# INFLUENCE OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT ON CHILDREN'S PERFORMANCE IN NUMBER WORK ACTIVITIES IN KIANJAI ZONE, TIGANIA WEST, MERU COUNTY.

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**A Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Award of the Degree of Master in Education (Early Childhood Education) in the Department of Educational Communication and Technology, University of Nairobi**

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# DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for award of a degree in any other university

Sign ---------- Date ----------
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This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as university supervisor

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# DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to my husband Mr. Andrew Ntombura, My daughter Joy and My son Kevin.

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I would like to acknowledge the Almighty God for his blessings and strength in the undertaking of my study and especially the research project.

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| | |
|---|---|
| **ECD** | Early Childhood Development |
| **ECDE** | Early Childhood Development Education |
| **GoK** | Government of Kenya |
| **PTA** | Parent Teachers Association |
| **SPSS** | Statistical Package for Social Sciences |

# ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of parental involvement in children's performance in number work in selected pre-schools in Kianjai Zone, Tigania West Division of Meru County. This was necessitated by the desire to establish whether parents are involved in their children's academic performance. Involvement will entail activities such as parental support, communication, attitude and even participation in school activities. Further, can we draw a correlation between performance and parent's involvement in these activities. The study seeks to determine the influence of parental involvement in children's performance in number work in public and private pre-schools in Kianjai zone, Meru County, Kenya. It was guided by the following objectives; To establish parental support, determine the influence of parental communication with pre-school teachers, investigate the impact of parental attitude and finally determine the effect of parental participation in pre-school activities on children's performance in number work in the study area. The research adopted a descriptive survey design. This was suitable in this study as it helped the researcher establish the existing conditions at school and home. It further allowed identification of standards and norms with which to compare the parental involvement. This eventually impacts curriculum implementation. The target population for this study was pupils, parents, teachers and head teachers of pre-schools in Kianjai zone. The target population was 35 head teachers, 35 preschool teachers, 268 preschool parents and 310 preschool children. A sample of 11 head teachers, 80 parents, 14 teachers and 93 pupils were selected through simple random sampling. A pilot study was carried out on a different set of respondents to better plan for the research. Self-administered questionnaires were used to collect data from head teachers and preschool teachers, an interview schedule was conducted to collect data from parents in the study and an observation checklist was used to collect data from pupils specifically on number work activities. The findings indicated that parental involvement in their children's studies is very important. The researcher concluded that parental involvement in children's performance had a strong relationship with children's performance in number work. The researcher also concluded that parental support and parental participation were the strongest predictors of performance in number work. The researcher recommended that the government should assist parents who are unable to provide their children with learning materials to ensure that all children are well equipped to enhance performance in number work activities. The researcher also recommends that pre-school should organize more parent meetings, sports days and prize giving ceremonies to encourage communication between parents and pre-school teachers and thus improve on children's performance in number work.

# CHAPTER ONE

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 The Background to this Study

Parental involvement refers to parents indulging in various home and school based activities for the benefit of the child (Squelch 1994). Kreider (2002) went further to define parental educational indulgence as the set of activities conducted at home and in other early childhood education settings. Parents willfully support and motivate their children to succeed in school activities. As such, parents and teachers come into strategic partnerships that put the best interest of the child first through engaging in various schools and home based learning programs. Some of the noticeable parental involvement activities include parents and teachers supervising children homework.

Parental involvement is very important in the day to day learning of children. Many researchers such as Hamer and Marchioro (2002) greatly support the idea of learning experts and the parental cooperation. They believe that it encourages student improvement at school activities. They further posit that student self-esteem, performance, attendance and regular understanding of homework are greatly enhanced. Finally it also recognizes that parental cooperation with teachers leads to a more positive attitude and behavior in school learning. This in turn results to higher involvement in post-secondary education. Epstern (2001) argues that parental involvement leads to more learner achievement and more academic improvement in schools.

There are different levels of parental involvement in the learning of their children. Some of those issues that were brought forward by Epstein (1992) included the communication

aspect (Type / level 2) where the school regularly updates the parent on the progress of the child while at home the parent engages the child on his/her homework and the learners daily timetable (Type level 4) this where inspiration and contribution from the elderly citizenry is invited to providing better learning ways. This brings to the fore that elderly members of the Kenyan citizenry have a responsibility to participate in areas related to parenting all over the Kenya's republic.

Case example would be United States of America, where National survey data shows that attending school meetings or events is the leading way of parent participation in schools, followed by school fundraising ceremonies. The National Center for Education Statistics' Parent and Family Involvement in Education Survey for the 2007 National Household Education Surveys Program (Herrold and O'Donnell, 2008) indicated that 78 percent were of parents participated in parent-teacher conference; 74 percent were part of a class or school event; 65 percent participated in school fundraising activities; 86 percent said they had received information about the parents' expected role at the student's school; 46 percent volunteered at school committee; and 89 percent of those who were interviewed said they had attended at least one school or PTO/PTA meeting since the beginning of the school year.

The levels of parental engagement greatly vary among parents, when we look at mothers, parents of young children, Black/Black British parents, parents of children with a statement of Special Educational Needs are all more likely than average to be very involved in their child's education (Peters et al., 2008). Based on Pelletier and Brent (2002)showed that parents who migrated to Canada or speak English as the second language were less likely to engaged in the learners school activity or even the daily

progress of the school and its activities. According to Zhang et al., (2014) Chinese immigrant parents had a less level of engagement than non-Chinese parents across three forms of involvement which include communication with teachers, giving out free services to help at the before the children attend formal school, and participating in the school's decision making agenda. The study also revealed that Chinese immigrant and non-Chinese parents parental role in the rebuilding and parenting self-efficacy were indicators of all three forms of level of parental involvement, and perceived opportunity for involvement was indication of communication with the school administrators.

The nature of the Japanese parents being close to their children and the strong socio-cultural placed in the nurturing of the child played a bigger role in elevating their kids to the elementary school. Before the learners join school mothers gave them opportunities such as helping them in drawing, making gadgets with paper, and also paste and various activities related to basic reading and numbering abilities. This is a clear indicator bearing the fact that most Japanese children are able to read and write the 48 basic Japanese phonetic symbols (Elkind, 2009).

While further down in South Africa, Davids (2010) indicated that farm-worker parents in rural farms of Citrusdal area greatly participated in basic knowledge passing skills to children and is mostly done by parents of the female gender. In Nigeria, Akindele (2012) found out that parents would read stories to their kids but mostly during the end of the week. Time availability of time is a major hindrance faced by parents in cultivating reading culture for their children in (83.4%) of cases, while lack of parental involvement account for (23.3%).. the rate of the guardians being involved in ECD in Uganda is known to be very low; according to Ejuu (2012) this is because the importance of ECD

has not been inculcated in the whole society in Uganda. This lack of knowledge and the uncertainty of parents of the influence of ECD on the school readiness of their children has led many parents to place ECD far from the top of the education list of priority.

In Kenya the government has been offering pre-school education with stakeholders such as parent's local communities, local authorities, voluntary organization, churches and civil society. The Kenyan government has a policy framework where all the stakeholders form part of the school running process (GoK, 2006) The Kamunge report had considerations for the following (1979) urged every school in Kenya to form a parent – Teachers Association (PTA) with the following responsibilities to have closer ties between teachers and the parents and to have a high level engagements in running of the school, provide opportunities for exchange of ideas and knowledge among teacher parents interest in their children's education and provide funds for development and management.

Koech (2010 showed that parents emphasized the need of learning at home and volunteered in the school projects, this way extent of the government participation in ECD was limited. Based on this reference Kenya to Early Childhood education based on Wawire (2006) and the report based on the Ndaini report (2008) found as similar fashion of events. These findings puts a lot of doubt on this parent teacher engagements. This there raises an important question. Are parents involved effectively in their children's learning at home and communication to school?''

### 1.2 The Statement of the Problem based on this study

Most people in Kianjai zone are small scale farmers whose livelihood depends entirely on subsistence farming (Author, 2014). They cultivate on small scale various food and cash crops such as beans and sorghum on their land to fend for their family. These would then be sold when there is excess to cater for their home needs .Most people in this area are also involved in the keeping of livestock such cows to provide milk and other dairy products The zone where the researcher wants to do the study is characterized with people from various background such as married and some are bachelors and spinster. These people also grow trees to assist them with firewood and can sell some to get money. Most of the parents are mainly engaged in black collar jobs.

However inadequate jobs have led to increased rate of poverty which has led parents not to provide teaching and learning materials which are necessary for child development in school. They also fail to meet basic human wants such as food, clothes and shelter. This also makes them to pay school fees in time and most children end up in the streets or selling goods to supplement their parents. Pre-school ensures that a proper foundation for mathematics being at taught in school. There has been no study in Kianjai concerning number work. It is against this background that there is a need to research on how parental involvement influence on children's performance in number work-in selected pre-school in Kianjai zone.

### 1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of parental involvement in children's performance in number work in selected pre-school in Kianjai Zone, Tigania West Division of Meru County. This study seeks to establish the relationship between the

child's performance in number work and the impact the parent has on its success. The research examined the role of the parent in assisting the child progress in number work.

### 1.4 Objectives of the study

The study sought to fulfill the following objectives:

i. To establish the effect of parental support on children's performance in number work

ii. To determine the influence of parental communication with pre-school teachers on children's performance in number work.

iii. To investigate whether parental attitude influences children's performance in number work.

iv. To determine the effect of parental participation in pre-school activities on children's performance in number work.

### 1.5 Research questions

i. What is the effect of parental support on children's performance in number work?

ii. What is the influence of parental communication with pre-school teachers on children's performance in number work?

iii. What is the impact of parental attitude on children's performance in number work?

iv. What is the effect of parental participation in pre-school activities on children's performance in number work?

### 1.6 Significance of the Study

The results of this study may be of benefit to all pre-school stake holders. The Policy makers could use the findings to promote and strengthen parental engagement on children's performance in number work. Teachers and trainee may use this information to equip themselves with relevant skills on how to involve parents in the ECDE Centers. This study would also be important to the parents by helping them participate fully in school activities and ensure their children are well provided with books and pencils for number-work

### 1.7 Limitations of the Study

The study was limited by the prevailing rainy season in the area and the fact that it is a rural setting and would not provide a general overview of the whole country. This is based on the fact that parental involvement might be different yet the research problem under consideration in this study might be the same nationally.

### 1.8 Delimitation of the study

The study was carried out in Kianjai Zone. It investigated the parental support in their children's performance in number work in the Zone. It focused on the relationship communication, participation of the parents. The study was limited to the early learning centers in the area. Although, the study was conducted in selected pre-school in the areas around the Kianjai Zone, the factors that the researcher wanted to investigate are nation-wide.

### 1.9 Basic Aassumptions of the study

The researcher assumed that pre-school centers have near adequate facilities and qualified personnel. The researcher also assumed that pre-scholars have the same learning and concentration abilities at the initial areas of the enrollment into school. In addition, the researcher assumed that the children in the preschool do not have any special needs case or any disabilities

### 1.10 Definitions of the key terms

**Communication** is the conversation between children and the parents and school administrators

**Influence:** implies how one thing affects another

**Number work** relates to the activity carried out during the school counting work

**Parental involvement** involves having the parent engaged in the school work

**Performance** refers to the extent of progress achieved by the students of the institutions.

**Pre-school** is the he measure of learning between ages 2-6 years.

**Relationship** refers to similar characteristics that are witnessed in the learning situation.

**Teacher** refers to someone in charge of children and passes over the knowledge to them.

### 1.11 Organization of the study

The study was organized in five chapters.

Chapter one looked at the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions and significance of the study. It also looked at the limitations, delimitations of the study, basic assumptions of the study, and the definition of key terms and organization of the study.

Chapter two covered the review of the related work. Chapter three covered the research methodology; chapter four presented the data and its interpretation while chapter five includes the summary of findings, conclusion and recommendations.

# CHAPTER TWO

# REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

## 2.0 Introduction

This chapter makes cognizance of parents involvement through the following sub-headings: parental support, communication, attitude, participation, theoretical and conceptual frameworks.

## 2.1 Number Work Activities

Malaty (1997) points out that there is mathematics in everything that humans have created and in everything that humans have may not have meant to create deliberately. According to Ahtee & Pehkonen, (2000), the unique nature of teaching mathematics when one tries to develop mathematical model from every day situation, and to the application of mathematical system for instance in the problem situation to another new every day situation. Jolivette et al., (2006) found that math is applied at recreational level in games Skills in mathematics are essential to maintain employability and failure to grasp such is detrimental(Jolivette et al., 2006) as well as to achieve employment success (Erford & Klein, 2007)

Some of the very basic Mathematics skills are innate (Butterworth, 2005). The more advanced the skills are, for example correspondence construction, enumeration, counting, Arithmetic, and understanding of arithmetical concepts are acquired through study (Ardila & Rosselli, 2002). The trend points to the fact that children's mathematical skills develop in a cumulative manner from the preschool to the first years of school, even to

the extent that the first mathematical skills and knowledge in start of preschool were positively associated with their later growth rate: students with previous math's skills excelled at an advanced stage (Aunola et al., 2004). Once the skills are mastered, they can be used as a foundation for the acquisition of a variety of advanced set of knowledge and skills. A majority of the skills in the elementary school Mathematics curriculum are taught this way. For example, multiplication is often taught as a series of addition problems (Butterworth, 2005). Most students acquire skills in this manner and some may or may not grasp some certain concepts.

Bishop (1988) brought about the six categories of mathematical activities and saw these categories as an alternative perspective of culture. Some form of mathematics may have been capitalized and even included specific versions including six activities. Bishop's six categories consists of such topics are counting; using a systematic way to compare and order discrete phenomena. It may involve tallying, or using objects or string to record, or special number words or names. Locating; exploring one's spatial environment and conceptualizing and symbolizing that environment. This could be achieved via words, models, drawings, diagrams, and other ways. Measuring; quantifying qualities for the purposes of comparison and ordering, using objects or tokens as measuring devices with associated units or 'measure-words'. Designing; creating a shape or design for an object or for any part of one's spatial environment. It may involve making the object, as a 'mental template', or symbolizing it in some conventional way. Having plays and coming up with new games, and enrolling in, sports and ; hence, they have no time for mathematics (Lee & Ginsburg, 2009). The uncertainty when one is free, with more or

less formalized rules that all players must abide by. Explaining and coming up with ways to cater for the existence of phenomena, be they religious, animistic or scientific.

According to Doverborg and Pramling-Samuelsson (2011), early life in preschool is a great opportunity for the teachers to identify these skills and help the learners to nurture them at that young age. Some preschool teachers prefer to focus on areas of language and literacy, where they feel about the subject might partially be attributed to the fact that there are different conceptions of what is meant by mathematics at preschools. There are schools of thought led by Doverborg & Pramling Samuelsson (1999) that propose that math should be taught at primary level only.

### 2.2 Parental Support and Children's Performance in Number Work

The idea that support has a positive influence on students' academic achievement is so intuitively appealing that the average members of the society in general, and those educating of the children in particular, have considered it an important ingredient for the remedy of many problems in education. Among the major studies that have been conducted are of the issue quantitatively showed that mathematics achievement is influenced by this factor. Becher (1984) in Henderson and Berla (1994), shares that one factor that contribute to mathematic achievement as the support and participation of families in their children's education in positive ways. Through this most children would excel in school and post good grades and would later enroll in universities and colleges for higher learning.

It was noted by Ballen and Moles (1993), parent can support mathematics and mathematics teacher effort by helping their children to see the importance of taking

advance mathematic causes, emphasizing the importance of mathematics in today's careers, controlling the amount spent in watching of television set , and visiting science or mathematic related exhibitions and fairs with their children. This shows that parents can help students to get mathematics skills through these measures. Mample and Stage (1991), similarly found that parental variables such as parental education and interest in the child's school contributed to choice of mathematics or science related courses. This was supported by researcher like (Griffith, 1996; Goldering and Saphira, 1993); Gronic and Slowiaczeck, 1994, Zellman and Waterman, 1998) Parent level of input has shown to be important variable that positively influence children education assess home related activities , like parent working with children's education. Catsambis (1998) concluded that high parental aspirations tend to positively influence students level of achievement in primary and secondary education. Many researchers like Zellman and Watchman (1998) concluded that parents that were greatly involved at home with their children about school work contributed greatly to better grades and higher enrollment in later stages in the hierarchy.

**2.3 Parental Communication and Children's Performance in Number Work.**

According to most studies done by Oratoye and Agbatogan (2009), Mestry and Grobler, (2007) Bronfenbrenner (1986) a positive parent and teacher relationship helps a child feel good about school and be successful in school. Their studies have however stated that the parent-teacher relationship can have a varied number of emotions and tension that are involved. Entire books are written on the subject and it is often a topic of discussion in different forums. This is because parent/teacher relationships are important. Both sets of the guardians had to figure out how to work together and overcome obstacles that get

their way. Parents should learn to communicate their views and teachers should have a better understanding of each other therein.

Communication is a key factor for making this relationship work Bronfenbrenner (1986). The parents and teachers should share information among themselves on among other things the social development. Recommendations for close communication between parents and early childhood staff are on strong theoretical grounds. Bronfenbrenner (1979 - 1986) has offered the most detailed set of propositions about the developmental benefits of frequent and personal communication between the teacher and parents. Surprisingly little research has been conducted on this topic.

Oratoye and Agbatogan (2009) in their study on the parental involvement as a correlate of pupils achievement in mathematics in Ogun state, Nigeria noted that school administrators and parents ought to be highly involved to avert cases of child neglect and promote a better learning environment for the children to be successful at this stage.

There are differences and gaps where there should not be any with the resultant effect that the pupils' academic performance takes a nosedive (Oratoye and Agbatogan 2009). The essence of parent teacher relationship is further discussed by Mestry and (Gobbler 2007) who did a study in South Africa on collaboration and communication as effective strategies for parent involvement in public schools. They used quantitative research to determine the perceptions of teachers regarding aspects of parental involvement in school governance that were considered essential. Their findings showed collaboration and communication played a major role in the growing up of the child and the school at large

Another study which was conducted by the Owen, Ware and Barefoot (2000) showed that caregivers and mother involvement provided a greater achievement in the children's overall achievement at school. In the study more frequent communication involved mother and child care givers (providers) seeking and sharing information about the child and the child' past experiences. Moreover the study did not look at the frequency or mode of communication between a mother and child care provider. Carlisle et al, (2005) brought to the core the role of emails and letters in promoting communication.

Studies conducted in Kenya also show that parental involvement in children education appears to be limited in scope Wawire (2006). He further found out that the role of parents in preschools seem to be restricted to the provision of finances and facilities. Ndani's (2008) study in Thika district alto established that there was low participation of the community in activities at the preschool in communication volunteering decision making and further collaboration. These establishments suggest that current roles taken by parents are based on a very narrow form of partnership and this might affect children's achievement in number work activities.

### 2.4 Parental Attitude and Children's Performance in Number Work Activities

Parental attitude is a measure or an index of parental involvement. A child, brought up with affection and care in the least restrictive environment would be able to cope up better with the sighted world. Therefore, the family shapes the social integration of the child more than a formal school. Turnbull (1983) has identified some of the four basic parental roles- that parents can play as educational decision makers; parents as parents; parents as teachers and parents as advocates. Since the parent's attitude is so important, it is essential that the home set up and school work closely together. The Warnock Report

(1978) outlines the role of parents in the school success. Kroth (1981) states parents are like teacher and the professional should have conversations with them. Tait (1972) opines that the parent's wellbeing is essential for the social and mental development of the children. It is the parents who put more pressure the major influence on the development of the child from the period of birth to the time of maturity. One of the most important attributes of parental attitude is consistency in doing or participating in the school work. As children mature into a mature age, family participation in their learning remains important. Family engagement methods at home and at school have been found to influence secondary school students' academic achievement, school attendance, and graduation and college matriculation rates (Dornbusch & Ritter, 1988). Despite its importance, however, families' active participation in their children's education declines as they progress from elementary school to middle and high school (Dauber & Epstein, 1993). Research shows that partnerships are essential for development (Eccles & Harold, 1993; Epstein & Connors, 1994).

Most researchers maintain that parents have an important influence on children's personality and social development (Graig, 1992; Overett & Donald, 1998; Wintre & Sugar, 2000). Topping (1986) concurred that most of the parents are role models to their children who transmit, through the attitudes and the cultural norms. This shows parents as the assistants to the teachers (Yussen & Santrock, 1982). Previous research shows that family involvement helps for achieving higher attendance, better grade point averages and lower dropout rates amongst the students.

## 2.5 Parental Participation and Children's Performance in Number Work Activities

Homework is often presented as a school requirement for successful child learning, and parents often create school-like structures to support homework success. In some instances, parents control these frameworks; in others, parents follow the student's lead or work in other ways to fit homework involvement into the flow of family life. Variations in these strategies have been linked to patterns of child-rearing values (for instance beliefs that the child should conform to external authority; beliefs that the parent should support the child's innate needs; based on (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992; and McDermott, Goldman, & Varenne, 1984; and finally by Scott-Jones, 1987). They have also been linked to broader familial cultural values (Hong, Milgram, & Perkins, 1995; Hutsinger, Jose, & Larson, 1998; others quoted include Okagaki & Frensch, 1998; And Schneider & Lee, 1990).

Parents appear to involve themselves in their children's homework for three major reasons: they believe that they should be involved; they believe that their involvement will make a positive difference, and they perceive welcoming's to participation (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997). Parents' proactive engagement in homework have been examined in several investigations in relatively general terms. Researchers have also examined two more specific parental approaches to involvement: structured, convergent (often task centered) efforts to help the child with assignments, and informal, student-responsive (often child centered) patterns of involvement in homework tasks. Some researchers have associated these two general approaches with varied patterns of student outcomes (for example more structured approaches have been associated with poorer student performance, less structured approaches with better student performance: this

again based on Delgado-Gaitan, 1992 and McDermott et al., 1984 and also Scott-Jones, 1987). Parents have been known to apply various approaches in home learning these can be related also to the study carried out by (Hoover-Dempsey 1995).

According to Kenya School Improvement Project Baseline Survey (2004), a written school homework policy had several advantages: schools with homework policies tended to set guidelines for those educators to correct, grade, and return homework in an ordered way to their students, thus reinforcing learning. It is very important to note that schools with homework policies generally provide specific guidelines regarding what is expected from parents.

Moreover, schools with homework policies tend to design carefully and provide homework assignments appropriate to each grade level. These merits help to build on the fact that a lack of written policy on school homework assumes a lot about the factors at work or factors that may in one way influence the parental participation in homework activities. Lack of an established homework policy may place either insufficient or unrealistic demands on the child and the students may not be expected to work to full capacity. In another way, the students may receive too many assignments from different teachers on the same evening that may eventually negatively affect their capacity to learn properly.

As a supplementary learning strategy beyond the normal school hours, homework is highly favored. This is necessary with a wide syllabus that calls for extra time beyond the regular learning timetables. However, the assigned work is often very demanding for the pupils, especially when they have to take class work to their homes against the competing

family chores and prevailing circumstances in terms of physical facilities and conducive learning environment. In the premise of no written framework on homework, teachers often assign homework to the pupils that in most cases is determined by the available textbooks, often in total disregard of placed procedure in following of the curriculum and whether pupils are able to get parental help, or even whether the pupils are able to tackle the assignment on their own.

Pupils are usually punished for late work submission and guidelines should be developed for the home assignments

Homework policy framework that are based on home-school agreements are more likely to promote faster homework completion and a renewed interest in pupils' learning process in addition to increased parental participation in the performance of the students. Significantly, homework policy needs to be formulated within the context of gender . This is in recognition of the fact that homework completion is more likely to be higher among the boys than the girls – the latter being engrossed in family chores much more than the former. This is likely to influence the same gender considerations in class work and achievement. Hence understanding of the homework policy needs not only to be sensitive to socio-economic and cultural backgrounds of the people , but importantly to culture-specific gender roles and expectations by giving special consideration to the girl-child

### 2.6 Theoretical Framework of the study

This study is basically supported by a social constructivism theory of Levy Vygotsky (1978). In social constructivism Vygotsky emphasizes that learning is collaborative by

nature. He emphasizes that learning and the social interactions are at the core of the student's development and should be encouraged.

Vygotsky emphasizes that language and culture have a crucial role in the wholesome development of learners (Wertsch, 1997). They play a major impact in both human and the knowledge aspect and how they perceive the world. He further explains that learning involves collaboration for the actual development should be (independent) and the potential development (what the child is able to do under the guidance of a teacher). He further interrogates that motivation which essential in ones learning to be both extrinsic and intrinsic at times. Since knowledge is actively constructed by both the learner and the educator. Cordial relationship ensures that a child is well motivated throughout the learning process.

### 2.7 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a tool researchers use to guide their inquiry; it the following a set of ideas and a map that would translate to the various research question that are asked, the review of the work, methods and data analysis (Silverman, 2005). The conceptual framework in Figure 2.1 indicates the variables in the study and how they interact.

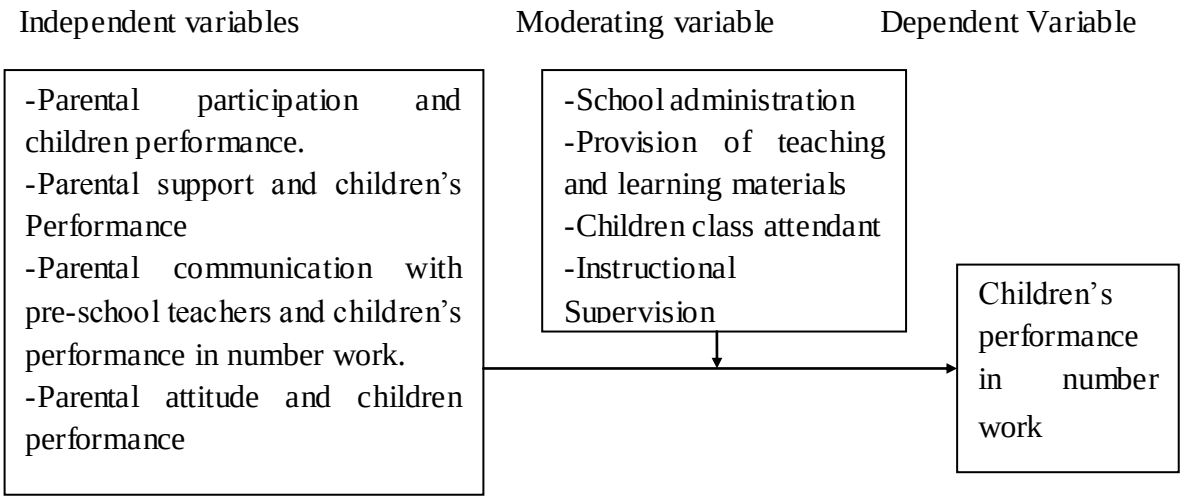


**Figure 2.1 Conceptual framework**

The conceptual framework above depicts the independent and dependent variables are interrelating. The standalone variables are participation, support, communication, attitude

all these topped up to the parental role. This shows how the parents are involved in promoting the child's performance in number work. The one variable considered to be dependent is therefore children's performance in number work in terms of activities children do like modeling, measuring ordering and counting numbers (performance). The various independent issues influence others that have no standing and parents and other stakeholders form part of this.

# CHAPTER THREE

# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## 3.0 Introduction

This chapter gives the research design approach, the target population sample size and sampling procedure research instruments validity and reliability of the research instruments procedure for data collection and data analysis.

## 3.1 Research Design Approach

The study adopted a descriptive research design which involves collecting data in order to answer questions on current status of subjects of the study. It can be used to collect information about people's attitudes, opinions or habits (Kombo and Tromp 2006). The data assisted in determining the influence of parent involvement in children's performance in number work in selected pre-school. Kothari (2004) recommends descriptive design as it allows the researcher do the following to describe, make record, also analyze and report conditions that exist or existed. The researcher related school safety with children's performance in number work with parental involvement.

## 3.2 Target Population

Dawson (2009) defines target population as people with identifiable characteristics. The target population for this study was the pupils, parents, teachers and head teachers of pre-schools in Kianjai zone. There were 35 preschools in Kianjai Zone: whereby 25 are public schools and 10 were private schools. There were 45 teachers of whom 30 were from the public and 15 were from the private pre-schools. There were 310 pupils and 268 parents.

### 3.3 Sample Size and the Sampling Procedure

Based on Blaxter et al., (2006), sampling involves getting a number out of the general population. Stratified random sampling was used to select children and parents in the study. A according to Blaxter et al., (2006) a stratified sample can provide greater precision than a simple random sample of the same size. The researcher therefore used stratified random sampling of 30% to arrive at a sample as shown in Table 3.1

**Table 3.1 Sampled participants**

| Population | Public Schools | Private Schools | Total Number | Sample size (*30%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Children | 198 | 112 | 310 | 93 |
| Parents | 187 | 81 | 268 | 80 |
| Head teachers | 25 | 10 | 35 | 11 |
| Teachers | 31 | 14 | 45 | 14 |
| Total | 441 | 217 | 658 | 198 |

Source: DEO, Tigania (2014)

Therefore 11 head teachers, 14 preschool teachers, 80 parents and 93 preschool children selected to take part in the study.

### 3.4 Research Tools

The researcher used various instruments to collect data. These were Self-administered questionnaires which were used to get data from head teachers and pre-school teachers in the study. Questionnaires were preferred because questionnaires are cost effective, familiar to most people, easy to analyze and reduce bias (Silverman, 2005).

An interview schedule was conducted to collect data from parents in the study. Interviewing involves asking questions and getting answers from participants in a study (Blaxter et al., 2006). The researcher preferred this data collection instrument because

they are useful to obtain detailed information about personal feelings, perceptions and opinions. In addition, ambiguities can be clarified and incomplete answers followed up (Dawson, 2009).

An observation checklist was used to collect data from pupils specifically on number work activities. Observation data collected is very accurate in nature and also very reliable. In addition, observation is less demanding in nature, which makes it of less bias toward the working abilities this again based on (Cohen & Manion, 2000).

### 3.5 Validity of Tools

Validity is concerned with establishing whether the instruments measure what is supposed to be measured (Orodho, 2004). The research instruments was developed basing it on the research objectives to ensure validity. After sometime the researcher gave the same instruments to the same respondents the results from these instruments to enable the researcher delete some of the items, add more information to them and modify some of the information. In addition, the instruments were submitted to the researcher's supervisor at the University of Nairobi for review.

### 3.6 Reliability of the Tools

The reliability of the instrument is the degree to which empirical indicators of theoretical concept will be stable across two or more attempts (Kothari, 2003). Reliability was tested using the instruments over a period of three days

After sometime the researcher was the same instruments to the same respondents the results from these instruments enabled the researcher to delete some of the items, add more information to them and modify some of the information to test its reliability. The

comparison used in step one was based on Pearson's Correlation Coefficient for the test Retest was employed to determine the correlation of the items which were obtained in the instruments. A coefficient of 0.72 was obtained which was a reliable measure as reliable (Silverman, 2005).

### 3.7 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher gave questionnaires to eleven head teachers and fourteens pre-school teachers to fill and schools /of which were collected later. The researcher interviewed parents of the selected Observation was administered among the preschool children as they performed number work activities. In the document analysis guide, the researcher looked at the some of the diaries used for formal conversations between parents and teachers on pre-school children's number work, the children's progressive records in number work activities and children's number work exercise books.

### 3.8 Data Analysis Procedures

Descriptive statistics such as frequency of the distribution, the percentages and the mean, were used to summarize and organize quantitative data. Qualitative data generated from questions was organized into thematic issues, major categories and patterns that were pertinent to the study and then analyzed using descriptive statistics. Document analysis of school records was performed. Pearson correlation coefficient (r) was used to give details of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables (Cohen & Manion, 2000). SPSS version 20 was employed for data analysis. Findings were presented using tables and figures.

# CHAPTER FOUR

# DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

## 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings and the interpretation of the findings from analysis of data collected. The purpose of analysis was to determine the influence of parental involvement on children's performance in number work in selected pre-schools in Kianjai Zone, Tigania West Division of Meru County.

## 4.2 Questionnaire return rate

The questionnaire return rate was as shown on Table 4.1

**Table 4.1 Questionnaire return rate**

| **Respondents** | **Sampled** | **Returned Questionnaires** | **Return rate %** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Children | 93 | 87 | 94 |
| Parents | 80 | 74 | 92 |
| Head teachers | 11 | 9 | 81 |
| Pre-School Teachers | 14 | 12 | 86 |
| **Total** | **198** | **182** | **92** |

Table 4.1 shows the questionnaire return rate. In overall, the responses from the four categories of respondents were all above 80%, an indication that the sample is adequately represented in the findings of the study. This was the same for both public and private schools.

### 4.3 Demographic Information

This section presents the findings on the demographic information and characteristics of the respondents in both public and private schools.

**Pre-school teacher's demographic information**

The study sought to establish the demographic information of the pre-school teachers that were involved in the study for both public and private schools.

**Pre-school teacher's gender for both public and private schools**

The results for the pre-school teacher's gender are as presented in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2 Gender of pre-school teachers**

| Pre-school teachers gender | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| **Female** | **9** | **75.0** |
| **Male** | **3** | **25.0** |
| Total | 12 | 100.0 |

Table 4.2 shows that majority of the pre-school teachers in both public and private schools were female (75.0%) while the remaining 25.0% were male. This shows that majority of the pre-school teachers in the study were female.

**Pre-school teacher's education levels for both public and private schools**

In order to compare adequately, the study sought the pre-school teacher's education level to establish a link with poor performances in number work. The results were as presented in Table 4.3.

**Table 4.3: Pre-school teacher's education level.**

| Pre-school teachers education level | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Master's Degree | 0 | 0.0% |
| Degree | 0 | 0.0% |
| Diploma | 3 | 25.0% |
| ECD Certificate | 9 | 75.0% |
| **Total** | **12** | **100.0%** |

The study found that a majority of 75.0% of the pre-school teachers ECD certificate as their highest education achievement. The other 25% had diploma level of education. The educational level points to the fact that the pre-school teachers are adequately trained for the job.

**Pre-school teachers working experience for both public and private schools**

In order to compare adequately, the study sought the pre-school teacher's working experience to establish a link with poor performances in number work. The results were as presented in Table 4.4.

**Table 4.4 Pre-school teachers working experience**

| Pre-school teachers working experience | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| 1-3 years | 3 | 25.0 |
| 4-7years | 6 | 50.0 |
| 8-11 years | 2 | 16.7 |
| 12 years and above | 1 | 8.3 |
| **Total** | **12** | **100.0** |

The study shows that a majority of 75.0% of the pre-school teachers have worked for less than 5 7 years at the schools. The other 25% reported to have worked for over 7 years. Generally, the working experience combined with their qualifications shown is sufficient for the pre-school teachers to have understood the challenges in teaching number work at

their schools.

**Pre-school head teacher's demographic information for both public and private schools**

The study sought to establish the demographic information of the pre-school head teachers that were involved in the study.

**Pre-school head teacher's gender**

The results for the pre-school head teacher's gender are as presented in Table 4.5.

**Table 4.5 Gender of pre-school head teachers**

| Pre-school head teachers gender | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| **Female** | **6** | **66.7** |
| **Male** | **3** | **33.3** |
| Total | 9 | 100.0 |

Table 4.5 shows that majority of the pre-school head teachers (66.7%) were female while the remaining 33.3% were males. This shows that pre-school administration is dominated by men.

**Pre-school head teacher's education levels**

In order to compare adequately, the study sought the pre-school head teacher's education level to establish a link with poor performances in number work. The results were as presented in Table 4.6.

**Table 4.6: Pre-school head teacher's education level.**

| Pre-school head teachers education level | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Master's Degree | 0 | 0.0 |
| Degree | 2 | 16.7 |
| Diploma | 4 | 33.3 |
| ECD Certificate | 3 | 25.0 |
| **Total** | **9** | **75.0** |

The study found that a majority of 33.3% of the pre-school head teachers had diploma qualifications while 25% had ECD certificate as their highest education achievement. The other 16.7% had degree level of education. The educational level points to the fact that the pre-school head teachers are adequately trained for the job.

**Pre-school head teachers working experience**

In order to compare adequately, the study sought the pre-school head teacher's working experience to establish a link with poor performances in number work. The results were as presented in Table 4.7.

**Table 4.7 Pre-school head teachers working experience**

| Pre-school head teachers working experience | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| 1-3 years | 0 | 0.0% |
| 4-7years | 2 | 22.3% |
| 8-11 years | 4 | 44.4% |
| 12 years and above | 3 | 33.3% |
| **Total** | **9** | **100.0%** |

In Table 4.7, the study shows that a majority of 77.7% of the pre-school head teachers have worked for less than 8 years at the schools. The other 22.3% reported to have worked for between 5-8 years. Generally, the working experience combined with their

qualifications shown is sufficient for the pre-school head teachers to have understood the challenges in teaching number work at their schools.

**What is the current enrolment in your school?**

The head teachers were asked to state the current enrolment in their schools. This would help identify the class sizes and thus shed light on their impact on the study. The results are tabulated on Table 4.8

**Table 4.8 Current enrolment in schools**

| Number of children | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| 1 - 20 | 1 | 11.0 |
| 21 – 30 | 1 | 11.0 |
| 31 – 40 | 5 | 56.0 |
| Over 40 | 2 | 22.0 |
| **Total** | **9** | **100.0** |

Table 4.8 shows that a majority of the schools (56%) in Kianjai Zone had an enrollment of between 31 and 40 children. These findings are contrary to findings by Murungi (2013), who indicated that there is a continuous documented trend of low enrolments of children in the Early Childhood Education Centers in Kenya and these low enrolments have persisted over the years.

**The number of ECD teachers in the schools**

The researcher also sought to find out from the head teacher the number of teachers in the participating schools. This was important to establish the staffing of preschools in Kianajai zone and link it to the study problem. The results are shown on Table 4.9

**Table 4.9 Number of teachers in the schools**

| Number of teachers | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| 1 - 3 | 7 | 78% |
| 4 - 6 | 2 | 22% |
| **Total** | **9** | **100%** |

Many schools have between 1-3 pre-school teachers at 78% while the rest have between 4-6 pre-school teachers. When we compare this with the enrolment, the teacher-pupil ratio has been achieved.

### 4.4 The effect of parental support on children's performance in number work for both public and private schools

The study was about the influence of parental involvement in children's performance in number work. In order to investigate these, the study sought to establish the effect of parental support on the children's performance in number work.

**The effect of** parental support on **children's performance in number work according to the pre-school teachers for both public and private schools.**

The pre-school teachers were asked questions that provide information on the effect of parental support on children's performance in number work. They gave their responses as narrated in the next section.

**Do parents assist children with schoolwork?**

The pre-school teachers were asked to state whether parents assisted children with their schoolwork. The results are illustrated in the Figure 4.1.

**Figure 4.1 Parents assisting children with their schoolwork**

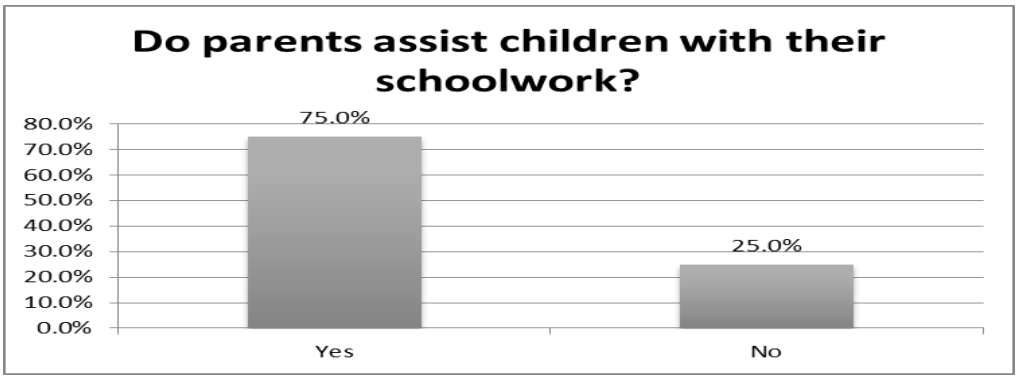


Figure 4.1 shows that according to the teachers, majority of the parents assisted their children with their schoolwork. This is positive but it would be very interesting to compare this with the parent's education levels to establish a link as to whether the parents would indeed be in a position to assist the children in their schoolwork.

**Ways parents assist their children with their schoolwork at home.**

The parents were required to explain how they assisted children with homework. Many mentioned that they helped their children with homework by helping them do the number work such as writing, counting and matching.

**The effect of parental support on children's performance in number work according to the pre-school head teachers for both public and private schools.**

**Frequency of ECDE parents visits to the head teachers offices**

In order to investigate the influence of parents in the children performance in number work, pre-school head teachers were tasked to state the frequency of ECDE parents visits to school to discuss their children progress. This information was important for the researcher to establish the influence of parental visits on their children's performance in number work.

**Table 4.10 Frequency of ECDE parents visits to the pre-schools**

| Visits to school | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Daily | 2 | 3 |
| Weekly | 16 | 2 |
| Monthly | 48 | 65 |
| Not at all | 8 | 11 |
| **Total** | **74** | **100** |

Table 4.10 shows that according to the head teachers a majority of the ECDE parents visit the school monthly at 65% while 2% and 3% visit the school weekly and daily respectively. There were 11% who do not visit the ECDE centre at all, raising concern on their commitment to the success of their children in number counting. The findings are therefore in agreement with Ndani's (2008) study in Thika district which established that there was low participation of the community in activities.

**Do ECDE parents report their children's issues to your office?**

The head teachers were also required to state whether ECDE parents' ever reported their children's issues to their office.

**Figure 4.2 ECDE parents reports on their children's issues to the head teachers**

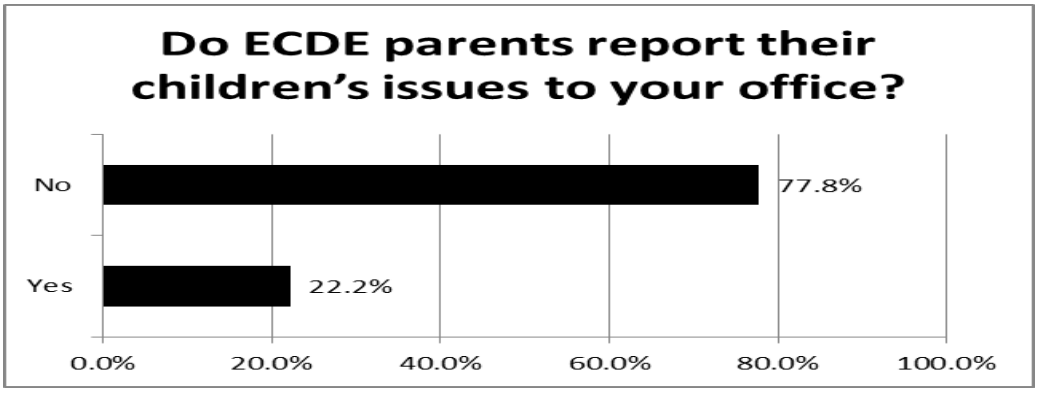


Figure 4.2 shows that majority of the parents at 77.8% do not report their issues to the head teachers. This could be due to various reasons such as lack of time, lack of

confidence that the issues will be resolved or perhaps lack of interest in their children progress at school.

**The effect of parental support on children's performance in number work according to the parents for both public and private schools**

**Areas of parental support**

**Figure 4.3 Areas of** parental **support on children's schooling**

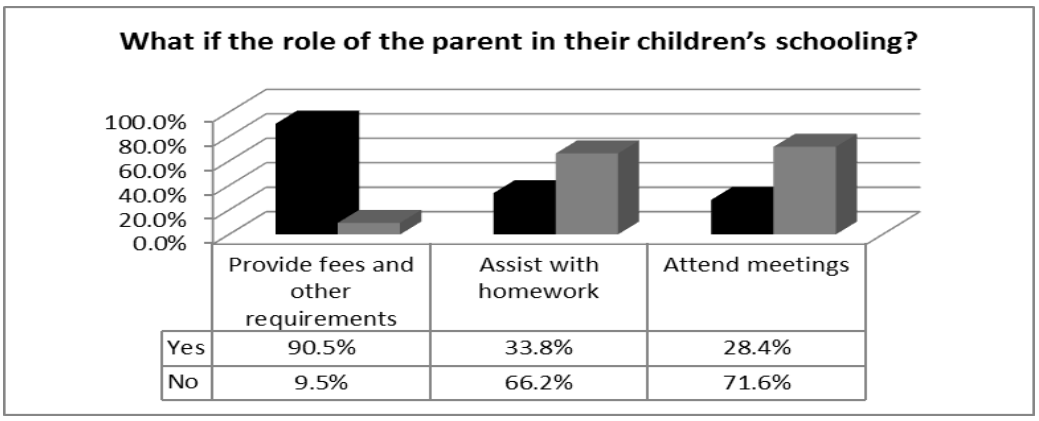


Figure 4.3 shows that majority of the parents at the schools studied believe that their sole parental support is to provide schools fees and other requirements. Others pointed at assisting with homework and attending meetings as their only parental support on children's schooling.

**4.5 The influence of communication with pre-school teachers on children's performance in number work**

The study was about the influence of parental involvement in children's performance in number work. In order to investigate these, the study sought to establish the influence of parental communication in the children's performance in number work.

**The influence of communication with pre-school teachers on the children's performance in number work according to the pre-school teachers**

To pre-school teachers gave various responses on the how communication with pre-school teachers affects children's performance in number work.

**How parents communicate to the teacher about their children as per the pre-school teachers**

The pre-school teachers gave various ways that parents communicate with them as shown on Table 4.11

**Table 4.11 Parents communication to the teacher about their children**

| How do parents communicate to the teacher about their children? | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Use of letters | 2 | 16.7 |
| Diaries | 7 | 58.3 |
| School visits | 3 | 25.0 |
| **Total** | **12** | **100.0** |

Table 4.11 shows that majority of the parents communicate with pre-school teachers using diaries at 58.3% followed by school visits at 25%. Only 16.7% communicate through use of letters.

**How the teachers communicate to parents on children's progress**

The pre-school teachers further gave ways that they communicate with parents as on children's progress shown on Table 4.12

**Table 4.12 Pre-school teachers communication to the parents about their children's progress**

| How the teachers communicate to parents on children's progress | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Use of letters | 2 | 16.7% |
| Diaries | 5 | 41.7% |
| Calls | 1 | 8.3% |
| SMSs | 4 | 33.3% |
| **Total** | **12** | **100.0%** |

Table 4.12 shows that majority of the pre-school teachers communicate with parents using diaries at 41.7% followed by SMSs at 33.3%. Only 16.7% communicate through use of letters while the rest communicate through calls at 8.3%.

**How often parents visit the school to check on the children's progress**

The pre-school teachers stated how often the parents visited the school to check on children's progress as shown on Table 4.13

**Table 4.13 Frequency of parents visit the school to check on their children's progress**

| How often do parents visit the school to check on the children's progress? | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Daily | 0 | 0.0% |
| Once | 8 | 66.7% |
| Rarely | 1 | 8.3% |
| Often | 3 | 25.0% |
| **Total** | **12** | **100.0%** |

Table 4.13 shows that according to the pre-school teachers, 66.7% of parents only visited the school once to check on children's progress. This will be most likely the closing day when they are required to collect the children. Another 25% mentioned that they visit often while 8.3% rarely visited.

**Incidence of clear communication between the parent and the teacher.**

The pre-school teachers gave the status of clarity of communication between parent and teacher as shown on Table 4.14

**Table 4.14 Incidence of clear communication between the parent and the teacher**

| Is there clear communication between the parent and the teacher? | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 7 | 58.3% |
| No | 5 | 41.7% |
| **Total** | **12** | **100.0%** |

Table 4.14 shows that according to the pre-school teachers, there was clarity in communication between the parents and teachers at 57.3%. Another 41.7% felt this was not the case. This could be a pointer to the poor state of the children performance and progress in pre-school number work activities.

The researcher also sought to establish the nature of parent's communication with pre-school head teachers affects children's performance in number work. The first question was on how ECDE parents communicate to the school about their children. The responses are as shown on Table 4.15

**Table 4.15 How ECDE parents communicate to the school about their children**

| How ECDE parents communicate to the school about their children | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Letters | 5 | 55.6% |
| Diaries | 0 | 0.0% |
| Mobiles | 3 | 33.3% |
| Physically | 1 | 11.1% |
| **Total** | **9** | **100.0%** |

Table 4.15 shows that 55.6% of the parents communicate to the head teachers through letters while another 33.3% communicate through mobiles. The rest (11.1%) visit the head teacher to communicate about their children's performance.

The next question was on whether ECDE parents understand any information communicated to them by head teachers. The results are as shown on Table 4.16

**Figure 4.4 Whether ECDE parents understand any information communicated to them by head teachers**

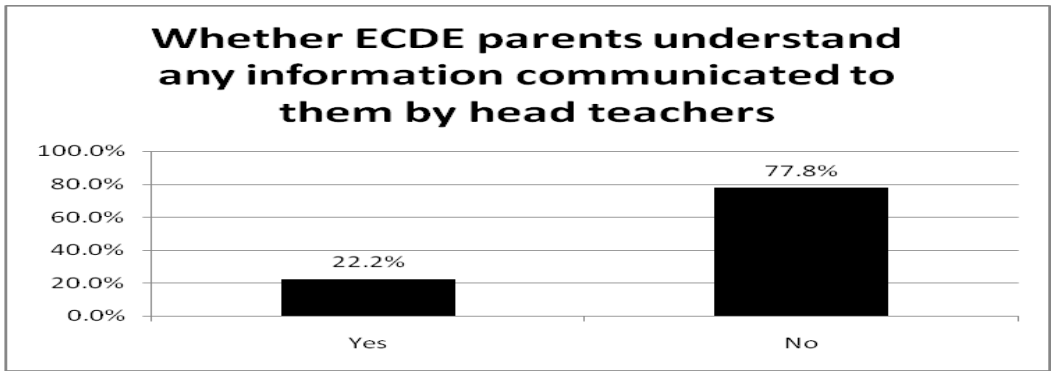


Figure 4.4 shows that majority of the head teachers felt that the parents do not understand the information communicated to them. This was mainly because many never responded to the communications. This may be because they do not receive such letters or that they don't find the time to respond or even due to literacy levels among the parents.

The head teachers noted that the challenges faced when communicating with parents are mainly lack of responses from the parents and also lack of following instructions issued through such letters. When the parents do not understand nor communicate to messages, the head teachers have no way of assessing reasons for children's dismal performance or even find out how progress can be improved.

**The influence of communication with pre-school teachers on the children's performance in number work according to the parents**

The parents were also asked questions on whether communication with pre-school teachers has an influence on children's performance in number work. The results are as shown on Table 4.16

**Table 4.16 Communication with child's pre-school teacher**

| How do you communicate with your child's pre-school teacher (s)? | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Letter | 5 | 6.8% |
| Calls | 8 | 10.8% |
| SMS | 12 | 16.2% |
| Personal Visit | 7 | 9.5% |
| Diaries | 42 | 56.8% |
| **Total** | **74** | **100.0%** |

Table 4.16 shows that majority of the parents communicate to the pre-school teacher via diaries at 56.8%. This was followed by SMS at 16.2%. The parents who made calls to the teachers were 10.8% while another 9.5% made personal visits to the pre-school teacher.

### 4.6 The influence of parental attitude on children's performance in number work for both public and private schools

Another study objective was to find out the influence of parental attitude on children's' performance in number work. The results of the questions on the influence of parental attitude on children' performance in number work according to the pre-school teachers is as shown on Table 4.17

**Table 4.17 Parents attitude on pre-school teachers**

| Parents attitude on pre-school teachers | Mean | Std Deviation | Variance |
|---|---|---|---|
| Teachers are incompetent | 3.083 | 1.165 | 1.356 |
| Their children are wise | 2.250 | 0.866 | 0.750 |
| Teachers hate their children | 2.167 | 1.193 | 1.424 |
| Teachers not morally upright | 4.250 | 0.452 | 0.205 |

**N=12**

Table 4.17 shows that the parents thought that pre-school teachers are not morally upright with a mean of 4.250. This was followed by the response of teachers not being competent at 3.083. The results indicate that there is a negative attitude towards pre-school teachers by parents which impedes on children's performance in number work.

The results on the questions regarding the influence of parental attitude on children's performance in number work according to the pre-school head teachers was as shown on Table 4.18

**Table 4.18 Provision of basic needs for ECDE children at home**

| **Do many parents provide their ECDE children with the basic needs at home?** | **Frequency** | **Percentage** |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 4 | 44.4% |
| No | 5 | 55.6% |
| **Total** | **9** | **100.0%** |

Table 4.18 shows that many parents don't provide their ECDE children with the basic needs for their school work. The main reason given especially for those from public schools was that they could not afford due to poverty levels.

There were also questions directed at the parents on the influence of parental attitude on children's performance in number work. They were asked to state the ways in which they assist their children do their number work assignment at home. The results are as shown on Table 4.19

**Table 4.19 Ways in which parents assist their children do their number work assignment at home**

| Ways in which they assist their children do their number work assignment at home | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| Participate in counting | 58% | 42% |
| Provide aids | 25% | 75% |

Table 4.19 shows that many parents don't provide their ECDE children with the basic needs for their school work. The main reason given especially for those from public schools was that they could not afford due to poverty levels.

They were also asked to state what learning resources they provide their children for number work activities. The results are as shown on Figure 4.5

**Figure 4.5 Learning resources provided to children for number work activities**

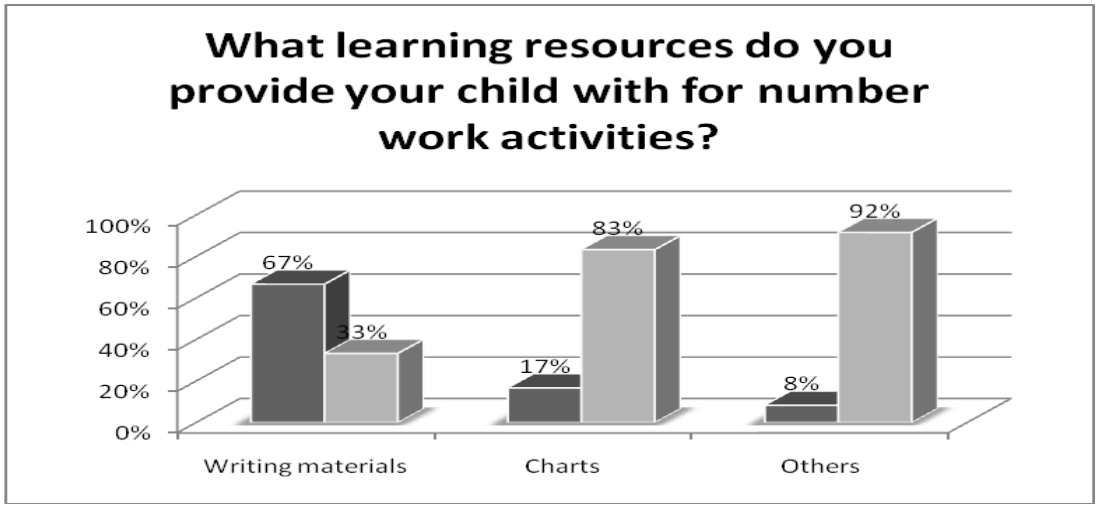


Figure 4.5 shows that writing materials were the only items that the parents provided for their children. This was followed by a few charts and lastly others which included objects.

### 4.7 The influence of parental participation in pre-school activities on children's performance in number work for both public and private schools

The study sought to establish the influence of parental participation in pre-school activities on children's performance in number work. This was done through questions raised to pre-school teachers, pre-school head teachers and parents. The results for the responses as per pre-school teachers are shown on Table 4.20

**Table 4.20 Influence of Parental participation in pre-school activities on children's performance**

| Influence of Parental participation in pre-school activities | Mean | Standard Deviation | Sample Variance |
|---|---|---|---|
| Participate in PTA | 2.833 | 0.937 | 0.879 |
| Visiting days | 2.667 | 1.371 | 1.879 |
| Sports day | 2.333 | 0.888 | 0.788 |
| Educational trips | 2.833 | 0.937 | 0.879 |

N=12

Table 4.20 shows that parents thought that participating in PTA and educational trips were pre-school activities that would help improve children's performance in pre-school number work. The results for the responses as per pre-school head teachers are shown on Table 4.21

**Table 4.21 Incidences of complains brought to the head teachers office**

| Do you receive any complain in your office that relates to participation in pre-school activities? | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 7 | 58.3% |
| No | 5 | 41.7% |
| **Total** | **12** | **100.0%** |

Table 4.21 shows that pre-school teachers receive complaints that relate to participation in pre-school activities. These include the fact that parents are not adequately informed of such meetings and that the meetings do not help much in improving children's performance in number work.

The results for the responses as per parents are shown on Figure 4.6 and Figure 4.7

**Figure 4.6 The way parents involve themselves in pre-school education**

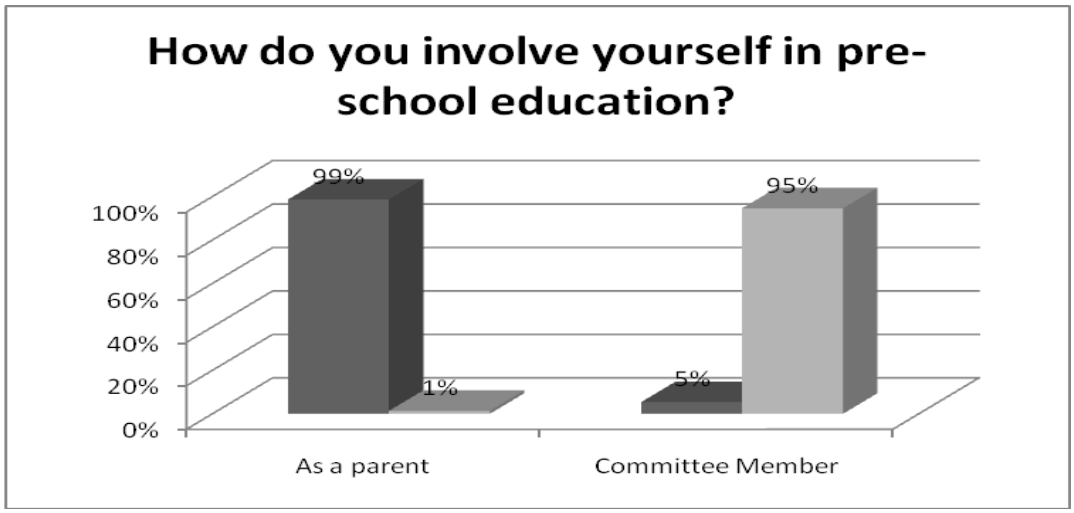


Figure 4.6 shows that many of the parents only involve themselves as parents only. However there is 5% who are committee members.

**Figure 4.7 Ways that parents are involved in their child's pre-school number work**

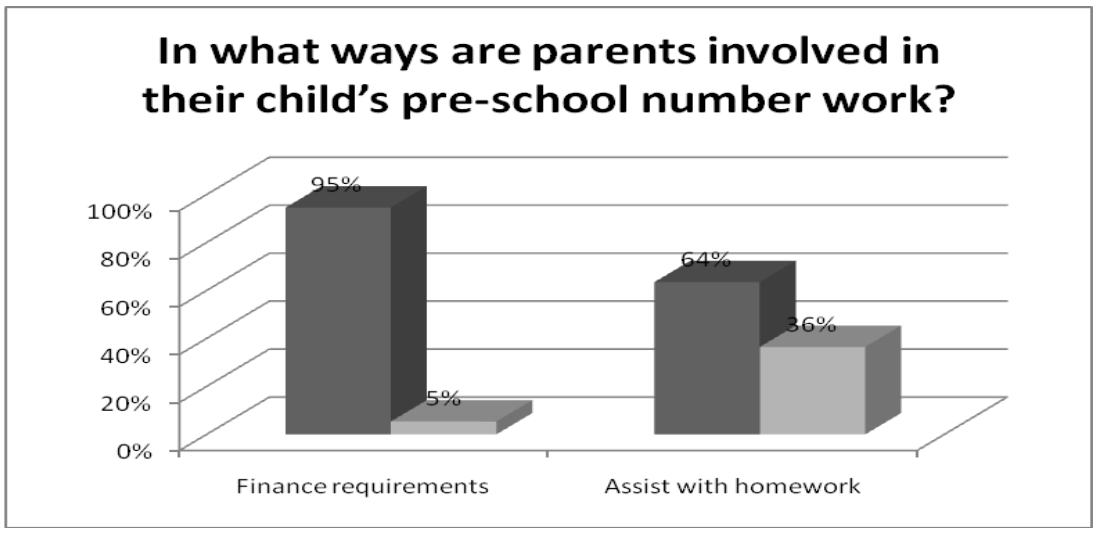


Figure 4.7 shows that parents involve themselves in their children's preschool number work only through financing requirements and assisting with homework.

On the challenges parents face in supporting their children to do their number work activities, the responses indicated that illiteracy on the part of parents was a major hindrance. Many felt that they could not be able to help the children because the job required professional training. For those in private schools, they stated that since they have paid school fees then it was not their job.

### 4.8 Observation checklist on the Influence of parental involvement in children's performance in number work for both public and private schools

The observation activity involved the researcher spending time with the sampled children in both public and private schools and observing various aspects that would shed light on the research problem.

The results of the findings for all the aspects the researcher observed as the children went through various number work activities are shown on Table 4.22

**Table 4.22 Observation checklist**

| Aspect observed | Mean | Standard Deviation | Sample Variance |
|---|---|---|---|
| Counting | 1.736 | 0.723 | 0.522 |
| Tallying | 2.126 | 0.833 | 0.693 |
| Addition | 1.839 | 0.834 | 0.695 |
| Subtraction | 1.920 | 0.750 | 0.563 |

Table 4.22 shows that counting was the most understood activity by the children involved in the study. This was followed by addition, then subtraction and finally tallying. This confirms findings by Ardila & Rosselli,(2002) who found that the more advanced skills, such as enumeration, correspondence construction, counting, Arithmetic, and understanding of arithmetical concepts are acquired through study.

# CHAPTER FIVE

# SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMNEDATIONS

## 5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of research findings, discussion of key findings, conclusions made from the study and the recommendations for policy and practice. The chapter also presents suggestions for further research.

## 5.2 Summary of findings

The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of parental involvement on children's performance in number work in selected pre-schools in Kianjai Zone , Tigania West Division of Meru County. The study adopted a descriptive research design to facilitate a detailed examination on the influence of parental involvement on children's performance in number work activities. The target population for this study was pupils, parents, teachers and head teachers of pre-schools in Kianjai zone. Stratified random sampling was used to come up with a sample of 11 head teachers, 14 preschool teachers, 80 parents and 93 preschool children. Self-administered questionnaires were used to collect data from head teachers and preschool teachers, an interview schedule was conducted to collect data from parents in the study and an observation checklist was used to collect data from pupils specifically on number work activities. Descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution, percentages and mean, were used to summarize and organize quantitative data.The following is a summary of the findings presented in the order of the study objectives.

On parental support, the study found that majority of parents indicated that they provided their child with the necessary materials to enable them do their number work. All the head teachers in the study agreed that parents provided their preschool children with basic items for use in school. Majority of the teachers in the study indicated that parental support influenced performance to a large extent. The findings indicate that parental support had a strong positive correlation with preschool children's performance in number work.

On parental communication, the study found that majority of the parents indicated that they visited their children's preschool to follow up on their child's progress. Findings indicated that preschool teachers and parents used letters and diaries to communicate with each other regarding the preschool children's progress in school. A significant number of the head teachers indicated that parental communication influenced children's number work to a large extent.

On parental attitude, the study found that a significant number of parents indicated that they encouraged their children to work hard in school. Majority of the teachers indicated that parental attitude influenced performance of preschool children in number work to a large extent. Majority of head teachers indicated that parents' attitude towards preschool affected performance of preschool children in number work to a large extent.

On parental participation in pre-school activities, the study found that a significant number of the parents indicated that they participated in various school activities when called upon by their children's preschool. Majority of the teachers in the study agreed

that parents assisted their preschool children with school work after providing for the financial support to their children.

### 5.3 Conclusion

The researcher concludes that parental involvement had a strong relationship with children's performance in number work in selected pre-school in Kianjai Zone , Tigania West Division of Meru County. The researcher concludes that parental support and parental participation were the strongest predictors of performance in number work in selected pre-schools in Kianjai Zone , Tigania West Division of Meru County. This is because the parents in Kianajai zone provided their children with learning materials and paid school levies on time. The study also found that the parents participated in assisting their children with homework. The researcher also concludes that majority of parents' had positive attitudes towards preschool education and as such they encourage their children to work hard in school.

The researcher concludes that communication between preschool teachers and preschool parents was a stumbling block in parental involvement. This is because parents did not always visit the school to follow-up their children's progress in academics. The researcher concludes that this is a problem because by visiting the school, the parents would be able to learn about the limitations of their child academically. In this way the parents would be more informed on areas to help their child. In addition frequent visits would give teachers an opportunity to advise the parents on the best way in which they (the parents) could assist their children in improving on number work activities.

### 5.4 Recommendations

The recommendations arising out of this study include looking at the value that the parents can bring into the children's performance. These touch on the school's curriculum, right from design, control and implementation. The benefits of parental support, communication, attitude and participation in school activities within the study area and the county at large should be felt beyond. More research should go into finding ways and means of mitigating non participation of parents in schools activities and affairs that lead to poor performances in number work. The study demonstrates how collaborative work produces positive outcomes for teachers, parents and the pupils. Persistent involvement of parents was found to be lacking for improved performance of the pupils and research should be done to find out how that can be improved for better performance, curriculum implementation and sustenance.

This study on the influence of parental involvement in children's performance in Kianjai Zone, Meru County, Kenya, has opened more research avenues in order to improve on the country's education sector as a whole. Due to the possible similarities of the influences of parental involvement in children's performance in number work in public and private schools studied in Kianjai Zone to other zones in the country, it will be very important that the study is replicated in these other areas in the District and the County at large. This provides an opportunity for the region to address the problems together if indeed they are similar. In the event that they are not, it will be important to have a critical look at the differences and therefore make better and more informed decisions on the involvement of parents and teachers in improving children's school performance.

In light of the above findings, the researcher recommends that the government should assist parents who are unable to provide their children with learning materials especially in public schools to ensure that all children are well equipped to enhance performance in number work activities. The management of the schools should organize more activities that enhance learning and improvement in number work in the schools.

### 5.5 Suggestions for further study

The current study focused on rural public and private pre-schools in Kianjai Zone. Future studies could focus on parental involvement in urban public and private pre-schools and the results compared with this study done in rural public and private pre-schools.

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix I: Questionnaire For Pre-School Teachers

Dear Sir/Madam,

The researcher is a student in the University of Nairobi studying for a Master's Degree in Early childhood education (ECDE). She is carrying out a research study on the influence of parental involvement on the children's performance in number work activity. Please note that any information that you give will be used for educational purposes only and will be treated confidentially. For every question with offered choices tick your preferred choice. For open ended question indicate your responses in the space provided.

**A) Background Information**

1. Name ECDE center.....

2. Zone.....

3. Gender: Male ( ) Female ( )

4. What is your highest level of Education?

Master's Degree ( ) Degree ( )

Diploma ( ) ECD Certificate ( )

5. How long have you worked as a teacher

1-3 years ( ) 4-7years ( ) 8-11 years ( ) l2 and above ( )

6. Please state the total Enrolment for

1-20 ( ) 21-30 ( ) 31-40 ( ) Over 40 ( )

**B) Influence of parental involvement in children's performance in number work**

**Effect of parental support**

7. Do parents assist children with their schoolwork?

   Yes ( ) No ( )

8. Name ways parents assist their children with their schoolwork at home.

   ……..

   ……..

**Parental communication**

9. How do parents communicate to the teacher about their children?

   Use of letters ( ) Diaries ( ) school visits ( )

10. How does the teacher communicate to parents on children's progress?

    Use of letters ( ) Diaries ( ) Calls ( ) SMS ( )

11. How often do parents visit the school to check on the children's progress?

    Daily ( ) Once ( ) Rarely ( ) Often ( )

12. Is there clear communication between the parent and the teacher?

    Yes ( ) No ( )

**Parental attitude**

13. Please indicate how the following parental attitudes affect children's

    performance?

| **Influence of parental attitude on children's performance** | **A very large extent** | **Large extent** | **No extent** | **Small extent** | **Very small extent** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Teachers are incompetent | | | | | |
| Their children are wise | | | | | |
| Teachers hate their children | | | | | |
| Teachers not morally upright | | | | | |

**Parental participation in pre-school activities**

14. Please indicate with a tick the extent to which the following items concerned with parental participation in pre-school activities influence children's performance in number work

| **Influence of Parental participation in pre-school activities on children's performance** | **A very large extent** | **Large extent** | **No extent** | **Small extent** | **Very small extent** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Participate in PTA | | | | | |
| Visiting days | | | | | |
| Sports day | | | | | |
| Educational trips | | | | | |

**Appendix II : Questionnaire For Pre-School Head Teachers**

Dear Sir/Madam,

The researcher is a student in the University of Nairobi studying for a Master's Degree in Early childhood education (ECDE). She is carrying out a research study on the influence of parental involvement on children's performance in number work activity. Please note that any information that you give will be used for educational purposes only and will be treated confidentially. For every question with offered choices tick your preferred choice. For open ended question indicate your responses in the space provided.

**A) Background Information**

1. Gender: Male ( ) Female ( )

2. Name of primary school.....

3. Zone.....

4. For how long have you served in this school?.....

5. What is your level of Education?

Master's Degree ( ) Degree ( ) Diploma ( ) Certificate ( )

6. Current enrolment:

Boys ( ) Girls ( ) Total.....

7. How many ECDE teachers do you have?

Male ( ) Female ( )

**B) Influence of parental involvement in children's performance in number work**

**The effects of parental support**

9. How often do ECDE parents visit your office?

Daily ( ) Rarely ( ) Once ( ) Always ( )

10. Do ECDE parents report their children's issues to your office?

Yes ( ) No ( )

**Parental communication**

11. How do ECDE parents communicate to the school about their children?

Letters ( ) Diaries ( ) Mobiles ( ) Physical ( )

12. Do ECDE parents understand any information communicated to them by teachers?

Yes ( ) No ( )

If No a give a reason for your answer.....

13. What are the challenges faced when communicating with parents?

.....

.....

**Parental attitude**

14. Do many parents provide their ECDE children with the basic needs at home?

Yes ( ) No ( )

If No give a reason for your answer.

.....

.....

**Parental participation in pre-school activities**

15. Do you receive any complain in your office that relates to participation?

Yes ( ) No ( )

If yes give some of the complains_____

**Appendix III : Interview for Preschool Parents**

Dear Sir/Madam;

The researcher is a student in the University of Nairobi studying for a Master's Degree in Early childhood education (ECDE). She is carrying out a research study on the influence of parental involvement, on children's performance in number work activity. Please note that any information that you give will be used for educational purposes only and will be treated confidentially.

**The effects of parental support**

1. What parental support do you extend to your children?

| **Parent Support** | **Yes** | **No** |
|---|---|---|
| Provide fees and other requirements | | |
| Assist with homework | | |
| Attend meetings | | |

**The influence of parental communication**

2. How do you communicate with your child's pre-school teacher (s)?

| **Communication with teacher** | **Yes** | **No** |
|---|---|---|
| Letter | | |
| Calls | | |
| SMS | | |
| Personal Visit | | |
| Diaries | | |

**Parental attitude**

3. In what ways do assist your child do his/her number work assignment at home?

| **Assist child** | **Yes** | **No** |
|---|---|---|
| Participate in counting | | |
| Provide aids | | |

4. What learning resources do you provide your child with for number work activities?

| **Learning resources** | **Yes** | **No** |
|---|---|---|
| Writing materials | | |
| Charts | | |
| Others | | |

**Parental participation in pre-school activities**

5. How do you involve yourself in pre-school education?

| **Involvement** | **Yes** | **No** |
|---|---|---|
| As a parent | | |
| Committee Member | | |

6. In what ways are parents involved in their child's pre-school number work?

| **Parent Involvement** | **Yes** | **No** |
|---|---|---|
| Finance requirements | | |
| Assist with homework | | |

7. Tell me about the challenges parents face in supporting their children to do their number work activities?

_____

_____

_____

**Appendix IV: Observation checklist on the Influence of parental involvement in children's performance in number work**

| **Aspect to be observed** | **Good** | **Fair** | **Bad** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Counting | | | |
| Tallying | | | |
| Addition | | | |
| Subtraction | | | |