

Effect of Parental Involvement by the Headteachers in the Education of their Children on Students Retention in Masinga Sub-County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

The study focuses on the effect of parents' involvement by head teachers in the education of their children and students' retention in secondary school education in Masinga sub – county Kenya. It was guided by the following objective: to determine the extent to which parents' involvement by the headteachers in the education of their children influences students' retention in secondary school education. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The study was anchored on Epstein theory. The target population was 50 head teachers, 50 deputy head teachers and 5022 form 3 and 4 students. Purposive, stratified proportionate sampling and simple random sampling were employed to sample 25 head teachers, 25 deputy head teachers and 370 students. Data collection instruments included questionnaires for headteachers and students, an interview guide for deputy headteachers and a document analysis guide. Validity of the research instruments was ascertained through expert judgement and piloting. Reliability was achieved through test – retest method where the instruments were piloted in a time interval of two weeks and the two results were correlated using Pearson's product moment correlation method. Further, inferential analysis was employed that involved correlational analysis at a 0.05 level of significance. The hypothesis was accepted or rejected at 0.01 level of significance. The findings showed that there is a positive correlation between parents' involvement in the education of their children and students' retention ($r = 0.811$; $p = 0.00$), hence the hypothesis was rejected and an alternative hypothesis accepted. The study concluded that the head teachers' efforts to engage parents in the educational matters positively influence students' retention. The study recommends that head teachers should use more communication strategies in order to involve all the parents in the education of their children.

Key words: Education, Head Teachers, Parental Involvement, Students' Retention

I. INTRODUCTION

Parents have a great influence on their children's academic success both in and out of school Ntirandekura et al. (2022) explain that parents can support and encourage their children through rewards and praises to give children through rewards and praises to give children a sense of initiative and confidence, which are necessary for learning and persistence in school. The children whose parents are actively involved in their education have high academic results and a positive attitude towards school (Anthoney et al., 2023). Garcia and Thornton (2014) indicated that parental involvement stimulates good behavior of students. The students school attendance and discipline are two crucial predictors of parental involvement and achievement because when the parents are involved, that is, there is good compliance between the schools and parents, improvement in the student retention is resulted or the attendance and discipline of the students get better (Rhames, 2014)

Parents' are broadly acknowledged to be essential partners in the schooling process of their children, with parental involvement being linked to positive impact on academic achievement. Parental involvement is linked to the academic progress of a learner through engagement in diverse activities such as assisting the learners in undertaking assignments, attending the learner's school mentorship programs, connecting between teachers and learners and attending teacher-parent meetings. Parental involvement has continuously become a concern to modern families that value quality education for their children (Duristic & Bunijevac, 2017).

Hanif (2019) studied the impact of parental involvement on academic performance of students in Karachi. A questionnaire was developed for data collection from sample students. In depth interview was conducted with the sample faculty members. The research findings showed that two factors of parental involvement i.e. moral and financial do affect academic performance of students of higher secondary classes. The study recommended that parent should spend time with their children and do discuss their academics at home.

Ibrahim (2021) explored the impact of parental involvement on academic achievement of students at crescent international school in Thailand. The responses of 12 parents' whose children are enrolled in secondary school level are

taken as samples for the study. Data was collected by use of questionnaires. The findings indicated that students with highly involved parents had better academic performance and higher test scores in all the subjects compared to students whose parents were not involved in their education. Ntekane (2018) reports the existence of a significant positive relationship between parental involvement and good parent-teacher relationships. In addition, the learners concerned reported that when their parents were involved in their education, they felt supported and guided, enabling them to make informed decisions regarding their career paths, which led to their enhanced academic performance (Gil-Galván & Martín-Espinosa, 2023).

Ndwandwe (2023) found out that parental involvement improves discipline and learners' achievement. However, various factors indeed affect parents' involvement such as lack of confidence in providing assistance to children with homework, ineffective communication, conflicts in home school scheduling and reluctance to attend parents' meetings.

Simweleba and Serpel (2020) studied parental involvement and learner's performance in rural basic schools in Zambia. The sample size was 168 participants. Questionnaires and interview guides were used to collect data from parents while tests in Mathematics and Chitonga were set to assess the learner's performance. Results showed that post test scores of learners in Mathematics and Chitonga in the intervention school were significantly higher, in addition to increased parent –child interaction and the use of home resources in instruction.

According to Kisiangani (2018), parents' demographic characteristics in their involvement in lower primary positively influence academic outcomes. The findings relate to the Mathematics scores that showed that parents who assisted their learners at home with Mathematics greatly improved the Mathematics aggregate points of the learners (Zurlo et al., 2020). Indimuli (2022) indicates that parental involvement in the learner's academic work significantly influences the learning process of the children. Makhoha et al. (2018) examined several schools on how parental monitoring influenced the academic achievements of students. The results showed that parental monitoring and academic performance were positively correlated.

Amunga et al. (2020) and Mwarari et al. (2020) have indicated poor parental involvement in children's education. According to these scholars the low parental involvement can be attributed to a number of factors including lack of sensitization of parents on their roles in education; inadequate knowledge and skills on how to assist their kids; inadequate instructional resources and lack of sufficient time owing to completing duties and negative parent attitudes towards their involvement in take home assignments as they do not think it is their obligation.

A study done in Machakos by Mudaki (2016) on parental involvement in children's reading comprehension and with 104 respondents found out that parental involvement in reading has a significant influence not only on reading achievement, language comprehension and expression skills but also on pupils' interests in reading attitudes toward reading and attentiveness in classroom.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The Kenya government has implemented various measures to foster more students' retention and completion of secondary education. These measures include adoption of elaborate policy on information, communication and technology (ICT) in education. The medium term plan III (2018 – 2022) of the vision 2030 endeavored to improve access, equity, quality and relevance in education, training and research. The implementation of this strategy saw the government increase students capitation from Kshs. 12, 870 to Kshs. 22, 224 and continues to expand school infrastructure and equipment through construction and rehabilitation of schools (Republic of Kenya, 2019). Further measures to improve on students' retention include the introduction of re – entry policy, provision of sanitary towels in schools, posting of trained teachers in secondary schools. All these notwithstanding retention in secondary education remains low (Ministry of Education, 2022)

Several studies have been done on students' retention for example (Lewin's 2018; Githaka et al 2017; Masaiti 2018), but none has investigated the influence of parental involvement by the headteachers in the education of their children in Masinga Sub – County. Parental involvement ways such as participating in academic days, school fundraising, PTA meetings and helping children do homework are believed to contribute to the issue of student retention. This study seeks to explore these parental involvement strategies on students' retention in Masinga Sub – County, Machakos County, Kenya.

1.2 Research Objective

The objective of this study was to determine the extent to which parents' involvement by the headteachers in the education of their children influences students' retention in secondary school education in Masinga Sub - County.

1.3 Research Hypothesis

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between parental involvement in the education of their children and students' retention.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Epstein Theory

The theoretical framework for this study on the effect of Parental involvement by the headteachers in the education of their children is anchored on Epstein (2001) theory which outlines six types of parental involvement in education. These include parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making and collaborating with the community. This theory is relevant to the study because it covers fundamental issues surrounding students' retention lined up for empirical analysis in this study. According to Epstein's model, parents should assist their children in preparing for school and ensure they return home safely. The school should provide a favorable and conducive environment for the learners to attain academic and psychomotor skills.

2.2 Empirical Review

2.2.1 Parental Involvement and Students' Retention

Several studies have been done on the influence of parental involvement in the education of their children on student retention. Kantova (2022) reported that higher parental involvement is linked to an increased probability of high school graduation while stricter parental behavior is found to decrease the expected likelihood of completing high school.

Rogers and Feller (2018) conducted a quantitative research with a sample of 825 youths to investigate the role of parents' involvement on the academic outcomes of youths. The findings revealed that parents who directly helped their children with school homework enhanced their performance and attendance.

Smokoska (2020) studied parental communication with learners and how it influenced academic achievements. A population of 540 respondents was randomly sampled for primary data abstraction. The findings revealed that parents with a good communication approach resulted in better academic outcomes for their learners.

Koskei et al. (2020) investigated parental support and boys' retention in public primary schools in Kenya. The study found out that lack of parental support in terms of parental involvement in boys schooling, engagement in child Labour, negative parental attitude, parental illiteracy and inadequate provision of learning materials was a major impediment to boys' retention.

Avnet et al. (2019) investigated the impact of parental involvement on educational attainment of students in elementary schools using a qualitative sample of 450 students. The findings revealed that homebased parental involvement positively influenced and improved students' outcomes. In contrast, Lareau (2019) conducted a quantitative study to examine parents' engagements in schooling and its impact on parental involvement in their childrens education. The findings revealed that although the perception of teachers and school principals towards parental involvement may be positive, it does not influence positive school achievement but negatively impacts academic achievement.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a descriptive survey research design. Descriptive survey research design is used in preliminary and exploratory studies to allow researchers to gather information, summarize, present and interpret for the purpose of clarifications.

3.2 Target Population

The study had a population of 5122 participants. A population of a study refers to the entire group of individuals to which a researcher aspires to generalize the outcome of the study (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2013). The study population of this study included 50 head teachers' 50 deputy head teachers and 5022 form 3 and 4 students of the 50 public secondary schools in Masinga Sub County which are distributed in four divisions. The researcher chose the form 3 and 4 students because they had spent a considerable time in the school and so were information rich.

3.3 Sample Size

The sample size for the students was computed using Yamane (1973) formula as indicated below: -

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

n = sample size

N = population size

e = margin error (0.05)



$$1 = \text{constant}$$

Hence,

$$n = \frac{5022}{1 + 5022(0.05)^2}$$

$$= 370$$

Table 1 below shows the distribution of the number of schools, head teachers, deputy head teachers and students.

Table 1
Sample Size

Zone	No. of schools	H/teachers	Sample Size	D/H/Teachers	Sample Size	Students	Sample Size
Masinga	18	18	9	18	9	1803	132
Kivaa	14	14	7	14	7	1356	100
Ndithini	11	11	5	11	5	1104	81
Kithyoko	7	7	4	7	4	759	57
Total	50	50	25	50	25	5022	370

3.4 Sampling Technique

Sampling is a method, process or procedure used to select a subset of a population to take part in the study. It is the process of choosing a large number of people for a research in a way that ensures the chosen people accurately reflect the larger population from which they were chosen (Matula et al., 2018).

Table 2
Sampling Technique

Category of target population	Population size	Sample size	Sampling Technique
Headteachers	50	25	Purposive
Deputy headteachers	50	25	Purposive
Students	5022	370	Simple random
Total	5122	420	

The study employed purposive sampling technique to select 25 deputy headteachers and 25 headteachers. The researcher further employed simple random sampling to select 370 students.

3.5 Data Collection

The researcher developed three instruments that were used to collect data from head teachers, deputy head teachers and students. This included questionnaires, interview guides and document analysis.

The instruments were validated. Validity assess whether content in a questionnaire is able to measure what is intended to be measured (Orodho, 2004). Validity for this study was ensured through pretesting instruments and expert judgment. Reliability was determined through test-retest method and was calculated using Pearson correlation coefficient resulting in a coefficient value of 0.7 for the students and head teachers' questionnaires.

Before proceeding to collect data, the researcher first obtained an introductory letter from the university of Nairobi department of educational management, policy and curriculum studies to be presented to the Secretary, National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) for authorization to carry out research. The researcher there after reported to the sub county director of education who issued a letter to the school head teachers allowing the researcher to conduct the research. The questionnaires were administered to the head teachers and students while the interview guide was administered to the deputy head teachers who were given enough time to respond to these research instruments. The researcher then collected the filled questionnaires and the deputy head teacher's responses for analysis.

3.6 Data Analysis

Data analysis deals with working with the data, breaking and synthesizing in search of patterns and attempting to discover what the important issues are (Babu-Nyarko, 2019). Quantitative data were analyzed by using the statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 22.0 where it computed descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation and presented the findings, using tables and graphs while the qualitative data were analyzed thematically and presented using a text.



IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1 Response Rate

A total of 370 questionnaires were administered to students while 25 questionnaires were administered to the headteachers. Only 350 questionnaires were returned for analysis by students which formed 95% return rate. Similarly, 25 out of 25 headteachers and deputy headteachers responded hence a response rate of 100%. The questionnaire return rate is showed in Table 3.

Table 3

Questionnaire Return Rate

Category	Sampled	Returned	Not returned	Percentage
Head teachers	25	25	0	100
Deputy headteachers	25	25	0	100
Students	370	350	20	95

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The researcher analyzed the demographic characteristics of the head teachers and deputy head teachers.

4.2.1 Distribution of Head Teachers, Deputy Head Teachers and Students by Age

Data displaying the distribution of head teachers and deputy head teachers by age is summarized in Table 4.

Table 4

Age Distribution of Head Teachers and Deputy Head Teachers

Age	Headteachers		Deputy Headteachers	
	Frequency	Percent (%)	Frequency	Percent (%)
35- 39	2	8.3	5	20.83
40- 44	9	37.5	13	54.16
45- 49	8	29.2	6	20.83
50- 55	3	12.5	1	4.18
Above 55	3	12.5	0	0

Majority 9(37.5%) of the head teachers are aged between 40 and 44 years while 8 (29.2%) of head teachers are aged between 45 and 49 years. 3(12.5%) of head teachers are aged between 50 and 55 years. Richer (2011) asserted that teachers between the ages 30-49 years are keen on trying new ideas, have hope in the system and aggressively seek to produce results and are likely to be appointed for leadership.

4.2.2 Gender of the Respondents

As shown in Table 5 the study sought to establish the gender of the respondents.

Table 5

Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Category	No. of Male	Percentage	No. of Female	Percentage	Total & Percentage
Head Teacher	19	76	6	24	25(100%)
Deputy Head Teacher	16	64	9	36	25(100%)
Student	150	42.8	200	57.2	350(100%)

Table 5 shows that majority of the head teachers were male 19(76%) while 6(24%) were female. Further, majority of the deputy head teachers 16(64%) were male while 9(36%) were female. The gender ratio clearly shows that more males were appointed in positions of leadership as compared to the female gender. In construct the table below shows that there were more female students 200 (57.2%) as compared to the male students 150(42.8%).

4.2.3 Professional Qualifications of Head Teachers and Deputy Head Teachers

Data displaying the professional qualification of head teachers and deputy head teachers is summarized in Table 6.

Table 6*Professional Qualifications of Head Teachers and Deputy Head Teachers*

Category	PHD (%)	Masters (%)	Degree (%)	Dipl (%)
Head teachers	-	6 (25%)	16 (66.7%)	-
Deputy head teachers	-	2 (8.3%)	20 (83.3%)	-

The findings in Table 6 indicate that majority of the head teachers 16(66.7%) were degree holders while 6(25%) of the head teachers had master's degree. In addition, 20(83.3%) of the deputy head teachers were degree holders while 2(8.3%) of the deputy head teachers had attained master degree. Consequently, the respondents had attained the necessary qualification of a degree in education for effective school management.

4.3 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics was done on the basis of the study variable.

4.3.1 Descriptive Statistics on Headteachers Involvement of Parents in the Education of their Children

The objective of this study was to determine the extent to which parents' involvement by head teachers' in the education of their children influence students' retention in public secondary schools in Masinga Sub County, Machakos County, Kenya. To realize this objective headteachers were requested to rank their degree of agreement on the effectiveness of parent involvement in the education of their children under the scale strongly disagree, disagree, not sure, agree and strongly agree. Their responses are presented in Table 7.

Table 7*Head Teachers' Responses on the Effectiveness of Parents' Involvement in the Education of their Children and Students' Retention*

Statement	SD		D		NS		A		SA	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Parental involvement ensures an intellectually stimulating environment	2	8	3	12	1	4	10	40	9	36
Parental involvement leads to students school readiness	2	8	1	4	2	8	8	32	12	48
Parental involvement leads to students adjustment and socio emotional development	1	4	3	12	1	4	10	40	10	40
Parental involvement leads to children staying longer in school	1	4	2	8	2	8	9	36	11	44

Findings in Table 7 indicate that majority 19(76%) of the head teachers believed that parental involvement ensures an intellectually stimulating environment in the school. Further, 5(20%) either strongly disagreed or disagreed while 1(4%) of the head teachers were unsure.

The findings also indicated that 3(12%) of the head teachers either strongly disagreed or disagreed that parental involvement leads to students' school readiness while 20(80%) strongly agreed or agreed that parental involvement leads to students' school readiness. 2(8%) were not sure.

In addition, the findings indicated that 20(80%) of the head teachers either strongly agreed or agreed that parents' involvement leads to students' adjustment as well as socio-emotional development. Further, 4(12%) of the head teachers either strongly disagreed or disagreed that parents' involvement leads to students' adjustments as well as socio-emotional development.

The findings indicated that 20(80%) of the head teachers believed that parents involvement leads to children staying longer in school. 3 (12%) of the head teachers either strongly disagreed or disagreed that parents' involvement leads to children staying longer in school while 2(8%) were not sure. These findings are in agreement with Alinusurin (2020) who found out that parental involvement enhanced students' academic outcomes and reduced unnecessary absenteeism.

4.3.2 Descriptive Statistics on Headteachers Involvement of Parents in Various School Activities

The researcher sought to examine how parents' involvement in various school activities influenced the students' retention. Data in Table 8 shows the results.



Table 8

Parents’ Involvement in Various School Activities and Students’ Retention

Activity	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Dev.
The extent in which giving homework enhances student retention.	25	1	4	1.96	0.859
The extend in which PTA meetings enhances students retention.	25	1	4	2.32	0.802
The extent to which school fund rising enhances students retention.	25	1	4	3.12	1.054
The extent to which academic days enhances students retention	25	1	4	1.96	0.978

Studies have showed that various parental involvement strategies yield different results as far as student retention is concerned. Rogers and Feller (2018) revealed that parents who directly helped their children with school homework enhanced their performance and attendance. Waswa and Wekesa (2016) found out that only 51.1% of parents participated in supporting the teaching program, 26.7% participated in providing writing materials and only 15.6% participated in checking if children did homework.

4.4 Influence of Parent Involvement on Students’ Retention as Perceived by the Students

350 students participated in responding to a question on whether parents’ involvement in their education increased their retention in school. Data in Table 9 reflect their responses.

Table 9

Extent to which Parents’ Involvement help increase Students’ Retention as Perceived by Students

	Frequency	Percent
No response	8	2.2
Great extent	267	76.3
Less extent	65	18.6
Rarely	10	2.9
Total	350	100

Table 9 indicates that majority 267(76.3%) of the students opined that parents’ involvement in their education increased students’ retention to a great extent. Further, 65 (18.6%) were of the opinion that parents’ involvement increased students’ retention to a less extent. Further 10 (2.9%) of the students were of the opinion that parents’ involvement influenced students’ retention rarely. 8 (2.2%) did not respond to the question. According to Ndwande (2023) parental involvement improves students discipline and learners’ achievement. Indimuli (2022) reports that parental involvement in learners’ academic work significantly influences the learning process of the children.

4.5 Students Retention

The headteachers were asked to rate the students’ retention in Masinga Sub – County for the last four years. Their findings are presented in table 10.

Table 10

Retention Rate

Rate	Frequency	Percentage
Very high	4	16
High	5	20
Low	11	44
Moderate	5	20
Total	25	100

The results in Table 10 shows that majority 11 (44%) of the headteachers indicated that the retention rate of the students in secondary schools in Masinga Sub – County was low, followed by 5 (20%) of those who indicated that it was moderate, 5 (20%) also indicated that it was high and 4 (16%) indicated it was very high. From the interview guide one deputy headteacher had this to say:

Actually the retention rate in Masinga sub county is low. As a school we have used all the strategies under our disposal to remedy the situation but it still remains low.

These findings are in agreement with the findings of Mahuro and Hungi (2016) who revealed in a study that parental involvement plays a major role in improved student retention. A study by Vijayalakshmi and Muniapan (2016) found out that students' retentions is directly influenced by Parental involvement.

4.6 Correlation Analysis

The researcher tested whether a relationship existed between parental involvement and students' retention. Data in Table 11 shows the results:

Table 11

Correlation between Effective Parental Involvement and Students' Retention Correlations

		Parental involvement	Student retention rate
Parental involvement score	Pearson correlation sig. (2-tailed)	1	0.811
	Sig.(2-tailed)		0.000
Students retention rate	N	25	25
	Pearson correlation	0.811	1
	Sig.(2-tailed)	0.00	
	N	25	25

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Results in Table 11 show that there is a significant strong correlation between parental involvement by the head teachers and students' retention ($r(23) = 0.81, p=0.00$). Null hypothesis was rejected and an alternative hypothesis accepted. This suggests that the more the head teachers involved parents in education matters the higher the rate of students' retention.

V. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

The following conclusion was made from the findings of this research study. Based on the objective of the study, it was concluded that the head teachers' efforts to engage parents in educational matters positively influence students' retention.

5.2 Recommendations

The study recommends that headteachers should use more communication strategies so as to involve all parents in the education of their children. The head teachers should organize more teachers-parents meetings, commence more workshops and other activities that actively involve parents in the education of their children.

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