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The relationship between parental participation in school activities and enrolment of children in primary school in Samburu County, Kenya

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to discover the connection between parental participation in school activities and the enrolment of children in primary school in Samburu County, Kenya. The study got its data from secondary and primary avenues. The secondary sources were literature materials from local libraries and records/reports in education offices and schools in the Samburu District. Primary sources were based on interviews and direct observations. An interview schedule with 9 main areas was used. Proportional Stratified sampling was used to divide the area into three clusters. The study adopted the Survey Research method. This method of data collection was used because it is the most appropriate for generating data and describing a population too large to observe directly. Direct observations were used to assess the nature of the regions studied and capture relevant 'off-the-cuff' remarks of the respondents. In this study, the analysis of the data was done using both descriptive and inferential statistical tools. The statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) was used to aid data analysis, organisation, interpretation and presentation. The specific tools used were frequencies, cross-tabulations, contingency tables, chi-square, multiple regression, correlation, and qualitative presentation in the form of quotations. The chi-square analysis revealed that participation in school activities is significantly associated with access to basic formal education, but the relationship was weak, as indicated by the value of the contingency coefficient (0.36). This study concludes that the deliberate involvement of people in school activities may boost the school enrolment of children.

Key words: Basic formal education, enrolment of children, parental participation, school activities.



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INTRODUCTION

In this study, education is conceptualised to mean “the individual and social development processes which cause a person’s intellectual, emotional, spiritual and physical abilities to mature, thus enabling him to fully participate in community affairs” (Otiende et al., 1992). As alluded to above, basic education entails teaching the human person basic skills of reading, writing and numeracy (Lockheed et al., 1991). More precisely, primary education has two main purposes, which are to produce a numerate and literate population that can deal with issues encountered at home and at work and to serve as a foundation upon which further education can be built (Lockheed et al., 1991).

Because of the arguments advanced earlier, the acquisition of formal education is a must in today’s world. It is important and necessary in its own right and is also a basic human right. There could be no sustainable development of the nomadic pastoral people without increased and sustained education of their children. Kenya’s government’s policy is to make basic education universal, and some efforts have been made to provide access to it to the disadvantaged (those living in ASAL and in slum areas).

However, despite Kenya’s policies, plans, and efforts to make education universal, its access to nomadic pastoralists and slum dwellers is still limited. Kenya, therefore, faces a problem in the elimination of illiteracy and the realisation of education for all. One of the intractable aspects of the problem, *inter-alia*, is the “low enrolment and extremely high dropout rates among the pastoral peoples” Gakuru (1993).

This, by implication, means that these people will continue lagging behind in all aspects of development because they will lack the capacity to march forward with the rest of the world.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Roy (1984) argues in favour of parental participation and, along the same lines as Naswa (1992), pointed out that many children drop out of school because of a lack of parental participation. That is, the more parents participate in schools where their children attend, the more likely that they appreciate formal

education and, therefore, encourage more of their children to enrol in school. The aforementioned studies did not specify any functional relationship between access to basic formal education and the explanatory variables.

METHODOLOGY

The study got its data from secondary and primary avenues. The secondary sources were literature materials from local libraries and records/reports in education offices and schools in the Samburu District. Primary sources were based on interviews and direct observations. An interview schedule with 9 main areas was used. Proportional Stratified sampling was used to divide the area into three clusters, namely; - Highland-Rural, Lowland-Rural and Urban. The study adopted the Survey Research method. This method of data collection was used because it is the most appropriate for generating data and describing a population too large to observe directly (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). For this reason, structured interviews and questionnaires were applied. Direct observations were used to assess the nature of the regions studied and capture relevant ‘off-the-cuff’ remarks of the respondents. Among the issues that were observed were the climate, water sources, activities done by the people, terrain, and settlements, among other things. In this study, the analysis of the data was done using both descriptive and inferential statistical tools. The statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) was used to aid data analysis, organisation, interpretation and presentation. According to Yellapu (2018), descriptive statistics involves methods concerned with arranging, summarising and conveying the characteristics of a range of numbers. Descriptive statistics used in these items include percentages, proportions and frequency distributions. On the other hand, inferential statistics involves making generalisations, predictions and conclusions about the characteristics of parameters based on the characteristics of the samples (Guetterman, 2019).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Participation of parents in School Matters

The respondents were asked whether they participated in school matters. Of the total who answered the question (n=110), 90.9 per cent said ‘Yes’; that is, they participated, and 9.1 per cent said

‘No’. However, one can see from the table below that there are variations in responses according to regions. With Urban respondents, 95.1 per cent said they participate, 98 per cent Highland-Rural and 63.1 per cent Lowland-Rural. It seems that the participation of Lowland-Rural respondents is lower than the rest and could be explained by the hardship area they are in, which forces them to be away herding and watering livestock.

The question on school participation was answered mainly by those with children in school. However, all the Highland-Rural respondents answered the

question. The respondents who did not have children in school asserted that they get involved in school matters like construction and so on. Similarly, 3 of the Lowland-Rural respondents who did not have children in school said they participated. In contrast, none of the urban respondents who did not have children in school answered. This shows the different cultures of community and individuality in Rural and Urban areas, respectively.

Table 1 shows the responses on parental participation in school matters.

Table 1: Parental Participation in School Matters

Response	Highland Rural		Urban		Lowland Rural		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Yes	49	98.0	39	95.1	12	63.1	100	90.9
No	1	2.0	2	4.9	7	36.9	10	9.1
Total	50	100.0	41	100.0	19	100.0	110	100.0

Association between Participation in School Matters and Access to Basic Formal Education

Table 2 shows the relationship between guardian participation in school activities and access to basic formal education.

Table 2 Association between Guardian Participation in School Activities and Access to Basic Formal Education

Access	Guardian participation in school activities		
	High	Low	Row Total
Accessible	78(50.3)	2(4.4)	80(40.0)
Not Accessible	77(49.7)	43(95.6)	120(60.0)
Column Total	155(100.0)	45(100.0)	200(100.0)

- Contingency coefficient 0.36
- $X^2 = 30.58542$
- Significance = 0.0000
- $df = 1$

Table 2 depicts that out of the total sample, only 22.5 per cent acknowledged that their participation in school activities was low, while a majority reported that their participation in school activities was high. However, out of the total sample, 40 per cent asserted that basic formal education is accessible, while over half (60%) were of the view that basic formal education is not accessible.

Of the 45 respondents who fall within the category of low participation, only 4.4 per cent reported that basic formal education is accessible. Simply put,

almost all (95.6%) of those who acknowledged low participation revealed that basic formal education is not accessible. This is probably explained by the fact that there are herders, and hence, they are always very far from school(s), and thus, their children are not able to access these facilities.

The association between guardian participation in school activities and access to basic formal education was found to be very significant at a 100 per cent confidence level. However, the relationship is very weak, as indicated by the small value of the contingency coefficient (0.36), suggesting the existence of other factors that can help to explain accessibility to basic formal education.

Discussion

The association between access to basic formal education was 0.12 and 0.01 units for each unit increase in participation and importance of education, respectively. The chi-square analysis revealed that participation in school activities is significantly associated with access to basic formal education, but the relationship was weak, as

indicated by the value of the contingency coefficient (0.36).

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the deliberate involvement of people in school activities may boost the school enrolment of children.

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