



Parental Influences on Children's Academics Work in the Era of COVID-19

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Author's contribution

The sole author designed, analysed, interpreted and prepared the manuscript.

Article Information

DOI: 10.9734/AJESS/2023/v48i31068

Open Peer Review History:
This journal follows the Advanced Open Peer Review policy. Identity of the Reviewers, Editor(s) and additional Reviewers, peer review comments, different versions of the manuscript, comments of the editors, etc are available here: <https://www.sdiarticle5.com/review-history/97430>

Original Research Article

Received: 08/06/2023
Accepted: 12/08/2023
Published: 26/08/2023

ABSTRACT

The global spread of COVID-19 has caused disruptions in many aspects of our lives. Education systems worldwide have changed dramatically. Numerous countries have encouraged schools to shift to e-learning and, as a result, parental involvement in their children's education has changed. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic upended family life around the world and with a lot for parents to navigate around. In response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, countries took unprecedented steps in an effort to prevent and contain the spread of the virus. Some of these containment measures included closures of schools and childcare services, lockdown of working places, working remotely, and guidelines for physical distancing, suspension of community gatherings and recreation services including the church. It was horrifying and confusing for everybody, more so to the children and this led to the interest of the researcher. This study focused on parental influence / involvement in children's education during the COVID-19 pandemic. The researcher was to explore the level of parental awareness of their roles in influencing academic work of their children. It was also to determine whether the demographic variable of parents has an effect on their awareness of their influence and hence their involvement in their children's education. In addition, the study sought to examine what existing literature review had in the relation between parental awareness of their roles in academic work and involvement. An

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exploration of the parental awareness of their roles in academics among the low- income parents can provide valuable insight for assisting these stakeholders in academics The study was carried out in Ruiru subcounty, Kiambu county. Population for the study included 3 class teachers in primary school in class six, five and four. 30 Parents with children in class four, five and six respectively and their children. The Intensity Sampling Technique was used in this research study. Open ended and closed questionnaires were used for parents and teachers and interview guide for children. which realized Qualitative and quantitative data.

Qualitative method was used to gauge parental awareness of their roles and influence on academic work. The results revealed that parental educational level and employment/occupation had greater impact on parental awareness of their influence and involvement. Results indicated that most parents were not conversant with the curriculums, very few visited the schools to follow-up on their children's performance and were not sure that their involvement influenced children's academic work positively or negatively. The findings, suggested that parents should grow more awareness of their influence on academic work, It was also recommended that parents should take an active role in assisting their children's education at school and at home since they are very significant in children's academic work. Polices on education should be clear on the role of parents in academic work other than fronteering children to schools and paying tuition fees

Keywords: Coronavirus disease; child development; academic work; parental influences.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

“Most children have two main educators in their life. Parents are the first educators and continue to influence their children's learning and development during the school years and long afterwards (Family-School Partnerships Framework” [1]. It is within the family that the child is first socialized in all aspects of development. The earliest moral & ethical writings of many cultures assert the significance of the family in the life of the child. The view is often expressed that society losses it strength if people do not fulfill the family obligations. It is within the family that the child's basic needs are met, and at the right time, when required and not when the parents have time. Just as the chain breaks first at its weakest links, so problems of a society become most pressing and visible in the social strata's that are under greatest stress; the family. It is therefore important that we should recognize the disruption of the process of socialization in the family and society that will interfere with children's quality education [2], (Cluver et al., 2020).

The influence of early years on the quality of education cannot be overemphasized [3]. The mental, social, emotional and physical development of the child plays a critical role in the ability to learn, which is shaped during the early years. However, the current socio-economic factors have had unprecedented impact on parents and children's behavior today

that can be considered unsuitable when weighed against traditional values in relation to children's wellbeing and long-life quality education.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

To Establish parental influence on children's academic work and their level of awareness of their roles in academic work during the era of current covid-19 restrictions and isolations on social interactions.

1.3 General Objective

The broad objective was to established the influence of parents on academic work during the COVID-10 ERA.

1.3.1 Specific objectives of the study

The aims of this research are as follows:

1. To establish parental awareness of their influence on academic work.
2. To determine whether parents are aware of their role in children's academic work?
3. Examine the areas of academic work that parents are involved in.
4. To investigate whether parents in this category are acquainted with the school curriculums?

1.3.2 Research questions

1. Are parents aware of their influence on academic work?

2. Are parents aware of the role in children's academic work?
3. What areas of academic work are they more involved in?
4. Are they acquainted with the school curriculums?.

1.4 Target Population

The study targeted the low income parents with children in class four, five and six and their children in the same classes. These are the middle classes in primary schools. They have their expectations and therefore can respond to questions and read simple questions. Class teachers of class four, five and six.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptualization of Parental Influence

Parental influence can be defined as the influence of a child's father and mother or guardian on the child's life with the purpose of supporting the youngster in making better decisions, integrating into society and enhancing over all academic work. Many authors, such as Khajehpour [4] refers to parental influence as parental engagement rather than parental influence. In the words of Abdul-Adil & Farmer [5], parental influence or involvement refers to any parental attitudes, behaviours, style, or activities that occur within or outside the school setting in order to improve children's academic and/or behavioural success in and outside school. According to Khajehpour [4], parental involvement is a critical component in promoting children's education in a good manner.

According to Ugwuja [6], "children learn and develop via three overlapping spheres of influence: the family, the school and the community. To give maximum value to the child, it is important that all three domains collaborate in order to establish linkages. Epstein's approach depicts an all-encompassing view of the consequences of a decision. He identified six types of influence that are based on relationships between the family, school and community: parenting (skills), communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making and collaborating with the community. He stressed that all of these six types of involvement must be integrated in order to achieve success".

According to L. Lara, M. Safacostti, [7], "parental participation in their children's academic activities

has a positive impact on their academic success, allowing them to reach their highest level of academics". In a study conducted by Kreider, Kennedy and Weiss [8], "researchers discovered that children who have their parents read aloud to them at home are more likely to comprehend the letters of the alphabet quicker than children who do not have their parents read aloud to them. In frequent talks with their children, parents who use demanding terms have a positive impact on their children, who do well in literacy-related kindergarten tasks". According to Shapiro [9], "children's academic performance increases when their parents are more involved in their lives. This is true independent of the parents' educational background". Further, studies by Mwoma, [10] on parental involvement of fathers indicated that children of involved fathers performed better academically.

Among the advantages of early parental involvement is the formation of stronger personalities in children, as they emulate what they see and hear from their parents. According to Khajehpour and Ghazvini [11] "family involvement improves components of children's education such as daily attendance, student performance and behaviour, as well as motivation. Children are more likely to react and perform well in school when their parents are involved and check homework, encourage involvement in extracurricular activities and assist children in setting goals for their future". Cotton and Wikelund [12] also cited by Khajehpour and Ghazvini [4]. The level to which a family is involved in a child's education, according to them, is the most dependable predictor of student achievement.

A large number of studies have been conducted to support the idea that students do better when their parents are involved in their educational process, according to Rahman [13]. According to Velez and Jones [14], cited by Rahman [13], "the research demonstrated that the parent-child bond serves as a firm foundation for academic achievement in young children. The greater the intellectual performance, the stronger the links are, especially when it comes to educational problems, more so for children. The findings of study indicated that parents with an educational background are more successful in preparatory work with their children for school than parents without an educational background. The findings of the study showed that children of educated parents have a higher level of life satisfaction and fewer troubles in school and in academics as

well as being more confident”, self-reliant Wamala (2013) study indicates that strong parental participation improves school discipline and helps students make greater academic success in the classroom.

2.2 Parental Influence on the Academic Performance of Students

“Parents influence their children in many ways. For example, they will voluntarily assist at school, exchange a few words with teachers about their children, be of assistance to children in home regarding educational activities, and be present at parent- teacher meetings” [15]. All these activities reflect their educational aspiration [16]. These educational aspirations are reflected in helping their children in completion of their homework, and conducive learning environment at home in addition to the parent- child communication regarding education and setting school routine leading to academic socialization [17]. For instance, Rafiq et al. [18] have found a profound influence of involvement of parents on scholastic success at secondary level. Their scholastic success is strengthened when their parents spend extra time with their children [19]. On the other hand, parents who are unable to pay attention to their children show higher aggression [20] which leads to the decline in academic success of their children. These activities within the home environment help in academic endeavors and ultimately motivate them to learn [21].

Thus, Parental influence and children's academic success are at odds because parents who are less interested in their children's education are concerned that their children should reach goals that they themselves were not be able accomplish but were not pushing towards the goal by their academic related activities.

Several researchers, like Kainuwa and Yusuf [22], have found “a difference between children of educated parents and children whose parents have only completed elementary school. They also discovered that fathers with a university degree have children who do well in school and get the highest exam results”. Musgrave [23] as cited in Kainuwa, [24], provided “support for this claim by stating that a child who grows up in an educated home would follow in the footsteps of his or her parents and, as a consequence, will put out more effort in his or her studies. The provision of library facilities by well-educated parents is intended to encourage their children to

engage in intellectual activities such as reading newspapers, magazines and scholarly publications”.

As a result, they are more likely to have a wider vocabulary, which will benefit the children and aid them in developing linguistic fluency. According to Eccles [24], “educated parents use a number of strategies to ensure that their children have access to a wide range of educational options. This shows that well-educated parents are better in interactions with children on academic's activities and the content being taught at school. When it comes to job and education, they will be able to provide greater assistance to their children”. For Gratz (2006), “due to their close relationship with their children, educated parents have a significant impact on their children's academic achievement, while less educated parents have uncontrollable stress in their lives. This stress interferes with their ability to engage in physical activity with their child. He contends that as parents go up the educational ladder, they become better equipped to deal with the stress that their children encounter in school and university”.

They have teaching styles that support children's development, engage their children in higher-quality verbal interaction, provide a cognitively stimulating learning environment and literacy activities at home and are more at ease and involved with their children's education, teachers and educational institutions than the general public, according to the findings. Nonetheless, they are associated with increased warmth in parent-child relationships and decreased hostility in parent-child interactions [25].

2.3 Children's Education

“Parents engage in their children's education in many ways at home and in school that influence children in all aspects of development. Good parenting at home includes engagement in children's education through; feelings of secure environment, providing intellectual stimulation and conversation, modelling constructive social and educational values and guidance in career choices, shaping the child's self concept as a learner by fostering literacy and problem-solving skills, encouraging high aspirations both personally and socially” [26].

Robert Jenkins, UNICEF's Global Chief of Education, offers five tips to help keep children's education on track while they're staying at home.

According to Abdul-Adil and Farmer [5], “parental involvement comprises parental attitudes, actions, events that happen inside or outside the school environment to support children's academic or behavioral success”. “The tips are based on the child and not addressing the parents’ issues in line with their children's’ education, yet children are supposed to be reliant on their caregivers for nurturing and to meet all their developmental needs” [27]. This was compounded with the economic instability and social isolation which in many cases caused stress and anxiety to the family. To examine parental involvement, the researcher sought to understand whether parents were aware of their roles and the impact of the roles on children’s academic work. Studies by Urie Bronfenbrenner [28], indicates that a child requires a reciprocal activity on a regular basis over a period of time with one or more persons with whom to develop strong, mutual, irrational attachment and who are committed to their wellbeing and development for life. John Bowlby [29] in his attachment theory calls this as starting life with a ‘secure base’. Empirical studies have shown that failure to secure emotional base can lead to devastating consequences for the child; effects that largely reflects in adulthood, affecting one’s relationships and sense of well-being, education achievement and one’s personality.

“Research using data from the National Child Development Study (NCDS) to explore the effect of parents’ involvement on achievement at 16 in English and Math’s found that very high parental interest is associated with better exam results compared to children whose parents show no interest. Parental involvement has a positive effect on children’s achievement even when the influence of background factors such as social class and family size have been taken into account” [30]. “Parental behaviour has a bigger effect than school quality on pupils’ attainment at key stages in education development - formative stages” [31].

Child’s ability on entry to school is the most important factor in predicting their attainment across subjects, followed by socio-economic background and parental education [31]. Meaning that quality education is as a result of collective responsibility from all stakeholders taking their rightful roles and at the right time. That is, parents should take their place alongside educators in the schooling of their children, fitting together their knowledge of their children, teaching and learning, and teachers’ knowledge.

With parent engagement, possibilities are created for the structures of schooling and empowering the child in academic work.

With parents being major stakeholders in education and as the first teachers of their children, they should be engaged, accessible and involved in their children’s school activities from the early years, to set a strong foundation, instill their expectations and aspirations for their children in education at all levels. The three dimensions; engagement, involvement and accessibility are achieved through active interaction with children when children need them and not when parents have time for them. Weiss, Lopez and Rosenberg [32] assert that family engagement must be a systemic, integrated and sustained approach, not an add-on or a random act by the parents.

2.4 Constrains of COVID-19

Governments worldwide have implemented measures to contain the spread of COVID-19, including school closures, home isolation/quarantine and community lockdown, all of which have had secondary impacts on children and their households. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and related school closures on education provision, learning and wellbeing are severe for most children.

In response to COVID-19 pandemic, countries had taken unprecedented steps in an effort to prevent and spread of the virus. Some of these containment measures included closures of schools and childcare services, restricted movement, working remotely, and guidelines for physical distancing, and suspension of community and recreation services.

Disruptions to everyday life meant that children were at home, entirely reliant on their caregivers for nurturing and to meet their developmental needs (physical, emotional, social and cognitive) [27]. Home confinement of the parents could mean increased responsive and nurturing care provided to children as caregivers spent increasing amounts of time at home, less engaged at their work places and other social activities. Similarly, the ongoing crisis was likely only to exacerbate the situation of children who are living in home environments characterized by lack of access to developmentally appropriate resources, such as toys and books, low level stimulation and responsive care, or inadequate supervision prior to the crisis UNICEF, 2021.

Among the many new norms that parents had to adopt to during the 2019-2020 COVID pandemic was children learning at home during closures. During this time, parents needed resources to keep their little humans engaged productively, However, nor the educator nor the education polices or the many conventions on education have ever emphasized the direct role of parents in educating children, importance of their involvement in their growth and development nor their influence in academic work and education curriculum. Study finding on parental involvement in children's education achievement emphasized on the importance of direct involvement in academics for improved achievement [33].

This is added burden on families who have to balance childcare, and work responsibilities, compounded with the economic instability and social isolation which in many cases caused stress and anxiety to the families. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic came with a new era in education where parents had to learn how to teach, study the curriculum and learn how to navigate around emerging technology substituting physical learning to virtual learning. What was not considered was the ability of the parents to handle what was expected of them in relation to influencing learning of children while at home.

2.5 Parental Involvement in Children's Academic Work

"Parents are the first teachers in children's life. This means that learning begins before a child first walk into a classroom. The skills developed in early years of childhood, forms the basis for future learning and human capital development" [34]. "Parental involvement in their children's education is beneficial for both the children's learning and academic skills development" [35]. This can only be achieved through holistic development and early interventions. The later are the most cost-effective measures that a child can be given during every stage of child's growth and development. Such measures minimize the need for special interventions, have the most significant impact on children's development and learning and have a decisive and lasting influence on how children grow to adulthood [36]. The longer the parents and the society waits to intervene in the life cycle of a disadvantaged child, the more costly it is to put right [34]. However, none of the education polices nor the many conventions on education have emphasized the direct role of parents or

educating parents on their influence in education of children at home and in school.

Home-schooling has emerged as the primary substitute format, putting extra pressure on parents who were not well prepared to take on the teacher's role. The whole demand was revolving around parental involvement and engagement. According to Burgess and Sievertsen [37], parents' productivity has been affected by the sudden change in the education system, as have children's social and academic lives. "Policymakers around the world urged educational institutes to move to online learning. Teaching and learning processes changed to online and virtual methods and assessments" [37].

"Research on the impact of COVID-19 on students' learning outcomes is gradually emerging as researchers worldwide study the effects of COVID-19 on daily life. However, a slow, steady flow of studies in the educational field suggest that there is evidence of learning loss among students" [38,39]. Other studies have shown the pandemic's impact on parents' work and their children's education [40], (Yamamura & Tsustsui, 2021). Some studies have focused on the teaching and learning process during the transfer from school-site to distance/online learning and have shown gaps in learning [41,42]. In addition, Garbe et al. [43] explored parents' experiences in the US during the pandemic.

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore parental involvement in children's formal education during the suspension of schools caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This closure differed from holiday closures because learners were expected to continue learning online [44]. This study took place in Saudi Arabia while students were engaged in distance learning and aimed to fill a gap in research of parental involvement by considering external pressures, which appeared with the rapid change from on-site schooling to distance/online learning. Researchers have claimed that COVID-19 pandemic argued that children from disadvantaged backgrounds have been severely affected by not attending school as they lost access to school facilities and actual teaching Lancker and Parolin [44] Kenyans were no exception in these challenging trends.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

The importance of this study lies in its contribution to Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's

model of parental involvement in children's schooling, illustrating how an external force can drive parents' involvement. Specifically, many parents have been forced to change the style and extent of their involvement due to the disruption caused by COVID-19; the sudden shift to online learning has caused parental involvement to reach unprecedented levels. This is further supported by Vygotsky and Bandura's theories.

According to Vygotsky and Bandura [45] "learning takes place first in a social context. To build a new context, children interact with significant others who provide feedback for their hypothesis or those who can help them accomplish the tasks they cannot do on their own. - zone of proximal development. This is enhanced more by fathers who are confident, interested in their children's education, make learning fun and enjoyable". They give children positive attitude towards reading and books and develops reading skills early [46]. This is achieved through engagement (direct involvement), accessibility (being there for the child) and responsibility (provision of needs). This can only work if parents are aware of their influence on academic work and how they can be involved.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This research employed a qualitative approach to determine their influence and level of awareness of their roles in academic work. By use of this design the researcher intended to report on the status of parental involvement in their children's education as it were in the schools studied.

3.2 Sampling Procedure and Sample size

3.2.1 Sampling procedure

Voluntary sampling technique was used to pick the parents for the study. This method was appropriate for the study due to the prevailing pandemic of COVID-19. The researcher used simple random sampling to pick four primary schools out of seven schools. The education zone has seven primary schools. Children of those parents automatically became part of the study sample. The head teachers of the four randomly sampled schools were requested for the class teachers of the class four, five and six to form part of the study sample.

3.2.2 Sample size

The study used 50% of the schools within the education zone giving four schools. All the schools in the zone had one stream, giving three class teachers per school and a total of twelve teachers. 5% criteria was used to pick the sample from parents and students. Most of the schools had between 51-55 students per class. This gave a sample of three (3) students and parents per class and a total of seventy two (72) for students and parents. Parents were picked on first come bases to pick the first three parents per class as participation was on voluntary basis (Table 1).

3.3 Instruments and Tools of Research

Two main tools were used to collect data for this research work. These instruments were: questionnaires, interviews

3.4 Data Collection

The researcher used the headteachers to identify and give consent to the class teachers in class four, five and six. Headteachers identified the parents and informed them of the intended research study. This study designed both open and closed questionnaire to gather information from the parents (age, level of education, employment and income) and teachers information about parents influence. interviews were used to gather information from the students. The questionnaires were sent to parents and teachers (hard copy) to gather the data due to COVID-19 restrictions. The students were interviewed by the researcher to determine their perception of parents' involvement and influence in their academic work. The researcher collected the questionnaires from the parents after two weeks of distribution of the questionnaires.

3.5 Piloting of Instruments

Piloting is done to ascertain the reliability and validity of the instrument to be used for collecting data [47]. A pilot study was carried out in two schools one from Kieni West Sub-County and another from a neighboring, Kieni East Sub-County. This exercise determined the time needed to carry out the study in one school and the time required to interview one parent. After the study, certain items that seemed unclear were altered or eliminated.

Table 1. Distribution of sample size

S/O	Target population	Total population per school	Percentage use %	Total sample size
1.	Parents			36
	Average population of students for the three classes per school	A. 51 B. 53 C. 55 D. 52	51X5/100 53X5/100 55X5/100 52X5/100	3X3=9 3X3=9 3X3=9 3X3=9
	Teachers per school	3	3x4	12
	Total			84

3.6 Reliability of the Instrument

Thirty (10) copies of the instrument were administered to primary schools that were not sampled within the study. The Cronbach alpha reliability for internal consistency was used to ascertain the reliability. It gave a reliability index of $\alpha=0.76$.

3.7 Validity of Instruments

The instrument was validated by three experts in the field of education research using the face and content validity. As a result, the validity of the study was ascertained.

3.8 Method of Data Analysis

The descriptive and inferential statistical method was used in this research and basic percentage and frequency tables used to accomplish this. Descriptive statistics condense data to a level that is intelligible and relevant, allowing for more straight forward interpretation. The conclusions produced from the presentation and interpretation of the data gathered and served as the basis for the conducted study. Version 21 of the Statistical Package for Social Program (SPSS) was used to analyse the coded

information. The formular for the simple percentage calculation was:

$$(\text{Number of respondents/ Total number of respondents}) \times (100 / 1)$$

5. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The data presentation was based on the responses from the completed questionnaire. The results of this exercise have been summarized in tabular forms for easy references and analysis. It also shows answers to questions relating to the research questions. A total of eighty-two questionnaire were distributed to the respondents.

4.1 Parents' Demographic Variables

The researcher gave parents questionnaires to gather information on their demographic variables. The demographic variables that are included in the study are: age, educational level, occupation and income.

The findings of the study on the demographic variables are as presented in Table 2. These included 36 parents.

Table 2. Demographic profile of parents

Age	NO.	Occupation	NO.	Income	NO.	Education Levels	NO.
30-34	18	Teacher	6	60,000-above	2	Degree Certificate	None
35-39	7	Office	4	25,000-30,000	3	Diploma Certificate	None
40-44	5	Labourers	20	10,000-15,000	25	Tertiary certificate	5
45-49	5	Artisans	6	5,000-9,000	3	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE)	19
50 above	1	Others		Below 4,900	3	Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) and below	12
Total	36		36		36		

Majority of the parents were aged between 30-34 years. This is a young age and the researcher expected these parents to have gone to school. Most of the population were labourers who could be the ones earning as little as 9,000 and below. The bigger percentage of parents had Kenya certificate of secondary education. This level of education has the ability to help the learners in questions.

The first objective sought to establish parental influence on academic work.

Respondents were presented with statements related to parental influence in academic work. Parents were presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Questionnaire for parents

N/O	Activities	YES	NO	Total
1	Do you think you can help your children in academic work?	13 (36%)	23 (66%)	36
2	Do you think parents have influence in children's academic work?	5 (14%)	31 (86%)	36
3	Are parents aware of their influence in children's academic work?	11 (31%)	25 (69%)	36
4	Do you encourage children in their academic work?	10 (28%)	26 (72%)	36
5	Are parents conversant with the school curriculum?	0 (0%)	36 (100%)	36
6	Do parents reward their children's academic work?	5 (14%)	31 (86%)	36
7	Do you agree that academic performance is as a result of teachers work	33 (92%)	3 (8%)	36
8	Do you agree that parents have a role to play in children's academic work	7 (19%)	29 (81%)	36
9	Did you help in downloading reading and assignments sent through the media to the learners?	4 (11%)	32 (89%)	36
10	Did you provide reading materials for home library	0 (0%)	100%	36
11	Did you ever read story books, tell stories read newspapers with your children?	3 (8%)	33 (92%)	36
12	Did you supervise children as they deed their assignments sent to them by teachers?	3 (8%)	33 (92%)	36
13	Is it the role of parents to support children's academic work?	13 (36%)	23 (64%)	36

14. If yes for the question above, how do they do it? 13 (36%)

Summarized Responses given by parents

- going to school when called upon
- Buying school uniform¹⁵.
- Buying writing materials
- tell them to work hard

15. If no, why? 23(64%)

Summarized Responses given by parents

- it is the work of teachers
- it is teachers who teach and not the parents
- teachers are trained to teach but not parents
- we don't know

This negates the argument that parents engage in their children’s education in many ways at home and in school that influence children in all aspects of development. Good parenting at home includes engagement in children’s education through; feelings of secure environment, providing intellectual stimulation and conversation, modelling constructive social and educational values and guidance in career choices by fostering literacy and problem-solving skills, encouraging high aspirations both personally and socially [26]. The question on whose role it is to support children’s academic work, parents were of the idea that it was the role of teachers 23 (64%) This is evidenced by responses given by parents as summarized in question in question 15. Questions or statements

were based on such engagements, which parents disagreed with. This means that parents were basically out in helping children in their academic work during the Corona Virus pandemic.

- ✓ The second objective sought to determine whether parents are aware of their role in children’s academic work? Parents were presented with statements related to parental awareness of their role in academic work as presented in Table 4 below.

The respondents were rated at a scale of 1 to 5, (1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest).

Table 4. Parents questionnaire

N/ S	Activities	YES	NO	NOT ¹ % SURE	Percentage			
1.	Do you help in making decisions about your child’s academic work?	0	30 (83%)	6 (17%)	36 (100%)			
2	Do you think you can help in motivating your child?	12 (33%)	0	24 (67%)	36 (100%)			
3	Do you agree, that you are good at building a healthy relationship and communicating with your child on academic work?	0	0	36 (100%)	36 (100%)	✓	✓	✓
4	Do you agree that you are capable of dealing with your child’s emotions appropriately?	0	10 (28%)	26 (72%)	36 (100%)	✓	✓	✓
5	Do you think you can support your child’s learning at home?	0	12 (33%)	24 (67%)	36 (100%)			
6	Do you have the ability to make the school meet your child’s learning needs?	0	0	36 (100%)	36 (100%)	✓	✓	✓
7	Do you think your child can focus entirely on academic work when they are doing it at home?	0	15 (42%)	21 (58%)	36 (100%)	✓	✓	✓
8	Is your child’s sleep affected because of the amount of academic work they have?	25 (69%)	0	11 (31%)	36 (100%)			
9	Do you think that your child has too much academic work even after school?	30 (83%)	0	6 (17%)	36 (100%)			
10	Do you help your child with their homework, to reduce academic stress?	5 (14%)	31 (86%)	0	36 (100%)			
11	Do you promote your child to participate in extracurricular activities to relieve stress?	0	0	36 (100%)	36 (100%)			

1. How much time do you spend with your child in a week?
1.A lot 2. Somewhat 3. Very little. 4. Not at all

2. Do you discuss your child’s emotional and academic needs with them regularly?

1. Yes, all the time 2. Sometimes 3. ~~No, don't get the time~~ 4. No, it is not needed
3. Are you aware of your child's academic and extracurricular achievements?
 1. To a great extent 2. Somewhat 3. ~~Very little~~ 4. Not at all
4. Do you always answer your child's questions?
 1. Yes, All the time 2. ~~Yes, only if they make sense~~ 3. No, it is annoying
 4. No, he has to learn on his own
5. How many times do you attend your child's games or events in which they are participating?
 1. Always 2. Very often. 3. Sometimes. 4. Rarely 5. ~~Never~~
6. How often do you go for outings with your children?
 1. Always 2. Very often 3. Sometimes 4. Rarely 5. ~~Never~~
7. How often do you have meals together with your children?
 1. Always 2. Very often 3. Sometimes 4. Rarely 5. Never

Responses from the table above sought to understand parents awareness of their roles in academics. Responses show that majority of the parents were not aware of their roles. Most of the highest percentages were not aware of their roles. 67% of parents could not motivate their children, while 72% were not capable of dealing with your child's emotions appropriately? Emotions are key in academic work, 83% could not help children make academic decisions while 86% could not help children do their home work. The two categories formed the largest percentages giving the actual position of the parents.

According to Vygotsky and Bandura [45] learning takes place first in a social context. To build a new context, children interact with significant others who provide feedback for their hypothesis or those who can help them accomplish the tasks, but in this case, parents are either not sure or they do not know how to help. This means, though parents had all the time due to the lockdown, very little if anything was going on in academics in this group of parents.

In the following set of questions, responses were not any different. Most of the questions were

looking for parents availability for their children. From the responses very little to no time or never. These responses support the previous set of questions where no response dominated.

This contradicts research using data from the National Child Development Study (NCDS) to explore the effect of parents' involvement on achievement at 16 in English and Math's which found that very high parental interest is associated with better exam results compared to children whose parents show no interest. Parental involvement has a positive effect on children's achievement even when the influence of background factors such as social class and family size have been taken into account [30]. Parental behaviour has a bigger effect than school quality on pupils' attainment at key stages in education development - formative stages [31] where this research focused on the middle classes in primary school where parents can make an impact as children prepare for their exams yet there was support for this long period of time during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Objective three Examined the areas of academic work that parents are involved in. Table 6 below lists the questions presented to the parents.

Table 6. Questionnaire for teachers

N/S	Activities	Yes	NO	Not Able	Percentage (100%)
1	Preparing your child for school;	6 (17%)	30 (83%)	0	36
2	Monitoring school work;	5 (14%)	31 (86%)	0	36
3	Did you work with schools and teachers effectively during the covid-19 pandemic	0	6 (17%)	30 (83%)	36

N/S	Activities	Yes	NO	Not Able	Percentage (100%)
4	Helping your child with reading and homework	0	8 (22%)	28 (78%)	36
5	Talking to your child about school and drugs	0	0	36 (100%)	36
6	Create a home environment that encourages learning and schoolwork	9 (25%)	0	27 (75%)	36
7	Establish a daily routine time for home work and revision work	5 (14%)	31 (86%)	0	36
8	Limit TV viewing to no more than one hour during the day during the lockdown	0	0	36 (100%)	36
9	Do you motivate your child in academics	10 (28%)	20 (56%)	6 (17%)	36
10	Did you create a home library appropriate for the age	0	0	36 (100%)	36
11	Did you Share reading moments with children	0	0	36 (100%)	36
12	Did you Model reading activities eg reading newspapers, old story books	51 (14%)	0	31 (86%)	36
13	Did you show interest in your child likes on the TV and discuss his choices with him.	6 (17%)	24 (67%)	6 (17%)	36

14. Depending on your responses above, do you feel you are doing much to encourage the child in academic work?

15. if yes, how?

16. if no why?

From The responses, parents did not involve themselves in most of the activities presented. These are activities that encourage, motivate or directly helping the learner in their academic work like helping in their homework. From the three alternatives given, the “NO and Not Able” responses were dominant with high percentages on what they are “not able” to do carrying the highest percentages.

According to Evans [48], lower income children have less stable and limited extra-familial social support networks. Parents in such setting would report lower educational expectations, less monitoring of children’s school work and less overall supervision of social activities compared to students from high income families. He discovered that children in low SES are less cognitively stimulated than high SES children, as a result of reading less and being read to less, and experience fewer complex communications with parents involving more limited vocabulary. Unfortunately, intelligent and talented low SES students have no control over their family’s income. All these academic related activities were part of the questionnaires presented to the parents of which they were either not able to do or did not do especially during the hard financial times of COVID-19 pandemics.

These findings are similar to studies conducted by Drummond & Stipek [49]. While discussing “low-income parent’s benefit about their role in children’s academic learning” stated that a few of these parents indicated that their responsibilities were limited to meeting children’s basic and social-emotional needs, such as providing clothing, emotional support and socializing.

To cross check on their responses, open ended questions were presented. The yes category of parents participated indirectly. Eg. They stated that they remind them to read, restrict Tv watching during the day, make breakfast and ask for their report forms to confirm their positions but not reading with the learner, those who responded to the negative “NO” said they were either not able to deal with issues of academic work, the curriculum is confusing and demanding or too expensive for them. They quoted the directive of down loading content from the internet sent by teachers during the COVID-19. They said they are not even conversant with internet. They said they were busy trying to meet the learners needs.

This indicates the disparities that existed in the delivery of the curriculum during the pandemic which was made worse by the hard economic

times. It also shows the mentality of parents towards their contribution to academic work-indirect involvement while children required direct involvement in academics in the absence of their teachers especially during this confusing times. Despite the low participation levels of parents during the pandemics, nothing has changed today to prepare parents for such an eventuality in future yet they are major stakeholders in education.

The fourth objective investigated whether parents in this category are acquainted with the school curriculums? Parents were questioned on areas of their children's curriculum as listed below. Parents had to choose from two responses and give reason(s).

Using frequencies, all parents were ignorant of the school curriculum. Other than Parents/teachers Association where all knew about it, there were few parents who consulted the teachers and helping children in their homework. This again can be attributed to the same mentality that their role was to provide for the basic needs.

This attitude negates finding by Khajehpour and Ghazvini [4] who found out that family involvement improves components of children's education such as daily attendance, student performance and behaviour, as well as motivation. A large number of studies have been conducted to support the idea that students do better when their parents are involved in their educational process, according to Rahman [13]. parental influence was missing out when teachers were also locked out, while reasons given for not being involved in academics was either lack of knowhow or the idea that children's education was the teachers work.

Class teachers were presented with questions that covered the knowledge of parent's involvement in academics. Yes and No responses was used. The questions are presented in Table 8.

From the table, all teachers tried to involve the parents during the pandemic season. This was meant to facilitate progress in academic work. However, the responses given were discouraging, 25% teachers had positive responses from the parents, 3 (25%) parents showed initiative, 25% sought support in teaching children, 25% responded to teacher's assignment and 25% teachers said that parents believed that parents have influence on academic work. Majority of parents were not available for the teacher's initiative as per the responses. Asked whether they involved parent, all affirmed positively, meaning they were ready to work with the parents to facilitate learning. However, use of the technology was wanting both to the teachers and the parents. Only 42% of the teachers tried to reach the learners using technology but even then, they did not get any response. This could be one of the disparities in transfer of information majorly among the parents and learners.

4.2 Discussion

The study at hand was conducted for searching the effect of involvement of parents and teachers on academic achievement of secondary school students. The results indicated that parents consistently are highly involved with their children in terms of communication. It proves that students need constant involvement of parents for better academic achievement [50].

Table 7. Parents questionnaire

N/S	Activities	Yes	No	Reason
1	Are you aware of the school/parent organizations (PTA/PTO).	36	0	Aware
2	Do you support school extra-curricular activities.	0	36	Not aware
3	Volunteering for the school activities	0	36	Its for teachers
4	Attending parent –teacher conferences.	0	36	Not invited
5	Communication with your child's teacher regularly	12	24	Lack of time
6	Checking on the curriculum coverage	0	36	Not aware
7	Buying story books for home library	0	36	Responsibility of the school
8	Helping in children's home work	10	26	Sometimes its hard to understand
9				

Table 8. Teachers questionnaire

N/S	Activities	YES	NO
1	Did you involve parents in teaching during Covid-19?	12 (100%)	0
2	Were parents supportive of the teacher initiative?	3 (25%)	9 (75%) (75%)
3	Did parents seek your support in teaching children?	3 (25%)	9 (75%)
4	Did parents buy reading materials for children?	1 (8%)	11 (91%)
5	Did children respond to assignments givens during the Covid-19 period?	3 (25%)	9 (75%)
6	Were you satisfied with parents' involvement in academic work during the pandemic	0	12 (100%)
7	Do parents belief that they have influence in their children's academic work	3 (25%)	9 (75%)
8	Did you send teaching materials to the learners through any devised application?	5 (42%)	7 (58%)
9	Were the materials downloaded?	0	12 (100%)
10	Did you get any feedback?	0	12(100%)

Results further indicated that parental communication and their emotional support has profound positive impact upon academic success of students. It is true that creation of nurturing environment by parents through better communication leads to their high academic achievement as well as high self-esteem [51]. One of the advantages of parental communication with their children is increased satisfaction and avoidance of conflict [52] which leads to their better academic achievement. This is also proven in the theory and research findings that involvement of parents has confirmed to have profound influence on the academic achievement of students [53]. These results also imply that parents who freely communicate with their children and provide emotional support are better educated. It is because highly educated parents, as compared to low educated parents, remain more involved in educational matter of their children [54]. Additionally, the value and importance to education given by parents is also reflected from the component of parental communication. It has been indicated in the studies that as parents have communicated to their children that they value education and have high expectations, it leads the students to become more interested, motivated, and confident about their academic achievement [55].

5. CONCLUSION

For the provision of experiences and enhancing the academic achievement of children, parents

should use their emotional support and communication optimally. Furthermore, parental communication and parental emotional support are significant predictors of children's learning . It indicates that parental support and communication through consistent strategies should be made to update parents on their roles in children's education, create awareness of the school curriculums, involve parents in school activities to brings desirable variations in their behaviors towards school learning. Parental communication and their emotional support have profound positive influence on academic achievement of pupils.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Based on the results of the study, it is recommended that a good environment should be established by the parents at home which enhance not only their physical, social, emotional development but provide them the opportunities for academic success.
2. It is recommended that parents should be well equipped in terms of knowledge as well as skills so that they can guide their young children in educational angles. Leading role should be played by parents in supporting the children in their academics. Parents are the agents of socialization who show them the social and academic aspects of the world.

3. For the educational success, parents should set realistic expectations from their children so that they can be motivated to perform well academically.
4. Parents should establish as well as enforce rules and regulations so as to make sure the supervision at home is effective. These rules and regulations make it easy for the home as well as school activities and provision of conducive learning environment.

CONSENT

As per international standard or university standard, Participants' written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

ETHICAL APPROVAL

The researcher called all the parents in the study for their own consent and that of their children. Letters were sent to headteachers to give the names of required class teachers and inform them of the intended research. Most of the data collection was done through sent questionnaires to parents and teachers due to restrictions from COVID-19. Students were gathered and adhered to COVID-19 restriction rules, example, distancing, wearing of masks and meeting for a very short time.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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Peer-review history:
The peer review history for this paper can be accessed here:
<https://www.sdiarticle5.com/review-history/97430>