sinclair, 1995). The report, a synthesis of research on parent involvement over the past decade, also found out that, regardless of family income or background, students with involved parents are more likely to; earn higher grades and test scores, and enroll in higher-level programs, be promoted, pass

their classes, and earn credits, attend school regularly, have better social skills, show improved behavior, and adapt well to school (SEDL, 2002).

### **2.3 Home Environment and Pre-school Learning**

Much of the first two years of human life are spent in the creation of a child's first "sense of self" or the building of a first identity. This is a crucial part of children's makeup, how they first see themselves, how they think they should function and how they expect others to function in relation to them. For this reason, early childhood care must ensure that in addition to employing a carefully selected and trained caretaker program, policy must emphasize links with family, home culture and home language (UNESCO, 2000).

Home environment focuses on the aspect of creating a supportive environment for the children to study in e.g. balanced meals, safety, a reading /homework area which has enough lighting establishing a family schedule to eat meals as a family, setting firm rules for bedtime, extracurricular activities, setting limit on television time, setting high but appropriate expectations, parents being models of learning and hard work.

Home environment includes supervision and rules. This refers to moderate levels of parental support (Jeynes, 2007). Children that spend less time watching television and more time on school-related activities shows a positive relationship with academic achievement (Clark, 1993).

Studies from India and USA show that, supervision which is a primary responsibility of parenting, include those activities parents undertake to ensure that their children's basic physical and safety needs are met. Being late to pick up a child at school, for example, can have grave safety consequences, especially if the school closes and no adults are on the premises. The degree of supervision to keep school-age children safe varies depending on the chronological age of the child and the location of the school and home. At a minimum, parents have to ensure that someone is available to take care of children's meals and transportation needs before and after the school day just to make sure the child does not struggle. Some older children can manage these responsibilities on their own, but someone should still check on their whereabouts before and after school, on

how they spend their weekends and with whom, and on how they are handling their nutritional needs (Jeynes, 2007).

The structure of the workplace constrains the ability of working parents to attend to these basic supervisory responsibilities. For those in autonomous jobs, communicating with children during the day is not a problem. However, in many kinds of jobs, employees are prohibited from making personal calls or their communications are monitored. Moreover, the nature of some jobs severely curtails opportunities to attend to the basic needs of children, such as leaving work early to take a child to a pediatric appointment (Patrikakou, 2004).

Home environment allow parents flexibility in scheduling, provide opportunities for parents and children to spend time together, and offer a relaxed setting. To be most beneficial, home activities should be interesting and meaningful not trivial tasks that parents and children have to "get through." When teachers plan home activities, they often think in terms of worksheets or homework that will reinforce skills learned in school (Barwegen and Joyce, 2004). But parents often grow tired of the endless stream of papers to be checked and the time spent on "busywork." Another danger of promoting home activities is the possibility that there may arise an unclear distinction of roles, with teachers expecting parents to "teach" at home. Teachers and parents need to understand that their roles are different, and that their activities with children should be different (Patrikakou, 2004). In addition, in an ideal home environment, there are many other important ways that parents can help their children learn. Some of these ways include setting rules for use at home, encouragement by parents to spend more leisure time reading than watching television.

#### **2.4 Parent-school communication**

In today's society, schools and parents are responding to increased expectations, economic pressures, and time constraint. In these changing times, effective partnerships between teachers and parents become even more essential to meet the needs of the children. Communicating with parents is one of six major types of parent involvement practices critical to establishing strong working relationships between teachers and parents (Epstein, 1995).

Cultivating the teacher-parent relationship is also considered vital to the development team work (Schuster, 2003). Unfortunately, many teachers are not specifically trained in the skills they need to communicate effectively with parents (Hradecky, 2004). School communication practices are so fundamental to involving families in the education process, teacher preparation and professional development programs should actively promote the development of communication skills for teachers (Casper, 2003). Teachers strive to establish partnerships with parents to support student learning. Strong communication is fundamental to this partnership and to building a sense of community between home and school. In these changing times, teachers must continue to develop and expand their skills in order to maximize effective communication with parents. Good communication between parents and teachers has many benefits. When parents and teachers share information, children learn more and parents and teachers feel more supported. Good communication can help create positive feelings between teachers and parents.

Schools and teachers know that good communication with parents is an important part of their job. Teachers need to know about the children's families, language, and culture in order to help children learn. Parents benefit because they learn more about what goes on in school and can encourage learning at home. Most importantly, children benefit by improved communication because contact between homes and school helps children learn and succeed. But parent-teacher communication can also be hard, especially when parents feel uncomfortable in school, don't speak English well, or come from different cultural backgrounds than teachers. Fortunately, both parents and teachers have developed ways to make communication easier. Some parents might have had a bad experience in school when they were children. Other parents have not felt welcomed by the school or teacher. Fortunately, there are things that can be done to help overcome these barriers. Here are examples of how some parents have become more comfortable and confident. Parents and teachers should check with each other first to make sure they both feel comfortable with these arrangements:



*Chat with the teacher.* One father just stops by and chats with his daughter's teacher when he picks his daughter up from school. Through these talks they have come to know each other and that can make it easier when it is time to have a parent-teacher conference.

*Join in an activity or program for parents at the school.* Some parents help a science class by doing gardening and helping children see how plants grow. Some parents attend a parent group at school to learn how to help their children learn at home. When parents do these kinds of things, it is a way of telling the teacher and the child that the parent cares a lot about the child's education and the school.

*Talk to other people who spend time in the school.* One parent knows the school nurse and is able to talk comfortably to her. This parent is able to learn more about the school by talking with other parents or neighbors who know the school and can provide information.

*Watching child in the school.* One mother regularly sits in her son's classroom at the beginning of the day for a few minutes when she drops him off. She gets the feel of the classroom and sees how he acts with his friends and his teacher. Sometimes parents do not have a car or someone to watch their other children while they visit the school. Other times, parents work during the day or evening and cannot get to a meeting. But communication can happen even without a visit to the school.

*Talk on the phone with the teacher.* One mother works full time, but is able to take calls at her job. She gave her work number to her child's teacher. When the child has a problem in class, the teacher can call the mother so they can work on a solution to the problem together. Sometimes the mother will give advice to the child over the phone.

*Write a little note.* A mother who works a swing shift job has a hard time coming into school during school hours. Sometimes she asks her older daughter who goes to the school to deliver a note to her young son's teacher, to tell the teacher about a doctor's appointment or other news.

Studies conducted in USA, sought to evaluate the efficacy of teacher communication with parents and students as a means of increasing student engagement (Kraft, Matthew and Shaun, 2011). It estimated the causal effect of teacher communication by conducting a randomized field experiment in which children were assigned to receive a daily phone call home and a text/written message during a mandatory summer school program. It was found out that frequent teacher-parent communication immediately increased student engagement as measured by homework completion rates, on-task behavior and class participation. On average, teacher-parent communication increased the odds ratio student completed their homework by 42% and decreased instances in which teachers had to redirect students' attention to the task at hand by 25%. Class participation rates among 6th grade students increased by 49%, while communication appeared to have a small negative effect on 9th grade students' willingness to participate. Drawing upon surveys and interviews with participating teachers and students, there are three primary mechanisms through which communication likely affected engagement: stronger teacher-student relationships, expanded parental involvement, and increased student motivation.

Parents can talk with their children and communicate positive behaviors, values, and character traits. They can keep in touch with the school and they can express high expectations for children and encourage their efforts to achieve. School communicates with families about school programs and student progress through effective school-to-home and home-to-school communication.

A teacher usually calls a parent to report a child's inappropriate behavior or academic failure. But teachers can use phone calls to let parents know about positive behavior and to get input. Parents justifiably become defensive if they think that every phone call will bring a bad report. If teachers accustom parents to receiving regular calls just for keeping in touch, it is easier to discuss problems when they occur (Grolnick, 1994).

## **2.5. Parents' participation in educational activities at home**

According to Keith (1993), when a child returns from school with assignment, the parents' role is to make sure that it has been done in the right way and at the right time. Parents checking child's homework, has shown a positive association with academic achievement in some studies. Students whose parents are involved in checking their homework showed higher achievement than students whose parents are not involved in checking homework. Other studies, however, have shown a negative association between parents checking their children's homework and academic achievement (Kurdek *et.,al*, 1995).

What parents do is more important to student success than whether they are rich or poor, whether parents have finished high school or not. Every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental participation in promoting the academic growth of children. It is known that children who spend more time on homework, on average, do better in school, and that the academic benefits increase as children move into the upper grades (Tizard *et.,al* 1993). Good assignments, completed successfully, can help children develop wholesome habits and attitudes. However, homework can help parents learn about their children's education. This can encourage a lifelong love for learning (Tizard *et.,al* 1993).

Learning at home involves families and their children in learning together at home, including homework and other curriculum-linked activities and decisions. Decision making includes families as participants in school decisions, governance, and advocacy through PTA, school councils, committees, and other parent organizations. Studies conducted by Education Research International in USA and Uganda shows that, parental affective support and participation appeared to be one of the strongest predictors of students' academic achievement (Deslandes, 1997).

The recent meta-analysis conducted by (Jeynes, 2007) showed a strong positive association between parental style defined as supportive, loving, helpful, and maintaining an adequate level of discipline and academic achievement. These positive associations may be due to the ability of parents with an authoritative parenting style to be loving and supportive and yet maintain an adequate level of discipline in the household. Parents with

this parenting style also demonstrate qualities such as trust and approachability that motivate children to discuss academic problems and expectations with their parents. Additionally, such parents are more likely to make contact with teachers when students have academic or behavioral problems (Deslandes, Sophia and Reifel, 1997). Busy parents can include children in such everyday activities as preparing a meal or grocery shopping. Teachers can also suggest that parents set aside time each day to talk with their children about school. Parents may find this difficult if they have little idea of what occurs in school. Parents and children can discuss current events using teacher-provided questions. Teachers often suggest the activity of reading aloud to children. Reading to children is an important factor in increasing their interest and ability in reading. Teachers can also encourage children to read to parents. In areas where children may not have many books, schools can lend books, and teachers can provide questions for parents and children to discuss (Patrikakou, 2004). Educational activities at home include: reading together with the children, playing maths and playing games, engaging in meaningful educational dialogues, reading to you children, listening to your children reading, engage the children in maths/science activities at home , taking children for educational tours, camps etc.

Parents are involved in Preschool children activities which help the child learn. Some of these activities include provision of play materials like toys and other materials for preschool play. These toy and material help the child to develop in creativity of the mind. The child can be able to remember different types of toys how the look like and how they function. Young children are strongly influenced by toys that are marketed on television.

First, many of these toys are related to cartoon shows, current children's movies, or children's television programs that feature violence and action figures. Unfortunately, these toys have little play value and can be related to aggressive play (Frost, 2008). They do not stimulate the imagination, dramatic play, or creativity. Over the past 50 years, the transformation of toys has included more technology and they are mass produced with unlimited variety.

Secondly, a parent is supposed to read together with the child. Reading together with the child helps the parent to identify the weaknesses of the child. For example the child can be able to read vocabulary and in other languages. The parent can also teach the child skills to listen and repeat what he/she has read. The parent will assist the child to count and do simple mathematical problems. Further the child can be helped to do the Counting, Grouping, Pairing, Sorting, Comparing and Matching. This will assist the child to be a better mathematician since he/ she is doing a lot of related activities. The child is provided with computer which has been installed with computer games and programs. These are found in the desktops at home. Some of these activities help the child to be a critical thinker since in any game the participants must think very first for someone to win (Frost, 2008).

Third, Parent – preschool child debate is another example of Parents’ participation in educational activities at home. Children also can be introduced to debates by their parents when for example waiting for the supper to get ready. By introducing such motions the child will be to develop skills of communication, listening, arguments, contribution, and broadening of mind. Debates and motions help the child to develop also dialogue skills. This will help in listening, and be able to respond to any particular question being discussed. By doing this well the child is able to apply the same techniques to academics both in school and at home.

Finally, another example of Parents’ participation in educational activities at home is education tours such as visiting museums, caves, zoos farms etc. These sites help them to study and know world science. The child will feel good after seeing interesting wild animals which are not common to our sight.

## **2.6. Parents’ participation in educational activities at school**

After many years of intense effort to increase parent involvement in schools, the results are beginning to appear in educational research. The news is good for schools where parent involvement is high, and the benefits for children are encouraging. When parents are involved in children’s schools and education, children have higher grades and standardized test scores, improved behavior at home and school, better social skills and adaptation

to school. Education activities in school include provision of instruction materials, attendance of parents meeting, attending sports day, annual academic day commonly known as 'academic clinic day', parents seminars and participation in different groups like Parent teachers association (PTA) (Hoover, 1997).

Research on the demographics of parents who are involved in their child's school finds that parents with higher educational attainment and income attend school conferences, volunteering at schools, and supporting school events to enrich their children's learning achievement. Parents at all socioeconomic levels can "level the playing field" in their child's education by taking the time to get involved. Teachers give kids more attention when they know their parents from school visits (Hoover, 1997). So it makes parents to give school events first priority for attendance and this can help to support children education.

One kind of parental involvement is school-based and includes participating in parent-teacher conferences and functions, receiving and responding to written communications from the teacher. Parents can also serve as school volunteers for the library or lunchroom, or as classroom aides.

Parents can participate in their children's schools by joining Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) or Parent Teacher Organizations (PTOs) and getting involved in decision-making about the educational services their children receive. Almost all schools have a PTA or PTO, but often only a small number of parents are active in these groups (Grolnick, 1994).

Such associations and organizations provide flexible scheduling for school events and parent-teacher conferences, inform parents about what their children are learning, and help parents create a supportive environment for children's learning at home (Grolnick,1994). Many schools have responded to the needs of working parents by scheduling conferences in the evening as well as during the day, and by scheduling school events at different times of the day throughout the year (Grolnick, 1994).

For many parents, a major impediment to becoming involved is lack of time. Working parents are often unable to attend school events during the day. In addition, evenings are the only time these parents have to spend with their children, and they may choose to spend time with their family rather than attend meetings at school.

## **2.7 Summary of the literature review**

Communication refers to passing of information from one party to another. Parent's school communication enables the parents or the teacher to pass information regarding the preschool child (Caspe, 2003).

In studies conducted by Epstein 1995, communication is put as one of the six pillars in parental involvement which facilitates a strong and significance relationship between the teacher and the parents. In the current society, schools and parents are responding to increased expectations concerning the child. In these changing times, effective partnerships between teachers and parents become even more essential to meet the needs of the children. According to Schuster (2003), cultivating the teacher-parent relationship is also considered vital to the development team work between the teacher and the parent. To enhance communication, (Hradecky, 2004), says that it is important that the teacher attends communication courses and seminars to be able to communicate to parents effectively. It has been known that, School communication practices are so fundamental to involve families in the education process, teacher preparation and professional development programs should actively promote the development of communication skills for teachers (Caspe, 2003).The study tried to fill the following gaps: extent to which parents' participation in educational activities at school and parent-school communication influence academic performance of pre-school learners.

Parents are involved in preschool children activities which help the child learn. Some of these activities include provision of play materials like toys and other materials which are important for preschool play. These toys and help the child to develop in imaginations and creativity of the mind. Researchers have found out that a child is likely to remember what he/she has seen more than what he can hear. Therefore, the child can be able to remember different types of toys how the look like and how they function. Young children are strongly

influenced by toys that are marketed on television. Parental involvement in education at home include; homework checking, reading together with children, playing maths and computer games and provision of play material.

According to Keith (1993) when a child returns from school with homework, the parents' role is to make sure that it has been done in the right way and at the right time. Parents checking child's homework, has shown a positive association with academic achievement in some studies. Students whose parents were involved in checking their homework showed higher achievement than students whose parents were not involved in checking homework. Other studies, however, have shown a negative association between parents checking their children's homework and academic achievement (Kurdek, 1995). After checking both parent and the child can read together as he/she guides the child. They can also play computer games, together. The parent can also provide play materials which enables the child to advance more in their academic.

It has been established that, what parents do is more important to student success than whether they are rich or poor, whether parents have completed higher education institutions or not. Every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental participation in promoting the academic growth of children. (Tizard, 1993) noted that, children who spend more time on homework, on average, do better in school. Good assignments, completed successfully, can help children develop wholesome habits and attitudes. Homework can help parents learn about their children's education. This can encourage a lifelong love for learning (Tizard, 1993).

When parents are involved in children's schools and education, children have higher grades and standardized test scores, improved academic skills and adaptation to school. (Hoover, 1997) noted that, education activities in school include provision of instruction materials, attendance of parents meeting, attending sports day, annual academic day commonly known as 'academic clinic day', parents seminars and participation in different groups like Parent teachers association (PTA) these are very important because they educate both the teacher and the parent on academic performance of the preschool children.



Research has shown that parents who are involved in their child's school finds that, parents with higher educational attainment and income attend school conferences, volunteering at schools, and supporting school events to enrich their children's learning achievement. Hoover, (1997) noted that Teachers give preschool children more attention when they know their parents from school visits. So it makes parents to give school events first priority for attendance and this can help to support children education.

Therefore parental involvement on academic performance of preschool children is very important. Productive interaction between the child and the parent is supported by Epstein's conceptual model and cultural capital theory.

## **2.8 Theoretical framework**

This study explores the multidimensional nature of parental involvement and its ramifications within the context of Epstein's conceptual model and cultural capital theory. This theory explains that parental involvement based on how parent-child interactions affect students' schooling and motivation. Behavioral involvement refers to parents' public actions representing their interest in their child's education, such as attending an open house or volunteering at the school. It further explains that personal involvement includes parent-child interactions that communicate positive attitudes about school and the importance of education to the child. Cognitive/intellectual involvement refers to behaviors that promote children's skill development and knowledge, such as reading books and going to museums. Parental involvement, according to this theory, affects student achievement because these interactions affect students' motivation, their sense of competence, and the belief that they have control over their success in school (Wendy, Grolnick, and Slowiaczek, 1994). Parental involvement broadly include activities such as helping with homework, discussing school events or courses, volunteering at school and coming to participate in schools' events. Parental involvement is a function of a parent's beliefs about parental roles and responsibilities. A parent can help the children succeed in school and the opportunities for involvement should be provided by the school or the teacher. In this theory, when

parents get involved, children's schooling is affected through their acquisition of knowledge, skills, and an increased sense of confidence that they can succeed in school (Kathleen *and* Tyoung, 1995).

School, family, and community are important "spheres of influence" on children's development and that a child's educational development is enhanced when these three environments work collaboratively toward shared goals. The encouragement is schools to create greater "overlap" between the school, home, and community through the implementation of activities across six types of involvement: parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaboration with the community by implementing activities across all six types of involvement, educators can help improve student achievement and experiences in school (Epstein, 2001).

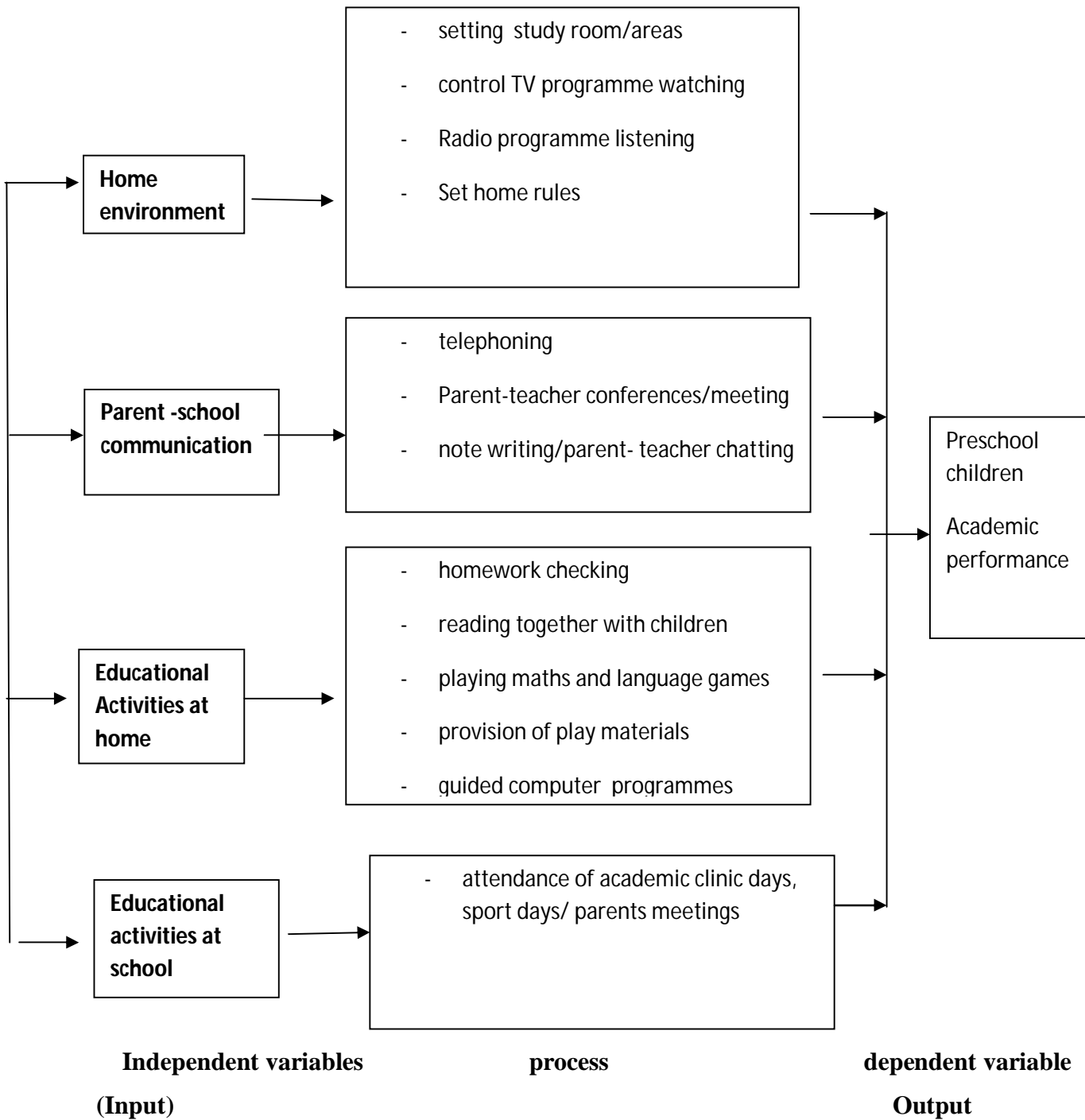
Cultural capital theory, developed by Bourdieu, and applied to elementary schools by Lee and Bowens, provides a theory for predicting how parents are involved in children's elementary education. Specifically, it predicts that parents with greater cultural capital will be more involved, and that involvement will be more efficacious in helping their children succeed. Parental involvement in the children's education has become widely recognized as a predictor of positive academic outcomes (Barwegen and Joyce, 2004). Parental involvement is a valuable tool for increasing the likelihood of improving childhood academic success and a construct amenable to influence by intervention (Christenson and Nicholas 2005). As the parental involvement research has evolved, it has also become clear to most researchers that parental involvement is a multidimensional rather than homogeneous construct (Fishel, Carolyn & Susan 2005). Epstein's parental involvement framework is by far the most referenced, tested, and widely-accepted conceptual model of parental involvement (Fishel, 2007). The six sub-constructs (hereafter simply referred to as constructs) are: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making and collaborating with the community. Parenting refers to parents' actions that foster the children's learning and cognitive development, not necessarily tied to school. Communicating covers all home-to-school communication regarding children's

academic development and other academically relevant information. Volunteering includes parental attendance in a variety of school events ranging in scope from classroom activities to school wide event.

## **2.9 Conceptual Framework**

This section covers the variables on the parental involvement on academic performance of preschool children. These variables include; home environment, parent-school communication, educational activities at home and school.

**Figure 1 conceptual frame work**



## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology that was followed in carrying out the study. This includes research design, target population, sample and sampling procedures, research instruments, validity and reliability, procedures of collecting data and data analysis.

#### 3.2 Research Design

The study adopted descriptive survey design. The design is considered suitable for the study as it involves gathering data from members of the population in order to determine its current status in regard to one or more variables (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). Moreover, a survey reports things the way they are. A survey study serves the following purposes: to obtain information that describes the existing phenomena by asking individuals about their perceptions, attitudes and values. Surveys are used to explain/explore the existence of two or more variables at a given point and they are useful where the study involves population which is too large for direct observation (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). More still, descriptive studies are concerned with gathering facts rather than manipulation of variables (Koul, 1984). In this regard, the descriptive design was considered appropriate as a means of achieving the main objective of the study which was to establish the influence of parental involvement on academic performance of pre children in Kangeta division, Meru County Kenya.

### **3.3 Target population**

The study was carried out in Meru County (Kangeta division). The target population was teachers, children and parents of Kangeta division. Kangeta division area has forty two pre- schools (twenty six public and sixteen private preschools), forty two head teachers, sixty five teachers, one thousand preschool children and one thousand parents (Kangeta division education office, 2012).

### **3.4 Sample and sampling procedures**

A sample is defined as a subject of a population, while sampling refers to the selection of a subject of cases of a population of interest (Sommer, 2003). Thus sampling is a systematic process of selecting a number of individuals for a study to represent the larger group from which they are selected. At least 10 % of the target population is appropriate for sampling (Sommer, 2003). Kangeta division has forty two total numbers of pre-schools. Twenty three percent (ten) of forty two preschools was sampled. The sample included six public and four private preschools. There are one thousand preschool children in Kangeta division. Ten percent (one hundred) of one thousand children was sampled to take part in the study. Ten percent (one hundred) of one thousand parents of pre-school was sampled. Ten percent (seven) of sixty five of ECDE teachers was sampled. Therefore, for this study sample size was two hundred and seven subjects consisting of parents, teachers and children. Stratified sampling technique was used for selecting schools. Random sampling was used for teachers, purposive sampling was used to select parents and simple random sampling was used for learners. For stratified sampling, names of the public schools was arranged in alphabetical order, then divided into 3 strata, the first and last names in each stratum was selected. For private schools, the names of the schools were written down and then divided into two stratums, and the first and last names in each group were selected. For random sampling techniques, numbers were written on the papers, folded, and then picked. The preschool children who picked the odd numbers were selected. Seven class teachers of pre-schools children were selected to join the study. They were selected through random sampling technique. Papers were written down and then picked.

Purposive sampling was done for parents. Papers for parents were picked by their children. It means that the children who were selected for study, by simple random sampling, their parent were picked to join the study.

### **3.5 Research Instruments**

In this study, the following research instruments were used; Interview schedules, questionnaires and documentary analysis.

#### **3.5.1. Interview schedules for children and parents.**

Face to face oral interviews were used for parents (appendix I) and children (appendix III). Parents were required to answer questions in order to determine the level of parental involvement on academic performance of the children. Interview schedules for children checked the role of parental involvement on academic performance of preschool children. Open ended questions were used.

#### **3.5.2. Questionnaire for teachers**

The questionnaire designed by the researcher was administered to teachers (Appendix II). It sought to explore parental involvement on academic performance of pre-school children. Questionnaires are generally less expensive and do not consume a lot of time in the administration (Kothari, 2003). The questionnaire was divided into four sections. Each objective was addressed by one section. The questionnaire involved both open and closed ended questions.

#### **3.5.3 Documentary Analysis**

Document analysis is a social research method which is a systematic examination of instructional documents such as course evaluation results. Documentary work involves reading a lot of written sources. A documentary guide (Appendix IV) was used to check on the learners' numeracy and language skills. To identify the learners' numeracy and language skills, progressive records was used. The progressive records enabled the researcher to obtain data on the learners' performance in number work and language. A table was drawn and labeled for various areas such as numeracy skills; Counting, grouping, pairing, sorting, comparing, matching

and language skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. The total score was compiled and the comment was given based on the score of the respondents and parental involvement.

### **3.6 Validity**

This is a measure of how well a test measures what it is supposed to measure. Orodho (2003) defines it as the accuracy and meaningfulness of inferences which are based on the research. Assessment of content and construct validity was achieved by use of non-statistical approaches including peer and/or expert review and pilot testing was involved (Klassen, 2008). Pilot study was done in ten pre-prechildren's schools. It helped in achieving validity as it results in correcting and appropriately adjusting areas of weakness in relation to the topic under study. Use of supervisors in the area was also involved. The results of the pilot study were not included in the final research findings.

### **3.7 Reliability**

Reliability is defined as a measure of how consistent the results from the test are (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). It is a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). A reliable instrument is one that produces consistent results when used more than once in the process of data collection. Reliability test was done through test-retest method. This enabled the researcher to know the consistency of the questionnaire. This method of reliability test required administration of the same test to the same respondents twice with a time space of one week after the first test. A correlation coefficient (reliability coefficient) between the two sets of results was calculated. Only a reliability coefficient of 0.7 or above was accepted. SPSS software version 16.0 was used to compute for correlation coefficient. For reliability purposes of interviews, few questions were repeated.



### **3.8 Procedures of Data Collection**

The first step was to obtain an introduction letter from university of Nairobi department of educational communication and technology which was presented to the relevant authorities to grant permission to carry out research. After the permit was given by the national council of Science and Technology, the researcher also obtained the introductory letter from the ministry of education (D.E.O) office. Arrangements on how to meet the respondents was done by the researcher by visiting the schools. The researcher gave teachers questionnaires to fill. Once they were filled, they were collected for analysis.

Face to face oral interviews were set for parents and children. The researcher read and interpreted the questions to the respondents and then the responses were noted down. For academic performance of preschool children a documentary guide was used to check on the learners' numeracy and language skills. The documentary analysis comprised of numeracy and language skills. To identify the learners' ability on numeracy and language skills, progressive records was used. Scores were recorded. The progressive records enabled the researcher to obtain data on the learners' performance in number work and language. After collection of the raw data, it was ready for analysis.

### **3.9 Data analysis**

Data collected was edited coded, classified and tabulated. After tabulation, the data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16.0. Descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) was used for close ended questions. The data was presented using frequency tables and bar graphs. Qualitative data was analyzed using content analysis. Responses were grouped into common themes and analyzed as guided by the research objectives.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents findings and discussions of the study. The findings are presented based on the research objectives of the study. The objectives of the study were:

- i) To find out whether home environment has an influence on academic performance of preschool learners.
- ii) To establish whether the parent-school communication has an influence on academic performance of pre-school learners.
- iii) To investigate whether parents' participation in educational activities at home have an influence on academic performance of pre-school learners.
- iv) To find out whether parents' participation in educational activities at school have an influence on academic performance of pre-school learners.

#### **4.2 Response rate**

A sample size of 207 participants was selected for this study out of which 166 participated giving a total response rate of 80.19%. The response rate for each of the participants was as follows; Teachers Questionnaires 6(85.7%), Parents- interviews schedule 80(80%) and children interview schedule 80(80%). According to Kelly, Belinda, Vivienne & Sitzia (2003), an achievable and acceptable response rate is 75% for interviews, and 65% for self completion questionnaires.

#### **4.3 Influence of Home environment on Academic Performance of preschool Learners.**

The first objective sought to establish whether the home environment had an influence on academic performance of preschool learners. The study sought to find out from the preschool children whether there

were rules at their homes governing their bed time, study time and television watching among others. The preschool children responses on home rules are presented on Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1 Preschool children responses on Home Rules**

	Frequency	Percent	Mean Scores (%)
Home rules	68	85	75
No home rules	12	15	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>	

Table 4.1 indicates the number of homes which had home rules and those which did not have. Majority 68 (85%) of preschool learners indicated that their parents had set home rules while 12 (15%) indicated that their parents had not done so. The result reveals that most parents provide a controlled home environment. The findings from the table further show that, preschool children who came from homes with home rules had a mean score of 75% while those from homes without rules had a mean score of 20%. This reveals that, preschool children who have home rules perform better academically than those children who come from homes without. Jeynes (2007) refers to supervision and rules as moderate levels of parental support. Children who spend less time watching television and more time on school-related activities shows a positive relationship with academic achievement (Clark 1993). The study further sought the parents' opinion on the home study environment. The parents' opinion is presented in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2. Parents Responses on Home Study Environment**

	Frequency	Percent (%)	Mean score
Set study rooms	64	80.0	79
No set study rooms	16	20.0	20
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>	

Findings on home study environment from the parents presented on table 4.2 show that 64(80%) of parents had set study rooms for their preschool children while 16 ( 20%) indicated that they had not provided the study rooms for their preschool children to use when doing their homework.

The table also indicates performance of preschool children whose parents had set study rooms and those who had not. The children of the parents who had set study room got a mean score of 79% while children of parents who had no set study rooms had a mean score of 20%.The results also revealed that majority of the parents were aware that study rooms were important for studies. The results also reveal that preschool children who had set study room performed better than those who had not. Further, the researcher investigated where else, apart from the study room, the preschool children used to do their studies. The responses from the parents and the children on the other places preschool children used for their studies are presented in Table 4.3.

**Table 4.3. Parents’ and children’s responses on other places apart from the study room used for home study**

	Frequency	Percent	Mean score (%)
Table room	80	50	28
Kitchen	60	37.5	22
Bedroom	20	12.5	13
Total	160	100.0	

Majority 80(50%) of parents and preschool children indicated that preschool children also used the table rooms to do their homework, 60 (37.5%) the kitchen, 20 (12.5%) the bedroom. Preschool children who used the table room got the highest mean score (28%), followed by those who used the kitchen (22%) and those who used the bed room 13%. The results show that preschool children who used the bed rooms, kitchen and table rooms were likely to perform poorly in their academic performance. For example, they could not pair well, count well, read well, listen well and perform well in other numeracy and literacy skills. The three groups scored low in numeracy and language skills.

The investigator was also interested in finding out the amount of time spent on watching television. This was because majority 50% of preschool children indicated that they did their homework in the table rooms. The findings of the amount of time spent on watching television are presented in Table 4.4.

**Table 4.4 Time spent watching TV by preschool children**

	Frequency	Percent	Mean Scores (%)
10 -60 MIN	43	53.75	90
1 -2 HRS	6	7.5	30
3 HRS and above	3	3.75	10
Not applicable	28	35	8
Total	80	100	

Majority 43(53.75%) of preschool children took between ten minutes to one hour watching television and these children had a mean score of 90%, followed by 6 (7.5%) who indicated they watched TV programmes between one hour to two hours and who had a mean score of 30%, followed by 3(3.75%) of the children who indicated that they took three hours and had a mean score 10%. The preschool children 28(35%) who said watching TV was not applicable had a mean score of 8%. The results revealed that most of the preschool children watched television and majority took a maximum of one hour. Watching TV impacts positively on academic performance of preschool children. However, watching TV by preschool children should be controlled to allow time for home study. Children who did not watch TV were denied opportunity for language development hence poor academic performance. Children who spend less time watching television and more time on school-related activities, shows a positive relationship with academic achievement (Clark 1993).

The researcher investigated why preschool children did not do homework. The findings are presented in Table 4.5.

**Table 4.5. Why Preschool children did not do their homework**

	Frequency	Mean Scores	
		Percent	(%)
No time at home	2	2.5	30
Not applicable	65	81.25	81
Watching of cartoon	8	10	30
Always involving	1	1.25	10
No support	4	5	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>	

According to Table 4.5, 4 (5%) of preschool children indicated that they were not assisted or given support to do their homework and these children got a mean score of 13%, 8 (10%) said they watched cartoon programmes on TV and they got a mean score of 30%. The other group of preschool children 2(2.5%) who indicated they had no time for doing homework, had a mean score of 30%. One preschool child 1(1.25%) indicated that he did not do the homework and he got a mean score of 10%. Majority 65(81.25%) indicated they had never failed to do their homework and these children got a mean score of 81%. The results reveal that preschool children failed to do their homework because they were not assisted or given support by their parents. Preschool children may fail to do their homework from school because they are not guided by their parents or guardians and therefore they take the opportunity of watching TV which is so attractive to most of the children Clark (1993).

The researcher investigated whether any of the preschool children had ever failed to do homework because they watched television instead. The findings are presented on Table 4.6.

**Table 4.6. Responses of preschool children on failure to do homework because of TV Watching**

	Frequency	Percent	Mean score (%)
Failed	50	62.5	40
Never failed	30	37.5	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Majority 50(62.5%) of preschool children indicated that they failed to do their homework due to TV watching, while 30(37.5%) said they had never failed. The mean score (40%) of preschool children who failed to do their homework was higher than the mean score (30%) of those who never failed. This is because most children were not controlled over TV watching time.

Further, the researcher investigated the awareness of the preschool children on their parents' expectation in their academic performance .The results are presented on Table 4.7.

**Table 4.7 Responses on awareness of performance by preschool children and parents' expectations**

	Frequency	Percent	Mean score (%)
Yes	64	80.0	59
No	16	20.0	21
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100 %</b>	

Majority 64(80.0%) of the preschool children who got the highest mean score (59%) said that they were aware that they were expected to perform well in their academic work. The other group 16(20%) of the preschool children who got a mean score of 21% indicated that they were not aware that they were expected by their parents to perform well in their academic. The results reveal that preschool children who were aware that their parents expected them to perform well in their academic work performed better than those who were not aware.

#### 4.4 Influence of parent-school communication on academic performance of preschool learners

The second objective of the study sought to find out the influence of parent-school communication on the academic performance of preschool learners. The study sought to find out from the preschool children whether there was parent-school communication. The findings on preschool children responses on parent–school communication are presented in Table 4.8.

**Table 4.8. Preschool children responses on parent –school communication.**

	Frequency	Percent	Mean score (%)
Parent –school communication	76	95	63
No parents’-school communication	4	5	10
Total	80	100.0	

The findings on Table 4.8 indicates that 76(95%) of the preschool children indicated that there was communication between the teachers and parents, while others 4(5%) indicated that there was no communication between the teachers and parents. The preschool children who indicated that there was parent-school communication had a higher mean score (63%) than those who indicated there was no communication (10%). The results reveal that preschool children were aware that communications existed between the teachers and the parents. Those preschool children who said that there was parent- school communication performed better. Frost (2008) points out that a preschool child performs better in academic performance when parents – school communication is effective.

The preschool parents were asked about their views on the influence of parents-school communication on academic performance of preschool children. The parents’ views are presented in Table 4.9.



**Table 4.9. Parents responses on influence of parents–school communication**

	Frequency	Percent	Mean Scores
Influence	65	68.75	73
No influence	15	31.25	59
<b>Totals</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>	

Majority 65(68.75%) of the parents indicated that parent-school communication had an influence on preschool children academic performance while 15(31.25%) indicated that there was no influence. The mean score of the preschool children whose parents indicated that there was an influence of communication between parents and the school was higher (73%) than the mean score 59% of those who said that there was no influence. The results indicated that parent-school communication had a great role to play on academic performance of a preschool child and it should be made rich so as to facilitate smooth learning of the child. According to Schuster (2003), cultivating the teachers and parents relationship is vital to the development of team work and teachers and parents should be trained in communication skills to enable them communicate effectively. The findings in this study concur with other findings from research in Africa and abroad which shows that school communication is vital (Hradecky, 2004).

Further, the researcher investigated the expectation of parents in regards to teacher-parent communication on academic performance of the preschool children. The results are presented in Table 4.10.

**Table 4. 10. Parents expectation that the child is performing well when there is no communication from school**

	Frequency	Percent	Mean score (%)
Agree	22	27.5	50
strongly agree	29	36.25	36
Disagree	13	16.25	56
strongly disagree	10	12.25	67
Neutral	8	10	39
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

The results in Table 4.10 show that 29(36.25%) of parents of preschool children strongly agreed with the expectation that the child was doing well in academic performance when the parent did not get any communication from the teacher. This was followed by 22(27.5%) of the parents who agreed that, they expected the child was doing well in academic performance when they did not get any communication from school. However, 13(16.25%) disagreed while 10 (12.25%) strongly disagreed that they expected the child was doing well in academic performance when they received no communication from the teachers. Some preschool parents 8(9.8%) took no grounds by being neutral. Preschool children whose parents' strongly disagreed with the expectation that their children were performing well when they did not hear anything from the school got a mean score of 67%, followed by a mean score of 56% of children whose parents disagreed, 50% of preschool children whose parents agreed and 36% of preschool children whose parents strongly agreed. The results revealed that effective communication between the school and parents lead to a very high mean score. Kraft, Mathew & Shaun (2011) points out that effective parents–teacher leads to increased academic performance of preschool children.

The teachers also gave their opinion on parent-school communication and its influence on preschool children academic performance. The teachers' opinion is presented on Table 4.11.

**Table 4.11. Teachers' responses on communication between the parents and the school**

	Frequency	Percent
Agree	2	20.0
Strongly Agree	4	80.0
Total	6	100.0

Table 4.11 shows that 2(20%) of the teachers' agreed that parents-teachers communication was effective while 4(80%) indicated that it was more effective. Teachers agreed that communication between parents and school

was effective meaning that, it was influential on academic performance of the preschool children. The results revealed that good communication between parents and teachers has many benefits. When parents and teachers share information, children learn more and parents and teachers feel more supported. Good communication can help create positive feelings between teachers and parents (Epstein, 1995).

The researcher investigated further to find out the methods used in the parent-school communication. The findings are shown on Table 4.12

**Table 4.12. Responses on parents-teacher communication**

	Frequency	Percent	Scores
Face to face	57	71.25	43
Through phone	18	22.5	40
Not applicable	4	5	10
Both face to face and phone	1	1.25	87
Total	80	100.0	

Results on Table 4.12 shows that 57(71.25%) of parents communicated with the teachers face to face and their children got a mean score of 43%. The other group of parents 18(22.5%) indicated that they communicated through phone and their children got a mean score of 40%. One parent 1(1.25%) used both face to face and phone methods of communication and the child got the highest mean score of 87%. Another group of parents 4(5%) indicated that, they did not communicate at all and their children got a mean score of 10%. The results reveal that school communication practices are so fundamental to involving families in the education process. Teacher preparation and professional development programs on communication should be offered because they actively promote the development of communication skills for teachers (Caspé, 2003).

The researcher investigated the various forms of communication used in the parent-school communication. The findings obtained from children interview schedules on the various forms of communication are presented on Table 4.13.

**Table 4.13. Teachers –parents communication modes**

	Frequency	Percent	Scores
Verbal	15	18.75	30
Written	62	77.5	80
Others	3	3.75	40
Total	80	100.0	

Table 4.13 shows the modes of communication used between the teachers and the parents of preschool children. Majority 62 (77.5%) of the parents preferred written mode of communication as compared to verbal 15 (18.75%) and mobile phone 3(3.75%). The results show that communication between the parents and the teachers was mainly formal. The preschool children whose parents used the written mode of communication with the teachers got a mean score of 80% while those who used verbal got 30%. The other preschool children whose parents indicated that they used other methods of communication got a means score of 40%. Schools and teachers know that good communication with parents is an important part of their job. Teachers need to know about the children's families, language, and culture in order to help children learn. Teachers should always choose the most convenient method to communicate. Written method of communication was found to be the most influential to academic performance of pre-school children compared to the verbal. Caspe (2003) noted that parent-school communication enables the parents or the teachers to pass information regarding the preschool child. Frequent teachers-parents communication immediately increased student engagement as measured by homework completion rates, on-task behavior, and class participation (Kraft *et, .al*, 2011).

Further, the researcher also investigated from the parents whether report cards were used by teachers to communicate to them about academic performance of the preschool children. The findings are presented on Table 4.14.

**Table 4.14. Preschool children progress report**

	Frequency	Percent	Mean score (%)
Agree	29	36.25	91
Strongly agree	21	26.25	66
Disagree	14	17.5	41
Strongly disagree	8	10	36
Neutral	8	10	50
Total	80	100.0	

Majority 29(36.25%) of the parents agreed that they received information on academic performance of their preschool children through report cards while 21(26.25%) strongly agreed, 14(17.5%) disagreed, 8(10%) strongly disagreed while 8(10%) remained neutral. The mean score for preschools children whose parents were involved in the study was as follows; 91% was from preschool children whose parents agreed that they received information on academic performance from the report cards, 66% was from preschool children whose parents strongly agreed, 41% was from preschool children whose parents disagreed, 36% was from preschool children whose parents strongly disagreed and those preschool children whose parents' did not respond got a mean score of 50%. The results reveal that academic performance of preschool children is communicated to the parent through report card or report books. This means that written method of communication is the formal method and the parents and teachers depend on written documents to communicate academic performance of the preschool children. It is through report cards that parents can tell the academic performance of their children. Once a parent looks at the performance of the child he or she, may decide to call or write to the teacher. Teachers strive to establish partnerships with parents to support student learning. Strong communication is fundamental to this partnership and to building a sense of communication between home and school. In these

changing times, teachers must continue to develop and expand their skills in order to maximize effective communication with parents (Casper, 2003)

#### **4.5 Influence of parents' participation in educational activities at home on academic performance of preschool learners**

The third objective sought to investigate the influence of parents' participation in educational activities at home on academic performance of preschool learners. An item on take home assignment was included in the interview schedule for the preschool children to establish whether parents' participation in educational activities at home had an influence on academic performance of preschool learners. The results on take home assignment for preschool children are presented in Table 4.15.

**Table 4.15. Take home assignment for preschool children**

	Frequency	Percent	Mean Scores
Home work	78	97.5	73
No homework	2	2.5	32
Total	80	100.0	

Table 4.15 shows whether the preschool children were given homework. Majority 78(97.5%) of the preschool children indicated that, they were given homework while 2(2.5%) indicated they were not given any assignment to take home. This means that majority of preschool children returned home with assignments. Preschool children who agreed that they were given homework had a higher mean score (73%) than those who were never given homework. Those who were not given take home assignment performed poorly as they got a mean score of 32%. The results show that those who did better had the opportunity to practice more on their academic work and this enhanced their academic performance. Further, the researcher investigated whether parents helped preschool children to do their homework. The findings are presented in Table 4.16 below.

**Table 4.16. Parents involvement in preschool children home assignment**

	Frequency	Percent	Mean Scores
Parent involvement	70	87.5	60
No parent involvement	10	12.5	10
Total	80	100.0	

Results on Table 4.16 show whether parents' participation in assisting their preschool children in their home work influenced their academic performance. Majority 70(87.5%) of the parents indicated that they were involved in assisting their children in their home work, while 10(12.5%) indicated they were not. The results

reveal that preschool children who were assisted by their parents in their homework got a mean score of 60% while those who were not assisted got a mean score of 10%. These homework activities included reading together with their children, counting together, and guiding them as they wrote. The results also reveal that majority of preschool parents assisted their children in their homework.

The preschool children were further asked whether their parents supervised them while they were doing their home work. The findings are presented on the Table 4.17.

**Table 4. 17. Responses on parental supervision**

	Frequency	Percent	Mean Scores
Supervision	76	90.0	98
No supervision	4	10.0	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Majority 76(90%) of preschool learners who indicated that they were supervised by their parents while doing their homework got a mean score of 98% while those who said they were not got a mean score of 30%. The results reveal that children who are supervised by their parents performed better. Parental supervision on child’s homework showed a positive association with academic achievement. For instance, studies carried out in USA, Canada and Nigeria (Tizard, 1993) indicated that learners whose parents were involved in supervising their homework showed higher achievement than those whose parents were not involved.

The preschool children were asked to explain whether their parents helped them in their studies e.g. reading together. The findings are presented in Table 4.18.



**Table 4.18. Preschool children responses on whether they read together with their parents**

	Frequency	Percent	Mean Scores
Reading together	65	81.25	70
No reading together	15	18.75	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Findings on Table 4.18 indicate whether parents read together with their children. Majority 65(81.25%) of the preschool children indicated that they read together with their parents while 15(18.75%) indicated they did not. Preschool children who read together with their parents scored a higher mean score (70%) than those who did not (20%). This means that when parents assist their children in their study like reading together, this influences the children’s academic performance. Deslands (1997) purports that, children who spend more time on homework with supervision, on average, do better in school, and that the academic benefits increase as children move into upper grades. Tizard (1993) also pointed out that, when parents and preschool children work together, assignments will be completed successfully and this help preschool children develop wholesome habits and attitudes. Homework also helps parents learn about their children's education.

Parents were asked whether they took their children for educational tours. The parents’ responses are presented on Table 4.19.

**Table 4.19. Parents’ responses on educational tours for preschool children**

	Frequency	Percent	Mean Scores
Yes	50	62.5	80
No	30	37.7	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Table 4.19 shows majority 50(62.5%) of the parents took their preschool children for tours such as to the museums while 30(37.7%) indicated that they did not take their preschool children for such educational tours. Those preschool children who were taken for educational tours got a mean score of 80% while those who were not taken got a mean score of 30%. The results reveal that most parents took their preschool children for educational tours which helped in improving their academic performance. These educational tours helped them know world science and acquire vocabularies (Barwelgen and Joice 2004).

The study sought to investigate whether preschool parents read maths and played computer games together with their preschool children. The findings on whether parents of preschool children read maths and played together with their preschool children are presented on Table 4.20.

**Table 4. 20. Responses on whether parents read maths and played computer games together with their children**

	Frequency	Percent	Mean Scores
Yes	64	78.05	90
No	16	21.95	30
Total	80	98.9	

The results on Table 4.20 show that majority 64(78.05%) of preschool children indicated that they read maths and played computer games together with their parents while 16(21.95%) indicated that they did not. Those preschool children, who read maths and played computer games together with their parents, got a higher mean score (90%) while those preschool children who did not read or play games together with their parents got a mean score of (30%). The results reveal that most parents read maths and played computer games together with their preschool children hence children developed sharp minds that enhanced their academic performance.

The findings of this study concurs with Frost (2008) who also found out that reading together with the child helps the parent to identify the weaknesses of the child. The child can be able to acquire vocabularies hence

language development is improved. The parent will also assist the child to count and to do simple mathematical problems. Numeracy skills such; counting, grouping, pairing, sorting, comparing and matching are developed. These skills assist the child to practice mathematics related activities. The children are also provided with computers which have been installed with games and other programs. Some of these activities help the child to be a critical thinker.

Further, the researcher investigated from the preschools teachers whether there was a difference in academic performances of preschool children whose parents were involved in educational activities at home and those who were not. The results on the difference of academic performance of children whose parents were involved and those who were not involved in educational activities at home are presented on Table 4.21.

**Table 4.21. Teachers’ responses on preschool children academic performance and parental involvement at home**

	Frequency	Percent
Agree	4	66.67
Strongly Agree	2	33.33
Total	6	100.0

Majority 4(66.67%) of the teachers agreed that there was influence of parental involvement at home and academic performance of preschool children while 2 (33.3%) who strongly agreed. The results revealed that there was a positive relationship between parental involvement at home and academic performance.

#### **4.5 Influence of parents' participation in educational activities at school on academic performance of preschool learners**

The fourth objective sought to investigate the influence of parents' participation in educational activities at school on academic performance of preschool learners. The objective looked at parents' participation in educational activities at school and enquired from the parents whether they participated in educational activities at school. The findings on parents' participation in educational activities at school are presented in Table 4.22.

**Table 4.22. Parents' participation in educational activities at school in general**

	Frequency	Percent	Mean scores
Participated	69	75	69
No Participation	11	25	26
Total	80	100.0	

Findings on Table 4.22 show that majority 69(75%) of parents were involved in educational activities at school while 11(25%) of parents were not involved. The results revealed that preschool children whose parents were involved had a mean score of 69% while those preschool children whose parents were not involved got a mean score of 26%. The results reveal that parents' participation in educational activities at school had an influence on academic performance. When parents are involved in children's schools and education, children have higher grades and standardized test scores, improved behavior at home and school, better social skills and adaptation to school (Hoover, 1997).

Further, the researcher investigated whether parents visited the school to find out how their children were performing academically. The findings on parents' school visits are presented in Table 4.23.

**Table 4.23. Responses on Parents' school visits**

	Frequency	Percent	Mean Scores
visited school	61	76.26	70
No school visit	19	23.75	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

According to Table 4.23, majority 61 (76.26%) of parents indicated that they visited the school to find out the progress of their preschool children, while 19(23.75%) said they did not. Those preschool children, whose parents said they visited the schools, got the highest mean score of 70% while the children of those parents who did not visit the school got a mean score of 30%. Those preschool children whose parents made a follow-up on their children got the highest mean score compared to those children whose parents did not. Therefore, parents' follow-ups on their children academic performance by visit to school are crucial in ensuring support.

Further, the researcher investigated how often the parents visited the schools. The responses of teachers on how often the parents visited the schools are presented on Table 4.24.

**Table 4.24. Teachers' responses on parents' school visits**

	Frequency	Percent	Mean Scores (%)
Not often	3	50	40
All the time	3	50	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Table 4.24 shows that 3(50%) of teachers indicated that parents did not visit schools frequently and the other 3 (50%) said that parents visited schools all the time. The results reveal that those preschool children, whose parents visited their schools all the time, got a mean score of 50% while the other group of children whose parents did not visit school often got a mean score of 40%.The results reveal that parents' school visits has an influence on academic performance of preschool children.

From the interview schedule with the parents, the researcher asked the parents whether they had any responsibility in the school. The findings are presented on Table 4.25.

**Table 4.25. Responsibility of preschool parents at school.**

	Frequency	Percent	Mean score (%)
School committee members	11	13.75	40
Class representative	12	15	40
Not applicable	55	68.75	20
Teacher	2	2.5	80
Total	80	100.0	

Table 4.25 shows that 11(13.75%) of the parents held responsibility at their children’s preschool as school committee members, 12(15%) parents represented various classes in the school management committees, while 55(68.75%) of the parents indicated they did not hold any responsibility in their children’s preschools. The preschool children whose parents were teachers got a mean score of 80%, those whose parents were in the school committees got a mean score of 40%, those whose parents were class representatives got a mean score of 40%, while those whose parents had no responsibilities at the preschools got a mean score of 20%. Preschool children whose parents were teachers performed better than those children whose parents were members of the school management committee or class representatives. The results reveal that the preschool children of parents who had responsibilities in the schools also performed better than those who had no responsibility at all. When parents are involved in children’s schools and education through participation in Parents-Teachers Association (PTA) or in school management committee, children acquire knowledge, skills and increase sense of confidence that they can succeed in school (Kathleen & Tyong, 1995).

The respondents were further expected to indicate whether parents visited the schools for any other reason. This item was included in each interview schedule and questionnaire. The results on whether the parents attended any function at school are presented on Table 4.26.

**Table 4.26. Functions Attended by Parents at School**

	Frequency	Percent	Mean scores (%)
Parent Meeting/ Conferences	90	54.2	70
Sport day	20	12	50
Academic day	52	31.32	80
Not applicable	4	2.4	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Majority 90(54.2%) of the children and parents and teachers indicated that parents attended parent meetings and conferences, 52(31.2%) indicated parents attended academic day, 20(12%) indicated parents attended sport day while 4(2.4%) indicated that parents did not attend any function at school. The children whose parents attended functions in the school had the following mean scores; 80% for those whose parents attended academic days, 70% for those whose parents attended meetings and conferences, 50% for those whose parents attended sports days and 10 % for children whose parents did not attend any function. The results reveal that parents attendance to schools' functions impacts positively on academic performance of preschool children (Grolnick, 1994).

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the study, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further research.

#### 5.2 Summary

The purpose of the study was to establish the influence of parental involvement on the academic performance of preschool children in Kangeta division, Meru County, Kenya. The study was guided by the following research questions:

- i) How does the home environment influence academic performance of preschool learners?
- ii) To what extent does parent-school communication influence academic performance of preschool learners?
- iii) How does parents' participation in educational activities at home influence academic performance of preschool learners?
- iv) To what extent does parents' participation in educational activities at school influence academic performance of preschool learners?

The study adopted descriptive survey design to establish the influence of parental involvement on academic performance of preschool children in Kangeta division, Meru County, Kenya. Stratified sampling technique was used for selecting schools; random sampling for teachers, purposive sampling for parents and simple random sampling for learners. Questionnaires, documentary analysis and interview schedule were the instruments of the study. Data was collected from one hundred and sixty six (166) respondents who included; parents, teachers and preschool children.



The data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16.0. Descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) was used for close ended questions. Qualitative data was analyzed using content analysis. Responses were grouped into common themes and analyzed as guided by the research objectives.

Influence of home environment on academic performance was the first objective which guided the researcher in the study. The study noted that, majority (78%) of parents had set study rooms for their preschool children. These preschool children got a high mean score because they could do their homework effectively and in time while 22% indicated their children were not provided with study room, hence poor academic performance. Preschool children who used study rooms got the best mean score (79%) compared to others (20%). The study noted that in a home environment, set study rooms are ideal areas for home study. The study also noted that there were other places where preschool children used to do their homework. The information acquired indicated that, majority (49.5%) of preschool children did their homework in the table rooms, 6.3% in the kitchen, while 3.2% did their home work in the bedrooms. The listed four venues where home work was done from influenced the children's academic performance. Preschool children who did their home work in the bedroom lived with their parents in single houses hence they only did their homework in the same rooms which were used for other household purposes like watching television. Home environment where there was mixed up of numerous events did not provide conducive environment for homework to be completed.

The study also noted that home rules were important to control home study. Majority 68 (85%) of preschool learners indicated that their parents had set home rules while 12 (15%) indicated that their parents had not done so. The findings show that, preschool children who came from homes with home rules had a high mean score of 75% while those from homes without rules had lower a mean score of 20%. The results revealed that preschool children who had home rules set performed better academically than those children who came from homes without.

The study noted that watching TV impacts positively on academic performance of preschool children. Majority 43(53.75%) of preschool children took a maximum of one hour watching television and these children had a mean score of 90%, followed by 6 (7.5%) who indicated they watched TV programmes between one hour to two hours and who had a mean score of 30%, followed by 3(3.75%) of the children who indicated that they took three hours and had a mean score 10%. The preschool children 28(35%) who said watching TV was not applicable had a mean score of 8%. However, watching TV by preschool children should be controlled to allow time for home study. Children who did not watch TV were denied opportunity for language development hence poor academic performance. The results revealed that children who spend less time watching television and more time on school-related activities, shows a positive relationship with academic achievement.

Parents –school communication was the second objective which guided the researcher in the study. From the findings of the study, it was noted that communication between the teachers and the parents influenced academic performance of preschool children. Majority (94.7%) of the parents showed teacher-parent communication influenced children academic performance while 5.3% of parents indicated that it did not have any influence. The mode of communication used between the teachers and the parents included verbal and written. Majority (65.3%) of parents who preferred written methods had their preschool children getting the highest mean score compared to parents who used verbal (31.6%) and mobile phone (3.2%). The results showed that communication between the parents and the teachers of preschool children was formal and it influenced positively the outcome of academic performance. The formal methods used included use of report cards which were used to show analysis of academic performance. The results revealed that, teachers invited parents for discussion of their children’s performance through telephone. The results revealed that effective communication between the school and parents led to improved academic performances of their children.

Parental participation in educational activities at home was the third objective which guided the researcher in the study. From the findings, parents, teachers and preschool children showed that parental participation in educational activities at home had an influence on the academic performance of preschool learners. Majority

65(81.25%) of the preschool children indicated that they read together with their parents while 15(18.75%) indicated they did not. Preschool children who read together with their parents scored a higher mean score (70%) than those who did not (20%). This means that when parents assist their children in their study like reading together, this influences their children's academic performance.

The study also noted that majority 50(62.5%) of parents took their preschool children for academic tours while 30(37.7%) indicated that they did not take their children for such tours. These tours benefited the children in that they were involved in activities like counting, classification/grouping, pairing, sorting; matching of animals in the museum, hence enhanced their numeracy and language skills. Majority 64(78.05%) of parents indicated that they read maths and played computer games together with their children while 16(21.95%) indicated that they did not.

The study also noted that, supervision of preschool children by parents in educational activities at home improved their academic performance. Majority 76(90%) of preschool learners who indicated that they were supervised by their parents while doing their homework got a mean score of 98% while those who said they were not got a mean score of 30%. The results revealed that parental supervision promotes numeracy and language skills development of their children.

Parental participation in educational activities at school was the fourth objective which guided the researcher in the study. The study noted that, parental participation in educational activities at school had an influence on academic performance of preschool learners. A group 11(13.75%) of the parents held responsibility at their children's preschools committee members, 12(15%) parents represented various classes in the school management committees, while 55(68.75%) of the parents indicated they did not hold any responsibility in their children's preschools. The preschool children whose parents were teachers got a mean score of 80%, those whose parents were in the school committees got a mean of 40%, those whose parents were class representatives got a mean score of 40%, while those whose parents had no responsibilities at the preschools got a mean score of 20%. Preschool children whose parents were teachers performed better than those children

whose parents were members of the school management committee or class representatives. The results reveal that the preschool children of parents who had responsibilities in the schools also performed better than those who had no responsibility at all.

Majority 90(54.2%) of the children, parents and teachers indicated parents attended parents' meetings and conferences, 52(31.2%) indicated parents attended academic day, 20(12%) indicated parents attended sport day while 4(2.4%) indicated that parents did not attend any function at school. The children whose parents attended functions in the school had the following mean scores; 80% for those whose parents attended academic days, 70% for those whose parents attended meetings and conferences, 50% for those whose parents who attended sports days and 10 % for children whose parents did not attend any function. The study noted that when preschool children's parents visited schools, they were able to learn more on academic performance of their children and the requirements for excellent performance. The study also noted that it was through educational clinic days, parents' conferences, meetings that parents got information on their preschool children academic performance. The results reveal that parents attendance to schools' functions impacts positively on academic performance of preschool children (Grolnick, 1994).

### **5.3 Conclusions**

One of the reasons cited for influence of parental involvement on the academic performance of preschool learners was the home environment. Study room was found to be the most effective venue for homework to be done as it created conducive home study environment. Preschool children using this facility were found to get a higher mean score compared to those without. There were other areas where children were found to do their homework that included; the table room, the kitchen and the bed room. The areas used as study rooms influenced children academic performance differently. When studying in the table room, preschool children were tempted to watch television longer than they should. This affected their study habits negatively. Controlled TV was found necessary since it had positive effect especially in language development where listening as a skill is highly developed.

The study established that, parents-school communication was one of the major parental involvement practices critical to establishing strong working relationships between teachers and parents. Although a small percentage of respondents indicated that communication between teacher and parents was not influential, most respondents indicated communication was influential on learners' academic performance. This forms the basis of cultivating the teacher-parent relationship which is vital to the development of team work. Parent school communication had a great role to play on academic performance of preschool and should be encouraged to facilitate smooth learning of the learners. Communication between the teacher and parents enhanced their relationship hence developed team work which promoted the academic performance of the preschool children.

The study established various forms of parental participation in educational activities at home which were found to have an influence on the academic performance of preschool children. Parental supervision and guidance on home work e.g. reading together, playing maths and computer games with their children are important activities that parents use to help their children improve in their academic performance.

Finally, the study established the influence of parental participation in educational activities at school on the academic performance of preschool learners. These activities included; visiting schools to find out academic welfare of their preschool children, responsibility of preschool parents at school, school- parent meeting/conferences, sport days, academic clinic days. When parents are involved in children's schools and education, children acquire higher grades and standardized test scores. This results to improved behavior at home and school, better social skills and adaptation to school, hence improved academic performance.

## **5.4 Recommendations**

The following recommendations are based on the conclusions of the study:

- i) Parents should set study rooms which provide conducive home environment for doing home study. The conducive home environment enhances thorough concentration during study.
- ii) Parents should set home rules to govern their children home study behavior. E.g. time to bed and time to watch TV. This will enable the children to develop good study habits at home.
- iii) Teachers should establish effective partnerships with parents to support learners learning. This enhances academic performance due to the attention given to the feedback from either party on the child's support.
- iv) Parents and teachers should adopt modern method of communication such as mobile phone to enhance communication. Parents and teachers should embrace parents' school communication for improved academic performance.
- v) Parents involvement in schools' activities should be encouraged and the government should consider developing and implementing policies that support this. The collaborative effort enhances children learning.

## **5.5 Recommendations for further research**

The researcher recommends further studies to be carried out in the following areas:

- i) A study on the role of parental affective support on preschool children academic performance.
- ii) A similar study on the influence of parental involvement on academic performance in other counties.
- iii) A study on the indicators of successful interpersonal relationship between the teachers, preschool children and the parents.

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**APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX 1: PARENT'S INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

**SECTION A**

1. What is your occupation? a) civil servant ( ) business person ( ) c) self ( ) **Others**  
.....

2. Highest level of education

a) Primary ( ) b) secondary ( ) c) tertiary college ( ) d) university ( ) others ( )

**SECTION B**

3. What time do your children come from school? a) Very early ( ) b) early ( ) c) late ( ) very late

4. What time do you come from work? a) Very early ( ) b) early b) late ( ) very late

5 Do your children come with homework from school? a) Yes ( ) b) no

If yes who supervises them.....

6. When you are not available who helps them? .....

7. Do you set study rules at home to children? a) Yes ( ) b) no

8. Have you set a study room at home? a) Yes ( ) b) no

9. Do you control when and what children watch in television? a) Yes ( ) b) no

10. Do you reward your children when they do well in school? a) Yes ( ) b) no

If yes, do they put more effort? a) Yes ( ) b) no

**11. Please tick one. Agree= 1, strongly agree = 2, disagree = 3, strongly disagree 4, neutral =5**

It's my job to explain tough assignments to my child. *I*. ( ) 2. ( ) 3. ( ) 4. ( ) 5. ( )

It's my duty to make sure my child understands his or her assignments *I*. ( ) 2. ( ) 3. ( ) 4. ( ) 5.

I make sure that my child's homework gets done. *I*) ( ) 2) ( ) 3) ( ) 4) ( ) 5) ( )

I talk to my child about what he or she is learning. *I*) ( ) 2) ( ) 3) ( ) 4) ( ) 5) ( )

I do take my child to the library, community events, or similar places. *I*) ( ) 2) ( ) 3) ( ) 4) ( ) 5)

A student's motivation to do well in school depends on the parents. *I*) ( ) 2) ( ) 3) ( ) 4) ( ) 5) ( )

My efforts to help my child learn are successful. *I*) ( ) 2) ( ) 3) ( ) 4) ( ) 5) ( )

I expected the school to notify me if my child had a problem. *I*) ( ) 2) ( ) 3) ( ) 4) ( ) 5) ( )

I assume my child is doing all right when I don't hear anything from the school. *I*) ( ) 2) ( ) 3) ( ) 4) ( ) 5) ( )

I get most of my information about my child's progress from report cards

*I*) ( ) 2) ( ) 3) ( ) 4) ( ) 5) ( )

My child's learning is mainly up to the teacher and my children. *I*) ( ) 2) ( ) 3) ( ) 4) ( ) 5) ( )

Your child's teacher asks you to help your child study for an upcoming math test.

*I*) ( ) 2) ( ) 3) ( ) 4) ( ) 5) ( )

How do you communicate with the teacher?

a) Face to face ( ) b) through phone call ( ) c) others.....

Do you visit the school to find out about the farewell of your child?

a) Yes ( ) No ( )

If yes, how often? Not often ( ) All the time ( )

Do you have any responsibility in school? a) Yes ( ) No ( )

If yes, which one.....

School committee official ( ) class representative ( ) any other .....

Do you attend functions organized by the school such as sports day, prayers day?

Do parents read together with their children? a) Yes ( ) No ( )

Do they provide educational games? a) Yes ( ) No ( )

Do they play the games together? a) Yes ( ) No ( )

Do they talk about school? a) Yes ( ) No ( )

## APPENDIX II: TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

I am a student of Nairobi University of pursuing a master degree in early childhood education in the Department of Educational communication and technology of. I am carrying out a research on influence of parental involvement in preschool activities on academic performance of pre children in Kangeta division, Meru County. Your assistance in responding honestly to all items in the questionnaire will help to generate data that will be used for academic purposes. Your response will be treated confidentially; please give your honest answers to the questions and therefore do not write your name on the questionnaire. Thank you for your cooperation.

### SECTION A

1. How many years have you been teaching? .....
2. In your opinion what are the differences in numeracy and language skills development between a child whose parent are involved and those not involved?.....
3. Please list ways in which you believe that the presence or absence of parental involvement might affects students' achievements in academic.....

### SECTION B

4. Do parent participate in in educational activities e.g. meetings, committees  
Yes ( ) No ( )
5. I feel that I am making a significant educational difference in the lives of my learners. 1) ( ) 2) ( ) 3) ( )  
4) ( ) 5) ( )
6. Parents come for progressive report of their children. 1) ( ) 2) ( ) 3) ( ) 4) ( ) 5) ( )
7. I am uncertain how to teach some of my students. 1) ( ) 2) ( ) 3) ( ) 4) ( ) 5) ( )
8. Communication between the parent and teacher is effective. 1) ( ) 2) ( ) 3) ( ) 4) ( ) 5) ( )



9. Teachers at this school are interested and cooperative when they discuss a child's progress with parents.

1) ( ) 2) ( ) 3) ( ) 4) ( ) 5) ( )

10. Parents feel welcome at this school. 1) ( ) 2) ( ) 3) ( ) 4) ( ) 5) ( )

11. There is a difference in children academic performance between those parents who attend academic

clinic days and those who don't. 1) ( ) 2) ( ) 3) ( ) 4) ( ) 5) ( )

12. All children do their homework. 1) ( ) 2) ( ) 3) ( ) 4) ( ) 5) ( )

13. Am provided with all required instructional materials. 1) ( ) 2) ( ) 3) ( ) 4) ( ) 5) ( )

### APPENDIX III: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CHILDREN

#### *To be read to the children by the investigator*

1. Do you like doing assignment? a)Yes ( ) b) no ( )
2. If no, why? .....
3. Does your teacher give you work to take home? a)Yes ( ) b) no ( )
4. Have you failed to do any at one time? Yes ( ) b) no ( )
5. What was the reason?
  - a) Mum/dad was not at home ( ) b) mum or dad refused to assist me c) others.....
6. Do your parent attend any school activities like sport day, academic clinic days, parent meeting?
  - a) Yes ( ) b) no ( )
7. If yes which one?
  - a) Parents meeting b) sport day ( ) c) academic day ( ) d) music festival ( )
8. Does your teacher send you to your parent? Yes ( ) b) no ( )
9. Which means does he or she use? Written ( ) b) verbal ( )
10. What time do you arrive home from school? .....
11. What do you do after you arrive?.....
12. Where do you do your home work?.....
13. How much TV do you watch.....
14. Are there rules at home? Yes ( ) No ( )
15. Do your parents help you in your homework? Yes ( ) No ( )
16. Do they supervise you? Yes ( ) No ( )
17. Do you read together? Yes ( ) No ( )
18. Do you go for educational tours e.g. to the museum etc, Yes ( ) No ( )

19. Do you talk about school with your parents? Yes ( ) No ( )

20. If No, What do you talk about.....

21. Do they provide game toys? Yes ( ) No ( )

22. Do you play the reading or maths games together? Yes ( ) No ( )

**APPENDIX IV: DOCUMENTARY ANALYSIS**

Name of the child.....Year .....term .....

<b>Numeracy Skill</b>	<b>Marks / Score x/10</b>	<b>Score In %</b>	<b>remarks</b>
Counting			
Pairing			
Grouping			
Pairing			
Sorting			
Comparing			
Matching			
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>			
<b><u>LANGUAGE SKILLS</u></b>			
Listening			
Speaking			
Reading			
Writing			
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>			

REPUBLIC OF KENYA



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Our Ref: **NCST/RCD/14/013/1250**

Date: **8<sup>th</sup> July 2013**

Veronicah Muthoni Mwirichia  
University of Nairobi  
P.O Box 30197-00100  
Nairobi.

### RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application dated **5<sup>th</sup> July, 2013** for authority to carry out research on *"Influence of parental involvement on numeracy and language skills development of preschool children in Kangeta division, Meru County."* I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Igembe South District** for a period ending **31<sup>st</sup> December, 2013**.

You are advised to report to **the District Commissioner and District Education Officer, Igembe South District** before embarking on the research project.

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

**DR. M. K. RWIGUTI, PhD, HSC.**  
**DEPUTY COUNCIL SECRETARY**

Copy to:

The District Commissioner  
The District Education Officer  
Igembe South District.