



Influence of Parental Involvement on Students' Performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education in Public Secondary Schools in Yatta Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya

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Abstract: Parental involvement is crucial in improving academic performance of learners in schools. However, in Yatta Sub-county, students' performance in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) being low. Hence, this study sought to examine the influence of parental involvement on students' performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education in public secondary schools. This study applied a mixed methodology approach, adopting a concurrent triangulation research design. The target population consisted of 33 principals, 33 Board of Management (BoM) Chairs, 983 teachers, and 2 Sub-county Directors of Education (TSC & MoE), totaling 1051 respondents from which a sample of 202 respondents was selected using Yamane's formula. This comprised 10 principals, 10 BoM Chairs, 180 teachers, and 2 SCDEs. Questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data from teachers and interviews were used to gather qualitative data from principals, BoM Chairs, and SCDEs. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically based on the study's objectives and presented in narrative form. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, such as frequencies and percentages, and inferential statistics through Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis, aided by SPSS Version 25, with results presented in tables. The study revealed a consistent decline in KCSE performance in many public secondary schools over the past five years (2020-2024). This decline was attributed to irregular involvement of parents in key decisions regarding academic activities of their children. Thus, principals should also involve parents more regularly in decision-making regarding academic programs aimed at enhancing academic performance.

Keywords: Public, Secondary schools, Academic performance, Principals, Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education.

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1. Introduction

To realize the fruits of education, the role of parents cannot be wished away. According to Wang and Sheikh-Khalil (2022), consistent parental support, particularly in the form of encouragement and assistance with homework, positively correlates with students' academic performance and motivation. This involvement not only

enhances children's self-efficacy but also instills a sense of discipline and commitment to learning. In the United States of America, Garcia and Weiss (2022) posit that consistent parental engagement, including help with homework, attending parent-teacher meetings, and fostering educational aspirations, has a significant positive effect on student achievement. Similarly, in France, Meuret and Morlaix (2023) assert that parental involvement has also been identified as a key factor

influencing academic outcomes, but with notable cultural differences. These assertions reinforce the fact that parental involvement, both at home and through school partnerships, remains critical in shaping children's academic achievement and long-term educational success. However, the extent to which the school learning environment influences students' academic performance in public secondary schools is yet to be fully explored.

According to Reusen (2023), academic performance entails achievement of students in internal and national examinations. In Yemeni, Agran (2022) posits that any learner in any school who scores a mean grade of 75% and above is considered to manifest excellent academic performance. Despite these postulations, many students still register low grades in their internal and national examinations. In Austria, for example, a report by Cotton (2023) shows that academic performance of learners in national examinations stands at 56.9% against an expectation of 85.0% in 2022. Cotton (2023) indicates that many Austrian Secondary schools sometimes register performance as low as 37.9%. This is the same scenario in Haiti where Gedro, Hartman and Suárez (2021) posit that academic performance in many secondary schools range between 24.8% to 44.8%. In Chile, Contreras and Gallardo (2022) indicate that academic performance of students in internal, joint and national examinations is still low at 36.1% despite a myriad of mitigations introduced by school management such as parental involvement.

In the words of Deborah (2022), schools which have created a conducive learning environment by regularly involving parents in academic activities of their children have witnessed improved academic performance in internal and national examinations. For example, in the Netherlands, Taylor and Francis (2022) assert that, with increased participation of parents in key academic programmes, schools were able to improve learners' academic performance with a record 11.3%. This points to the fact that parental involvement is a critical component in determining students' performance. In many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, there is recognition that parents are crucial in the improvement of students' academic grades. For example, in Botswana, Chapman and Burchfield (2023) posit that educational experts consider parental involvement and activities they undertake as the driving force and main source of the organizational development and academic growth of students.

To corroborate these assertions, Lasker, Weiss and Miller (2023) posit that, in KwaZulu Natal Province in South Africa, many schools which have created conducive learning environment by ensuring that key stakeholders such as parents are regularly tapped to take part in school programmes, there has been improved academic performance. For instance, a regional analysis by the African Union (2021) reported that schools which involve parents in their daily operations record average

student performances of 20-30% higher and vice versa. Moreover, a survey undertaken by Fadima and Singh (2023) across various African countries indicated that while socio-economic factors undeniably affect educational outcomes, the frequency of stakeholder involvement provides a more significant predictive capacity for academic performance. Schools that frequently engage parents in helping their children with academic activities observe improvements of up to 40% in student performance data. In Rwanda, Niyigena and Imanishimwe (2020) note that involvement of parents has a direct reflection on students' academic achievements. In Uganda, Kiggundu and Nayiga (2021) also indicated that, schools that prioritized participation of stakeholders such as parents saw a significant improvement in student performance, with academic outcomes improving by approximately 20% over a two-year period. In Kenya, performance of students in national examinations has been on a downward trend. For example, a report by the Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC) (2022) shows that the pass rates in the KCSE have fluctuated over the past five years, with a notable decline observed from 2018 to 2022 (KNEC, 2022). The pass rate fell from 66.3% in 2018 to around 60% in 2022, suggesting a troubling trend for educators and policymakers alike.

In Yatta Sub-county, the scenario is the same with students' academic performance in KCSE being on a downward trend. For instance, a report authored by the Ministry of Education (2024) shows that students in public secondary schools in Yatta Sub-county registered 27.1% in 2019, 25.2% in 2020, 25.1% in 2021, 23.3% in 2022 and 21.9% in 2023. This was against a national aggregate which stood at 56.9% in 2019, 60.3% in 2020, 59.9% in 2021, 61.7% in 2022 and 69.3% in 2023. To mitigate these challenges, there have been concerted efforts to involve parents in academic activities taking place in schools. However, much still needed to be done to interrogate the extent to which parental involvement influences students' performance in Kenya Certificate in Secondary Education in selected public secondary schools, hence the study.

1.1 Research Objectives

The study sought to address the following objectives:

1. To assess the status of students' performance in Kenya Certificate in Secondary Education in public secondary schools in Yatta Sub-county.
2. To examine the influence of parental involvement on students' performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education in public secondary schools in Yatta.

2. Literature Review

Parental involvement plays a pivotal role in shaping students' academic outcomes across various cultural

contexts. According to Epstein (2018), families and schools have worked together in striving to give learners quality education since the beginning of formal schooling. Families were responsible for preparing their children with the necessary skills in the early years and schools took over from there with little input from families. However, in the context of students' academic performance and greater accountability and demands for children to achieve high academic expectations, schools and parents form partnerships and share responsibilities for children's education in more structured ways. For instance, in the United States of America, Hill and Tyson (2021) conducted a meta-analysis revealing that students with highly involved parents tend to achieve higher grades and exhibit better attendance. These findings underscore the importance of parental engagement as a predictor of academic success. Moreover, research conducted in the USA by Jeynes (2022) found that the effects of parental involvement extend beyond academic metrics to positively influence students' behavioral and social outcomes. Specifically, students who experience robust parental support are more likely to display greater motivation and lower dropout rates. Research conducted by Dronkers and Robert (2023) in the Netherlands shows a strong correlation between active parental involvement and enhanced academic performance, particularly in primary education.

A study carried out by Simons et al. (2020) examined the relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement among primary school students in the Netherlands. Their findings demonstrate that active parental engagement, especially in the form of helping with homework and setting high academic expectations, significantly correlates with improved student performance. Similarly, Van der Meer, Jansen and Torenbeek (2021) focused on secondary school students and found that parental involvement in school activities not only enhanced students' academic results but also fostered greater student motivation and self-regulation. Another important aspect highlighted in the literature is the economic and social background of families. According to a study conducted by Van de Werfhorst and Mijs (2022), parental involvement is strongly influenced by socio-economic status, with higher socio-economic families more likely to participate in school activities. This disparity raises concerns about equity in educational outcomes, suggesting that students from lower socio-economic backgrounds may not receive the same level of support and engagement, potentially hindering their academic performance.

In Germany, there is a positive correlation between parental involvement and students' academic performance. Research undertaken by Böhme, Hartmann and Müller (2021) demonstrated that active parental engagement not only enhances students' motivation but also fosters better grades and standardized test scores. The study revealed that students whose parents were more involved exhibited a greater sense of academic self-efficacy, underscoring the psychological benefits of

parental support. Moreover, the findings of Müller and Schmitz (2022) emphasize the importance of quality over quantity in parental involvement. Their research suggests that supportive and constructive interaction with children, such as discussing academic aspirations and expectations, yields significant improvements in academic achievements compared to mere attendance at school events or parent-teacher meetings. Additionally, a study by Eirich, Kahn and Schmitt (2020) in Germany found that parents who communicated consistently with teachers and participated in school events positively influenced their children's attitudes towards education and their overall academic success.

In France, the work of Lamoutte (2022) notes that socio-economic factors significantly mediate the effects of parental involvement. This highlights that while engaged parents irrespective of their economic status can foster positive outcomes, disparities in resource availability often shape the level of involvement and efficacy. Recent studies conducted in France have reinforced the notion that parental involvement positively correlates with students' academic performance. A study conducted by Dupriez, Dumay and Peter (2020) surveyed over 5,000 parents across various regions of France. The findings indicated that students whose parents regularly assisted with homework and engaged in school-related activities demonstrated higher levels of achievement compared to those whose parents were less involved.

Moreover, a research article by Lefevre and Nussbaum (2021) highlighted the significance of socio-economic factors in parental involvement. Their study demonstrated that parents from higher socio-economic backgrounds were more likely to participate in school functions and provide academic support at home. Conversely, parents from lower socio-economic backgrounds faced barriers that limited their ability to engage fully, thus impacting their children's academic outcomes. Similarly, in Italy, research by Zambelli and Rella (2021) indicates that parental expectations and aspirations have a profound impact on students' motivation and performance, reinforcing the premise that parental engagement transcends mere participation. Research consistently indicates a positive correlation between parental involvement and academic performance. In Italy, studies have highlighted that students whose parents are actively engaged in their education tend to achieve higher academic results.

For instance, a qualitative study conducted by Ferrara (2021) emphasized that parental involvement helps foster a supportive home environment that promotes academic success. Parents who assist with homework, create a conducive atmosphere for study, and express interest in their child's education significantly enhance their child's academic experience. In African contexts, the dynamics of parental involvement are influenced by cultural, social, and economic factors. In Nigeria, the work of Ibrahim, Adewunmi and Oluwemimo (2020) suggests that parental support, especially in the form of

educational guidance and resources, significantly impacts students' performance. However, the authors note that the disparity in parental education levels often creates gaps in involvement, leading to varied academic outcomes among students. Ghanaian research conducted by Annan and Frempong (2021) highlights that parental involvement is often expressed through monitoring and communication rather than direct assistance with academic tasks. This limited form of involvement can influence students' academic performance, especially in urban versus rural settings, where access to educational resources differs markedly.

A study carried out by Bendriss, Naciri and Refai (2020) in Morocco emphasizes the importance of familial expectations and the role of parental education in cultivating a supportive academic environment. Moreover, the impact of cultural beliefs and practices on parental involvement and children's educational aspirations is particularly noteworthy, as it reflects a broader societal understanding of education. In a study carried out in Uganda, Nsereko (2021) also underscored the role of parents in academic activities of their children. Similar assertions are espoused in Kenya by Mohammed and Mbogoh (2020). For instance, in Kisumu County, the participatory role of parents in school activities has been linked to improved student performance. In Yatta Sub-county, community-based initiatives have been introduced to encourage parental involvement as a means of enhancing educational outcomes. Research by Mwangi and Njeru (2021) found that students with actively involved parents tend to achieve higher grades and demonstrate better attendance records. This finding is supported by the work of Mburu (2022), who noted that students whose parents engaged in educational activities at home exhibited improved comprehension and retention of academic material. These findings all point to the fact that parents are involved in different activities in school to improve the academic undertakings of their children. However, Mwangi and Njeru (2021), Mburu (2022) as did other reviewed studies had not exhaustively interrogated how specific activities parents are involved in influence students' performance in KCSE, thus, the study.

Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by the stakeholder involvement theory which was postulated by Freeman (2000). The origins of stakeholder involvement theory draw on four key academic fields: sociology, economics, politics and ethics, and especially the literature on corporate planning, systems theory, corporate social responsibility and organizational theory. Freeman (2000) set out his model as a chart in which the company is positioned at the center and is involved with stakeholders connected with the company. According to Freeman (2000), the basic premises of stakeholder theory are: the organization enters into relationships with many groups that influence or are influenced by the company. The theory focuses on the nature of these relationships in

terms of processes and results for the company and for stakeholders, the interests of all legitimate stakeholders are of intrinsic value and it is assumed that there is no single prevailing set of interests. The theory focuses upon school management decision making, explains how stakeholders try and influence school decision making processes to be consistent with their needs and priorities. In this theory, stakeholder management recognizes, analyzes and examines the characteristics of parents as school partners being influenced by organizational behavior and how their involvement is key to academic activities and performance in examinations. In other words, this theory takes cognizance of the fact that parental involvement provides a platform upon which academic activities are carried out over three levels namely, planning and provision of key resources, provision of physical facilities and ensuring that learners are disciplined at all times as well as construction of relationships with the entire process structured around schools' curriculum objectives. The study was also guided by Walberg's academic achievement theory. This theory posits that learners' psychological traits coupled with their immediate learning environments influence educational outcomes. Walberg (2012) proposed nine main aspects which impact learners' educational outcomes. These include learners' ability or prior achievement, motivation, age or developmental level, a quantity of instruction, quality of instruction, classroom climate, parental involvement, home environment, peer group, and exposure to mass media outside of school. Walberg (2012) shows that psychosocial characteristics of classroom learning environments demonstrate incremental validity in predicting learner achievement. These traits are useful in curriculum evaluation studies and can provide teachers with useful information to arrange more optimally functioning classrooms. In this study, to increase educational productivity and efficiency, educational process goals, as well as achievement goals, must be considered. Thus, the relevance of this theory is that educational process goals are interpreted to include learner perceptions of the social environment, creativity, self-concept, participation in extra-curricular activities, and interest in the subject matter. In other words, ignoring these perceptions and experiences in favor of traditional goals measured by test scores would decrease motivation and ultimately lower educational achievement.

3. Methodology

This study adopted a mixed methodology approach, adopting a concurrent triangulation research design. The target population consisted of 33 principals, 33 Board of Management (BoM) Chairs, 983 teachers, and 2 Sub-county Directors of Education (TSC & MoE), amounting to 1051 respondents. A sample of 202 respondents was selected using Yamane's formula. Stratified sampling was used to create five strata based on Yatta Sub-county's zones, and from each zone, two principals and two BoM Chairs were chosen through purposive sampling. All Sub-county Directors of Education were

included purposively, while simple random sampling was used to select 36 teachers from each zone to eliminate bias. This sampling resulted in 10 principals, 10 BoM Chairs, 180 teachers, and 2 SCDEs. Questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data from teachers and interviews were used to gather qualitative data from principals, BoM Chairs and SCDEs. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically based on the study's objectives and presented in narrative form. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, such as frequencies and percentages, and inferential statistics through Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis, aided by SPSS Version 25, with results presented in tables.

In this research, an ethical clearance certificate was obtained from Mount Kenya University Ethical Review Committee (MKU ERC) before embarking on data collection processes. The researcher undertook to keep private any information given by the respondents that touched on their personal life. The researcher assured the respondents that no private information would be divulged to a third party. The nature and the purpose of the research were explained to the respondents by the researcher. The researcher explained to the respondents

the procedure that would be followed during the data collection so that they could participate willingly. The raw data collected were filed for easy reference. Once the data were analyzed, computer printouts were filed while soft copies were stored in storage devices such as CDs and flash discs.

4. Results and Discussion

In this section, findings of the study as per the objectives are outlined besides highlighting presentation of findings as well as discussions.

4.1 Response Rates

In this study, 180 questionnaires were administered to teachers and, in return, 170 questionnaires were filled and returned. In the same token, the researcher interviewed 8 principals and 2 Sub-county Directors of Education (TSC & MoE). This yielded response rates shown in Table 1;

Table 1: Response Rates

Respondents	Sampled Respondents	Those Who Participated	Achieved Return Rate (%)
Principals	10	8	80.0
Teachers	180	170	94.4
School BoM Chairs	10	8	80.0
Sub-county Directors of Education (TSC & MoE)	2	2	100.0
Total	202	188	93.1

Source: Field Data (2025)

Table 1 shows that principals registered a response rate of 80.0% whereas teachers registered 94.4%. However, all (100.0%) of the Sub-county Directors of Education (TSC & MoE) took part in the study. This yielded an average response rate of 93.1%, which is consistent with the assertions of Creswell (2018) that a response rate above 75.0% is adequate. This information was important since it allowed the researcher to generalize the study outcomes to the target population.

4.2 Status of Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools

The study sought to assess the status of academic performance in public secondary schools in Yatta Sub-county. This was measured by analyzing the KCSE results for the last five years (2020-2024). Results are shown Table 2;

Table 2: Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Yatta Sub-county between 2020 and 2024

KCSE Results	Years of Examination				
	2020 %	2021 %	2022 %	2023 %	2024 %
1-2.9 points (Poor)	40.2	43.5	44.2	47.3	48.9
3-4.9 points (Below Average)	36.9	35.1	34.9	33.5	32.5
5-6.9 points (Fair)	15.4	15.1	14.8	13.7	13.4
7-8.9 points (Good)	5.3	4.4	4.3	3.8	3.6
9-11.9 points (Excellent)	2.2	1.9	1.8	1.7	1.6

Source: Field Data (2025)

Table 2 indicates a consistent decline in the academic performance of students in the Kenya Certificate of

Secondary Education (KCSE) over the past five years. This trend highlights a significant concern regarding the

overall academic progress of students in this period. The findings align with the conclusions of a recent report by the Ministry of Education (MoE) in 2024, which also confirmed a steady decline in KCSE performance in Yatta Sub-county. The downward trajectory raises questions about the factors contributing to the diminishing academic results and underscores the need for targeted interventions to reverse this concerning trend.

4.3 Parental Involvement and Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools

The study sought to assess how parental involvement influences academic performance in public secondary schools. Descriptive data were collected from teachers, organized and summarized into specific thoughts. Results are shown in Table 3;

Table 3: Teachers’ Views on the Influence of Parental Involvement on Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools

Test Items	Ratings				
	SA %	A %	U %	D %	SD %
In public secondary schools, parents are often involved in the development of learning materials for learners as a way of improving performance in KCSE	41.1	13.6	7.2	26.6	11.5
Public secondary schools usually involve parents to provide instructional materials as a way of improving performance in KCSE	50.4	14.4	5.8	20.1	9.3
In public secondary schools, parents usually volunteer to undertake school activities which have improved performance in KCSE	48.2	6.5	4.3	14.4	26.6
To improve performance in KCSE, parents are rarely involved in assisting learners with their homework activities	63.3	12.9	7.2	13.7	2.9
Involving parents to monitor learners’ behaviour has improved performance in KCSE	50.4	10.8	3.6	33.1	2.1

Source: Field Data (2025)

Table 3 shows that 70(41.1%) of the teachers strongly agreed with the view that, in public secondary schools, parents are often involved in development of learning materials for learners as a way of improving performance in KCSE while 24(13.6%) agreed, 13(7.2%) were undecided, 46(26.6%) disagreed whereas 20(11.5%) strongly disagreed. This indicates that one of the key ways parents are involved in the academic success of their children is through contributing to the development of instructional materials. In many public secondary schools in Kenya, parents play a vital role in supplementing the school's resources. This supports the assertions of Mutisya and Gichohi (2021) that schools that engage parents in providing educational materials such as textbooks, stationery, and technology resources often experience improved academic performance in KCSE. Njeru and Nyamu (2022) also noted that this involvement not only provides learners with the necessary resources but also strengthens the partnership between parents and the school, fostering an environment of collective responsibility for students’ success. Schools with active parental involvement in resource provision have been found to achieve higher pass rates in national examinations. More than half, 85(50.4%), of the teachers strongly agreed with the view that public secondary schools usually involve parents to

provide instructional materials as a way of improving performance in KCSE while 25(14.4%) agreed, 10(5.8%) were undecided, 35(20.1%) disagreed whereas 16(9.3%) strongly disagreed. The study found that 82(48.2%) of the teachers strongly agreed with the view that, in public secondary schools, parents usually volunteer to undertake school activities which have improved performance in KCSE while 12(6.5%) agreed, 8(4.3%) were undecided, 25(14.4%) disagreed whereas 46(26.6%) strongly disagreed. These findings indicate that volunteering by parents in school activities is another crucial form of involvement that directly affects student performance. Parents who participate in extracurricular activities, as well as those who assist with academic events, contribute to a school’s supportive atmosphere, which enhances students' engagement with their studies. This corroborates the findings of research undertaken by Gathigia and Mwangi (2023) who demonstrated that schools where parents volunteered for various functions, such as organizing events and assisting teachers, showed significant improvement in KCSE performance.

These activities foster a strong connection between parents and their children's educational environment, which, according to Ayotunde and Onyango (2020),

leads to enhanced motivation and performance among students. Majority, 108(63.3%), of the teachers strongly agreed with the view that, to improve performance in KCSE, parents are rarely involved in assisting learners with their homework activities whereas 22(12.9%) agreed, 13(7.2%) were undecided, 24(13.7%) disagreed whereas 5(2.9%) strongly disagreed. These findings indicate that parental involvement in homework activities appears to be less frequent. This is in line with the assertions of Mutua and Gitau (2020), who noted that, while some parents offer academic support to their children at home, this is not a widespread practice in Kenyan public secondary schools. In other words, despite the potential benefits of such involvement in reinforcing learning at home, there are barriers, including time constraints, lack of necessary academic expertise, and insufficient awareness of the role of homework in academic success. These findings attest to the fact that lack of consistent parental assistance with homework may hinder some students from reaching their full academic potential, thus affecting their overall performance in KCSE.

Most, 85(50.4%), of the teachers strongly agreed that involving parents to monitor learners' behavior has improved performance in KCSE whereas 18(10.8%) agreed, 7(3.6%) were undecided, 56(33.1%) disagreed whereas 4(2.1%) strongly disagreed. This implies that monitoring learners' behavior is a key domain where parental involvement has a profound impact on academic performance. This lends credence to the findings of research carried out by Muthini and Wachira (2021) suggest that when parents take an active role in

supervising their children's behavior, there is a noticeable improvement in both academic performance and general school conduct. Students who experience regular communication and oversight from their parents regarding behavior tend to exhibit better study habits, a higher level of self-discipline, and a more positive attitude towards learning, all of which contribute to better outcomes in KCSE. This finding is consistent with research by Kimani (2022), which identified a correlation between parental involvement in behavior monitoring and improved student performance in national exams. These findings affirm the fact that parental involvement in the development of learning materials, volunteering in school activities, and monitoring learners' behavior has a positive impact on the academic performance of students in public secondary schools. While parents' role in homework assistance remains underdeveloped, their involvement in other areas has been proven to contribute significantly to improved KCSE outcomes.

4.4 Inferential Analysis

To verify the influence of parental involvement on academic performance in public secondary schools, data were collected from 8 principals of the sampled public secondary schools on how often (Very Often = 5, Often = 4, Sometimes = 3, Rarely = 2 and Never = 1) they involve parents in the academic activities of their children and the 2024 KCSE results. Results are shown in Table 4:

Table 4: How Often Principals Involve Parents in Academic Activities and Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools

How Often Principals Involve Parents in Academic Activities	2024 KCSE Results
2	2.149
3	3.786
3	3.817
3	2.805
1	3.486
3	3.892
2	4.091
1	2.988

Source: Field Data (2025)

Table 4 shows that, in public secondary schools where principals often involve parents in academic activities of their children, academic performance of students in national examinations is relatively high. This underscores the vitality of parental involvement since it creates a collaborative environment where parents and teachers work together towards the students' success. When parents are engaged in their children's education, they can offer additional support at home, monitor their academic progress, and address any challenges their children face. This partnership encourages a shared sense of responsibility and accountability between both parties. Parents' involvement also fosters better communication, which allows for early identification of issues and

targeted interventions. When schools provide regular updates on students' academic performance, parents can better understand areas of strength and those requiring improvement. Moreover, engaged parents often motivate their children to stay focused and committed to their studies, increasing their chances of achieving high results. Additionally, schools that encourage parental involvement tend to create a supportive and nurturing atmosphere, which boosts students' morale and confidence. This environment is crucial for students' academic success, especially in preparing for critical national examinations. The results in Table 4 were subjected to Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis and the results are shown in Table 5:

Table 5: Relationship between Parental Involvement and Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools

		Parental Involvement	Academic Performance
Parental Involvement	Pearson Correlation	1	.557*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.025
	N	8	8
Academic Performance	Pearson Correlation	.557*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.025	
	N	8	8

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

Table 5 shows Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis which indicates that there is a positive correlation between parental involvement and academic performance in public secondary schools ($r(8) = 0.557$, $p = 0.025$ at $\alpha = 0.05$). This further indicates that, when parents are actively engaged in their children's education, students tend to perform better in school. This involvement can take various forms, such as attending parent-teacher meetings, providing academic support at home, or showing interest in school activities. When parents monitor their children's academic progress and maintain open communication with teachers, students are more motivated to excel in their studies. Additionally, parents who create a supportive learning environment at home contribute to enhanced concentration and better study habits among students. The emotional support and encouragement provided by involved parents also foster a positive attitude toward learning. It strengthens students' self-esteem and reduces academic stress. Moreover, parental involvement helps to bridge the gap between school and home, ensuring that students have the necessary resources and guidance to succeed. In other words, active participation from parents leads to better academic outcomes, contributing to the overall success of students in their educational journey.

4.5 Thematic Analysis

During the interviews, however, majority of the principals, Chairs of school BoM and the Sub-county Directors of Education stated that parental involvement in academic programmes in school is key in improving performance of their children. Principal, P1, stated;

In my primary school, parents are usually invited to meetings with teachers to understand their value in their children's education and undertake activities such as learning material development. Parents are required to help their children by taking part in the development and improvisation of learning materials

On their part, the Chairs of school BoM as well as the Sub-county Directors of Education stated that parents

constitute a key pillar in realization of education objectives in secondary schools.

On provision of instructional materials, the interviewees also supported the view that parents contribute to academic activities by providing teaching and learning resources. Principal, P2, noted;

In my secondary school, parents are required to supplement the efforts of the Ministry of Education in ensuring that their children have adequate teaching and learning materials.

On the question of volunteering, most of the interviewees responded in favour of the view that parents usually volunteer to undertake school activities such as school feeding programmes to support academic programmes at school. They further stated that parents are required to be active participants in their children's academic undertakings by volunteering and performing hands-on tasks at school which motivates their children to value education. Just like quantitative findings, these views underscore the important role which parents play by volunteering to participate in school activities. On monitoring learners' behaviour, the interviewees also noted that involving parents in monitoring learners' behaviour has made it easy to achieve educational goals witnessed through improved academic performance. Principal, P3, noted;

In my school, I always involve parents whenever I detect any misbehavior among their children. This has enabled them to develop desirable behaviour patterns.

These views also support the assertions of Conenzio and French (2016) that parents constitute a critical component in ensuring that students register impressive grades in examinations. These mixed findings further point to the fact that parents are key pillars in primary schools in improving children's school attendance, homework completion, improved learning behaviours and even better learner's discipline.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

Over the past five years (2020-2024), the academic performance of learners in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) has shown a consistent decline. This has been attributed to parental involvement. In other words, irregular involvement of parents in key decisions pertaining to academic activities of their children is one of the key reasons behind the low academic performance observed in these schools.

5.2 Recommendations

As a practice, principals should regularly involve parents in key decisions regarding academic programmes aimed at improving academic performance in public secondary schools. As a policy, the Ministry of Education should constantly enforce policy regulations which require principals to create a conducive environment which promotes realization of quality education in public secondary schools

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