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## **INFLUENCE OF HOME TO SCHOOL COMMUNICATION ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF STANDARD EIGHT PUPILS IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KISUMU WEST SUB – COUNTY, KENYA**

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**Abstract**

**Purpose:** The purpose of the study was to establish the influence of home to school communication on academic achievement of pupils in public primary schools.

**Methodology:** The research design used was sequential explanatory research design, which combined both qualitative and quantitative models of research so that evidence may be mixed and knowledge increased in a more meaningful manner. The study population consisted of 1210 standard eight pupils, 300 standard eight teachers, 1210 standard eight parents and 75 Head teachers drawn from 75 public primary schools in Kisumu West Sub-County, Kisumu, Kenya. Stratified random sampling technique was employed for selecting 23 public primary schools and simple random sampling used in each stratum to select the pupils. Purposive sampling technique was done to select standard eight parents, and head teachers. The researcher would collect data using questionnaires and interview schedule, focus group discussions guide and document analysis. Quantitative data was analyzed through descriptive and results presented in the form of tables, frequencies, Percentages, and accumulative percentages and on the other hand qualitative data generated from open ended questions were organized, categorized and presented in narratives.

**Findings:** The study established that home to school communication affected pupils' academic achievement.

**Unique contribution to theory, practice and policy:** The recommendations of the study were that there should be regular academic clinics and pupils progress follows up to help enhance achievement amongst the learners. The ecological system theory of development by (Bronfenbrenner 1969) outlined the influence of parent involvement at schools and the other surrounding influences on a child's development and academic achievement which the ministry could borrow to enhance academic achievement

**Keywords:** *Factors, Education, Home to School Communication, Pupils Academic Achievement, Kisumu West.*

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Various types of measures can be applied when looking at the term parental involvement such as parents' educational aspirations for their children, helping with homework, parents' participation in school activities, teaching appropriate behavior for academic success, home to school communication, parents' provision of school requirements on academic achievement (Dumont, Ludtke, Neumann, Niggli & Schnyder, 2012).

Parental influence has been identified as an important factor in affecting girl student' academic achievement; parents' education and encouragement are strongly related to improved student achievement (Wang, Wildman & Colhoun, 1996). Parental education and social economic status have an influence on student achievement. Students with parents who were both college-educated tended to achieve at the highest levels. Children whose parents are of high educational status have a better statistical chance of participating in education (Oloo, 2003). Important factors include parental involvement and communication in their children education.

According to Hill and Craft (2013), while parental involvement has been found to be related to increased academic achievement, the mechanisms through which parental involvement exerts its influence on a pupil's academic achievement are not yet fully understood. It is therefore necessary to establish various mechanisms by which parents can be or are involved in their pupil's learning process. These mechanisms include the nature of parental involvement, parents' provision of school requirements and how parents' participation at school influence their involvement in their pupil's academic achievement

Epstein (2010) who studied communication as an integral component for determining a strong school community stated that Learning Management System (LMS) present new opportunities for communication and collaboration among parents, teachers and students. The study focused on learning management system for school-home communication in rural K-12 school districts. The study only employed the use of quantitative data collected from parents, teachers and students. Most of the population received the survey via email. The study used a very small population of parents and teachers within the target district. The study results demonstrate that the learning management system may provide value to school –home communication. The current study therefore sought specific non-learning management system forms of school-home communication, study collected both qualitative and quantitative data and lastly, the study included head teachers which were left out in the first study as the academic achievement decision makers.

### **Statement of the problem**

Home to school communication is a factor that has been regularly associated to a child's good academic achievement, while this relation between home to school communication and a child's academic achievement is well approved, studies have yet to determine how home to school communication increases a child's academic achievement. However, the influence of home to school communication on academic achievement in Kisumu West Sub-County seem not to have been given proper attention particularly in Standard eight which is a transition level from primary education to secondary education. There has been hardly any information about home to

school communication among standard eight pupils in public primary schools in Kisumu West Sub County. This study therefore seeks to establish the influence of home to school communication on the academic achievement of pupils' in public primary schools in Kisumu West Sub County, Kisumu County, Kenya.

### **Research Objective**

To Find out influence of home to school communication on academic achievement of standard eight pupils in public primary schools in Kisumu West Sub –County, Kenya.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study was based on Ecological System Theory of Development by (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) as cited by (Rosa and Tudge, 2013). They outlined the influence of parent involvement at schools and the other surrounding influences on a child's development. Like fish in the ocean, people exist as part of an ecosystem, with each person having their own immediate social 'microsystem'. Parents, teachers and caregivers are all a part of this 'microsystem' and positive interactions between these parts will create balance for an individual's growth and learning. These vital interactions are all part of an individual's 'microsystem'. For example, when parents and teachers communicate directly and work towards shared goals, such as encouraging a child's interest in reading, practicing an instrument for the school concepts or raising a grade from C to B, children can rely on their support system and feel more confident in creating and pursuing goals. Bronfenbrenner's model predicts that high levels of parent involvement in schools should lead to successful child outcomes.

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

According to Carr (2015) poor language skills may be a barrier, resulting in unequal communication opportunities among parents. Schools should make sure that all school parents understand the information given by the school. Kraft (2016) examined engagement of parents as partners in education through better communication. The study only involved parents as partners in students' learning. The study used randomized controlled trials to illustrate how parents with brief but specific and actionable recommendations and advice can enable them to better support their children's learning. This quantitative study examined one rural Michigan school district's approach to leverage a newly adopted learning management system for communication purposes. The study utilized a census approach in which all members of the population were surveyed. Only questionnaires were used to collect data from the parents. The result showed that most parents accessed the internet daily, with only 4 parents did not. However, the study results did not indicate how the internet was used to enhance home-school communication. The current study therefore brought out how the use of internet enhance home-school communication. Also, qualitative and quantitative data were included in the study and lastly, the study explored population both from urban and rural settings.

Rogers (2015) determined the effects of weekly teacher-to-parent messages sent to the parents of high-school students during a traditional summer school program offered by a large urban school district in the Northeastern United States. The researcher in this study hired the use of a



translator. The study employed the use of experimental design and a block randomized trial was used. A total of 1417 students actively enrolled. The study only used questionnaires for both teachers and students. However, the study did not use the interview schedule and pupils focus group discussion. The current study therefore used four tools that is questionnaires, interview schedule, pupils' focus group discussion and documentary analysis for data collection and Lastly, the current study looked into communication in totality, not only in text messages.

Gilgore (2015) investigated the effects of teacher communication on parent knowledge of the work their child does in the classroom. Data was collected through pre-information and post-information question sheets, interviews, and education events feedback forms. A total of twenty-two parents were participants in this study. The study conducted two parent meetings and the two parent meetings were identical in terms of format and content. The study results showed that teacher-communication knowledge of the work has got connection with children's academic achievement. However, the study did not reveal teacher communication knowledge strategy employed to bring out the connection. The current study therefore used both qualitative and quantitative data and again, the study only used one meeting with the parents and lastly, used larger population of parents, teachers and pupils.

Thompson (2012) investigated the changing nature of parent-teacher communication: mode selectin in the smartphone era. The participants were 1349 parents of students from district in the Midwestern United States. A total population of the district was 37164 students were used. Both qualitative and quantitative responses to understand the communication modes. The study applied media richness theory. Data were analyzed and presented in frequencies and percentages. The revealed an increase in parents' preference for frequent e-mail communication as well as for emerging modes of parent-teacher communication. However, the results were not inclusive of other communication channels and it did not include teachers who could provide additional insights. This study explored different ways of parent-teacher communication modes and this study also used pupil focus group discussion as tools of data collection.

Sad and Gurbuzturk (2010) examined the extent of parental involvement among primary school children concerning the area of communication and homework support. The study was designed based on descriptive survey model and comparative and correlational associative models. The study sample comprised of 1252 parents whose children studied at 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> classes of six primary schools in Malatya province. The study employed parental involvement scale to collect the data. The study results revealed that parents' level of involvement was high for such tasks as communication with children, creating enabling home settings and supporting child's personality development. The current study involved parents of grade eight, teachers and pupils of grade eight and lastly, study employed the use of questionnaires, interview schedules and pupils focus group discussion.

Shiffman (2011) examined the connection between education participation and parents' communication in children's education. The study was limited to title 1 elementary school educators and parents in a large Texas urban school district. The study was carried out using an exploratory case study method. The study used mixed method research design with sequential transformative approach. Data sources for this study included interviews with parents, adults'

educators and school staff. The study used Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory to address the importance of communication between educators and parents. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. The results revealed constructive concerns associated with lack of accessibility, education trust, parent educational background and knowledge.

### 3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted sequential explanatory research design, which combined both qualitative and quantitative models of research so that evidence may be mixed and knowledge increased in a more meaningful manner (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2009). The population of this study comprised of 1210 standard eight pupils, 300 standard eight teachers, 1210 standard eight parents and 75 Head teachers drawn from 75 public primary schools in Kisumu West Sub-County, Kisumu County, Kenya. Kisumu West Sub-County had 75 public primary schools out of which 23 public primary schools were sampled. 23 Head teachers were sampled to take part in the study (30% of the study population). Out of 1210 standard eight pupils, 230 of the pupils were sampled to take part in the study, 50 standard eight parents were sampled and 90 teachers were sampled to be part of the study. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select 23 public primary schools in Kisumu West Sub-County.

Analysis of data collected was based on the purpose and objectives of the study. Data collected was edited, coded, classified and tabulated. After the tabulation process, the data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16.0. Quantitative data was analyzed through descriptive and results presented in the form of tables, frequencies, Percentages, to allow for data interpretation. Quantitative data that was gathered by responses from close-ended questions from Head teachers (HTQs) and teachers (TQ) was read carefully and paying attention to; comments, ideas and concerns of respondents. Qualitative data generated from open-ended questions in the research instruments were organized, categorized and presented in narratives according to various emergent themes

The first objective sought to establish whether home - school communication had an influence on academic achievement of standard eight learners. The objective sought to find out from parents, teachers, headteachers and pupils how home - school communication influence the academic achievement of standard eight pupils in public primary schools. Data on this objective was collected and analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The respondents responses on the influence of home - school communication were summarized on Table 5.

### 4.0 RESULTS

**Table 1: Parents Responses on the Influence of Home to School Communication**

Category	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
No	34	68	68
Yes	10	20	88
Not sure	06	12	100

Data analyzed in the Table 1 reveals that majority 34(68%) of parent says that there is no influence of home to school communication on academic achievement of standard eight pupils while minority 10 (20%) of parents agreed that there is influence between home to school communication and academic achievement. On the same table 06 (12%) of parents are not sure whether there is a relationship between home to school communication and academic achievement.

This concurs with the responses from the interview conducted with one of the parents, whosaid that there is completely no influence of home to school communication on the academic achievement. One parent was quoted saying that:

*“How do you say that, l talking to teachers at school can improve my child’s academic achievement? Not true at all.”*

The study findings also concur with a study conducted by Kraft et al ( 2013) which found out that students engagement in a summer school program increased when families received daily phone calls and written text messages from teachers. Palts and Kalmus (2015), concluded that no emails between teachers and parents led to no increased homework completion.

These findings further concur with Caspe (2016) who argues that teachers training and professional development programs must actively support improvement of parents’ communication skills. Implicit in the wish for improving home to school communication is the expectation that parents attendance will contribute to the improvement of students academic achievement and realization of an efficient education (Tschannen-Moran,2014).

Home to school communication enhances academic performance therefore barriers to the communication such as physical, technical, psychological or social can lead to poor performance.

Negative school experiences of parents can also constitute a barrier in their communication with teachers . Schools should be able to offer guidance service to help parents to manage these kinds of psychological problems.

The study further sought to establish head teachers’ view on the influence of home to school communication on the academic achievement of standard eight pupils. The study findings are summarized in Table 2.

**Table 2: Head Teachers’ Responses on the Influence of Home to School Communication on Academic Achievement**

Categories	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	23	100	100
Agree	00	00	00
Strongly Disagree	00	00	00
Disagree	00	00	00
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Table 2 reveals that all of head teachers 23 (100%) reported that, there is correlation between academic achievement and home - school communication. Azhar (2014) state that home to

school communication is linked to academic competence, which has a significant influence on the academic achievement of their children in public primary schools..

This study indicates that all head teachers strongly agreed that home to school communication is essential in enhancing academic achievement in terms of creating opportunities for the child to excel in academics. Parents who frequently communicate to school about their children are concerned about what goes on round the learning of their children. The study findings concurs with Bakker et al (2010) who state that, a student who have parent who maintain communication with school, have a wider opportunity to become more successful in his/her academics than students whose parents have lower communication level. Amazingly, there are positive relations between home to school communication and parents' expectations for their children's success (Davis-Kean, 2009), suggesting that more highly communicative parents actively encourage their children to develop high expectations of their own. Muola (2010) reported that, children of communicative parents are provided with better learning environment at home for they would love to share with their children about school work, home study and encourage them always to be focussed.

The study also sought to find out from teacherstheir view on home to school communication on the academic achievement of pupils in public primary schools. The study findings are summarized in Table 3,

**Table 3: Teachers' Responses on the Influence of Home to School Communication on Academics Achievement**

Categories	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	63	70.0	70.0
Agree	17	18.9	88.9
Strongly Disagree	08	8.9	97.8
Disagree	02	2.2	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>	

Table 3 reveals that majority of teachers 63 (70%) strongly agreed that, home to school communication and academic achievement of pupils in public primary schools is related, 17 (18.9%) also note that there is a correlation between home to school communication while minority 8 (8.9%) of teachers strongly disagreed that home to school communication has got influence on the academic achievement of pupils and lastly on the same,2 (2.2%) of teachers disagree that home to school communication has influence on the academic achievement a child. Eccles & Kean (2009) state that the relationship between home to school communicationand their children's academic success is real.

The study also implies that most teachers are concerned about home to school communication for the enhancement of academic achievement of pupils' in public primary schools. Parents who are educated are better in understanding and are to talk about education matters. These study findings concurs with Kainuwa and Yusuf (2013) reported that, there exist a difference between children of educated parents and students with parents having completed only primary school or not. They further stated that fathers of students with university degree, their children perform



considerably well and get highest score in examination. This was supported by Musgrave (2010) “a child born of educated parents home would follow the steps of his or her family and by this, the child would work actively in his or her studies. Educated parents provide library facilities to encourage the child to interact and work hard.

These study findings observed that, communication is important but indicated that, proactive involvement does not require parents to be physically present at school since they can be connected through school social media.

The study further sought to establish standard eight pupils views on the influence of home to school communication on their academic achievement. The study findings are summarized in Table 4.

**Table 4: Pupils’ Responses on the Influence of Home to School Communication on Academic Achievement**

Categories	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	190	82.6	82.6
No	35	15.2	97.8
Not Sure	05	2.2	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>100</b>	

Table 4 reveals that majority 190 (82.6%) of pupils’ indicated that there is influence between home to school communication on their academic achievement while minority 35 (15.2%) of pupils indicated that there is no influence of home to school communication on their academic achievement. Another slot 5 (2.2%) of pupils indicated that, they are not sure whether home to school communication has got influence on their academic achievement or not. This implies that home to school communication is essential in the academic achievement of pupils in public primary schools in Kisumu West Sub County.

This findings concurs with response from focus group discussion where some pupils are quoted saying that:

*“My parents always inquire from my class teacher how am performing in continuous assessment text and when I get my parents talk to my teachers about my performance, this encourages me to work hard”.*

These findings also concurs Hradecky (2014) who reported tha, home to school communication practices are so fundamental to involving families in education process of their children. Home to school communication is very important because it enhances participation of both parents and their children in the learning process.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Conclusion

In reference to the findings discussed in chapter four, the study made the following conclusions based on research objectives: To find out influence of home to school communication on

academic achievement of pupils' in public primary schools in Kisumu West Sub-County, the study findings showed that majority of parents reported that there was no significant influence of home to school communication on academic achievement of pupils in public primary schools. Majority of teachers and all head teachers in the study clearly indicated that there is influence of home to school on the academic achievement of pupils' in public primary schools.

### **Recommendations**

The researcher recommends that, there should be regular academic clinics and pupils' progress follow up to help enhance academic achievement amongst learners. The same clinics could be used by the ministry to gauge the influence of home to school communication on students and thus encourage parents to be involved more in communicating with their children and the school.

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