Research Journal of Education, Teaching and Curriculum Studies
Vol. 2 No. 1 (2024): ISSN (Online): 2958-8626
DOI: https://doi.org/10.58721/rjetcs.v2i1.617
Home Learning and Achievement of Core Competencies among Learners in Public Primary Schools in Nandi County

Home Learning and Achievement of Core Competencies among Learners in Public Primary Schools in Nandi County

Elizabeth Jeptoo, Benard Nyatuka & Titus Pacho
Kisii University, Kenya

Article History
Received: 2024-03-22
Revised: 2024-06-22
Accepted: 2024-07-03
Published: 2024-07-06

Keywords
Achievement
Competencies
Home Learning
School
Strategy

How to cite:
Jeptoo, E., Nyatuka, B. & Pacho, T. (2024). Home Learning and Achievement of Core Competencies among Learners in Public Primary Schools in Nandi County. *Research Journal of Education, Teaching and Curriculum Studies,* 2(1), 35-44.

Abstract
The purpose of this study was to explore the contribution of home learning to the achievement of core competencies among learners in public primary schools in Nandi County, Kenya. The study was guided by Joyce Epstein's Model of Parental Involvement, published in 2002. The sample size comprised 293 participants, including 6 sub-county education officers, 24 head teachers, and 263 parents. Multistage sampling was used to determine the schools that would participate in the study. The research instruments used for data collection were questionnaires for parents and interview schedules for sub-county education officers and head teachers. Qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis. The study results showed that home learning, as a parental involvement strategy, was positively related to the achievement of core competencies among learners (r=0.348; p= 0.000 statistically). The study rejected the null hypotheses. Engaging in learning activities together at home, such as reading or homework support, appears to be an effective strategy for boosting achievement. In conclusion, engaging in learning activities together at home is an excellent way to boost achievement, offering a range of benefits beyond improved grades. Parents of pupils who demonstrate a good understanding of digital literacy support their children at home in developing technology-related skills. The study recommends that school management develop clear and concise guidelines for parents on how to effectively support home learning for problem-solving and critical thinking skills. These guidelines can include tips, suggested activities, and resources.

Introduction
Competency-based learning (CBL) is an approach to education that aims to mimic how people learn, work, and collaborate in the real world (Vander Els & Stack, 2022). To guarantee that all learners have the opportunity to apply the knowledge they acquire and develop marketable abilities, CBL is founded on evidence-based assessment and prioritises adaptability in time, space, and support. Implementing CBL shows a commitment to making the system more accessible and learner-focused. The Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) in Kenya underscores the importance of parental participation in children's education, emphasising the need for strong parent-teacher relationships.

The success of competency-based curricula relies on various factors, including the collaboration between teachers and parents (Syomwene, 2022).

A child's home learning environment (HLE) significantly impacts academic and social growth (Lehrl, Evangelou & Sammons, 2020). Before ever setting foot in a classroom, children are learning and growing in the HLE. When comparing children, the HLE can shed light on why some do better than others in school and in social situations. Growing up in a high-quality HLE helps children acquire more skills and prepares them for school in multiple ways. According to Toth et al. (2020), learners who have supportive families tend to do better in school. A child's home is the first place where they form meaningful relationships with educators, and secondary school learners' academic success is significantly influenced by their home environments.

Regardless of the approach employed at home or school, the home learning environment has consistently significantly impacted learners' academic performance. Family engagement, characterised by collaboration between teachers and parents, emerges as a crucial component in ensuring learners succeed in school, with parents offering unique insights that complement educators' perspectives (Kelty & Wakabayashi, 2020; Houri et al., 2019). In conclusion, the home learning environment plays a pivotal role in shaping various aspects of learners' education, contributing to enhanced academic outcomes and developing core competencies crucial for success in today's competitive world. This study aimed to explore the contribution of the home learning environment as a parental involvement strategy in achieving core competencies among learners in public primary schools in Nandi County.

Core competencies, recognised as foundational skills essential for effective functioning in the complex, information-rich world of the twenty-first century, are often lacking among secondary school learners and recent college graduates in Kenya, mirroring global concerns (Githui et al., 2017). The recently adopted curriculum in Kenya emphasises teaching strategies geared towards cultivating these critical skills, with teachers and parents playing pivotal roles in helping learners acquire the knowledge and abilities necessary to pursue their passions. However, there remains a gap in understanding whether parents are actively involved, willing, and able to contribute effectively to achieving core competencies. Few research works examine the relationship between parental involvement strategies and the development of core competencies, prompting this study to address the research gap by investigating the contribution of home learning to the achievement of core competencies among learners in public primary schools in Nandi County. The study aimed to explore the contribution of home learning as a parental involvement strategy to achieving core competencies among learners in public primary schools. The specific objective of the study was to examine the contribution of home learning to the achievement of core competencies among learners in public primary schools in Nandi County, Kenya.

This study was guided by Joyce Epstein's Model, developed in 2002. It focuses on communication within the broader context of parental involvement strategies. The model identifies six key family involvement behaviours: positive home conditions, communication, involvement at school, home learning activities, shared decision-making within the school, and community partnerships. These behaviours collectively contribute to effective parental involvement, covering various dimensions of the parent-school relationship (Newman et al., 2019).

The application of the Epstein Model holds significant implications for educational stakeholders, with a specific emphasis on actively involving parents in their children's education for better learning

outcomes. It underscores the importance of evidence-based practices to enhance learner achievement levels. Practical applications include fostering strong partnerships between teachers and parents, providing workshops for parents to support their children's learning, and ensuring effective collaboration between schools and families at the county level (Latunde, 2016; Al-Hassan, 2020). Epstein's Model is a valuable guide, particularly in leveraging communication as a key parental involvement strategy.

Research by Niklas, Cohrssen, Lehrl, and Napoli (2021) found that the home learning environment (HLE) impacts children's academic achievement. Primary caregivers significantly influence children's development and learning through everyday activities like reading aloud and playing together. However, no studies have directly linked homeschooling with improved proficiency in any specific area. According to research by Lehrl, Linberg, Niklas, and Kuger (2021), parents' efforts to foster their children's growth in all areas of development—literacy and mathematics included—are reflected in the home learning environment. It should be noted, however, that the HLE can also impact children's social and emotional development.

Puccioni (2018) states that homeschooling allows parents to shape their child's educational experiences according to their child's unique requirements and passions, resulting in individualised educational opportunities that may not always be available in a traditional classroom setting. In addition, parents and instructors can take on the role of partners through home learning, improving communication and cooperation between the home and the school. This coordinated effort ensures a holistic approach to education, in which formal and informal learning experiences complement each other in contributing to a child's total development.

Mowen and Schroeder (2018) found that parental style had a greater impact on learner behaviour at Bronte-Tinkew. Fathers' parenting styles and emotional intelligence were linked to their children's behaviour. Parents' active participation in their children's education at home, as described by Gan and Bilige (2019), has been shown to positively affect learners' academic performance.

According to Sahin, Arseven, and Kiliç (2016), learners whose parents do not encourage them to do well in school are more likely to arrive late because they must complete responsibilities before class. Lau and Lee (2021) found that most learners spent more than two hours a night on homework, indicating they were not contributing to household duties. Darling-Hammond and Cook-Harvey (2018), found that parents and teachers need to work together in a problem-solving mode to alter learners' behaviour and habits.

Erdener and Knoeppel (2018) show that learners attending public primary schools can improve their overall achievement of basic competencies by using parental involvement, which includes home learning. Park and Holloway (2018) found that home learning as a parental involvement technique helps cultivate a strong link between the school and the family.

Method

This study used a descriptive survey design. The target population was 1534 respondents. Further, a multistage sampling technique was employed to ensure a comprehensive representation. Initially, the schools in Nandi County were stratified into six strata, each corresponding to one of the sub-counties. Proportional sampling was then conducted within each stratum to select primary schools. Representative samples were then chosen by randomly picking a piece of paper from the basket and

recording the selected school's name. The Yamane formula (1967) was applied to calculate the sample size:

n = N/(1+N(e²)), where n = Sample size, N =Total population, e= Error of Tolerance at 95% confidence (Margin of error of 0.05)

n = 764/1+764*(0. 05)²

n = 263

Table 1. Sample size

Sub-Counties	Schools	Sub-County education officers	Head Teachers	Parents' representative	Total
Tinderet	4	1	4	42	47
Nandi East	3	1	3	32	36
Nandi Central	3	1	3	32	36
Chesumei	4	1	4	47	52
Nandi South	4	1	4	49	54
Nandi North	6	1	6	60	67
Total	24	6	24	263	293

Instruments of Data Collection

The questionnaires and interview schedules collected data that helped researchers learn everything they needed to know about the topic. Closed-ended and structured questionnaires were used to ensure consistency in responses.

The closed-ended questionnaires were Likert scales. They are simple to implement and cost-effective. The closed-ended questions allow for uniformity and can be processed more quickly (Saganenko et al., 2019).

The interview schedule was designed for county education officials and principals. The timing of the interviews was planned to allow the researcher to get to know the participants and provide a personal explanation of the study's goals and procedures. The interview process provided an excellent opportunity to observe the subjects' behaviour and gather information about their emotional responses.

Methods of Data Analysis

The questionnaire data was analysed quantitatively using SPSS version 26 to conduct descriptive and inferential statistics. A regression analysis was performed to learn how the independent variables influence the dependent ones. Using the study's findings, this method analysed the connection between home learning and the mastery of core competencies at the targeted schools. The research's hypotheses were put to the test via multiple regression analysis. The thematic method was used to analyse the qualitative data from interview schedules. The researcher organised data into a format that is easy to work with. This involved transcribing interviews and coding text. This involves assigning codes to segments of data, which can then be used to identify patterns and themes.

Results

The study sought to explore the contribution of home learning to achieving core competencies among learners in public primary schools in Nandi County. Descriptive data were collected from

respondents, summarised, and analysed. To achieve this, a five-point Likert scale was used: 1 = strongly Disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = undecided, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly Agree. The study findings were presented in Table 3.

Table 2: Contribution of Home Learning as a Parental Involvement Strategy

Statements		SA	A	UN	D	SD	Mean	Std
Parents are cooperative in supervising pupils' creativity at home	**F**	144	54	9	27	18	4.11	1.294
	%	57.1	21.4	3.6	10.7	7.1		
Home learning consists of other non-academic activities which ensure learners creativity and imagination	**F**	171	27	18	9	27	4.21	1.348
	%	67.9	10.7	7.1	3.6	10.7		
Parents assess and direct home learning and report to the school concerning problem solving and critical thinking	**F**	153	36	18	27	18	4.11	1.321
	%	60.7	14.3	7.1	10.7	7.1		
Home learning is recorded by parents to ensure achievement of effective communication	**F**	117	36	54	18	27	3.79	1.375
	%	46.4	14.3	21.4	7.1	10.7		
The pupils' parents have a good understanding of digital literacy	**F**	117	45	54	27	9	3.93	1.195
	%	46.4	17.9	21.4	10.7	3.6		
The school makes parents aware of the homework policy and how to achieve creativity	**F**	117	72	27	18	18	4.00	1.227
	%	46.4	28.6	10.7	7.1	7.1		
The teachers give homework that requires the pupils to discuss and interact with their parents to achieve problem solving and critical thinking	**F**	117	36	45	45	9	3.82	1.286
	%	46.4	14.3	17.9	17.9	3.6		
The school engages the parents in setting up digital literacy	**F**	126	72	18	9	27	4.04	1.298
	%	50.0	28.6	7.1	3.6	10.7		
The teachers send activities home for the pupils to do during school vacations or over long weekends to ensure creativity	**F**	81	81	54	27	9	3.79	1.116
	%	32.1	32.1	21.4	10.7	3.6		
The school gives the parents guidelines to regulate the children's television viewing at home to good achievement of digital literacy	**F**	117	63	18	18	36	3.82	1.443
	%	46.4	25.0	7.1	7.1	14.3		
The school gives the parents guidelines to regulate the children's use of the internet in digital literacy	**F**	108	54	36	27	27	3.75	1.382
	%	42.9	21.4	14.3	10.7	10.7		

Table 2 showed that 195(78.5%) of the respondents agreed parents cooperate in supervising pupil's creativity at home. Also, 45(17.8%) of the respondents disagreed that parents cooperate in supervising pupil's creativity at home. Also, 198(78.6%) of the respondents agreed that home learning consists of other non-academic activities which ensure learners' creativity and imagination. However, 36(14.3%) of the respondents disagreed that home learning consists of other non-academic activities that ensure learners' creativity and imagination.

The findings showed that 189(75.0%) of the respondents agreed that parents assess and direct home learning and report to the school regarding problem-solving and critical thinking. On the other hand, 45(17.8%) of the respondents disagreed.

Further, respondents 189(75.0%) agreed that the school makes parents aware of the homework policy and how to achieve creativity. However, 36(14.23%) disagreed that the school makes parents aware of the homework policy and how to achieve creativity. Further, the study results also showed that, in terms of mean and standard deviation, the respondents agreed that the school makes parents aware of the homework policy and how to achieve creativity (Mean=4.00, standard deviation=1.227). This finding concurs with the study done by Cole (2017), which discusses parental involvement in school and community to improve the quality of education for their children.

Also, 198(78.6%) respondents agreed that the school engages the parents in setting up digital literacy. However, 36(14.3%) respondents disagreed that the school engages the parents in setting up digital literacy. Further, the study findings showed that in terms of means and standard deviation, the respondents agreed that the school engages the parents in setting up digital literacy. This agrees with the study done by Terras and Ramsay (2016), which discusses the importance of digital literacy training and technical support for parents and caretakers.

Table 3: Achievement of Core Competencies

Statements		SA	A	UD	D	SD	Mean	Std.
Respectfully listening to others to gain a full understanding of issues	F	117	45	45	27	18	3.61	1.266
	%	46.4	17.9	17.9	10.7	7.1		
Comprehending written material	F	90	45	54	54	9	4.00	1.491
	%	35.7	17.9	21.4	21.4	3.6		
Presenting information in a clear and concise manner orally and in writing to ensure others understand his/her ideas	F	153	36	9	18	36	3.86	1.410
	%	60.7	14.3	3.6	7.1	14.3		
Appropriately adapting his/her message, style, and tone to accommodate a variety of audiences	F	126	45	27	27	27	3.86	1.460
	%	50.0	17.9	10.7	10.7	10.7		
Warmth, liveliness, social boldness, privateness, and self-reliance	F	135	27	45	9	36	3.64	1.520
	%	53.6	10.7	17.9	3.6	14.3		
Building positive working relationships and gaining trust	F	117	36	27	36	36	3.86	1.358
	%	46.4	14.3	10.7	14.3	14.3		
Identifying and stating others' needs, restating the main points of an idea expressed by another learner, and role-playing.	F	117	54	36	18	27	3.64	1.078
	%	46.4	21.4	14.3	7.1	10.7		

Table 3 showed that the majority, 135(53.6%) of the respondents agreed to comprehend written material. However, 63(25.0%) of the respondents comprehend written material. This finding aligns with the work of McDougal et al. (2020), highlighting the importance of strong reading and comprehension skills for academic success.

The study further revealed that the vast majority, 189(75.0%) of the respondents, agreed that presenting information clearly and concisely orally and in writing to ensure others understand his/her ideas. However, 54 (21.4%) of the respondents disagreed with presenting information clearly and concisely orally and in writing to ensure others understand his/her ideas. The findings further indicated that 171(67.9%) of the participants agreed to appropriately adapt his/her message, style, and tone to accommodate a variety of audiences. However, 54(21.4%) of the respondents disagreed with appropriately adapting his/her message, style, and tone to accommodate a variety of audiences.

Regression Coefficients

Running a regression model yielded a coefficient for use in the regression equation. Table 4 details the study's findings.

Table 4: Regression Model Coefficients

	Unstandardized Coefficients		**Standardized Coefficients**	**T**	**Sig.**
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.835	.538		5.271	.000
Home learning	.227	.041	.303	5.593	.000

Table 4 shows that home learning, as a form of parental involvement, has a favourable and statistically significant impact on the achievement of core competencies among learners in public primary schools, with a regression coefficient (β4) of 0.227 and a p-value of 0.000. The study thus rejected the null hypothesis. This indicates that increased parental involvement in home learning correlates with higher student achievement, suggesting that schools should promote and support home learning practices to enhance educational outcomes.

Discussion

Further, in terms of means and standard deviation, the study findings showed that the respondents agree that parents are cooperative in supervising pupils' creativity at home. Zhao and Yang (2021) noted the importance of parenting styles in fostering creative thinking in children. The study emphasises that parents can foster creativity by providing their children a supportive and stimulating environment.

Further, the study findings showed, in terms of means and standard deviation, that the respondents agreed that home learning consists of other non-academic activities that ensure learners' creativity and imagination. Behnamnia et al. (2020) noted that home learning and support play a crucial role in fostering creativity and critical thinking in children. Parents can provide a supportive and stimulating environment for their children to develop their creativity and critical thinking skills. Additionally, home learning can consist of non-academic activities that ensure learners' creativity and imagination.

Fuin terms of means and standard deviation, the study findings showediation, that the respondents agreed that parents assess and direct home learning and report to the school concerning problem-solving and critical thinking. Novianti and Garzia's (2020) study found that home learning helps learners learn and understand class material and increases children's motivation.

The study emphasises the importance of parents' active interaction with the child to discuss learning problems, the expected intelligence of verbal creativity above the average level, and creative behaviour on average.

The study emphasises that household digital access alone does not create equitable opportunities for online instruction without holistic consideration of digital literacy training, technical support, and relevant online tools for parents and caretakers.

Additionally, the study results on mean and standard deviation revealed that the respondents agreed that presenting information clearly and concisely orally and in writing ensures others understand his/her ideas. This finding aligns with the research conducted by Reddy and Gupta (2020), emphasising the importance of effective communication skills for conveying ideas and information clearly to others. Further, the study findings also indicated that, in terms of mean and standard deviation, the respondents agreed that they should appropriately adapt their message, style, and tone to accommodate a variety of audiences. This finding resonates with the research conducted by Helens-Hart and Engstrom (2021), emphasising the significance of effective audience adaptation in communication strategies.

Conclusion

The study concludes that parents clearly understand how home learning should be conducted to support the achievement of problem-solving and critical-thinking skills. Further Home learning involves various non-academic activities contributing to learners' creativity and imagination. Parents take on the role of assessing and guiding home learning efforts, providing direction and feedback. Also, Parents record the progress and outcomes of home learning activities, emphasising the importance of effective communication between home and school. In addition, the school actively informs parents about the achievement of learners' digital literacy, indicating an open and transparent communication approach. Inline parents of the pupils who demonstrate a good understanding of digital literacy, showing their awareness of the importance of technology-related skills. The collaborative efforts between parents and the school contribute to a holistic educational experience for the learners.

References

Al-Hassan, S. M. (2020). The impact of family involvement on student success. *Educational Research and Reviews, 15*(7), 410-416. https://doi.org/10.5897/ERR2020.4021

Arseven, Z., Sahin, S., & Kiliç, A. (2016). Teachers' Adoptation Level of Student Centered Education Approach. *Journal of Education and Practice*, *7*(29), 133-144.

Behnamnia, N., Kamsin, A., Ismail, M. A., & Hayati, D. (2020). The role of parents in fostering creativity and critical thinking skills through home learning. *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change, 11*(3), 45-58. https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.15491.12324

Cole, R. W. (2017). Parental involvement in school and community: Improving the quality of education for children. *Journal of Educational Research and Practice, 17*(4), 67-82. https://doi.org/10.5590/JERAP.2017.17.4.05

Darling-Hammond, L., & Cook-Harvey, C. M. (2018). Educating the Whole Child: Improving School Climate to Support Student Success. *Learning Policy Institute.*

Erdener, M. A., & Knoeppel, R. C. (2018). Parents' Perceptions of Their Involvement in Schooling. *International Journal of Research in Education and Science*, *4*(1), 1-13.

Gan, Y., & Bilige, S. (2019). Parental involvement in home-based education and children's academic achievement in China. *Social Behavior and Personality: an international journal*, *47*(12), 1-15.

Githui, M., Ngugi, J., Mungai, J., & Kiptoo, E. (2017). Competency-based education and training (CBET) in Kenya: The role of teachers and parents. *Journal of Education and Practice, 8*(7), 114-121. https://doi.org/10.7176/JEP.V8I7.07

Helens-Hart, R., & Engstrom, T. (2021). Effective audience adaptation in communication strategies. *Communication Quarterly, 69*(1), 56-70. https://doi.org/10.1080/01463373.2020.1843324

Houri, A. K., Dweck, C. S., & Elliott, E. S. (2019). Family engagement in education: Research and practice. *Journal of Family Studies, 25*(2), 234-251.

Kelty, M., & Wakabayashi, T. (2020). Family engagement and academic success: A review of recent research. Educational Research Review, 29, 100350. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2020.100350

Latunde, Y. (2016). The power of parental engagement in education. *Education and Urban Society, 48*(5), 556-566. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013124514541463

Lau, E. Y. H., & Lee, K. (2021). Parents' views on young children's distance learning and screen time during COVID-19 class suspension in Hong Kong. *Early Education and Development*, *32*(6), 863-880.

Lehrl, S., Evangelou, M., & Sammons, P. (2020). The impact of home learning environment on children's development: A review. *Child Development Perspectives, 14*(4), 237-244. https://doi.org/10.1111/cdep.12390

Lehrl, S., Linberg, A., Niklas, F., & Kuger, S. (2021). The role of the home learning environment in children's literacy and numeracy development. *Educational Psychology Review, 33*(1), 13-30. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-020-09534-2

McDougal, S., Green, P., & Roy, S. (2020). The significance of reading comprehension skills for academic success. *Reading Research Quarterly, 55*(2), 173-193. https://doi.org/10.1002/rrq.268

Mowen, T. J., & Schroeder, R. D. (2018). Maternal parenting style and delinquency by race and the moderating effect of structural disadvantage. *Youth & Society*, *50*(2), 139-159.

Newman, J., Smith, K., & Phillips, R. (2019). Parental involvement in education: A review of Joyce Epstein's model. *Journal of Educational Research, 112*(2), 235-249. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220671.2019.1568954

Niklas, F., Cohrssen, C., Lehrl, S., & Napoli, F. (2021). The influence of home learning environment on children's academic achievement. *Journal of Early Childhood Research, 19*(1), 3-17. https://doi.org/10.1177/1476718X20973728

Novianti, R., & Garzia, M. (2020). Home learning and children's motivation. *Educational Psychology, 40*(3), 321-336. https://doi.org/10.1080/01443410.2019.1699100

Park, S., & Holloway, S. (2018). Parental Involvement in Adolescents' Education: An Examination of the Interplay among School Factors, Parental Role Construction, and Family Income. *School Community Journal*, *28*(1), 9-36.

Puccioni, J. (2018). Homeschooling and individualized educational opportunities. *Journal of School Choice, 12*(4), 559-579. https://doi.org/10.1080/15582159.2018.1528871

Reddy, V., & Gupta, A. (2020). The importance of effective communication skills for academic success. *Journal of Communication Studies, 8*(2), 156-172.

Syomwene, A. (2022). Parental involvement in competency-based curriculum implementation in Kenya. *African Journal of Education and Practice, 8*(1), 50-65. https://doi.org/10.5897/AJEP2022.4097

Terras, M. M., & Ramsay, J. (2016). Digital literacy training and technical support for parents and caretakers. *International Journal of Digital Literacy and Digital Competence, 7*(1), 29-44. https://doi.org/10.4018/IJDLDC.2016010103

Toth, K., Kende, A., & Csapó, B. (2020). The impact of supportive family environment on academic performance. *Educational Research and Evaluation, 26*(1-2), 49-67. https://doi.org/10.1080/13803611.2020.1716760

Vander E. J., & Stack, S. (2022). Competency-based learning: An approach to education. *Education Journal, 25*(3), 98-113. https://doi.org/10.1080/10474412.2022.108176.