**PARENT INVOLVEMENT & ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF COMPASSION**

**INTERNATIONAL SPONSORED PRIMARY SCHOOLS; A CASE STUDY OF**

**KIKONDA & BRIGHT FUTURE PRIMARY SCHOOLS,**

**KYANKWANZI DISTRICT**

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**Abstract**

*The study was about the influence of parental involvement on academic performance of Compassion International sponsored primary schools with specific reference to Kikonda and Bright Future primary schools, Kyankwanzi District. The research was carried out through a cross-sectional research design and obtained relevant data from 101 respondents. The researcher found out the co-curricular activities conducted in both Kikonda and Bright Future include musical performance (music dance and drama day) which usually occurs. The researcher recommended that the Kikonda and Bright Future primary school should create a newsletter for parents within the school-site as well as a newsletter district-wide specifically for parents.*

**Keywords:** Parental involvement, Academic Performance, Primary Schools, International Sponsored Schools

**INTRODUCTION**

This article about the influence of parental involvement on academic performance of Compassion International sponsored primary schools at Kikonda and Bright Future primary schools, Kyankwanzi District warrants research because it has been observed that that if pupils are to maximize their potential from schooling, they will need the full support of both their parents and community members. Attempts to enhance parental involvement in education occupy governments, administrators, educators and parents’ organizations. It is anticipated that parents in Uganda should play a role not only in the promotion of their own children’s achievements but more broadly in school improvement and the democratization of school governance. Regardless of government policies, some parents have always been actively involved in enhancing their children’s development and educational progress. This spontaneous activity has taken a number of forms including ‘good parenting’ in the home pre-school (which provides a good foundation of skills, values, attitudes and self-concept); visits to school to gather relevant information and establish good relationships; discussions with teachers to keep abreast of the child’s progress or to discuss emergent problems; and assisting more broadly in the practical activities and governance of the school (Byrnes, 2012).

In Uganda, pupils’ achievement and adjustment are influenced by many people, processes and institutions (Talemwa, 2015). Parents, the broader family, peer groups, neighborhood influences, schools and other bodies (for instance churches, clubs) are all implicated in shaping children’s progress towards their self-fulfillment and citizenship. The children themselves, of course, with their unique abilities, temperaments and propensities play a central role in forming and reforming their behavior, aspirations and achievements (Diri, 2018). Aina, (2012) explains that in the face of this complexity, attempts to ascertain the impact of any singular force in shaping achievement must proceed with some conception of how the many forces and actors might interact with each other. It should be emphasized that child outcomes are broadly conceived. It includes attainment as accredited in public examinations and National tests. It also refers to a wide range of attitudes, values and knowledge which, taken together, help sustain a commitment to lifelong learning and good citizenship.

According to Francis (2015), parental involvement includes a wide range of behaviors but generally refers to parents' and family members' use and investment of resources in their children's schooling. These investments can take place in or outside of school, with the intention of improving children's learning. Bruno (2012) adds that parental involvement at home can include activities such as discussions about school, helping with homework, and reading with children. Involvement at school may include parents volunteering in the classroom, attending workshops, or attending school plays and sporting events. On the other hand, academic performance is the measurement of student achievement across various academic subjects. Teachers and education officials typically measure achievement using classroom performance, graduation rates and results from standardized tests. Mohammad (2013) explains that academic performance is the extent to which a student, teacher or institution has attained their short or long-term educational goals. Completion of educational benchmarks such as primary school diplomas and bachelor's degrees represent academic achievement. Parental involvement refers to a situation where parents are directly involved in the education of their children, they involve themselves and are involved by the school and teachers in the learning process of their children, and they fulfil their duties as parents in making sure that the learner is assisted in the process of learning as much as they possibly can. It does not just refer to parents enquiring about the performance of a learner in schools, but also in them taking a role in communicating with their children with the aim of having a healthy relationship with them, so that the process of encouraging, mentoring, leading and inspiring may be genuine (Clinton and Hattie, 2013).

The importance of parent involvement in their children’s education is not a new issue. Parents began to become involved in nursery schools at the beginning of 20th century in the United States. Parent cooperative nursery schools bloomed from the 1920s to the 1960s. Most of these educational centers were located in college or suburban towns and welcomed primarily stay-at-home mothers who served as paraprofessionals in the classrooms, assisting a teacher and taking physical care of the facility (Gestwicki, 2007). The major notion of parent involvement was that parents know what they want for their children and thereby should be involved in the school. Parent involvement in school helped those educational settings to decrease budget costs and build a tie between parent and school (Gestwicki, 2007). However, these parent involvement efforts were limited to middle-class families.

The theoretical underpinning of the study was based on what Bertalanffy in 1934 called the Systems Theory. According to this theory Integrated Financial Management System is like system or framework which has a set of two or more components where, the behavior of a single component has an influence on the behaviours of whole system, and this means that a framework system comprises of subsystems whose inter-relationships and interdependency are moving towards a balance inside the bigger framework, this can clearly provide an explanation for the independent variables under this current study which as automation of cash management, automation of public procurement process and automation of budgeting. The importance of parent involvement in their children’s education is not a new issue. Parents began to become involved in nursery schools at the beginning of 20th century in the United States. Parent cooperative nursery schools bloomed from the 1920s to the 1960s. Most of these educational centers were located in college or suburban towns and welcomed primarily stay-at-home mothers who served as paraprofessionals in the classrooms, assisting a teacher and taking physical care of the facility (Gestwicki, 2007). The major notion of parent involvement was that parents know what they want for their children and thereby should be involved in the school. Parent involvement in school helped those educational settings to decrease budget costs and build a tie between parent and school (Gestwicki, 2007). However, these parent involvement efforts were limited to middle-class families.

The theoretical underpinning of the study was based on what Bertalanffy in 1934 called the Systems Theory. According to this theory young children are active learners with a constant drive to match their internal constructions (their own view of the real world) and external constructions (the external realities they face with in their surroundings) (Piaget, 1981). Children, as agents in his term, continually rework and revise-assimilate and accommodate their internal constructions with each new experience. Additionally, the Cognitive Development Theory also guided the study, the theory nevertheless explains how children assimilate new learning and accommodate their own incorrect views of the world more quickly if they are more actively involved with people and things in their surroundings. In this regard, children learn best when they have opportunities to interact with their environments, and particularly with their parents who are a vital part of children’s environments (Athey, 2017).

In this process, parents can play a crucial role, contributing to stimulating and supporting children's self-regulatory and cognitive development (Bandura, 2013). Indeed, parents who undertake verbal interactions and structure activities and games with their children allow them to live the rich linguistic communication and contexts of shared attention and meanings. These experiences encourage children's active exploration and engagement with their environments, improving children's academic skill and their success in school.

**Conceptual Framework**

**Independent variable Dependent variable**

**Academic performance**

* Intellectual level.
* Study habits.
* Teacher-student relationship.
* Self-esteem.

**Parental involvement**

* Parental participation in school activities.
* Parent-child communication.
* Parental-teacher engagement.

**Extraneous/**

**Moderating variables**

* School environment.
* School syllabus

***Source: Adopted from Mauri,* (*2013*) *and modified by the researcher (2021)***

The conceptual framework postulating a clear insight into the influence of parental involvement on academic performance of Compassion International sponsored primary schools which includes automation of parental participation, parent-child communication and parent-teacher engagement. This helps to achieve better understanding into service delivery achievement envisaged in allocation and use of resources, transparency of procurement process and accountability of public sector systems. The process of IFMIS processes and service delivery is moderated by government policies and project priorities.

**Findings of the study**

According to Francis (2015), parental involvement includes a wide range of behaviors but generally refers to parents' and family members' use and investment of resources in their children's schooling. These investments can take place in or outside of school, with the intention of improving children's learning. Bruno (2012) adds that parental involvement at home can include activities such as discussions about school, helping with homework, and reading with children. Involvement at school may include parents volunteering in the classroom, attending workshops, or attending school plays and sporting events. It does not just refer to parents enquiring about the performance of a learner in schools, but also in them taking a role in communicating with their children with the aim of having a healthy relationship with them, so that the process of encouraging, mentoring, leading and inspiring may be genuine (Clinton and Hattie, 2013).

**Parental participation in school activities on academic performance of pupils in Kikonda and Bright future primary schools.**

The research examined how parental participation in school activities has influenced academic performance in Kikonda and Bright Future primary schools. The study findings revealed Kikonda and Bright Future primary schools’ management have built partnership with parents and also developed mutual responsibility for children’s academic success. It was also revealed that most parents feel that the teachers have to develop culturally responsive classrooms that can foster a safe environment for children. According to the analysis and discussion of results, the study found Teachers revealed that most parents volunteer as classroom helpers, tutors, volunteer in school computer lab and at times help organise, cater, or work at fundraising activities such as bake sales or car washes. It was revealed that most parents feel that the teachers have to develop culturally responsive classrooms that can foster a safe environment for children.

The results are in support of Durisic and Bunijevac (2017) who assert that to comply with the system of integrated support for their students’, schools need to build partnership with parents and develop mutual responsibility for children’s’ success in the educational system. In this way, parental involvement is increased, parents’ effort to support schools are encouraged, and they are directly making a positive impact to a successful educational system.

Nord and Brimhall (2017) argue that parents who are highly involved in their children's schools are more likely to be involved at home, as well. Empirical evidences revealed that elementary school children with fathers or mothers who are highly involved in their schools are more likely to have participated in educational activities with their parents than children whose parents have low levels of involvement in their schools.

This is in line with the findings of Lee and Bowen (2016) most educators recognize parental involvement in school activities and positive and direct influence on student academic performance. In other words, achieving home-school consistency and information exchange between parties can be seen as important for academic, personal, and social development of children.

According to Desforges and Abouchaar (2003) when parents take an active and direct role in their children's education and parents involved in children education activities, children get better grades and test scores, graduate from high school at higher rates, have greater enrollment in higher education also has been shown to improve teacher morale and job satisfaction.

**Parent-child communication about school activities on performance in Kikonda and Bright future primary schools**

The research revealed that many a number of children comprising of 32% at Kikonda and 46% at Bright Future have trouble reading. It was revealed that parents commonly emphasise communication with various teachers of their children in various subjects to find out how their children are performing. In addition to this, on many instances, a child has to first approach the parent with an assignment and in case the child doesn’t do this, many parents do not care to actually find out whether the children have been given assignments. Most of the children in both Kikonda and Bright Future primary schools are dropped to school by their parents; this has enhanced academic performance of children and ultimately parent-children communication. It was showed that parents active involvement motivates teaching quality since child’s learning is made simpler.

This is in line with Patrikakou (2015) who asserts that there is a natural variation in parental attitude and behaviors associated with student achievements, which include school performance, achievement test scores and educational attainment. Overall, high parental involvement, regardless of ethnicity, socioeconomic status, a child’s sex, and a child’s motivational level, have been found to produce a positive correlation with a student’s academic achievement.

Mannan and Blackwell (2017) determined that when the school environment wasn’t sensitive to the home language and culture, two-way communication was often very difficult, and many parents were discouraged from initiating any type of dialogue with the teacher. Hill and Taylor also suggest that it was not recognized that parental involvement seems to function differently and serve different purposes in different cultural groups

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Dika and Singh (2016) note that parents play a major role in student achievement; however, based on the Cultural and Social Capital framework, teachers and administrators are very instrumental to the students’ academic achievements as well. While building a partnership with parents, teachers gain a better understanding of the child’s culture, their needs and their academic capabilities, thereby addressing the social capital needs.

This is supported by Nora (2016) who found out that communication is an integral component for establishing a strong school community. Learning management systems (LMSs) present new opportunities for communication and collaboration among teachers, students, and parents. School home communication, which includes all communication between school staff and students’ parents, has evolved in recent years because of the proliferation of new technologies.

**Parent engagement and academic performance**

During the study, it was discovered that parents and teacher’s interaction can enhance academic performance. The results also showed that indicated that there are aspects such as comprehension and reading fluency improve in situations when parents are actively involved. It was revealed that it is the responsibility of the class teachers to make regular updates to parents on children’s academic issues, however, most teachers do are not consistent with this activity. It was noted that the results also revealed that Kikonda and Bright future primary school have programs through workshops that help parents support their children’s learning at home. It was revealed that teachers lack guidance on how to make right consistent decisions; it has been reported on several instances that parents approach teachers and request to view their children’s answer script.

The study findings can be linked to According to [Waterford.org](https://www.waterford.org/education/how-parent-involvment-leads-to-student-success/), an organization seeking to help children succeed through access to lifelong education, the participation of parents in the educational process means that teachers and parents share the responsibility to teach students and work together to achieve educational goals. To this end, the organization suggests that teachers invite parents to regular school meetings and events and that parents voluntarily commit to prioritizing these goals.

Mila (2017) notes that to comply with the system of integrated support for their students’, schools need to build partnership with parents and develop mutual responsibility for children’s’ success in the educational system. In this way, parental involvement is increased, parents’ effort to support schools are encouraged, and they are directly making a positive impact to a successful educational system.

**Recommendations**

The study recommends that that school administration create newsletter for enhancing parents’ knowledge about school events and activities. The study also recommends that both Kikonda and Bright Future primary school should establish a framework model indicating effective teacher to parent communication. The study recommends that Compassion International should implement regular informal gatherings with the teachers to provide informal opportunities for parents to meet and greet the teachers and administrators.

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