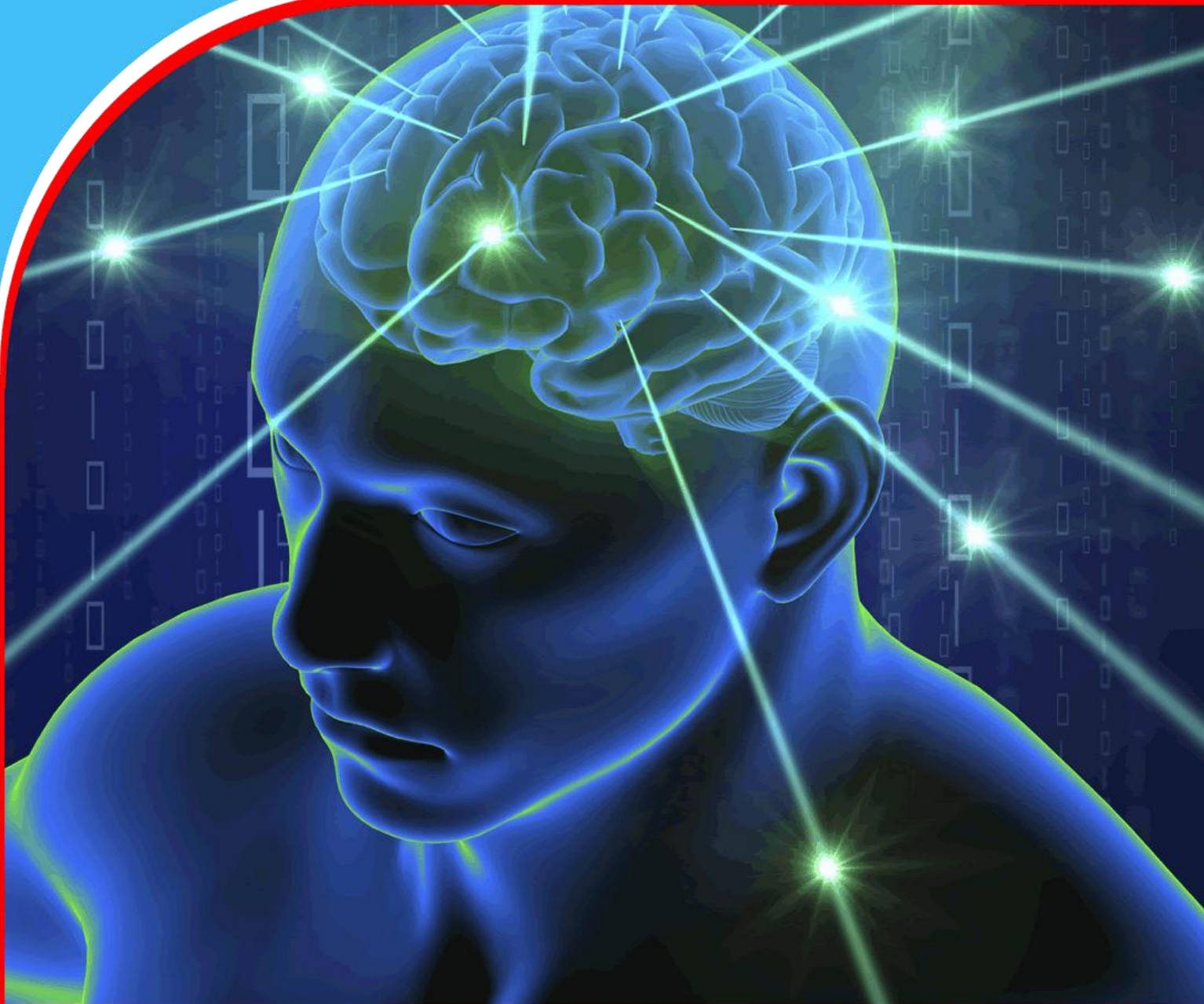


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Parental Engagement as a Predictor of Academic Performance among Secondary School Learners in Sheema District, Uganda

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Abstract

Purpose: Globally, parents' engagement in their children's education has been found to result in improved academic success. This study investigated the prediction effect of parental engagement on students' academic performance in government grant-aided secondary schools in Sheema District, South Western Uganda.

Methodology: The study used quantitative approach employing cross-sectional survey design. Participants included senior four students, parents of senior four students, and teachers teaching in senior four class. The participants were selected using simple random sampling technique. Data on parental engagement and learners' academic performance were collected using a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire.

Findings: Study results indicated a statistically significant effect of parental engagement in provision of basic needs ($t = 5.242, p < .05$), academic communication ($t = 6.116, p < .05$), decision making ($t = 5.834, p < .05$), infrastructural development and maintenance at school ($t = 5.525, p < .05$), provision of conducive learning environment ($t = 6.819, p < .05$), provision of adequate learning resources ($t = 6.167, p < .05$) on learners' academic performance. However, the combined effects of parental engagement aspects did not significantly predict learners' academic performance. The results imply that parental engagement in learners' educational pursuit should be encouraged so as to enhance learners' academic performance.

Recommendation: It is therefore recommended that school programmes that can compel parents to participate in educational activities should be deliberately instituted so as to enhance academic performance among learners.

Keywords: *Parental engagement, academic performance, predictor, secondary school*

INTRODUCTION

The world over, educational institutions strive for sustainable development and continuous survival (Tibarimbasa, 2010). According to Glickman (cited in Tibarimbasa, 2010), however this survival can only be ensured through adequate staffing, financial capacity, and relations between the teaching staff, students and the parents and having adequate facilities that can aid the teaching-learning process in schools and at home. A lot of literature shows that parental participation in students' education has positive outcomes in terms of academic performance (Reece et al., 2013; Rafiq et al., 2013; Jeynes, 2016; Wood & Bauman, 2017). A successful relationship between schools and families reinforces children's health and learning in multiple settings; at home, in school, in and out of school programs, and in the community (Winnicott, 2016). Parental participation according to Lau, Li and Rao (2011) is related to a wide range of positive child outcomes in primary and high schools, such as good academic skills, positive attitudes and social competence. Bicknell (2014) asserts that parents play essential roles as motivators, content and Learning/teaching advisers, resource providers and, monitors in a child's education at home.

Epstein (2011) affirmed that parents play a major role in raising their children. Parental participation has commonly been established to be concomitant with positive cognitive and psychosocial child outcomes (Day & Padilla-Walker, 2009; Fingerman et al. 2012; Wilder, 2014). However, some line of thought indicate that parental participation can deleteriously affect students, especially those whose parents do get involved in the educational process through the so-called over-parenting or 'helicopter parents'. Over-parenting is the situation in which parents are over focused on their children. Padilla-Walker and Nelson (2012) defined the term of helicopter parent as "high on warmth/support, high on control, and low on granting autonomy" (Padilla-Walker & Nelson 2012; cited in Garst & Gagnon 2015, p.8). There is some consensus that over-parenting would passively affect the child because it yields anxiety, narcissism, and feelings of entitlement (Segrin, Woszidlo, Givertz, Bauer & Murphy, 2012; Segrin, Givertz, Swaitkowski, & Montgomery, 2013; Segrin, Woszidlo, Givertz, & Montgomery, 2013). Over-parenting or helicopter parents leave harmful effects on the students because they become over dependent, depriving the child of any motivation, prevent them from making their decisions and solving their problems on their own in the future (Garst & Gagnon 2015). This is usually triggered by the pressures placed by children's parents to achieve academic success (Padilla-Walker & Nelson 2012). For the purpose of this study, the researcher will look at provision of basic needs and communication as subjects under parenting.

Basic needs: Maslow (1943) set up a hierarchy of five levels of basic needs. They are as follows; Physiological Needs or biological needs - oxygen, food, water, and a relatively constant temperature, Safety Needs, Needs of Love, affection and belonging, Needs for Esteem and Needs for Self-Actualization. Consuming a healthy and nutritious diet, getting engaged in extra-curricular activities, staying calm and taking pleasure in studying are some of the aspects that help in maintaining good psychological and physical health (Srinivas & Venkatkrishnan, 2016). If a student is hungry, unsafe, not loved or accepted, or lacking self-esteem, it affects academic performance. In order for parents to meet their children's needs, it is vital for schools to support parenting skills and help parents develop strategies to work with their children (Epstein, 2011).

Research has also found out that children who are raised by mothers who are less affectionate towards them have a lower self-esteem than those children whose mothers showed more affection and love (Hosogi, Okada, Fujii, Noguchi, & Watanabe, 2012). Furthermore, Driscoll (2013) asserts that children who are shown acceptance by parents, easily follow the rules and

boundaries set by the parents, and that enhances their self-esteem. It is important to note that students with high self-esteem levels are more motivated to complete tasks and succeed in life (Khan, Tufail, & Hussain, 2014) and thus self-esteem affects academic performance (Bilal, Sadiq, & Ali, 2013). Using self-determination theory as a theoretical framework for investigating the role of parents in the quality of motivation that students adopt toward homework, Katz, Kaplan, Buzukashvily, (2011) established that parents' behavior such as competence, beliefs and positive attitude towards the task of homework, support the children's psychological needs and these needs positively related to children's autonomous motivation for doing homework.

Communication: In a study on secondary school students, Zakaria, Hasim, Salleh, and Yusoff (2013) found that interaction and communication, parenting practices, leisure, openness, and acceptance were the prognostic aspects of parental participation and had a positive correlation with students' achievement. Research by González and Jackson (2013) revealed that efforts to increase communication with families are positively associated with increases in the reading achievements of their children. The communication system is a two-way process of school and family and should involve both parties (Epstein, 2011; Symeou, Roussounidou & Michaelides, 2012).

Parental attitudes, traditions and participation in education are among the essential family factors that insinuate students' academic performance (Osonwa, Adejobi, Iyam, & Osanwa, 2013; Stull, 2013). Maina (2010) asserts that with positive attitude, children are able to dedicate themselves wholeheartedly towards learning and generate the desired academic outcomes. When parents listen to the grievances of their children, share with them and help them solve their problems, it leads to encouragement of positivity and solutions to problems (Ogunsola, Osulale, & Ojo, 2014), which results into academic improvement. Research by Abuya et al. (2014) in Kenya discovered that parental engagement by involving and forming an open communication with their teenage school-going children significantly improved their learning outcomes.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed non-experimental cross-sectional research design using quantitative techniques of collecting and analysing data. The population of the study was made up of senior four students, parents of senior four students, and teachers teaching in senior four. The sample size, determined using tables developed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) to ensure a good decision model, resulted in 69 teachers of senior four learners, 246 parents and 245 senior four learners. Quantitative data was analysed using SPSS. The study hypothesised that the prediction effect of parental engagement on learners' academic performance would be statistically significant. This was tested using simple and later multiple linear regressions analysis. The researcher observed ethical considerations. For instance, permission was sought from Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST)'s Research Ethics Committee (REC) and National Council for Science and Technology. An introduction letter was obtained from MUST's Dean of Faculty of Science to District Education Offices and Head teachers of government aided USE schools in Sheema District.

RESULTS

Background Information

The background information of the learners focused on their age, sex, number of biological parent(s), status of schooling, and previous academic performance among others. Demographic information of parents and teachers included age, sex, state of leadership position in the

community, highest level of education, number of children being looked after by the family, family economic status, and who the child spends most of the time with while not at school.

Age of the Respondents

The age of respondents was analysed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations) and presented in Figure 2. Later the findings were interpreted in light of the influence of parental engagement on students' academic performance in government grant aided USE schools.

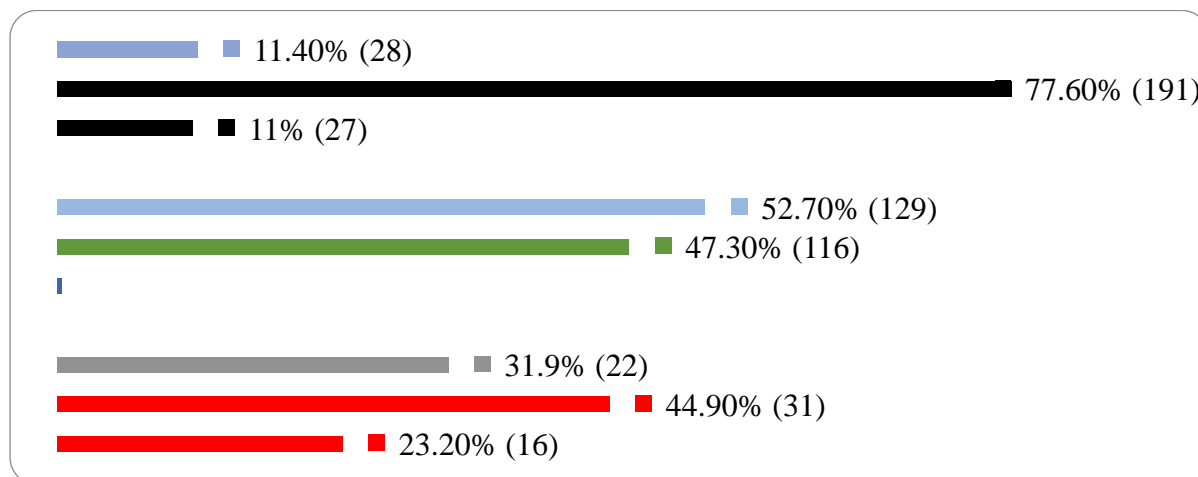


Figure 1: Age of the respondents

Source: Primary data

Students' Age

Figure 2 shows that majority (52.7%) of the student participants were above 18 years, followed by those between 12 to 17 years (47.3%). The fact that majority of the students were above 18 years could be due to the fact that most students in USE schools in Sheema District start schooling late and most repeat classes. This further explains why there is a high dropout rate in USE schools; they lose morale for schooling as they feel overaged for their level. This further more implies that government grant aided USE schools in Sheema District should encourage parents to bring children to school in time, at 6 years and emphasise automatic promotion as stipulated by government policy.

Teachers' Age

Figure 2 shows that majority of the teacher participants were between 31 and 60 years (44.9%), followed by those below 30 years (23.2%), and 60 and above years (31.8%). The majority of teacher respondents were between 31 to 60 years and this could be due to the fact that usually schools tend to trust candidate classes with teachers of some years of teaching experience but those who clock 60 years are usually retired. However, the results show that some teachers who are above the retirement age of 60 years are given opportunities to further teach probably on contract. Also, since government has not employed enough teachers, schools tend to hire retired teachers using PTA funds, to teach their children because of their experience and being cheaper. This implies that government grant aided USE schools in Sheema District should follow the retirement policy of government of 60 years. They should also lobby from central government for more teachers on government pay role, and this will reduce the burden on the parents. The study further shown that some teachers of 30 years and below, many of which

are likely to be fresh graduates are given opportunity to teach candidates' classes. This implies that mentoring of fresh and none experienced teachers can easily be done.

Parents' Age

Figure 2 shows that majority of the parent participants were between 31 and 60 years of age (77.6%), followed by those above 60 years (11.4%) and those below 30 years (11%). The majority of parents were between 31 and 60 years probably due to the fact that many people in Sheema get married at the age above 18 years and many students come to school at the age of 12 years, therefore by senior four, many parents are above 30 years. Some parents in Sheema produce many children and end up having children in senior four even after 60 years. Also, some parents above 60 years are taking care of their glad children especially those whose parents were claimed by HIV/AIDS scurge or those who were produced outside marriage. Such children are usually taken to be cared by their glad parents. Other children are left behind with glad parents and their biological parents go to remarry especially after the death of one of the parents or after separation.

Broken marriages have always left behind child headed families of families under the care of very old people. This implies that government grant aided USE schools in Sheema District should sensitize parents on problem solving in their families and protection against killer diseases. The study further shows that a good percentage of studentds are under the care of parents under the age of 30 years. This could be mainly due to some early marriages, early girl child pregnancies and child headed families due to loss of parents. This implies that government grant aided schools in Sheema should sentise parents on such diseases and effects early marriages, family breakdowns or separation of parents and even offer counselling services especially for sexually abused students or students who were neglected by parents. Government should put a policy of providing a school counsellor to each school. A teacher, who is teaching uncounselled student does it in vain.

Sex of the Respondents

Sex of the participants was categorized as male and female. Sex was later used as an explanatory variable for the influence of parental engagement on students' academic performance in the government grant aided USE schools in Sheema District. Figure 3 shows the distribution of the participants by sex.

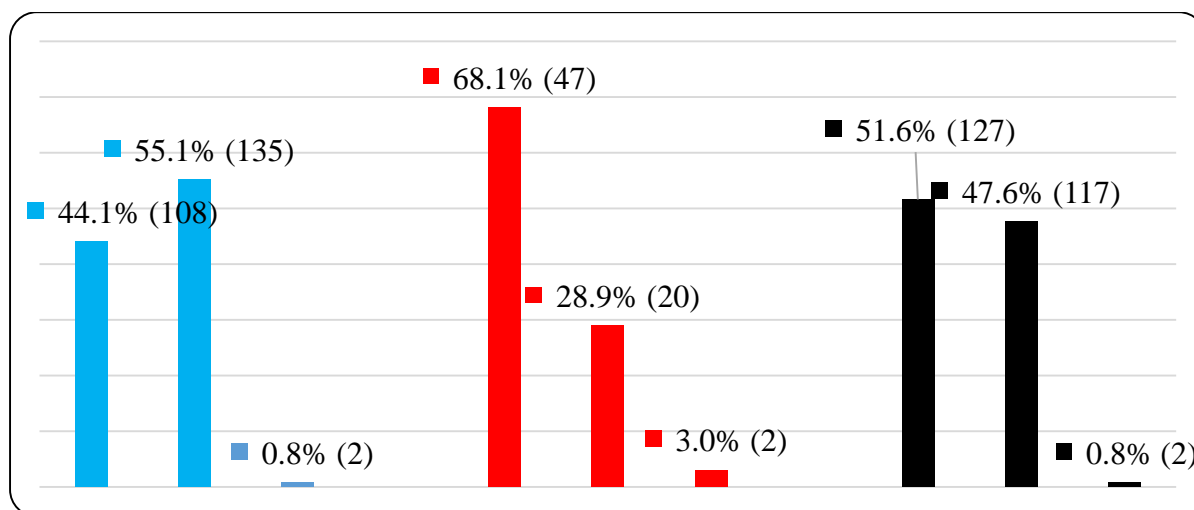


Figure 2: Sex of respondents

Students' sex

Figure 3 shows that majority (55.1%) of the student respondents were female, followed by male (44.1%) and those who didn't declare their sex (0.8%). The fact that majority of the student respondents were female could be due to the fact that there has been a lot of sensitization on the education and care of a girl child in many communities in Sheema district. Many parents have put much emphasis on the education of girl of a girl child leaving the boy child behind. This implies that government grant aided USE schools in Sheema District should also sensitize parents on the education of boy child. School administration should emphasise and sensitize parents on the policies concerning gender.

Teachers' sex

Results in Figure 3 indicate that majority of the teacher participants were male (70.3%), followed by female respondents at 29.7%. The majority of teacher respondents were male and this could be due to the fact that many administrators still see women as a weaker sex. In many schools, ladies are time tabled to teach candidate classes in fear of what may happen in case they get maternity leave of three months or because of failing to wake up early at night or moving late at night if the school wanted them to teach extra/remedial lessons. This implies that government grant aided USE schools in Sheema District should consider always consider gender equality policy issues. The study further shows that many schools do not put emphasis on policies of government like the policy of one-third for women in their activities.

Parents' sex

The figure above shows that majority of the parents who participated in the study were male (51.6%), followed by female respondents (47.6%) and 0.8% who did not declare their sex. Majority of the parent respondents were male probably because in Sheema like many areas in Africa consider the father as the head of the family and therefore, if a child brings a questionnaire on studies home, even if the mother is the one paying fees, the father will be the one to fill it. This implies that government grant aided USE schools in Sheema District. The study further shows that most likely, the men are more educated than women because originally there was gender discrimination especially on women, teenage pregnancies and desire of many parents to get money inform of dowry made many girls not to reach far in education or even learning how to read and write. Government policies on gender and women empowerment should be emphasized in communities through sensitization programs.

Prediction Effect of Parental Engagement on Learners' Academic Performance

The study sought to examine the extent to which parental engagement in learners' academic activities affected the learners' academic performance in government grant-aided USE schools in Sheema District. It was hypothesized that parental engagement in (a) basic needs provision, (b) academic communication, (c) decision making, (d) structural development and maintenance, (e) provision of a conducive learning environment at home, and (f) provision of adequate Learning materials at home would significantly affect the learners' academic performance. Testing the hypothesis using simple linear regression analysis was preceded by normality testing and correlation analysis.

Using the Shapiro-Wilk test results, the null hypothesis of normal distribution was rejected for all but infrastructural development and maintenance ($p > .05$). However, given that all the data were continuous, all the variables were subjected to correlation (Table 1) and subsequent regression analyses.

Table 1: Pearson product moment correlation coefficients between parental engagement subscales and academic performance

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1) Basic needs	1					
2) Communication	.597**	1				
3) Decision making	.529**	.618**	1			
4) Structural development and maintenance	.243**	.418**	.541**	1		
5) Learning environment	.467**	.513**	.541**	.473**	1	
6) Learning materials provision	.504**	.474**	.497**	.434**	.552**	1
7) Academic performance	.230**	.267**	.255**	.243**	.299**	.270**

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

Results in Table 1 indicate that all the aspects of parental engagement had a moderately low significant positive correlation with academic performance. This generally implies that increase in parental engagement in learners' academic activities is positively associated with the learners' academic performance.

Extent to which parents' provision of basic needs affects students' academic performance

It was hypothesized (Hypothesis 2a) that academic performance is significantly predicted by parental engagement in basic needs provision. A simple linear regression analysis was conducted in SPSS between provision of basic needs score and academic performance score. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Regression of academic performance on provision of basic needs

Predictors	B	Std. error	Beta	T	Sig.
Academic performance	38.623	1.729		22.340	.000
Basic needs	0.308	.059	.230	5.242	.000

Note. $R = .230$, $R^2 = .053$, $Adjusted R^2 = .051$; $F = 27.478$, $p < .000$

The interaction between the independent variable (provision of basic needs) and the dependent variable (academic performance) gave a low multiple correlation coefficient (R) value of .230, and consequently adjusted R square value of .053. The low R -value implies that there is very little variance shared between the between parental engagement in basic needs provision and academic performance. Eyeball interpretation of the R square value reveals that the provision of basic needs predicts only up to 5.3% of the learners' academic performance. Analysis of variance indicates a significant model ($F = 27.478$, $p = .001$). From Table 2, every unit increase in the level of parents' provision of basic needs causes a 0.308 increase in academic performance ($t = 5.242$, $p < .05$). In this case, there was a statistically significant effect of parents' provision of basic needs on learners' academic performance. Hence, Hypothesis 2a was accepted.

Extent to which parental engagement in academic communication affects students' academic performance

It was hypothesized (Hypothesis 2b) that academic performance is significantly predicted by parental engagement in academic communication. A simple linear regression analysis was conducted in SPSS between academic communication score and academic performance score. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Regression of academic performance on academic communication

Predictors	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Academic performance	36.384	1.817		20.024	.000
Academic Communication	.314	.051	.267	6.116	.000

Note. $R = .267$, $R^2 = .071$, $Adjusted R^2 = .069$; $F = 37.411$, $p < .000$

The interaction between the academic communication and academic performance gave a low multiple correlation coefficient (R) value of .267, and consequently adjusted R square value of .071. The low R -value implies that there is very little variance shared between the between parental engagement in academic communication and academic performance. Eyeball interpretation of the R square value reveals that parental engagement in academic communication predicts up to 7.1% of the learners' academic performance. Analysis of variance indicates a significant model ($F = 37.411$, $p < .05$). From Table 3, every unit increase in the level of parental engagement in academic communication causes a 0.314 unit increase in academic performance ($t = 6.116$, $p < .05$). Therefore, there was a statistically significant effect of parental engagement in academic communication on learners' academic performance. Hence, Hypothesis 2b was accepted.

Extent to which parental engagement in decision making affects students' academic performance

It was hypothesized (Hypothesis 2c) that academic performance is significantly predicted by parental engagement in academic decision making. A simple linear regression analysis was conducted in SPSS between decision making score and academic performance score. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Regression of academic performance on decision making

Predictors	B	Std. error	Beta	T	Sig.
Academic performance	39.479	1.383		28.545	.000
Decision making score	.327	.056	.255	5.834	.000

Note. $R = .255$, $R^2 = .065$, $Adjusted R^2 = .063$; $F = 34.038$, $p < .000$

The interaction between the parental engagement in decision making and learners' academic performance gave a low multiple correlation coefficient (R) value of .255, and consequently adjusted R square value of .065. The low R -value implies that there is very little variance shared between the parental engagement in decision making and academic performance. Eyeball interpretation of the R square value reveals that parental engagement in decision making predicts up to 6.5% of the learners' academic performance. Analysis of variance indicates a significant model ($F = 34.038$, $p < .05$). The results in Table 4 further indicate that for every unit increase in the level of parental engagement in decision making, there is a 0.327 unit increase

in academic performance ($t = 5.834, p < .05$). Therefore, there was a statistically significant effect of parental engagement in decision making on learners' academic performance. Hence, Hypothesis 2c was accepted.

Extent to which parental engagement in structural development and maintenance at school affects students' academic performance

Hypothesis 2d stated that academic performance was significantly predicted by parental engagement in structural development and maintenance at school. A simple linear regression analysis was conducted in SPSS between the structural development and maintenance score and academic performance score. The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Regression of academic performance on infrastructural development and maintenance at school

Predictors	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Academic performance	39.266	1.496		26.242	.000
Structural development and maintenance score	.284	.051	.243	5.525	.000

Note. $R = .243, R^2 = .059, Adjusted R^2 = .057; F = 30.527, p < .000$

The interaction between parental engagement in infrastructural development and maintenance at school and learners' academic performance gave a low multiple correlation coefficient (R) value of .243, and hence adjusted R square value of .059. The low R -value implies that there is little variance shared between the parental engagement in decision making and academic performance. Eyeball interpretation of the R square value reveals that parental engagement in infrastructural development and maintenance at school predicts up to 5.9% of the learners' academic performance. Analysis of variance indicates a significant model ($F = 30.527, p < .05$). The results in Table 5 also indicate that when the level of parental engagement in infrastructural development and maintenance at school increases by one unit, there is a 0.284 unit increase in academic performance ($t = 5.525, p < .05$). Therefore, there was a statistically significant effect of parental engagement in infrastructural development and maintenance at school on learners' academic performance. Hence, Hypothesis 2d was accepted.

Extent to which parental engagement in provision of conducive learning environment affects students' academic performance

It was hypothesized (Hypothesis 2e) that academic performance is significantly predicted by parental engagement in provision of conducive learning environment. A simple linear regression analysis was conducted in SPSS between the provision of conducive learning environment score and academic performance score. The results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Regression of academic performance on parental engagement in provision of conducive learning environment

Predictors	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Academic performance	35.094	1.847		18.996	.000
Learning environment score	.349	.051	.299	6.819	.000

Note. $R = .299, R^2 = .089, Adjusted R^2 = .087; F = 46.502, p < .000$

The interaction between parental engagement in provision of conducive learning environment and learners' academic performance gave a low multiple correlation coefficient (R) value of .299, and hence adjusted R square value of .089. The low R -value shows that little variance is shared between the parental engagement in provision of conducive learning environment and academic performance. Eyeball interpretation of the R square value reveals that parental engagement in provision of conducive learning environment predicts up to 8.9% of the learners' academic performance. Analysis of variance indicates a significant model ($F = 46.502, p < .05$). The results in Table 6 further reveal that when the level of parental engagement in provision of conducive learning environment increases by one unit, there is a 0.349 unit increase in academic performance ($t = 6.819, p < .05$). Therefore, the effect of parental engagement in provision of conducive learning environment on learners' academic performance was statistically significant. Hence, Hypothesis 2e was accepted.

Extent to which parental engagement in provision of learning resources affects students' academic performance

It was hypothesized (Hypothesis 2f) that academic performance would be significantly predicted by parental engagement in provision of adequate learning resources. A simple linear regression analysis was conducted in SPSS between the parental engagement in provision of adequate learning resources score and academic performance score. The results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Regression of academic performance on parental engagement in provision of adequate learning resources

Predictors	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Academic performance	40.984	1.074		38.146	.000
Learning materials provision score	.222	.036	.270	6.167	.000

Note. $R = .270, R^2 = .073, Adjusted R^2 = .071; F = 38.035, p < .000$

The interaction between parental engagement in provision of adequate learning resources and learners' academic performance gave a low multiple correlation coefficient (R) value of .270, and hence adjusted R square value of .073. The low R -value shows that little variance is shared between the parental engagement in provision of adequate learning resources and academic performance. Eyeball interpretation of the R square value reveals that parental engagement in provision of adequate learning resources predicts up to 7.3% of the learners' academic performance. Analysis of variance indicates a significant model ($F = 38.035, p < .05$). The results in Table 7 further reveal that when the level of parental engagement in provision of adequate learning resources increases by one unit, there is a 0.222 unit increase in academic performance ($t = 6.167, p < .05$). Therefore, the effect of parental engagement in provision of adequate learning resources on learners' academic performance was statistically significant. Hence, Hypothesis 2f was accepted.

Extent to which parental engagement in provision of learning resources affects students' academic performance

It was hypothesized (Hypothesis 2g) that academic performance would be significantly predicted by parental engagement in provision of adequate learning resources. A simple linear regression analysis was conducted in SPSS between the parental engagement in provision of adequate learning resources score and academic performance score. The results are presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Regression of academic performance on overall parental engagement

Predictors	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Academic performance	32.864	2.496		13.167	.000
Basic needs	.008	.087	.006	.094	.925
Communication	.157	.082	.135	1.921	.055
Decision making	-.031	.092	-.025	-.342	.732
Structural development and maintenance score	.065	.073	.057	.895	.371
Learning environment	.141	.077	.124	1.841	.066
Learning materials provision	.099	.052	.120	1.919	.056

Note. $R = .334$, $R^2 = .112$, Adjusted $R^2 = .097$; $F = 7.795$, $p < .000$

The interaction between parental engagement and learners' academic performance gave a low multiple correlation coefficient (R) value of .334, and hence adjusted R square value of .112. The low R -value shows that little variance is shared between the parental engagement aspects and academic performance. Eyeball interpretation of the R square value reveals that parental engagement predicts up to 11.2% of the learners' academic performance. Analysis of variance indicates a significant model ($F = 7.795$, $p < .05$). The results in Table 8 reveal that the effect of combined aspects of parental engagement on learners' academic performance was not statistically significant. Hence, Hypothesis 2g was rejected.

Table 9: ANOVA results

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1986.038	6	331.006		.000 ^b
	Residual	15796.595	372	42.464		
	Total	17782.633	378			

a. Dependent variable: Academic performance score

b. Predictors: Academic performance, Learning materials provision score, Structural development and maintenance score, Basic needs score, Learning environment score, Communication score, Decision making score

Table 10: Model analysis

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. error			
1	Academic performance	32.864	2.496		13.167	.000
	Basic needs score	.008	.087	.006	.094	.925
	Communication score	.157	.082	.135	1.921	.055
	Decision making score	-.031	.092	-.025	-.342	.732

Structural development and maintenance score	.065	.073	.057	.895	.371
Learning environment score	.141	.077	.124	1.841	.066
Learning materials provision score	.099	.052	.120	1.919	.056

a. Dependent variable: Academic performance score

DISCUSSION

The extent to which parental engagement in learners' academic activities affected the learners' academic performance in government grant-aided USE schools in Sheema District was examined. Parental engagement was measured in terms of (a) basic needs provision, (b) academic communication, (c) decision making, (d) structural development and maintenance, (e) provision of a conducive learning environment at home, and (f) provision of adequate learning materials at home would significantly affect the learners' academic performance. The hypotheses were tested using simple linear regression analysis and the results are discussed herein.

The results indicate that parental engagement in satisfying basic needs, academic communication, decision making, structural development and maintenance, creating a welcome home learning environment, and providing enough learning resources has a statistically significant impact on students' academic performance. These results are consistent with a substantial body of prior research. For instance, Núñez (2021) provides a summary of studies revealing strong connections between student accomplishment and numerous aspects of family life, such as parental involvement with their children's homework. Odama and Ezati (2017) concur that parental participation can have a significant impact on the academic progress of children, noting that the most parental engagement in their children's education and extracurricular activities is a greater determinant of the children's academic success than either socioeconomic or familial position. This suggests that substantial achievement gains are possible when parents and teachers collaborate to improve education. With the help of the parents, they develop a relationship built on trust, respect, and a shared desire to enhance their child's academic achievement. According to the research, when schools seek to incorporate parents, student conduct improves. The parents' social capital would reciprocally improve by becoming a community of practicing parents.

According to a study by Wilder (2014), parental involvement in their children's education has a good and significant effect on their lives, including their growth, behavior, motivation, and academic success. Children whose parents are interested in their academic work attend school more frequently, behave better, perform better academically from kindergarten through high school, progress further in their education, and attend better schools. Parental participation gives a clear message to children, expressing their interest in their activities and reinforcing the notion that school is essential. By becoming enthusiastically involved in their children's education at home and in school, parents give their children clear messages, expressing their interest in their activities and reinforcing the notion that school is essential.

Odama and Ezati (2017) cite a 2005 study by De-Hass et al. that discovered parental involvement at school increased children's perceptions of control and competence, fostered a sense of safety and belonging, and aided children in internalizing issues. Based on the findings of Odama et al. (2017), I argue that when parents are involved in their children's education,

learners should demonstrate higher levels of engagement, focus, attention, curiosity, responsibility, and perceived competence. This resonates with the findings of Núñez (2021) that the higher the level of parental engagement by way of control and support, the greater the students' motivational and cognitive engagement. However, parental supervision and the use of extrinsic rewards may be associated with an emphasis on extrinsic rather than intrinsic motivation. Students who perceive that their parents are most committed in their education are more likely to have a mastery goal orientation to learning, which indicates that they will seek out tough activities, persevere when confronted with academic obstacles, and enjoy the learning process. Where parents engage actively in their children's academic activities, the results are obvious: the children achieve higher academic performance than their counterparts whose parents are slack in academic engagement.

The study findings imply that ineffective parental engagement in learners' academic activities would have a negative impact on academic performance of the learners. Previous studies (e.g., Núñez et al., 2021) indicate that academic success is significantly and negatively associated with parental emphasis on control and structure in form of excessive control and pressure on children to complete homework, directives and rules about homework and schoolwork. Similarly, Núñez et al. (2015) found that children's perceptions of parental control regarding homework were directly and negatively related to academic achievement. Wilder (2014) similarly observed that the relationship between parental aspiration and expectation for academic achievement and academic achievement itself was stronger than the relationship between parental supervision of children at home through regulating time spent doing homework and/or watching television, providing home environments conducive to studying, and making sure children return home after school. Hence, the greater the perceived parental control, the worse the students' academic performance.

According to Fernández Alonso et al. (2017), parental involvement in their children's education is connected with varying effects on academic success. There is a negative correlation between the controlling style and academic achievement. Instead, there is a favorable correlation between communicating style and academic achievement. When parental engagement is measured using distal measures of support (family communication about school matters), there are clearer effects than when the measures refer to the amount of help with homework, suggesting that less interventionist parenting styles promote children's autonomy and are associated with better academic outcomes.

Notably, parenting styles are neither independent nor consistent, according to Fernández Alonso et al. (2017). The relationship between controlling and communicative styles has been found to be strong and good. In other words, adolescents who perceive stronger parental supervision over homework also report improved communication with their parents regarding school-related issues, indicating the need to strike a balance between the amount of direct assistance parents provide and the encouragement of autonomy. Parents exhibit more controlling behaviors when their children are less motivated or have a history of more learning difficulties.

Another reason for advocating for parental engagement in learners' academic activities is that, as posited by Topor et al. (2010), increased parental engagement is significantly related to increased quality of the student-teacher relationship, which reciprocally relates to the students' academic performance. This implies that for parents who do not effectively engage for reasons of low socioeconomic empowerment and low education level, there is need for institutional programmes to support them to engage with their children academically (Antoine, 2015). If parents can be made to feel competent in handling their children's academic affairs, then they

are more likely to exhibit more effective engagement. This can be achieved by educating the parent so that they can educate their child. In this regard, parental engagement should be made an enjoyable or simple task which will parents will yearn to embrace. As the children grow older and start undertaking more complicated academic content, the parents' role can be restructured to moral and material supervision, sometimes through connecting the learners with the world of practice.

CONCLUSION

It is evident from the study that parental engagement has a significant and positive relationship with academic achievement. This implies that the academic achievement of the students depends upon the mutual cooperation between the parents and school of the students. Both the home and the school need to cooperate in making the learners to be well adjusted emotionally as this could make more academic achievement. Severe efforts should be taken from both the sides to maintain a fruitful partnership. Deficient approaches such as the expert and consumer models should be shunned in fostering parental engagement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that school managers and teachers design strategies to engage families in the education of their children and encourage the participation of parents in regular, two-way communications involving student academic achievement and various school activities. One way is for schools to enact policies that pressure parents to get engaged in school programs such as accompanying the children while reporting to school, compulsory school visits, and picking up children from school, in addition to attending other critical school activities like school parents' meetings.

Schools should institute home-based academic activities that will encourage parents to participate to enhance their children's academic outcomes and develop their competences even at home. Parents possess a key role and they should play this role to guide and back their children's developments and academic learnings because parents are the foremost teachers and the first educators to introduce the children to the society and school.

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