

Influence of Parents' Level of Education on Quality Education in Public Primary Schools in Machakos County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

The level of parents' education has been identified as one of the greatest determinants to children's ability to learn this paper therefore explored how parents' level of education influenced quality education in public primary schools in Machakos County, Kenya the study adopted descriptive research design approach and the target population was 403 head teachers, 2015 teachers and 756 standard 8 pupils from public primary schools located in rural areas a sample size of 343 respondents was selected through purposive sampling and simple random sampling primary data was collected using questionnaires which were issued to teachers who taught standard 8 Focus Group Discussions were conducted by standard 8 pupils under guidance of the researcher descriptive analysis was used, and this included means, standard deviation, relative frequencies and percentages a computer software programme, Statistical Package for Social Scientist (SPSS) version 26.0 was used to generate data array that was used for subsequent analysis of the data inferential statistics using regression model was applied to examine the relationship between the research variables the study findings revealed that a change in either of the variables led to a significant change in quality education in public primary schools in Machakos County, Kenya the conclusion drawn from the study is that there was a linear positive relationship between parents' level of education and quality education the study recommends that GOK through the local administrations and other means to sensitize parents and guardians on the importance of supporting their children in education matters despite their level of education.

Keywords: Children, influence, parents' level of education, public primary schools, quality education.

INTRODUCTION

Quality education is a dynamic concept which changes with time and is subject to social, economic and environmental conditions it was emphasized back in the Dakar Framework for Action (2000) which declared that access to quality education was essential and a right of every child (UNESCO, 2012) in an effort to access quality education, the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals agenda four was established hence went beyond access of EFA to access of quality education on this matter, developed countries have continued to make rapid progress towards universal primary education over the past decade by expanding access to schooling for a large number of children however, the past decade has also seen a growing need for developed nations to broaden the concept of EFA beyond a concentration on increased access to schooling, to include improvements in the quality of learning outcomes for all children (Schinder,

2013).

Quality education is thus crucial for it sets foundation for better learners, better citizens, and in turn, better society it is in this context the researcher brings in the aspect of parental involvement, since they are key stakeholders to ensure realization of quality education among school going children however, Adeyemi (2010) acknowledges the role played by parents towards schooling of their children he adds that there is need to examine the parents' level of education since some parents' level of education is too low to support their children's cognitive and psychosocial development in schools in the same vein, Ogunsola, Osuolale, & Ojo (2014) urges that parental education not only influences parent-child interactions related to learning, but also affects parents' income and need for help in the home or school this explains why family support is crucial in producing quality learners this implies that if this variable of parents' level of education is put into consideration, there will be a turnaround effect on quality education in public primary schools

In line with the above, African countries have continued to make rapid progress towards universal primary education over the past decade by expanding access to schooling for a large number of children however, the past decade has also seen a growing need for nations to broaden the concept of EFA beyond a concentration on increased access to schooling, to include improvements in the quality of learning outcomes for all school going children (Hewlett foundations global development programme strategy, 2013) there is general concern that the quality of education that is being offered in many Sub Saharan countries does not provide learners with the desired competencies thus, learners are not acquiring critical knowledge and skills at school that are required for meaningful contribution to sustainable national development (World Bank, 2016) in addition, the poor quality of education has been demonstrated by low pupil achievement in national assessment the poor results have led to on-going debates about the quality of education in many African countries these debates have prompted international organizations that invest in education programmes to combine the focus on increasing enrolment rates into schools with greater emphasis on improving the quality of education in order to achieve improved Learning for All (LFA) for the next 10 years improving the quality of education should therefore be a priority within the context of African Countries hence this calls for Government and parental support (Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ), 2018) on this matter, Ogoye (2010) agree that it is crucial for parents to realize the importance of education and the role they are expected to play in the realization of better performance by their children however he noted that children of the educated parents are more liable than the children of the lower or non-educated parents to have higher aspirations and higher education plans this has an implication that the academic aspiration of children is either positively or negatively impacted or directly related to the level of their parents' education.

Adding another angle to the above, Kenya like other developing countries has significantly invested a lot of resources with an aim of enhancing quality education involvement of other stakeholders such as parents has also been a strategy that the State has employed to improve quality education (Adayemi, 2010) this has led to an increase in the count of public primary schools from 26,549 as reported in 2012 to 35,442 as observed in 2017, with enrollment increasing from 9.8 million in 2012 to 10.4 million pupils as observed in 2017 (Maina, 2018) this translates to a growth in Gross Enrollment Rate (GER) from 104.4% to 106.4% in public primary school education, while Net Enrollment Rate (NER) rose from 88.0% in 2012 to 91.2% in 2017 further, in the same period, the completion rates decreased from 84% in 2012 to 80% in 2017 while retention rates decreased from 86% in 2012 to 77% in 2017 (GOK, 2019) Kenyan primary schools are at stake given the fact that the dropout rate is alarming and therefore a need to re-think a workable formula to address the problem it is for this reason that this study was carried out to establish whether parents' level of education was a contributing factor towards the negative influence of quality education in public primary schools in Kenya.

In Machakos County, poor quality of education has been demonstrated by low completion rates and poor

performance according MOE through basic education statistical booklet (2020), in Machakos County, Gross Enrollment Rate (GER) for public primary schools was 106.4% in the year 2017 and in the year 2019 it increased to 111.2% while Net Enrollment Rate (NER) rose from 81.0% in the year 2017 to 87.2% in the year 2019 however, in the same period, the completion rates decreased from 78% to 71% ideally, the number of pupils who enrolled at the beginning of a particular level should be the number that completed the final year thus the question, “what is ailing quality education in public primary schools in Machakos County?” in search for answers for this question, Kieti (2016) observed that in Machakos County, majority of school going children often lacked food and were unable to finish up homework due to lack of parent’s support on the same note, Makewa (2010) concluded that parents’ educational background could affect the children’s success in school this was a strong pointer that necessitated this study to establish whether parents’ level of education influenced quality education in public primary schools in Machakos County, Kenya

Objective of the study

The objective that guided this paper was to explore the parents’ level of education and its influence on quality education in public primary schools in Machakos County, Kenya.

METHODS

This study made use of descriptive design utilizing both qualitative and quantitative approaches. According to Kerlinger (2013), descriptive design is used in preliminary and exploratory studies to allow researchers to gather information, summarize, present and interpret for the purpose of clarification. Similarly, Mugenda and Mugenda (2009) point out that descriptive survey research is intended to produce statistical information about aspects of education. The independent variable was school funding as defined by the way schools were funded by the Government and other stakeholders in Machakos County. The dependent variable was quality of education which was the expected outcome of the research. According to MOE (2020), Machakos County has 8 Sub Counties and consists of 909 public primary schools. Among them, 403 are located in the rural areas with 403 head teachers, 2015 standard 8 teachers and 756 standard 8 pupils from each sub County. These formed the target population of 3174 respondents. Considering the nature of the sample study and geographical spread of the respondents, the researcher used different instruments: Questionnaires, interviews, Focus Group Discussion (FGDs), Observation schedule and document analysis. This is enunciated by Gay, Airasia, and Mills (2011) who argue that in social science research, the most commonly used instruments are questionnaires, interview schedules and observational forms. There was both qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative data was written down and narrated by the researcher. The analysis of this data considered the inferences that were made from the opinions of respondents. The analysis was then presented thematically in a narrative form. Quantitative raw data was first cleaned, sorted, coded and subjected to the SPSS software version 26. Thereafter it was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The data was further subjected to regression analysis.

This type of analysis is used when a researcher is interested in finding out whether an independent variable predicts a given dependent variable (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2009). This study was interested in the Goodness of Fit. The Goodness-Of-Fit (GOF) of a statistical model describes how well it fits into a set of observations. GOF summarizes the discrepancy between the observed values and the values expected under a statistical model in question (Kombo & tromp, 2009). GOF was measured by the R-Square statistic. The F-test was used to test the significance of the independent variable with the dependent variable. This is because the sample size was larger than 30.

Based on the study objectives and variables as constructed in the conceptual framework, a multiple linear regression model analysis was carried out to determine the form of mathematical model that explains the

relationship between the dependent variable and the significant independent variables previously shown through correlation analysis. This regression model was used because it provides a sufficient and flexible framework that suits the needs of a lot of analysts and has been adopted in similar past studies including those by Feng *et al.* (2010). The coefficient of the significant variables as determined by correlation analysis was established. From the analysis of data, the researcher was able to interpret the findings and draw conclusions. This in turn enabled the researcher to come up with suggestions and recommendations depending on the interpretations that come out as a result of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study involved various categories of respondents. Among them were head teachers of public primary schools, teachers of standard eight and standard eight pupils. The researcher issued 217 questionnaires to the standard eight teachers out of which 215 were adequately filled and returned. This represented a successful response rate of 99% among the standard eight teachers. Record forms were issued to 44 heads teachers, out of which 42 were sufficiently filled and returned; this indicated a response rate of 95%. The researcher also set out to conduct focused group discussions with 82 standard eight pupils. Out of these, only 71 were available during the time of carrying out the study hence a successful response rate of 87%.

Parents level of education and quality education

The study further sought to establish the influence of parents’ level of education on quality education in public primary schools in Machakos County, Kenya. The teachers were presented with a series of statements where they expressed their extent of agreement or disagreement with the statements. The standard eight pupils also expressed their views on parents’ level of education and quality education during the FGDs.

A descriptive analysis of the responses was conducted, followed by a correlation and finally a regression analysis.

Descriptive analysis of parents’ level of education

The findings showed that on average, the teachers disagreed that most parents are graduates or secondary school leavers given (Mean=1.51, SD=0.785) and (Mean=2.18, SD=1.004) respectively. Only about 2.80% and 10.20% agreed that majority of the parents are graduates or secondary school leavers respectively. The teachers had a neutral view on that majority of the parents are primary school leavers given (Mean=2.64, SD=1.143). They however disagree that most of the parents never went to school as supported by (Mean=1.92, SD=1.067).

Table showing descriptive analysis of parents’ level of education

Parents Level of Education	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Dev.
Majority of the parents in the school are Graduates	60.90%	32.10%	4.20%	0.90%	1.90%	1.51	0.785
Majority of the parents in the school are secondary school leavers	24.20%	47.90%	17.70%	6.00%	4.20%	2.18	1.004
Majority of the parents in the school are primary school leavers	11.20%	47.90%	15.30%	17.20%	8.40%	2.64	1.143

Majority of the parents in the school never went to school	41.40%	40.00%	8.40%	5.60%	4.70%	1.92	1.067
Average						2.063	1

Correlation analysis between parents’ level of education and quality education

The findings as outlined in Table 4.22 show that there was a weak, positive and significant correlation between parents’ level of education and quality education in public primary schools in Machakos County, Kenya ($r=0.159, p=0.020, p<0.05$).

Table showing Correlation analysis between parents’ level of education and quality education

		Parents’ Level of Education	Quality of Education
Parents’ level of education	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	215	214
Quality of education	Pearson Correlation	.159*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.020	
	N	214	214

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Regression analysis between parents’ level of education and quality education Regression analysis was carried out to show the relationship between parents’ level of education and quality education in public primary schools in Machakos County, Kenya. This enabled the researcher to quantify the influence of parents’ level of education on quality education. The following hypothesis was therefore tested: 05 There is no significant relationship between parents’ level of education and quality education in schools in Machakos County, Kenya.

Model summary

The model summary results presented in Table 4.23 showed that parent’s level of education explained a small proportion of the variation in quality education. This is supported by the R square of 0.025 which meant that 2.5% of the variation in quality education could be explained by the parent’s level of education. The rest of the variation, 97.5% was attributed to other factors not considered in this particular model.

Table 4.23: Model summary for the effect of parent’s level of education on quality education

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.159a	0.025	0.021	30.003

a. Predictors: (Constant), Parents level of education

Analysis of variance

The analysis of variance results presented in Table 4.24 showed that the model used to show the link between parent’s level of education and quality education was significant given $F(1, 212) = 5.510, p = .020, p < 0.05$. The findings showed that the parent’s level of education was a significant variable of quality education in public primary schools in Machakos County, Kenya.

Table showing Analysis of variance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4960.132	1	4960.132	5.51	.020b
	Residual	190834.3	212	900.162		
	Total	195794.4	213			

b. Predictors: (Constant), Parents level of education

Regression coefficient for parent’s level of education

The regression coefficient output displayed in Table 4.25 showed that quality education was positively and significantly influenced by parent’s level of education given $\beta = 8.201$, $t = 2.347$, $p = .020$, $p < 0.05$. The findings implied that a unit increase in parent’s level of education would result to an increase in quality education by 8.201 units holding all other factors constant. These findings led to the rejection of the null hypothesis and an inference made that parent’s level of education has a significant influence on quality education.

The following model was therefore fitted;

Quality education = 221.407 + 8.201 Parents’ level of education

Table showing Regression coefficient for parents’ level of education

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	221.407	7.49		29.559	.000
	Parents level of education	8.201	3.494	.159	2.347	.020

Pupils comments on parents’ level of education

During the FGDs, some pupils remarked that their parents were very supportive of their education. Most of the pupils especially whose parents were well educated and professionals remarked that their parents encourage them to study so that they can achieve their goals later in life.

In explaining, one of the pupils remarked;

“My father is a teacher and encourages me to work hard so that I pass exam. He motivates me so much.
 “PUPIL IV

“My father is doctor and mother is a social worker. They support me so much in my learning. For example, while at home, when doing homework even when my siblings go to sleep my parents waits for me until I finish”. PUPIL III

It was however clear that though some pupils come from families where parents are not highly educated they were as well supported as confirmed below.

One pupil remarked;

“My parents support me so much in my school matters. They keep on telling me that they value education

though they did not make it to secondary school.” PUPIL I

Further, pupils whose parents were not well educated remarked that they did not get the necessary academic support from their parents. One pupil remarked;

“My parents did not study past primary education, sometimes when I’m doing homework and get stuck, I find it hard to ask them anything because in most cases they do not know.” PUPIL IV

It also emerged that most of the parents only strived to provide learning resources as required but they were not sufficiently supportive of their school going children academically. Most of the academic work was delegated to the teachers. A pupil had this to say;

“My parents do not seem to be supportive to my learning. They provide what is required in school though sometimes they don’t. My father keeps on saying there are many people who are learnt but they are poor and there are others who are not learnt but they are rich”. PUPIL VI

The findings above showed that the academic aspiration of children is either positively or negatively impacted or directly related to the level of their parents’ level of education.

CONCLUSION

Regardless of parents’ level of education, every parent ought to strive to support the learning of their children since it’s their obligation according to children Act (2001).

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