

**INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF
INNOVATIVE RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE**

ISSN-2213-1356

www.ijirk.com

Factors Influencing Parents' Involvement in Students' Performance of Homework: A Case Study of Primary Schools in Morogoro Municipality

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ABSTRACT

Parental involvement in children' performing their homework has gained much importance as it has an impact on students' overall academic performance. It is so unfortunate that not all the parents are motivated to support their children in homework performance in spite of the importance of doing so. This prompt the researcher to examine the factors influencing parents' involvement in their children's performance of homework in the primary schools located in Morogoro municipality as there was no study previously conducted in the area. In order to achieve the study purpose, a mixed study approach was adopted, whereby both quantitative and qualitative methods of sample selection, data gathering, and data analysis were deployed. In this context, multi-stage sampling was utilized, in which a purposive selection of six primary schools in Morogoro municipality was done, followed by a random selection of six head teachers, 42 students, and 42 parents to form a sample population. Data collection methods included interviews conducted with head teachers, focus group discussions carried out with students, and questionnaires distributed to the parents. Thematic analysis was used in qualitative data analysis while multiple regression analysis with the aid of the

Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 21.0 was used to analyze quantitative data. Multiple regression results indicated that predictor variables including parents' education, parents' income level, home learning atmosphere, and availability of learning materials had statistically significant influences on parents' involvement in students' performance of homework, which is the study's outcome variable. Qualitative findings also added that educated parents or parents with awareness of the importance of supporting their children in the learning process had a tendency to support their children in homework performance. In addition, factors such as parents' income level and ambitions for children's academic success influence parents' involvement in students' performance of homework. This study concludes that parents' education level, parents' income level, home learning atmosphere, and availability of learning materials are the factors influencing the involvement of parents in supporting their children to do their homework in Morogoro municipality.

Keywords: *parents' involvement, parents' education level, home learning environment, students' homework performance*

1. INTRODUCTION

Parental involvement in children's learning remains vital due to its enormous contribution to the overall performance of students and their commitment to learning. Parents are role models throughout their children's lives, even if this role evolves as children get older (Nyembeke, 2016). The attitudes of parents towards education can both inspire children and empower them as they go through their own educational journey. According to Hannon, (2013), the home is the first school, and parents are teachers, supporters, and advocates for their children, whether they recognize it or not. Much has been investigated about parental involvement and students' learning commitment. In the United States, for example, the issue of parental involvement in students' learning is among the states' policy goals. Some studies in the U.S., such as that of McQuiggan and Megra (2017), reported a variation in parental involvement based on demographic characteristics of the parents, such as education level, indicating that parents with higher levels of education have higher rates of involvement in their children's learning.

In some African countries, including South Africa, Uganda, and Burundi, policies that support parental involvement in education are noted (Gaitan, 2013). For instance, in South Africa, the Schools Act No 84 of 1996 (South Africa, DoE, 1996) requires all public schools to have an elected school governing body consisting of the head teacher, teachers, parents, non-teaching staff, and students (Gaitan, 2013). In Tanzania, increased interactions in the local, national, and global context have paved the way for changes in Tanzania's education policy in recent years. As a result, the government of Tanzania introduced the Primary Education Development Plan (PEDP) in 2002, aiming at materializing Tanzania's commitment towards global education for all (URT, 2005). Furthermore, the Education and Training Policy (2014) introduced free education for all students in primary as well as secondary school. The aim of PEDP and ETP was to increase the overall enrolment of girls and boys in schools, although community participation in education automatically increased. This means the government noticed how parental involvement in education can be the way forward to improving the academic performance of students.

There are various factors which influence parents' involvement in students' homework worldwide. According to Chahe and Mwaikokesya (2018), parents with a good income were more likely to support their children's learning of literacy and numeracy at home than those with relatively low income groups. The majority of the parents with relatively higher education had relatively higher levels of readiness to support their children's

literacy skills by teaching, supervising, and monitoring their progress than those with relatively lower levels of education. While Emerson et al., (2012) attribute various contexts such as home environment (i.e., designated area to do home-works) and kids' access to reading and writing materials as factors influencing learning and parental support in performing children' assignments, Similarly, Chahe and Mwaikokesya (2018) indicated that children from home environments with fewer disturbances or other unnecessary interruptions had a relatively higher likelihood of being supported to learn more effectively than others. Gunn, (2014) added that pupils from relatively conducive literate environments are likely to perform better than those in unpalatable conditions due to the nature of the learning environments.

Involvement of parents in students' learning has a substantial contribution towards students' commitment to learning (Gaitan, 2013). Of importance, parents encourage learning and express high expectations for their children's achievement and future careers (Ngussa and Nzowa, 2019). The benefits surrounding the involvement of parents in the performance of students' homework are well known. Notwithstanding, studies (Chahe and Mwaikokesya, 2018; UWEZO, 2013; Ngorosho, 2011) show that parents lack motivation to be involved in students' homework. It has been noted that one in four parents help their children with homework (UWEZO, 2013). This implies that the majority of parents are less concerned about supporting their children with homework. Despite various studies (Chahe and Mwaikokesya, 2018; Emerson et al., 2012; Gunn, 2014) indicating the factors for parental involvement in children's homework, the factors for parental involvement in the children's performance at home in Morogoro municipality were not properly addressed. Hence, this case study is intended to determine the factors that influence parents' involvement in the performance of students' homework, particularly in primary schools in the study area. This level of education is vital in building children's commitment and ability towards learning.

This study was important in terms of learning practices and the promotion of Education and Training Policy (2014), which encourages the enrollment of girls and boys in primary and secondary schools through free education, which in turn increases community participation in their children's education. The findings from this study can provide baseline information for future studies which will be interested in parents' support of children's learning. It can give insights on parents' awareness of the benefits of supporting their children in learning and performing their assignments. As Naidoo et al., (2014) acknowledge, the involvement of parents in children' learning has great importance for different reasons, such as its substantial role in facilitating the acquisition of learning skills. This study can motivate parents to support and ensure that their children successfully perform their homework, monitor reading and remain committed to school learning activities. In addition, this study can enhance collaboration between parents and schools, which will make it easy for them to discuss the child's academic progress and suggest ways to solve problems noticed in teaching and learning. In other words, the continuous involvement of parents in supporting their children in teaching and learning activities has a significant contribution to the development of children. From this point of view, it was important to conduct this study as parents' role in children' learning is very important, hence it was necessary to study the factors influencing their involvement in homework performance.

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of this study was to examine the factors influencing parents' involvement in students' performance of homework in primary schools.

3. MATERIAL AND METHODS

This paper adopted mixed study approach which incorporate both quantitative and qualitative approaches in sample selection, data gathering and data analysis. Data was obtained from multiple study units, referring to primary schools including public and private ones found in Morogoro Municipality. On the other side, head teachers, parents and students were considered as the study population. Multi-stage sampling technique was used for sample selection. According to Kothari (2004) multi-stage sampling procedure consist of first selecting the clusters and then randomly choosing a specified respondents from each selected cluster. In this case, the first stage was concerned with purposive selection of wards and primary schools available in Morogoro Municipality. Morogoro Municipal Council have 29 administrative wards (URT, 2021) and 115 primary schools (70 Government schools and 45 private schools) (Morogoro Municipal Council, 2021). Due to time factor and limited resources it was not easy to reach all 115 primary schools available in the council, hence, only three wards were purposively selected and in each ward two schools were purposively selected (one government ward school and one English medium school). Hence, this study included KihondaMaghorofani ward whereby Holy Cross and Kihonda Maghorofani primary schools were drawn; Kihonda ward whereby Top Star Pre & Primary school and Kihonda Primary school were selected; and Lukobe ward whereby Living Hope Pre & Primary school and Lukobe Primary school were included.

The second stage involved the random selection of respondents including head teachers, parents and students of the selected schools. A sample size of 90 respondents including head teachers (n=6), parents (n=42) and students (n=42) enabled the researcher to gather enough data concerning parents' involvement in students' performance of homework. The criteria for the inclusion of the sample varied based on target population; for instance head teachers participated in interviews due to their reliable knowledge about the problem under study, while parents and students were selected based on representation as the study intended to have students' representatives in each class (standard 1-7) to participate in FGD with their parents who participated in questionnaires. Therefore from the six primary schools selected, the article had response from 6 head teachers, 7 students with their parents in 6 primary schools made it 42 students and 42 parents.

Thematic analysis was used to analyze qualitative data collected through Interview and Focus Group Discussion methods. This data analysis method was useful for this study as it enabled the researcher collect opinions of respondents from open ended questions, which in turn it enabled the study to have an insight concerning the issue of parents' involvement in assisting their children perform their homework. Quantitative data collected through questionnaires were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS version 21.0), in which multiple regression analysis was used to determine the factors for parents' involvement on students' performance of homework. The multiple regression equation:

$$Y = \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + e$$

Where: Y= Parents involvements in students' performance of homework

β_1 , β_2 , β_3 , β_4 and a β_5 are constants or unknown parameters

X1= Parents education level

X2= Parents' income level

X3= Parents' occupation

X4= Home learning atmosphere; and

X5= Availability of learning materials

e = Error term

4. RESULTS

This study examined the factors influencing parents' involvement in their children's performance of homework in primary schools. To achieve this objective, the study derived correlation analysis, multiple regression analysis, and ANOVA with the aid of SPSS. Qualitative results through Focus Group Discussions and Key Informant interviews supplemented data concerning the factors that influence parents' involvement in students' performance of homework.

Demographic profile

In this study, qualitative data was collected from 6 head teachers who participated in interviews, 42 students who participated in focus group discussions. On the other side, quantitative data was collected from 42 parents through questionnaire, in which their demographic profile are as presented descriptively in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Demographic profile of sampled parents (N=42)

Variable	Sub variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	29-39	17	40.5
	40-50	20	47.6
	51-60	5	11.9
Gender	Female	10	23.8
	Male	32	76.2
Education level	Primary	9	21.4
	Secondary	10	23.8
	Certificate	7	16.7
	Diploma	2	4.8
	Bachelor degree	11	26.2
	Post graduate degree	3	7.1
Occupation	Entrepreneur	8	19.0
	Self-employed	11	26.2
	Civil servant	11	26.2
	Employed in private sector	5	11.9
	Farmer	7	16.7
Income	0-100,000	11	26.2
	100,001-200,000	15	35.7
	200,001-300,000	0	0
	300,001-400,000	5	11.9
	Above 400,000	11	26.2
Marital status	Single	4	9.5
	Married	25	59.5
	Cohabiting	10	23.8
	Divorced	0	0
	Widow	3	7.1
Number of children	1-2	14	33.3
	3-5	25	59.5
	Above 5	3	7.1

From Table 4.1, nearly half of the sampled parents (47.6%) were aged between 40 and 50 years old, while the rest were aged 29-39 followed by those aged between 51 and 60. About third quarter of sampled parents (76.2%) were male parents while the rest were female parents. Only 26.2% of the sampled parents had

bachelor degree education level, while the rest had secondary education followed by those with primary education, certificate, post graduate degree and diploma level. The results indicated that 26.2% of parents involved in this study were engaged in self-employment and civil servant respectively while the remaining percent are entrepreneurs, farmers and employed in private sector. It was revealed that monthly earnings for about 35.7% of sampled parents was 100,001-200,000, while the rest earn 100,000 and less followed by those earning 400,001 and above and those earning 300,001-400,000 Tanzania shillings. More than half (59.5%) of parents involved in this study were married followed by those who are cohabiting, single, widow and none of them was divorced. In the same way, more than half (59.5%) of sampled parents had number of children between 3 and 5, followed by those with 1 to 2 children and those with more than 5 children.

Regression Analysis Assumptions Test Results

The researcher checked the regression assumptions of auto-correlation, normality, and the absence of multi-co linearity in order to make valid inferences about the study's regression model.

Test of auto-correlation assumption

The Durbin-Watson (d) statistic value is supposed to be not less than 1 or greater than 3, and fully not exactly 2. From this juncture, the Durbin-Watson values should range between 1.5 and 2.5 (Field, 2009). Table 4.2 presents that the Durbin-Watson value is 2.355, which ranges between the values of $1.5 < d < 2.5$, suggesting that there were no auto-correlation errors in the regression model, and so no highly correlated variables in the general model.

Table 4.2: Auto-correlation assumption test-Durbin-Watson

Model Summary

Model	Durbin-Watson
1	2.355

- a. Predictors: (Constant), parent’s education level, parent’s income level, home learning atmosphere, parent’s occupation, availability of learning materials
- b. Dependent Variable: parents’ involvement

Test of Normality assumption

This regression assumption must be tested because, in order to make a valid inference from a regression model, the regression residual must follow the normal distribution. The Skewness and Kurtosis tests were done to ascertain the normality statistics. Field (2009) indicated that the values of Skewness and kurtosis lying in between -2 and +2 the data are considered normally distributed and hence satisfactory for interpretation. The test results in Table 4.3 show that the residuals are normal, and the researcher was able to make a valid inference using this regression model.

Table 4.3: Test of Normality assumption

	N	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Parentsinvolvement	42	.98887	-.710	.365	.277	.717

Parents education level	42	1.440	-.241	.365	-1.320	.717
Parents' income level	42	1.365	-.469	.365	-.975	.717
Home learning atmosphere	42	1.270	-1.129	.365	.361	.717
Parents occupation	42	1.239	-1.244	.365	.573	.717
Availability of learning materials	42	1.253	-.621	.365	-.740	.717
Valid N (listwise)	42					

Multicollinearity

This is measured to see if the predictor variables are highly correlated with one another. The model does not suffer from multicollinearity because the VIF ranges from 1.374-3.309. Further inspection is in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Test of Multicollinearity

Model		Collinearity Statistics	
		Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)		
	Parent's education level	.728	1.374
	Parent's income level	.597	1.675
	Home learning atmosphere	.302	3.309
	Parent's occupation	.394	2.539
	Availability of learning materials	.411	2.433

a. Dependent Variable: parents' involvement in students' performance of homework

Model Summary

This part provides the R values. The R value explains how well the whole model describes the data. In this case, the model explained 94.4% of the data. The R square explains the extent to which the variability of the dependent variable is explained by the independent variables. In this case, 89.1% of the variability in parents' involvement in students' performance of homework was explained by the independent variables, namely parents' education level, parents' income level, home learning atmosphere, parents' occupation and availability of learning materials. In this study, the adjusted R square value was 87.5%. This means that, accurately, 87.5% of the total variability of the dependent variable was explained by the independent variables. Results is in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig.F Change
1	.944 ^a	.891	.875	.34916	.891	58.571	5	36	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), parent's education level, parent's income level, home learning atmosphere, parent's occupation, availability of learning materials

ANOVA

This part presents the analysis of variance (ANOVA). This section provides statistics about the overall significance of the model being fit. By looking at the significant value, also known as the p-value, one is able to know if the independent variables of the study explain the dependent variable. The ANOVA results indicated that the p-value is 0.000 which is less than 0.05. Results in table 3.6. This tells us that the study’s independent variables, including parents’ education level, parents’ income level, home learning atmosphere, parents’ occupation, and availability of learning materials, reliably explain the dependent variable, which was parents’ involvement in students’ performance of homework. Therefore, the model is statistically significant.

Table 4.6: ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	35.704	5	7.141	58.571	.000 ^b
	Residual	4.389	36	.122		
	Total	40.093	41			

a. Dependent Variable: parents’ involvement in students’ performance of homework

b. Predictors: (Constant), parent’s education level, parent’s income level, home learning atmosphere, parent’s occupation, availability of learning materials

Multiple Regression Results

Multiple regression analysis is used to analyze the relationship between a single dependent variable and several predictor variables (Kothari, 2014). According to Masaboet al. (2017), when evaluating each of the independent variables, if the Sig. value (p-value) is less than 0.05, then the variable is making a significant unique contribution to the prediction of the dependent variable. If greater than 0.05, then you can conclude that the variable is not making a significant unique contribution to the prediction of your dependent variables. In addition, if the Beta coefficient is positive, it means that the predictor variable has a positive influence on the dependent variable and vice-versa. As a reminder, the study’s predictor variables included parents’ education level, parents’ income level, home learning atmosphere, parents’ occupation, and availability of learning materials, while the study’s dependent variable was parents’ involvement in students’ performance of homework. The results for the regression analysis are in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Multiple regression results

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.294	.204		1.443	.158
	Parent’s education	.421	.044	.614	9.497	.000
	Parent’s income level	.335	.052	.462	6.471	.000
	Home learning atmosphere	.249	.080	.313	3.116	.004
	Parent’s occupation	.063	.068	.081	.923	.362
	Availability of learning materials	.212	.068	.269	3.129	.003

a. Dependent Variable: parents’ involvement in performance of students’ homework

From table 4.7, multiple regression results indicated that predictor variables including parents’ education, parents’ income level, home learning atmosphere, and availability of learning materials have a positive and

significant influence on parents' involvement in students' performance of homework, which is the study's outcome variable. The results also revealed that parents' occupation has a positive but not significant influence on parents' involvement in students' performance of homework. These findings concur with the findings obtained through interviews and focus group discussions. Several factors, including education and awareness, income level, and ambitions for academic success, were suggested by head teachers involved in interviews.

The study also observed that the level of parents' involvement in students' learning varies across the place and schools. It was revealed that in some areas such as Chamwino, Mafisa and Sabasaba where most people with low income live have minimum level of parental involvement in their students' learning, especially in students' performance of homework. For instance, one interviewee said that:

There are some neighborhood have people who give minimum attention to school as a result schools around the areas lack parental involvement in schools' important matters such as meetings and students' performance of homework (Interviewee C).

As a result, the schools that belong to certain areas in the council are performing well because of the willingness of parents to participate in school matters such as participating in making important decisions. For instance, in some areas, the parents' associations are very strong and have decided to take charge of paying for tuition and food while in school. The head teacher insisted that, considering that there are a lot of children in the classroom, normal school hours are not enough for students to catch up; hence, tuition gives a chance for teachers to have additional time to teach and provide homework to students. In addition, students stay in school until late afternoon hours, so providing food at school helps the pupils concentrate in the classroom. For instance, one interviewee said that:

I am an experienced teacher who taught in multiple schools in the council. In some areas, parents are well determined in supporting their children' education. Their parents' associations take charge of paying for tuition and food in the afternoon. As a result, their children's performance has been improving compared to the areas where parents do not pay for their children' tuition and food at school (Interviewee D).

The study also observed that there is a substantial difference between private schools and government-owned schools in parental involvement in students' learning, especially students' performance on homework. It was noticed that private schools provide homework to students on a regular basis, but public primary schools are not providing homework on a regular basis, while some of the schools do not provide homework at all. For instance, one student in public schools said in a focus group discussion that:

I am not given homework at school, but we are given classroom exercises which we finish at home due to the limited time at schools (FGD 2).

In contrast, one student studying in a private school said that:

In our school, homework is provided on a regular basis depending on the subjects. Each day, a different subject (FGD 4)

One head teacher in public schools clarified in the interview that:

Due to the large number of students in the classroom, for instance, in this school there are an average of 400 pupils in one class categorized into three streams or less. As a result, in one stream there is an average of more than 100 students, which is very hard for teachers to mark classroom assignments and homework, as a result, teachers fail to provide homework. However, the classroom assignments are completed by students at home (Interviewee D).

In contrast, one head teacher in a private school said that:

In this school, home assignments are provided every day, and it is a duty of a teacher, students, and parents to ensure that children complete their home assignments. Since homework is treated as important, students grow a culture of successfully completing such assignments at home (Interviewee E).

5. DISCUSSIONS

As specified earlier, this study examined the factors influencing parents' involvement in their children's performance of homework in primary schools. The study envisaged that predictor variables including parent's education level, parent's income level, home learning atmosphere, parent's occupation and availability of learning materials have positive and significant influence on parental involvement on student's performance of homework. It has been confirmed that parents' education, parents' income level, home learning atmosphere, and availability of learning materials have a positive and significant influence on parents' involvement in students' performance of homework.

Multiple regression results has also revealed that parents' occupation has a positive but not significant influence on parents' involvement in students' performance of homework. These findings concur with the findings in several studies such as Chahe and Mwaikokesya, 2018; Gunn, 2014 and Emerson et al., 2012 which revealed that factors such as parents' education and income level, home learning environment, and availability of learning materials have an influence on parents' involvement in students' performance of home assignments. To put much emphasis on this, Chahe and Mwaikokesya, 2018 stipulated that parents with a good income were more likely to support their children's home learning, including the performance of home assignments, while highly educated parents had a higher readiness to support their children in home learning in different ways, including teaching, supervising, and monitoring their progress, than those with relatively lower levels of education. Similarly, Emerson et al., (2012) acknowledge that the home learning environment (i.e., designated area to do home-works) and the availability of learning materials at home can influence learning and parental support in performing children' assignments. These findings concur with the findings obtained through interviews and focus group discussions. Several factors, including education and awareness, income level, and ambitions for academic success, were suggested by head teachers involved in interviews.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study concludes that parents' education level, parents' income level, home learning atmosphere, and availability of learning materials are the factors influencing the involvement of parents in supporting their children to do their homework in Morogoro municipality. It has been noted that parents' involvement in students' performance of homework varies across the areas and schools. Some schools which are surrounded by households or people with low income levels have been reported to be less concerned about school matters, including students' performance on homework, compared to areas dominated by middle-income households or people. In addition, there is a substantial difference in the level of parents' involvement in students' performance of homework between private and public schools due to factors such as variation in parents' education and income level, learning atmosphere, and availability of learning materials. Private schools tend to have a higher level of parents' involvement in supporting their children's homework performance than public schools.

Due to the findings from the study, the following recommendations are to be considered: parents should be educated about the best ways and importance of supporting their children's homework performance. Due to differences in education level among parents, there are some obstacles that parents could encounter in playing

the teacher's role. However, even low-educated parents can supervise their children while performing their homework and support them with learning materials that could help children perform their homework successfully. The teachers should also work closely with parents in fulfilling their role in students' homework performance. This can create awareness among parents about the benefits involved in supporting their children's homework performance, including increased concentration in subjects and improved academic performance.

Parents should create a supportive home learning atmosphere to encourage their children to perform their homework successfully and comfortably. This can improve the concentration and seriousness of students in performing their school home assignments. Not only that, but parents can also be motivated to support their children in their homework assignments as the learning environment attracts them to do so. Parents should make sure that recommended learning materials are available at home. This can even help them understand the subjects and help their children tackle hard questions in the event that they seek support. The available learning materials can also help parents assess the way their children tackle the questions provided in homework. Setting a good assignment routine can also help parents be aware of the homework provided in school every day.

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