

Nexus between Participation of Single Parents in School Activities and the Academic Performance of Learners in Public Primary Schools in Kiambu County, Kenya

Irene Nyokabi Mwangi¹, Prof. Donald Kisilu Kombo², Prof. Rubai Mandela³

¹Candidate, Masters of Education in Sociology and Policy Studies School of Education and Long-Life Learning, Kenyatta University, Kenya

^{2,3}Department of Education Foundations School of Education and Long-Life Learning, Kenyatta University, Kenya

ABSTRACT: Single parenting is on increase in Kenya. Participation of parents in school activities is one of the key factors which contributes to the academic performance of learners. The responsibility of bringing up children is shouldered by one parent in single parent families unlike in families with both parents where responsibilities are likely to be shared. Consequently, single parenthood may influence how learners participate in school activities in ways that need to be investigated in a study of this nature. Single parenting is on increase in Kiambu County with an average of every four learners out of ten being from single parent families. The academic performance of learners in public schools has been on decline for the last five years in Kiambu County. This paper is based on research that investigated effects of participation of single parents in school activities on the academic performance of learners in public primary schools in Kiambu County. The study utilized descriptive survey research design. It employed stratified random sampling to select two hundred and sixty-four participants. Data was collected using Questionnaires, interview schedule and FGD schedule. Qualitative data was analysed thematically while quantitative data was analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Inferential analysis was done using multiple regression analysis model. The study findings indicated that participation of single parents in school activities had significant effect on the academic performance of learners in public primary schools in Kiambu County. It was further realized that single mothers participated more in school activities than in single fathers which had proportionate effect on the academic performance of learners in public primary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya. The study recommends that teachers and school administration should ensure they create awareness to parental involvement in school activities while the government through the Ministry of Education (MOE) should come up with clear policy guidelines on Parental Engagement and Empowerment (PEE) as one of the key components in the Competency Based Education (CBE).

KEYWORDS: Single Parents, Single Parenting, Participation in School Activities, Academic Performance, Public Primary Schools

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Single parenting is a trend that is on the rise in the entire world. According to the US Census Bureau (2016), fifteen percent of children live in single parent households worldwide; with women heading approximately 85% of these households. In the United States of America (USA), from 1960 to 2016, children who have been brought up by single mothers tripled to 23 percent while those brought up by father only rose from one percent to four percent. This emanated from divorce and separation which was attributed to 58% of single parents and never married mother following with 24% (US Census Bureau, 2016). English speaking countries have the highest percentage of single parents with USA with 25.8%, Ireland 24.3%, New Zealand 23.7%, Canada 22.1% and the United Kingdom (UK) with 21.5% (OECD, 2011).

African culture discouraged single parenting by dejecting divorce and giving birth outside the wedlock but this has changed with advent of industrialization and globalization in Africa (Olaleye & Oladeji, 2010). Amato and Keith (2000) projected that 75% of African children born to married parents will experience their parent's divorce before the age of sixteen. Kenya is one of the leading countries in single parenting in Sub Saharan Africa (SSA). According to Kenya Demographic and Health Survey of 2019, single parenting had increased by 15% in 10 years with more than 25% in Kenya being headed by single parents (KNBS, 2019). Mungai (2017) observed that 45% of children did not live with their biological parents. The researcher further observed that 23.2% of all parents were single mothers in Central Kenya with single fathers being less common. Kiberenge (2013) projects that six of every 10 Kenyan women are likely to be single mothers by the time they reach 45 years. It is estimated that 4 out of every 10 children in public primary schools are raised by single parent (Unpublished Kiambu County Education Report, 2022).

Nexus between Participation of Single Parents in School Activities and the Academic Performance of Learners in Public Primary Schools in Kiambu County, Kenya

Participation of parents in school activities is paramount on the schooling of their children. According to Abate and Birhanu (2019), parental participation refers to all the components, influences, and circumstances inside the household that catapults' the child's intellectual, emotional, and physical development. It may involve parents engaging actively to ensure academic success of learners creating a supportive learning environment at home, providing educational resources, offering guidance and counseling, attending school functions, and communicating with teachers about their children's academic progress. Levanda (2011) hitherto viewed parental involvement as representing different behaviors and practices presented by parents both at home and school. Parental participation to revolve around the parenting style, parental expectations and aspirations, home rules and parental supervision; parents' attitudes towards children activities, helping with homework, visiting the school to talk to teachers, and beliefs their child's education which help improve performance of learners (Levand, 2011; Porumbu & Necsoi, 2013). Parental participation may extend to effective communication between teachers and parents, talking with the child about school, bringing a cake to a party, presenting in front of the child's class, and getting actively involved in shaping the school's policies by attending school conferences (Tan & Goldberg, 2009; Khajehpour & Ghazvini, 2011). Jeynes (2018) categorize parental engagement as home-based activities like helping in assignments and secondly school-based activities like participating in school events.

Fleming (2014) acknowledges the critical role played by both parents to social and cognitive development of children and notes that absence of one parent is detrimental to both growth and learning of the children. Children brought up by two parents have a plus compared to their counterparts from single parent families. The parental roles were culturally determined in African context where maternal roles were child-rearing, home training and complimenting fathers' roles while the paternal roles were economic responsibilities and discipline of the children although recently this has been affected by modernization (Michelle, 2012). When both parents are available, children are well socialized and have quality upbringing leading to optimal cognitive and social growth and schooling (Mece, 2015). Comparatively, learners from single parent families headed by mothers are more constrained compared to single parent families headed by fathers. Stephan (2014) observed that single fathers tend to be more financially endowed than single mothers which has ripple effect on learners' schooling.

Participation of parents in school activities is linked to learning and academic performance of learners. Narad and Abdullah (2016), view academic performance as knowledge that is assessed through marks by teachers or examination to measure education goals. According to Bengesai and Nzimande (2020), the investments that parents offer in terms of time, resources and in activities like motivation, inspiration and discipline are connected with academic performance of their children. Parents are viewed as key teachers stationed at home who offer basic literacy in formative years and who should assist learners in school assignments and home works in order to improve their performance in schools (Erlendsdóttir, 2010; Gudlaug, 2010). Study conducted by Castro, Casas, Martin, Lizasoain, Asencio and Gaviria, (2015) indicated that parental behavior, personality and participation in school events acted as a lever to promote the academic achievement of the children.

Parental engagement and participation in school activities by single parents as an impetus to academic performance has an unresolved lacuna. Abuya, Ciera and Kimani (2012) noted that children in two parent households were 1.23 times more likely to be in the right grade for age compared to children in one parent household in Kenyan society while Maposa, Zirima and Mushauri (2020) affirmed the same by indicating that single parenting participation affected the academic performance of learners. This was however negated by Azumah, Krampah, and Nachinaab (2018) by noting that there was no significant difference in academic performance between children from both parent families and single parent families. This creates a paradox which this study investigated on nexus between participation of single parents and academic performance of learners in schools.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Single parenting is rapidly growing in the Kenyan society. There is no classroom without a child from single parent families in most schools (Mungai, 2017). In Kenya, it is estimated that 4 out of every 10 children are brought up by single parents (Mungai, 2017). These escalating numbers are more in Central Kenya and in particular Kiambu County. Single parents raise their children single handedly unlike families with both parents. Additionally, single parents provide all basic and school needs alone unlike where parents share the responsibilities (Mece, 2015). Even in the case of co-parenting, the gender of parents, resources and pace adjustment of parent who has the custody of the child after separation is key determiner to the academic performance of learners (Riina & McHale, 2014).

The academic performance of learners in primary schools has dwindled for the last five years in Kiambu County. Most learners have not met expectation in their final results in Kenya Primary School Education Assessment (KPSEA) in Kiambu County (Unpublished Education Report, Kiambu County, 2024). There has been paradox on whether dwindling academic performance has any connection with gender and level of participation of single parents in school activities. The existing empirical literature is not conclusive on whether participation of single parents in school activities have effect on academic performance of learners. There is no known study which has been done in Kiambu County on the relationship between participation of single parents in school activities and academic performance of learners in public primary schools drawing gender issues on the conversation. This created

Nexus between Participation of Single Parents in School Activities and the Academic Performance of Learners in Public Primary Schools in Kiambu County, Kenya

a gap thus this study investigated the relationship between participation of single parents in school activities and the academic performance of learners in public primary school pupils in Kiambu County in Kenya.

1.3 Specific Research Objective

To establish how participation of single parents in school activities affects the academic performance of learners in public primary schools in Kiambu County.

1.4 Research Hypothesis

Ho: Participation of single parents in school activities has no significant effect on the academic performance of learners in public primary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya.

Ha: Participation of single parents in school activities has effect on the academic performance of learners in public primary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya.

2.0 REVIEW LITERATURE

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Socialization Theory

This study was anchored on socialization theory which was proposed by Charles Cooley (1902). The theory was brought forth borrowing from the concept of 'looking-glass self' which elevate socialization of individuals as key in defining themselves. The key tenet of the theory is that people are a reflection of how they interact with other people (Chandler & Munday, 2011). The scholars mutilates human mind in to both social and mental realm where they deduce that the process that happens in people's mind emanate from social interactions. The theory connotes that people dictates what other people think about themselves (McIntyre, 1998).

Parenting practices are viewed as socialization which influence how learners' grow and develop. It may involve long life process which entails inheriting and teachings on norms, customs and ideologies which facilitate acquisition of knowledge, skills and habits of importance to them as they get involved in societal activities. Although culture amongst people differ in terms of customs and behavior, it is best expressed at the personal level and this emanate from socialization by one's parents, extended family and extended social networks (Super & Harkness, 2002).

The theory links how socialization of children by their parents is paramount to their lives and connect socialization with their upbringing. It is worth noting that children from families with both parents are more socialized than those with single parents because the responsibilities are shared amongst the parents. This theory illuminates how relevant socialization of learners sets foothold in improving level of esteem of learners and on how they perceive themselves. Holistic development which results from self-esteem and perception of children on themselves is product of socialization.

2.2 Empirical Review

Parental participation and engagement in school activities is pivotal for the success of learners in schools. Hakizimana and Sikubwabo (2024) conducted a study on effects of parents' participation in secondary school activities on students' academic achievement in Nyabihu District, Rwanda. The study adopted a descriptive and correlational research design. The study involved a sample size of 301 which was realized using Sloven's formula. The data was collected using structured questionnaire, interviews, and documentation. Data was analysed using regression analysis model. The study indicated that parental involvement lead to improved academic performance of students in Nyabihu District. The study was done in secondary school unlike this study which was done in primary schools in Kenyan context. The study further had conceptual gaps where this study operationalized parental participation using financial participation and without specifying the family status of the parents.

Chepkorir, Koros and Piliyesi (2024) assessed the relationship between parental engagement and student academic performance of public day secondary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County, Kiambu County, Kenya. The study was anchored on Epstein's integrated theory of family-school connections. They study utilized mixed methodology involving 15 public secondary schools, with samples taken from principals, teachers, students, and parents who were sampled using census, purposively and stratified random sampling. Data was collected using questionnaires and interview guides. Data was analysed using frequency distribution tables and direct quotations. The study findings indicated that there was significant and positive relationship between parental engagement and academic performance of learners. The study had methodological gaps by sampling some respondents using purposive sampling which is non-representative in nature.

Osuesu (2023) assessed the efficacy of parental participation in Houston, Texas Catholic mixed schools in USA. Participation of parents was operationalized using volunteering in schools, attending PTA events and award ceremonies and going on field trips with students. The study indicated that there was low degree of family participation among parents in schools. The results indicated that parental participation in school activities had effect on academic performance of learners in schools. The study had contextual gaps in that the study was conducted in USA unlike this study which was conducted in Kenyan context.

Nexus between Participation of Single Parents in School Activities and the Academic Performance of Learners in Public Primary Schools in Kiambu County, Kenya

Emmanuel and Andala (2021) conducted a study to establish the relationship between parents' involvement in education activities and learners' academic performance in 12year basic education schools in Nyarugenge district in Rwanda. The study utilized correlation research design where data was collected using questionnaire, interview guide and document analysis review. The study involved 308 participants used simple random and stratified sampling techniques. The study findings indicated that there was a high significant positive relationship between parents' participation in education activities at school and better academic performance in schools. The study had contextual lacuna in that it was carried out in different context and country limiting generalization of the findings.

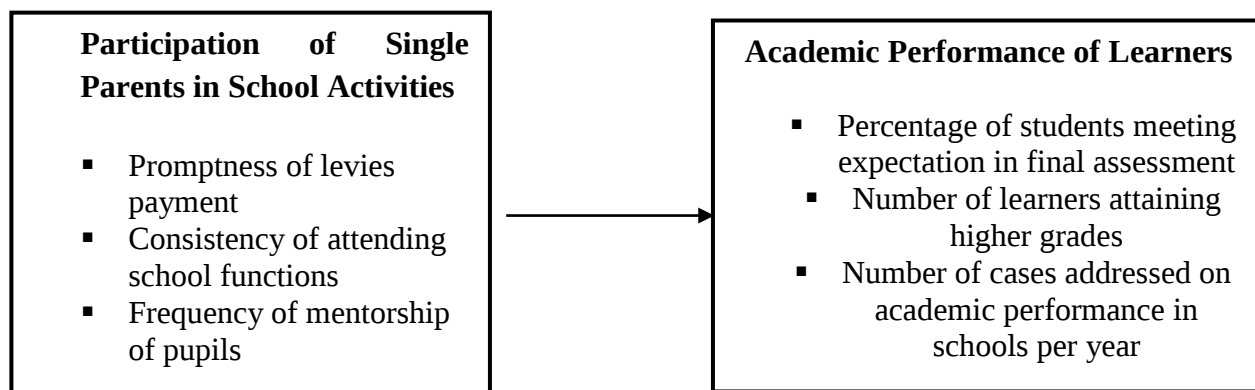
Maposa, Zirima and Mushauri (2020) indicate that learners from single parents were more under achievers compared to their counterparts in families with both parents. This was attributed to the low participation of parents in the schooling of their children by single parents. This deviated from the observation by Kimaru, Mukolwe and Kimani (2020) that there was no statistical difference in academic performance between children from single parent families and those from both parent families. This created a gap which this study needed to investigate.

The nature of family where students come from may be a risk factor on their academic performance. Musili, Mwanja, and Mulwa (2020) observed that the type of family dictates the educational resources at disposal of their children. They noted that children in single parent families are more likely to be headed by mothers. Most mothers are characterized with poor academic qualifications and may not have adequate time to get involved in their children's learning thus affecting academic performance in schools. The study supports hitherto findings by Abuya, Mutisya, Onsomu, Ngware and Oketch (2019) that children from two parent families are educationally advantaged on academic performance than their counterparts from single parent families.

Based on the literature review, there exist variance in the operationalization of the variables under investigation. The study noted various contextual and methodological limitations in the existing studies. Various empirical studies had contradictory results on participation of single parents on school activities had relationship with the academic performance of learner, necessitating the need for this study.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

Literature reviewed formed basis on to which conceptual framework was developed. The conceptual framework highlighted the relation between the participation of single parents in school activities (Independent variable) and academic performance (Dependent variable) of learners in public primary schools.



Source: Author (2024)

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study utilized descriptive survey research design. Kombo and Tromp (2006) recommends use of this design when investigating peoples' attitudes and views as they are without manipulating the variables. Descriptive survey design was chosen for this study because it allowed quick data collection which was relatively cheap over a very short time and involving large sample.

3.2 Participants

The study interacted with 21 head teachers, 44 teachers, 80 parents and 96 Grade 6 learners totaling 241 participants from 24 public primary schools in Githunguri Sub County, Kiambu County in Kenya. The participants were sampled using stratified random sampling in order to have equal gender representation and to give any person a chance to be selected as participants during the study.

Nexus between Participation of Single Parents in School Activities and the Academic Performance of Learners in Public Primary Schools in Kiambu County, Kenya

3.3 Data Collection

This research gathered data using semi-structured questionnaires for head teachers and teachers, interview schedule for parents and Focused Group Discussions (FGD) schedule for both parents and Grade 6 learners. Questionnaires were administered through drop and pick method while interviews and FGDs were conducted at the sampled schools. Pilot was done in two randomly sampled schools involving two school head teacher, four teachers, eight parents and eight pupils who were not involved in the final study. Face and content validity were used to analyze validity of the tools. Reliability of the instruments was analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient which was 0.813 thus making the items to be reliable since the threshold was coefficient above 0.7 as proposed by Tavakol and Dennick (2011). The results indicated that all variables had Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient greater than 0.7 with the aggregate coefficient being 0.813 thus conclusion made that the research tool was reliable.

3.4 Data Analysis

Quantitative data was analyzed to produce descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics was summarized in form of percentage, mean and standard deviation. Inferential statistics was used to test hypothesis where regression analysis model was used which was reported using adjusted coefficient of determination (R^2), F statistics (ANOVA), unstandardized coefficients (beta values) and p values at 0.05 level of significance.

4.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The respondents to questionnaire were 65 who included head teachers and teachers. The number represents 90% of respondents who were expected to fill the questionnaire and who are sufficient for making inferences and drawing conclusion as recommended by Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) who proposed that response rate of 70% was adequate. The study also interacted with 24 parents who were interviewed. The study further interacted with 80 parents and 96 Grade 6 learners who were engaged in a focused group discussion each comprising of 8 parents sampled in ration of 1:1 in terms of gender.

4.1 Participation of single parents in School Activities

The study utilized percentage in order to offer an understanding of the responses made in relation to level of participation of single parents in school activities which is our independent variable. The study involved analysis of the responses of each of the 65 respondents who filled questionnaires. The study findings indicated that single parent's participation in school activities was poor as indicated by 48% of participants. This was followed by 32% of the participants who opined that there was average level of participation of single parents on school activities. Almost a sixth of the participants (14%) were of the view that single parents didn't engage themselves in school activities while 6% of participants indicated that single parents highly involved themselves in school activities. This implies that participation of single parents in school activities was not to the expected level in public primary schools. The study further used percentage to analyze various ways through which single parents participate in school activities. The results were summarized in table 1

Table 1: Aspects of Participation of Single Parents in School Activities

Category	Sub-category	Frequency	Percentage
Ways of participating in school activities	1,2	17	26.2
	1,2,4	13	20.0
	1,2,6	17	26.2
	1,4,6	9	13.8
	3,4	5	7.7
	5,6	4	6.2
	Total	65	100.0
NB: 1 = Paying school levies 2 = Participating in school development			
3 = Guidance and counselling 4 = Maintaining learner's discipline at home			
5 = Helping pupils in doing homework 6 = Provision of learning materials			

Source: Survey data (2024)

The results in table 1 indicated that single parents participated in school activities mostly through paying school levies, participating in school development and provision of learning which accounted for 26.2% of all responses which was equal in same percentage with single parents who participate through combining paying of school levies and participating in school development. Some 20% of respondents believes that single parents participated in school activities through combining paying of school levies, participating in school development and maintaining learner's discipline at home. It was only 6.2 % of respondents who believed single parents participate in school activities through helping pupils in doing homework and provision of learning materials. This implies that single parents participate in school activities in multifaceted and varied ways in public primary schools. The study utilized mean

Nexus between Participation of Single Parents in School Activities and the Academic Performance of Learners in Public Primary Schools in Kiambu County, Kenya

and standard deviation of a 5-point Likert on how participants agreed or disagreed with various statements related to participation of single parents in school activities. The results were summarized in table 2

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on Participation of Single Parents in School Activities

Participation of single parents on school activities	Mean	Std Dev.
Single parents are consistently involved in school activities in schools	3.12	.901
Single parents pay school levies promptly like their counterparts in in families with both parents	2.82	.846
Male single parents participate in school activities better than their female counterparts	2.78	.760
Most families with both parents perform their parental roles in school better than single parents	3.65	.943
Participation of single parents on school activities have effect on the academic performance of their children	3.82	.900
Aggregate scores	3.24	.870

Source: Survey (2024)

The findings in table 2 indicated that overall mean response for all items on participation of single parents in school activities was 3.24 which is closer to 3.0 (not sure) on the 5-point Likert scale adopted in this study. The variability of responses was low at 0.870. This implies that most participants were not sure or doubted whether there was adequate participation of single parents in school activities in public primary schools in in Kiambu County, Kenya. All the specific aspects related to participation of single parents in school activities indicated a doubt on whether participation of single parents was consistent in areas of like paying school levies. The results further highlights doubt whether gender of single parents was factor on how they participated in school activities. There is however agreement that when both parents are available they perform parenting roles better than single parents which has influence on how learners perform in schools.

4.2 Academic Performance of Learners in Public Primary Schools

The study utilized percentage in order to offer an understanding of the responses made in relation to academic performance of learners in public primary schools which is the dependent variable. the results indicated that performance of most learners was average as indicated by 52% of the respondents followed by 20% of the participants who tied by believing the academic performance was either poor or good. Participants who believed the results were excellent were only 8%. This implies that academic performance of learners from single parent families in public primary schools was questionable compared to learners from families with both parents. The study further utilized mean and standard deviation of a 5-point Likert on how participants agreed or disagreed with various statements related to the state of academic performance in public primary schools. The results were summarized in table 3

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Academic Performance in Public Primary Schools

Academic performance of learners	Mean	Std Dev.
Learners from single parent families are performing like their counterparts with both parents	2.86	.882
Learners from single parents headed by fathers perform better academically than counterparts from families headed by mothers	3.06	.788
Most learners from single parent families have been meeting expectation in their final assessments as their counterparts from families with both parents	3.25	.751
Most learners from single parents have attained higher grades in their final assessments	3.06	0.818
The number of cases addressed on poor academic performance have dropped among the learners from single parent compared to learners from families with both parents.	3.05	.856
Aggregate mean scores for Academic performance of learners	3.06	.819

Source: Survey data (2024)

The results in table 3 indicated that overall mean response for all items on academic performance of learners in public primary schools in Kiambu County to be 3.06. This is closer to 3.0 (not sure) on the 5-point Likert scale adopted in this study. This implies that most participants were disputing whether there is good academic performance of learners in public primary schools as confirmed

Nexus between Participation of Single Parents in School Activities and the Academic Performance of Learners in Public Primary Schools in Kiambu County, Kenya

by low variability of responses as denoted by standard deviation of 0.819. The findings also indicated that most participants had doubts whether learners from single parents were performing better than their counterparts from families with both parents. The doubt extended whether the gender of single parents (whether male or female) was a factor in influencing academic performance and learners from single parent families have been meeting expectation in their final assessments in primary schools as their counterparts from families with both parents. The study findings further noted that most respondents had contrary opinion that most learners from single parents attained higher grades in their final assessments and the number of cases addressed on poor academic performance had dropped among the learners from single parent compared to learners from families with both parents.

4.3 The Relationship between Participation of Single Parents in School Activities and the Academic Performance

To empirically test the hypothesis, the study used regression analysis model as applied by Nzomo, Kinyua and Mwasiagi (2023). The null hypothesis of the study was H_0 : Participation of single parents in school activities has no significant effect on the academic performance of learners in public primary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya. The hypothesis was tested at 95% confidence level ($\alpha=0.05$) to determine how academic performance of public primary schools in Kiambu County was explained by participation of single parents on school activities using adjusted R^2 . To test if the relationship between the variables was significant, the study utilized Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) or F- test. The summary of regression analysis results for participation of single parents in school activities and academic performance was summarized in table 4

Table 4: Regression Results for Participation of Single Parents on School Activities and Academic Performance

Regression Results for Participation of Single Parents on School Activities and Academic Performance

Model summary					
Model	R	R square	Adjusted R ²	Standard error of estimate	
1	.648 ^a	.420	.411	.3034	
ANOVA					
Model	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Regression	4.202	1	4.202	45.655	0.000 ^a
Residual	5.798	63	.092		
Total	10.000	64			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Participation of Single Parents on School Activities,

b. Dependent Variable: Academic Performance

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficient (beta)	t	Sig.
	Beta	Std error			
1 (Constant)	0.984	.554		1.778	0.005
Participation of single parents in school activities	.529	.118	.648	4.498	0.000

Dependent Variable: Academic Performance

Source: Survey data (2024)

The results in table 4 indicated that the adjusted R squared was 0.411 implying that both GIS and regulatory framework explains 22.9% of the variation of performance sustainability at 95% level of significance. The model was statistically significant at $F(1, 63) = 45.655$ and the calculated probability was 0.000. The summary for model was:

Academic Performance = $0.984 + 0.529 \text{Participation of Single Parents on School Activities} \dots \dots \dots \text{Model 1}$

The regression model indicated when participation of single parents in school activities is constant at zero, the academic performance of learners in public primary schools in Kiambu County was at 0.984. By adding participation of single parent in school activities, the academic performance of learners in public primary schools would be enhanced positively and would improve. The results revealed that the beta coefficient for participation of single parents in school activities was $\beta=0.529$; $t = 4.498$; $p = 0.000$. This implies that a unit change in participation of single parents in school activities improves academic performance by 0.529 in public primary schools in Kiambu County. The null hypothesis was rejected since the p-value was less than 0.05 implying that the relationship between participation of single parents in school activities and academic performance was significant. These findings matched with previous studies by Hakizimana and Sikubwabo (2024), Chepkorir, Koros and Piliyesi (2024), Osuesu (2023), Emmanuel and Andala (2021), Maposa, Zirima and Mushauri (2020) and Musili, Mwanja, and Mulwa (2020) which found that participation of single parents on school activities had effect on the academic performance of learners in schools. The findings were inconsistent with Kimaru, Mukolwe and Kimani (2020) which to contrarily found that there was no statistical difference in academic performance of children from single parent families and those from both parent families caused by their variance in the participation in school activities.

Nexus between Participation of Single Parents in School Activities and the Academic Performance of Learners in Public Primary Schools in Kiambu County, Kenya

4.4 Qualitative Analysis of Participation of Single Parents in School Activities and the Academic Performance of Learners

The opinion of most respondents who were interviewed and involved in the FGDs was that most single parents were averagely involved in school activities. The participants opined that families with both parents were more actively involved in school activities than their counterparts from single parent families. The participants affirmed that female single parents participated in school activities better than their male counterparts. To quote verbatim, one of the FGD group members quoted that “Female single parents tend to be more available for their children unlike male single parents who live their children with relatives”. Most participants concurred that children from male single parents gets little or no attention and their parents are hardly available as they solitary try to meet the basic need of their children limiting their participation in school activities. The bulk of participants believed parents participate in school activities by combining more than one way through payment of school levies, guidance and counselling, helping learners in doing homework and provision of learning materials as the ways through which parents participated in school activities. There was conformity amongst the key informants that participation of single parents had positive effect on the academic performance of learners and female single parents had more influence than their male counterparts. The qualitative findings are congruent with quantitative results that indicted that there was significant positive on the relationship between participation of single parents in school activities and academic performance in public primary schools. These findings conform to study by Maposa, Zirima and Mushauri (2020) which indicated that that there was positive effect of participation of single parents in school activities and academic performance of learners in public primary schools.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 CONCLUSION

This study sought to find out the relationship between participation of single parents in school activities and the academic performance in public primary schools. The study found out that the participation of single parents in school activities was average. The study found out that female single parents participated in school activities better than male single parents. The study also found out that single parents were involved in school activities using diverse ways. It was further realized from the study findings that participation of single parents in school activities had effect on the academic performance in public primary schools with gender of the single parents playing key role. It is logical therefore to conclude that by single parents participating in wide range school activities, it helps improve the academic performance in public primary schools with gender of the parents playing a pivotal role.

5.2 Policy and Practical Recommendation

This study recommends to school administration and teachers to hold regular meeting with parents to guide them on their responsibilities as parents and how best they can be involved in learning of their children in order to achieve the best results for their children. The NGOs should work towards ensuring equal access to education for all children despite their family structure or social economic status through encouraging parents and helping create awareness on how they may optimally involve in the learning of their children. The Government of Kenya (GoK) though the Ministry of Education (MOE) should ensure there is clear policy on Parental Engagement and Empowerment (PEE) which is one of the Pertinent and Contemporary Issues (PCIs) in Competency Based Education (CBC) in order to address how issues related to parental participation in learning of their children.

5.3 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This study focused on the relationship between single parenting and academic performance in public primary schools. This limits generalization of findings to all level of education calling for future research to be done in secondary and tertiary institutions and bringing out aspects of gender of parents in the study. The study was cross sectional in nature where it did not capture the trend over period of time thus need for a longitudinal research involving 10 years. This study involved regression analysis. Future studies should consider conducting a longitudinal research and using of Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), Tobit Spatial Models and involve panel or time series as the trend in single parenting keep changing with socio-economic and technological changes in the world.

REFERENCES

- 1) Abate, A. & Birhanu, S. (2019). Relationship between Parental Involvement and Student's Academic Achievement in Model Primary and Secondary Schools of Haramaya University, East Harargwe Zone, Oromia Regional State, Ethiopia. *International Journal of Education Literacy Studies*. Vol 7 (2),46-56.
- 2) Abuya, B. A., Ciera, J. & Kimani-Murage, E. (2012). Effect of mother's education on child's nutritional status in the slums of Nairobi. *BMC Paediatrics*, 12(1).
- 3) Abuya, B.A., Mutisya, M., Onsomu, E.O., Ngware, M. & Oketch, M. (2019). Family structure and child educational attainment in the slums of Nairobi, Kenya. Nairobi: sage.
- 4) Amato, P. R., & Keith, B. (2000). Parental divorce and adult well-being: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 53, 43–58.

Nexus between Participation of Single Parents in School Activities and the Academic Performance of Learners in Public Primary Schools in Kiambu County, Kenya

- 5) Azumah, F. D., Krampah, S. & Nachinaab, J. O. (2018). Effects of family structure on the academic performance of children: A case study of Ayeduase R/C Junior High School in the Kumasi Metropolis, Ghana. *International Journal of Social Science Studies*, 6(10): 11-22.
- 6) Bengesai, A. V. & Nzimande, N. (2020). The association between family structure changes and high school completion in South Africa. *Social Science*, 9(133), 1-15.
- 7) Castro, M., Casas, E., Martin, E., Lizasoain, L., Asencio, E., & Gaviria, J. (2015). Parental involvement on student academic achievement: A meta-analysis. *Educational Research Review*, 14, 33-46.
- 8) Chandler, D. & Munday, R. (2011). *A Dictionary of Media and Communication*, Oxford; Oxford University Press.
- 9) Chepkorir, K., Koros, P. & Piliyesi, E. (2024). Parental Engagement and Student Academic Performance of Public Day Secondary Schools in Kikuyu Sub-County, Kiambu County, Kenya, *International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews*, Vol 5, no 9, pp 1963-1974.
- 10) Cooley, C.H. (1902). Looking-glass self. *The production of reality: Essays and readings on social interactions*, 6, 126-128.
- 11) David, D. M. (2022). Influence of parental engagement on student's academic achievement in public mixed day secondary schools in Yatta Sub-County, Machakos County (Doctoral dissertation, Strathmore University).
- 12) Emmanuel, H., & Andala, H., O. (2021). Parents' Involvement in Education Activities and Learners' Academic Performance in 12YBE Schools in Rwanda. *Journal of Education*, 4 (7), 55-75.
- 13) Erlendsdottir, G. (2010). Effects of parents al Involvement in Education. A case study in Namibia (Master's Thesis, University of Iceland).
- 14) Fleming, F. (2014). Opposite gendered African American siblings from low to middle socioeconomic status families and female favored differential schooling outcomes: A phenomenological interview study. (Unpublished Doctorate Thesis). University of Michigan, Dearborn.
- 15) Grant, K. B., & Ray, J. A. (2010). *Home, school, and community collaboration: Culturally responsive family involvement*, London: Sage.
- 16) Gudlaug, E. (2010). Effects of Parents al Involvement in Education: A case study in Namibia (M.Ed. Thesis, University of Iceland).
- 17) Hakizimana, F. & Sikubwabo, C. (2024). Effect of Parents' Participation in Secondary Schools Activities on Students' Academic Achievement: A Case of Nyabihu District, Rwanda, *African Journal of Empirical Research*, Vol. 5 (2) 2024, 98-108.
- 18) Jaynes, W. H. (2018). A practical model for school leaders to encourage parental engagement and parental engagement. *School Leadership & Management*, 38(2), 147-163.
- 19) Jaynes, W.H. (2018). A Practical Model for School Leaders to Encourage Parental Involvement and Parental Engagement, *School Leadership and Management*, Vol 38 (2), 147-163.
- 20) Khajepour, M., Ghazvini, S. D. (2011). The role of parental involvement affects in children's academic performance. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 15, 1204-1208.
- 21) Kiberenge, K. (2013). More women become single mothers as men abandon family roles, *Family issues*, 17/8/2013
- 22) Kimaru, G. W., Mukolwe, N. & Kimani, J. M. (2020). Influence of family structure on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya. *Global Journal of Advanced Research*, 7(7), 162-166.
- 23) KNBS (2019). *Kenya Demographic and Health Survey, 2019*, Nairobi: KNBS.
- 24) Kombo, D. K. & Tromp, D. L. A. (2006). *Proposal and Thesis Writing – A Production*. Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa.
- 25) Levanda, O. (2011). Parental involvement in school: A test of Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's model among Jewish and Arab parents in Israel. *Children & Youth Service Review*, 33, 927- 935.
- 26) Ma, X., Shen, J., Krenn, H. Y., Hu, S., & Yuan, J. (2016). A meta-analysis of the relationship between learning outcomes and parental engagement during early childhood education and early elementary education. *Educational psychology review*, 28, 771-801.
- 27) Maposa, B. R., Zirima, H. & Mushauri, P. K. (2020). Single parenthood and academic achievement of learners: Findings from a primary school in Kuwadzana, Harare. *International Journal of Education and Science*, 17(2), 36-41.
- 28) McIntyre, L.J. (1998). *The practical Skeptic*, Houston: Mayfield publishing company.
- 29) Mece, M. (2015). Impact of changing family structure on child well-being. Retrieved December 12, 2015 from s.ugd.edu.mk/index.php/BSSR/article/download/1256/1056
- 30) Michelle, B. (2012). Types of family structure, Afro introduction. *Com/marriage*.
- 31) Mugenda O. M. & Mugenda, A.G. (2003). *Research Methods: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*. Nairobi: Acts press.
- 32) Mungai, C. (2017). Single parenting 'crisis' is here with us but is not what you think, *The standard newspaper*.

Nexus between Participation of Single Parents in School Activities and the Academic Performance of Learners in Public Primary Schools in Kiambu County, Kenya

- 33) Musili, E.K., Mwanja, J.M., & Mulwa, D.M (2020) The Influence of Family Based Determinants on Implementation of Re-Admission Policy of Girls After Teenage Pregnancy in Public Secondary Schools in Kitui County. *Journal of Education and Practice*, Vol.11 (11), 13-18.
- 34) Narad, A., & Abdullah, B. (2016). Academic performance of senior secondary school students: Influence of parental encouragement and school environment. *Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*, 8(2), 12-19.
- 35) Nzomo, J.K., Kinyua, G.M., & Mwasiaji, E.T. (2023). Green Innovation Strategy as Antecedent of Performance Sustainability among ISO 14001- Certified Manufacturing Firms in Kenya: Does Regulatory Framework Play a Moderating Role? *The International Journal of Humanities and Social Studies*, Volume 11 (8), 198-207.
- 36) OECD (2011). *Doing better for families*. Paris: OECD publishing.
- 37) Olaleye .Y.L. and Oladeji .D. (2010) "Single Parenthood Impact on Street Children in Ibadan Metropolis, Nigeria" (pp 185-196) *African Research Review. An European Journal of Research in Social Sciences* Vol. 4 No. 9, 2016 ISSN 2056-5429.
- 38) Osuesu, A. O. (2023). Effective Parental engagement in Catholic Middle Schools in Houston, Texas.
- 39) Porumbu, D., & Necsoi, D. V. (2013). Relationship between parental involvement, attitude and children's school achievement. *Procedia-Social & Behavioral Sciences*, 76, 706-710.
- 40) Riina, E.M., & McHale, S.M. (2014). Bidirectional Influence between Dimensions of Co-parenting and Adolescent Adjustment, *PMID*, Vol 43(2) 257-269.
- 41) Stephan, S. (2014). Single father statistics. Retrieved from: <https://singlemotherguide.com/single-father-statistics/#menu>
- 42) Super, C. M. & Harkness, S. (2002). Culture structures the environment for development, *Human development*, 45 (4): 270-274.
- 43) Tan, E. T., & Goldberg, W.A. (2009). Parental school involvement in relation to children's grades and adaptation to school. *Journal of applied developmental psychology*, 30, 442-453.
- 44) Tavakol, M., & Dennick, R. (2011). Making sense of Cronbach's alpha. *International journal of medical education*, 2, 53.
- 45) US Census Bureau (2016) *Family Groups 2016*, Washington DC: US census Bureau.