

Influence of Parental Support on Early Years Learners' Literacy Competencies in Nyamira South Sub-County, Nyamira County, Kenya

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Abstract

Early childhood is an important stage of life with respect to children social, emotional, intellectual and physical development hence utmost care and involvement is critical. This study looked at the task of involvement of parents on early year's learners' literacy competencies in Nyamira South Sub County. The study specific objectives were to determine the influence of parental education, parental access to home literacy resources, and parental social economic level on early years learners' literacy competencies in Nyamira South Sub County. This study was guided by Coleman and ecological systems theory. A descriptive research design targeting 7,494 parents of children enrolled in early childhood development centers from Nyamira South Sub County were involved. From the population, Yamane formula was utilized to compute a sample size of 380 parents through multi-stage sampling. Collection of primary data was done using structured questionnaire. The quantitative data was processed and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24.0. Inferential analysis was conducted to develop a study model through multiple regression analysis, and the model was validated using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The findings indicated that parental education level had a positive but moderately insignificant impact on preschool children's literacy skills ($\beta=0.167$; $p=0.0133$; $r=0.538$). The availability of home literacy resources showed a positive and moderately significant effect ($\beta=0.222$; $p=0.042$; $r=0.550$), and parental economic well-being demonstrated a positive moderate significant influence ($\beta=0.309$; $p=0.009$; $r=0.586$) on literacy skills of preschoolers in Nyamira South Sub-County. Based on these findings, the study recommends that parents should strive to enhance their literacy skills and equip their homes with appropriate learning materials suited for their preschool children. Significantly the study will inform policies on involvement of parents of early years of learning.

Keywords: Literacy, Competencies, Parental Support, Early Years Learners, Influence

Introduction

In the verdant highlands straddling Kenya's Borabu (Kisii County) and Sotik (Bomet County) regions, a Parents do have an important role in development of literacy capacities by their children. Parents are the initial educators that children meet in their life and are also said to be children long lasting teachers in the history. This is because parents are with their children long before they begin schools and would still be close to them till the time they transit to higher education. Even if they are schooling, children are mostly with their parents during weekends and school holidays. It is valuable for parents to be engaged in their children's education activities early enough (Fatonah,2020).

Despite early years learners being under the care of their caregivers or teachers during their school period, Babalola (2007) indicated that parental support during this stage is also important towards influencing their children literacy development. One of the best methods of encouraging and maintaining pupil development of literacy competencies is through active parental participation. Arnold et al. (2008) and Powell et al. (2010) argue that active parental participation in their children education significantly improve children behavioural, social, and academic outcomes because the early learning years represent crucial potential for pupils' growth.

Pupils' academic achievement is favourably influenced by participative parents who help their children in reading behaviours (Gibbs & Powell, 2010). Taylor et al. (2011) also found out that parental support highly contributed to pupils' social and cognitive development which ultimately promoted positive results. Education background of parents has an influence on how their children reason (Bonci et al., 2011). Parent participation in their children education enhances their social competencies and reduces behavioural concerns. Provision of literacy rich surrounding at home for children has a critical influence on their future literacy and academic performance and could be utilised to forecast their forthcoming literacy capacities (McCoy & Cole, 2011; Veldhuijzen van Zanten et al., 2012; Edwards, 2014). Results of children literacy skills are reliant on the resources developed for use in their national and local environmental context (United Nations Children Fund, 2012). There is solid proof that parental contribution in their children learning improves their literacy competencies.

It is essential to tally children development requirements to the advancement of family level of literacy to be in a position to attain expected literacy results of the pupil through involvement of parents' support (Caspé et al., 2007). In developed countries like those in Europe and United States, parental support of early years learning children has taken keen motivation and interest (Bennet, 2008). Parental participation in developed counties was more centered on co-curricular tasksthan learners' progress in academics (Kobrin, 2008). Parents in developed nations have higher beliefs in themselves and advanced expectations for their children future literacy competencies (Storch & Whitehurst, 2001). Much of the development in children literacy competencies in United Kingdom was attributed to parental support (Bennett et al., 2002).

In Sub Saharan Africa, parental support for their children development of literacy competencies appears to be minimal (Ntim, 20150. Because of poor parental contributions and late focus on basic literacy, most African nations have learning discrepancies, mainly early years children literacy competencies. Actually, most African countries have learning deficiency, mostly in early childhood literacy competencies because

of low parental participation and late support of early literacy initiatives (Roskos & Vukelich, 2006; Ntim, 2015). Most parents see that support and preparedness as being critical to early years child literacy competencies readiness in Sub Saharan Africa, where developed countries prioritize due to having established systems of education (Marfo et al., 2011). Ntuli and Pretorius (2005) research in South Africa established that early year's pupils who had never been exposed to fictional tale material reading were considerably underprivileged in their reading advancement. After beginning school, those children interacted with books in classroom shoddily and mostly in wrong way up and they had no information on how to be involved in reading tasks in the class. In activities such as book behaviour, free storytelling and tale memory, pupils who had earlier been exposed to story books did better than their peers who had not.

There are principles for early literacy learning in Kenya. Family roles, the importance of early child years, literacy skills development in addition to other topics, are all well explained in these principles. Based on recommendations, Mukuna and Indoshi (2012) said that involvement of parents was important in making sure that early year learners developed their literacy competencies well. Parents are expected, among other roles, to guide and educate their children in literacy capacities development (Abagi, 1997). Because of illiteracy and high poverty rates, many parents, mainly those from poor environment, have not attempted to help their children in literacy competencies advancement as found by Abagi (1997) and MOEST (2011). Additionally, these parents were not ready to empower in their children early literacy competencies advancement. It was found out that parents were not much concerned in assisting their children advance their literacy skills (Murungi & Muthaa, 2015).

Nyamira is one of the counties in Kenya which experience high number of children having poor performance in reading skills. Based on Uwezo Report (2018), out of all Grade three learners in the county, only 48.9% were capable of reading through 'Hadithi' and story book in comparison to the country average of 39.0% who were not in a position to read through 'hadithi', together with 42.4% of countries average who would not turn over through a story book. This suggested that Nyamira South Sub County pupils continued to have poor reading competencies. The present study looked at the contribution of involvement of parents and early years learners' literacy competencies in the Sub County. As found out by most stakeholders, most parents were not sufficiently informed of their responsibilities in their children literacy competencies advancement. Therefore, over time, there have been demands for parental support in their children education through being involved in various instructional activities (MOEST, 2006; Mukuna & Indoshi, 2012).

Statement of the Problem

Inadequate parental support for their children in pre-schools affects their literacy skills advancement (Murungi & Muthaa, 2015). Many parents are not well versed on their role in development of their children literacy skills at pre-school level. Here, parents are not actively supporting their children in acquisition and development of literacy competencies, and this negatively affects their acquisition of literacy skills. Early years learners' performance can decrease due to inadequate parental support (Strauss & Corbin, 2010). Based on research evidence, parents discover it difficult to help their children with homework and other literacy associated activities given by the teacher. Attempts to include parents in their children learning would not have the required result provided the inadequate contribution that parents provide. According to

Uwezo report (2018), out of all Grade 3 learners in Nyamira County, only 48.9% were in a position to read through story book and 'hadithi' which is a below average achievement. Similarly, the same study revealed that 3 pupils out of 10 in grade 3 were able to read story books meant for grade 3, while only 1 pupil out of 10 in grades 4 and 5 were able to read with less strain. This evidence that literacy competencies of pupils in Nyamira South are wanting. It is for this reason that the current investigation examined the influence of parental support on early years learners' literacy competencies in Nyamira South Sub County.

Research Objectives

The specific objectives of the study were to:

- Find out how parental support in provision of literacy materials at home affects the earlier years literacy of learners in Nyamira South Sub-County.
- Determine the influence of parental education level on the literacy competencies of earlier years learners in Nyamira South Sub-County.
- Establish the influence of parental economic status on the development of literacy competencies for earlier years learners in Nyamira South Sub-County

Conceptual Framework

The independent variables for the study consist of resources available at home, social economic status of parents and parents' level of education. The dependent variable is literacy competencies measured through pupils' communication, writing, and reading skills. Figure 1.1 illustrates the relationship between the variables in this investigation.

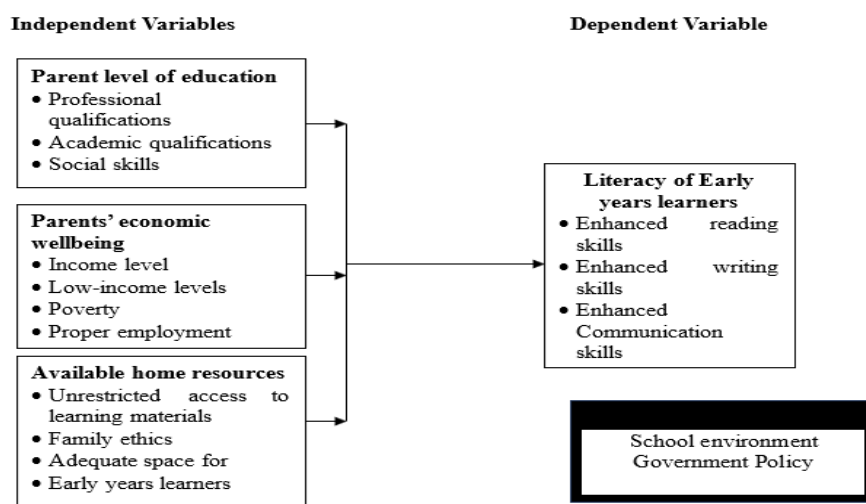


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Literacy competencies for early years learners are dependent on parental support areas categorised into; education level of parents, parents' economic status and resources provided at home by parents to aid in children learning. The research supposes that parents' education level has a significant determinant towards literacy competencies acquisition by pupils in the study area. The Study hypothesised that early years' learners' literacy capacities are determined by their parents' level of education. The educational background of a parent also influences the development of literacy competencies by learners. The influence of parents

on the environment at home and children schooling will be utilised to establish parental influence. The conceptual framework also indicates that early years' learners reading levels were determined by parents' social economic status. This means that children in pre-schools capacity to acquire literacy competencies are dependent on the financial status of their parents. The study also hypothesised that resources provided by parents at home for learning influences acquisition of literacy competencies by their children. Hence, learners' development of literacy skills is significantly influenced by the resources provided at home by their parents.

Independent variables in this study consisted of parents' social economic status being a measure of family or individual level of income, education level (including employment) and the capacity to purchase reading materials (books) for their children to use at home. The dependent variable is the level of learners' literacy competencies measured through their writing, reading, and communication abilities. Literacy is also described as the capacity of a child to utilise and comprehend written materials. Intervening Variables (Moderators) included school environment and government policies. These also affect the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. School environment variables could be mitigated through advocating for the provision of professional development opportunities, continuous training, and resources to help facilitators improve their instructional methods. As for government policies this could be mitigated through advocating for reforms that prioritize early childhood literacy and target the reduction of inequality in access to quality education

Literature Review

This section covered theoretical and empirical literature based on the study objectives: establish how parental access provision of literacy materials at home influences the development of literacy competencies by early years learners, analyse the influence of education level of parents on the literacy competencies of earlier years learners and to analyse the contribution of economic status of parents on acquisition of literacy competencies by early years learners.

Home Resources and Literacy Competencies of Pre-Primary Learners

According to Ballard (2010), parents have numerous chances to act as teachers during daily activities. For instance, keeping books suitable for a child's age at home helps them familiarize themselves with printed material and introduces basic print concepts, such as reading direction—from front to back, right to left, and top to bottom. Additionally, when parents converse with their children during various activities, they introduce new vocabulary, enriching their language skills. Engaging with everyday objects also enables children to learn color names and develop early counting abilities.

Parents do have untapped potential in form of talents and skills which can be utilised in assisting their children schooling (Bridgemohan, 2012). When these resources are effectively deployed, their children would gain more literacy skills. Development of pre-primary learners' literacy competencies would seemingly be determined by the degree of maternal teaching, maternal education and maternal reading behaviours, maternal quality and maternal understanding (Britto et al., 2006). Hammer et al., (2003) states that pre-primary learners literacy skills standards are dependent on the quality of resources used at home in promotion of literacy activities.

Provision of resources for learning at home by parents is crucial in assisting children to develop their literacy competencies (Roberts et al., 2005). Britto et al. (2006) agrees with this by establishing a stronger association between African – American children literacy skills and support by mother in reading books while at home. Based on the study, parents (African American) who interacted more in bookkeeping tasks supported in their children development of literacy competencies. Ntuli and Pretorius (2005) found out that pre-primary learners who had little exposure to storybooks were significantly deprived when it came to literacy competencies advancement. After being enrolled in school, these children utilized textbooks in a wanting manner, repeatedly upturned and did not have hint on how to be involved in reading tasks. Pre-primary learners with previous story reading exposure and experienced performed better than their peers in activities of; book behaviour, spontaneous storytelling, and tale recall.

Pupils who have read storybooks are well off prepared to gain from classroom learning because they understand how to associate with textbooks (Senechal et al., 2008; Ntuli & Pretorius, 2005). Parents reading loudly to their young children while at home improve their literacy knowledge (Levy et al., 2006). Provided the importance of early literacy advancement for children, these learning initiatives normally provide atmosphere which are full in literature and targeted literacy instruction to pupils from poverty-stricken families to enable them get and enhance their emerging reading capacities (Korat et al., 2007). It was found out that most parents were not in a position to purchase a variety of materials to provide to their children. This proved to be setback to literacy competencies acquisition for pre-primary learners.

The importance of having literacy materials present to pre-primary learners at home is emphasized by researchers through indicating out that having accessibility to great quality books may have a significant influence on children literacy competencies (Crawford & Zygouris-Coe, 2006). Despite these researchers indicating that reading resources availability assist children to acquire literacy skills, it is clear that costs associated with buying these materials was a problem to many parents. This suggests that parental social economic standing could influence their capacity to avail reading materials for their children. It was found out by Goin et al. (2004) that lack of materials at home prevents pre-primary learners from developing adequate literacy competencies. It was also found out that differences in home conditions influenced how pre-primary learners advanced in reading competencies.

Various household situations, inclusive level of parent education, literacy activities and household income could have an influence on how best children plan for schools with respect to literacy (Weigel et al., 2006). Kemunto (2012) found out that provision of enough resources at home by parents to their children had a favourable influence on their literacy skills development. She suggested that parents need to regularly offer their learners with instructional resources at home to assist them advance in their literacy skills. Moreover, parents were expected to readily provide materials needed for their pre-primary learners' academic progress because these materials provide the children with knowledge and information needed for their age and educational development. Gikunda (2022)' Study on influence of parental support on literacy skills of pre-school children in Meru Sub-County confirms that home resource immensely influences acquisition of literacy skills. In his recommendations for further study, he recommended a replication of similar study to other sub-counties given the diverse challenges to validate the study findings. The current study sort to fill the geographical gap in order to validate the results as recommended by Gikunda given Nyamira South Sub-County has its unique challenges different from Meru Sub-County.

Parents' Level of Education and Literacy Competencies of Early Years Learners

Davis-Kean (2005) commented that for parents to have a positive bearing on their children literacy competencies, their level of education matters a lot. A key factor influencing children reading outcomes is the parent's education level. This is based on the notion that parental support to their pre-primary learners' literacy advancement warrants healthier family associations which would influence their academic progress and future life ambitions. It was established by Davis-Kean (2005) that level of education of a parent had a direct influence on pre-primary learners' literacy competencies. This observation corresponds with Strickland et al. (2004) who stated that children coming from homes with regular parental assistance for literacy activities showed higher level of literacy competencies.

Cockle (2016) carried out a study in the United States to examine the impact of teachers' academic qualifications on students' academic performance in Florida. The research utilized interviews, detailed analysis schedules, and qualitative methods. However, in the study Cockle relied solely on a qualitative approach and did not include aspects touching on parental level of education as major stakeholders in the learning of their children especially on literacy skills. To address this gap, the current study aimed to incorporate both qualitative and quantitative data to explore the relationship between parents' educational levels and the development of reading competencies among early years pupils in Nyamira South Sub-County, Kenya.

Klehm (2018) carried out a study in South Africa to examine how a teacher's educational background influences the development of reading skills among students with disabilities. The research utilized a survey to collect data from 218 middle school respondents, aiming to assess the correlation between teachers' qualifications and their instructional approaches that may impact the academic performance of students with disabilities. The findings revealed notable distinctions between the educational levels of special education and general education teachers and their effects on students with disabilities in acquiring reading skills. Unlike Klehm study which carried out in South Africa and among teachers handling disabled children the present study engages early years learners, and it is concerned with parent's level of education and the bearing it has towards the acquisition of their literacy skills.

Future success aspirations in late youth will have an influence on real academic and professional achievement in latter stages of life. It has been suggested by Epstein (2007) that parental assistance is essential in every level of education. It is evident that parental participation in their pre-primary learners is acknowledged and valued, and it is presumed to have various benefits for pre-school pupils in the country. MOEST (2011) reported noted that high levels of illiteracy among pastoral and coastal communities in Kenya was a hindrance in acquisition of adequate pre-school pupils' literacy skills. This implies that parents' education level is a determinant of pre-primary learners' literacy competencies in the country. Strauss and Corbin (2010) said that lower parental education level could affect learners in a negative way. The higher the level of academic level by parent would directly influence pre-primary learners' literacy competencies. This means that parents who have higher education level would have pre-school pupils with higher literacy competencies (Bonci et al., 2011). Disparities in pupils' readiness for literacy could be associated to parental education, family income and parental literacy habits (Weigel et al., 2006; Goin et al., 2004).

Myrberg and Rosen (2009) observed that development of pre-school pupil competency is dependent on educational background of the parent. This implies that when establishing a pupil reading competency, the level of education of a parent is an essential social economic determinant of the pre-school child literacy competencies. It is suggested that parents with modest or no formal education need to involve themselves in frequent, productive print literacy activities with their children (Lynch, 2009). These activities include drawing, singing, talking and reading. A suggestion was also forwarded that parents with inadequate education need to be involved in activities to help them in improving their literacy associated exercise at home. The above-mentioned empirical studies reveal that parent's level of education is a key variable in enhancing pre-primary learners' home literacy competencies.

Economic Well-Being of Parents and Literacy competencies of Early Years Learners

A family's economic standing plays a crucial role in fostering a child's foundational reading literacy. The home environment serves as a primary influence on the development of reading skills. Factors such as parents' level of education, socioeconomic background, and occupation contribute to their economic status. Early literacy and numeracy activities, along with access to educational resources in lower primary, often originate from the home setting (Lichri & Richter, 2018).

Economic constraints can impact parental engagement in their children's literacy development. Parents experiencing financial stress may have limited time and energy to support reading activities at home, leading to reduced exposure to language-rich interactions (Quilliams & Beran, 2009). Additionally, children from low-income backgrounds may attend schools with fewer literacy-supporting resources, further widening the literacy gap between economically advantaged and disadvantaged learners (Chiu & Xihua, 2008). Research has consistently shown that parental financial stability influences not only the availability of learning materials but also the quality of language interactions within the household, both of which are critical for developing strong literacy foundations in early childhood (Melhuish et al., 2008). Addressing economic disparities through policies that support early literacy programs and parental education can help mitigate these challenges and promote equitable literacy development for all young learners.

Elvers (2017) examined the impact of school facilities on student performance in Ireland, linking it to factors such as parental unemployment, low socio-economic status, and multilingual communities where languages other than English are spoken as a first language. He established that these factors significantly contributed to the development of reading literacy in lower primary school settings. The study also revealed that literacy-related activities that enhance reading skills often involve teacher support during reading exercises and the use of educational materials such as storybooks. The study further highlighted that school-based literacy experiences and the overall economic status of the community play a crucial role in shaping children's ability to acquire essential reading skills. In his recommendations Elvers recommended explication of the study in other regions to validate his findings given that these challenges are region specific. The current study sort to bridge this gap by specifically examining the role of parental participation in the acquisition of literacy competencies of early years leaners in Nyamiras South Sub-County,Kenya.

Lichri (2018) conducted a longitudinal study across two German federal states to examine literacy and numeracy patterns in relation to parental financial status. The study involved 421 children aged 3 to 10 from 89 second-grade classrooms. Findings indicated that children with limited exposure to literacy-related

experiences at home were at a disadvantage, often performing poorly in literacy and numeracy tasks. The study underscored the significant influence of parental socio-economic status on children's ability to develop foundational reading skills, particularly in lower primary school. Additionally, the analysis revealed that many young learners engaged in fewer literacy activities due to financial constraints that limited parental support for a broad range of educational experiences. Whereas Lichri (2018) study was carried out in Germany, the current study was conducted in Nyamira South Sub-County, Kenya thus bridging the geographical gap.

Rask and William (2016) conducted a study in England to explore factors that support children's literacy development. They examined four groups of six-year-olds, interviewing children, their teachers, and parents in each category. The research aimed to establish a link between parental financial status and children's reading and literacy skills. Findings revealed that daily literacy experiences at home played a crucial role in shaping independent literacy learning in school. Teachers noted that children with engaged and supportive parents demonstrated enhanced literacy development. Furthermore, meaningful learning environments and parental involvement contributed to improved meta-cognitive awareness, coordination, and the development of essential motor skills required for reading and writing. Rask and William study recommended similar studies in other regions to establish if such factors affected them in equal measure. The present study was carried out in Nyamira South Sub-County, Kenya to bridge the regional gap as recommended by Rask and William's (2016) study.

The relationship between economic status (ES) and students' academic performance has been widely documented across various populations (Khan & Ahmad, 2019; Otula, 2011; Ngorosho, 2017). For example, research by Khan and Ahmad (2012) and Anwar and Ahmar (2013) identified a strong link between parental financial stability and children's educational outcomes, with students from higher-income families outperforming those from lower-income backgrounds. Ngorosho (2011) highlighted five key factors—parents' education levels, household knowledge, lighting source, and the number of books at home—as significant indicators of academic success in rural Eastern Tanzania. In contemporary society, parental influence remains a crucial factor in children's educational performance. According to Otula (2007), financial constraints among parents hinder the effective delivery of primary education, as those from lower economic backgrounds often struggle to provide essential school supplies, a conducive learning environment, and adequate nutrition necessary for developing reading skills in public lower primary schools. Ngorosho's study was based in rural Eastern Tanzania, the current study is based in Nyamira South, Kenya thus filling a geographical gap

Despite these investigations showing the value of parental assistance to pre-primary pupils' literacy competencies, the researchers fail to show variables of parental support which could result in attaining positive pre-school pupils' children literacy competencies. The studies failed to describe how home resources availed by parents, extracurricular activities that parents engaged in with their children, parents' economic status and parents' education level as variables influenced pre-primary pupils' literacy competencies. It is also not clear how parental assistance could be improved for sustainability of pre-school pupils' literacy competencies. These researchers also failed to examine measures which would enhance parental assistance in a way which will confidently affect pre-primary learners' literacy skills advancement. The present investigation seeks to fill these knowledge gaps.

Methodology

Research Design

Research design is the outline, scheme, plan or structure which is utilised to produce answers to research questions (Orodho, 2004). When answering research questions, the present investigation will use descriptive survey research design to describe the phenomenon under investigation. Kimathi (2014) said that descriptive research design is the practice of collection of data to react to questions concerning present situation of study respondents. Through description of various factors, this research design was utilised to shed more light with respect to the study problem.

Target Population, Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

In the investigation, the target population were parents (including guardians) of pre-primary learners in Nyamira South Sub County. Based on statistics from Sub County Director of Education Office, 7,494 learners are enrolled in public ECD centres (translating to 7,494 parents/guardians) forming the study target population.

Table 1: Population of Respondents

SN	Ward	No.Schools	PP1	PP2	Total
1	Township	09	302	282	584
2	Bogichora	26	1127	864	1991
3	Nyamaiya	21	706	881	1587
4	Bonyamatuta	18	892	596	1488
5	Bosamaro	27	972	872	1844
	Grand Total	101	3999	3495	7,494

Source: Nyamira South Sub-County Education Office (2024)

Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

A sample frame of parents from each ECD centres was developed for the investigation. Thereafter, the researcher utilised Yamane formular, multi-stage sampling and simple random sampling technique in choosing the parents from each centre. The accessible population for the study was 7,494 parents. The researcher considered only one representative per family with children enrolled in public ECD centre. Therefore, the sample size involved 380 parents.

Table 2: Sampling of Schools

SN	Ward	No. Schools	No. Schools to be sampled ($n=N/1+N_e^2= 101/1+101 \times 0.05^2$)
1	Township	09	$9/101 \times 81=7$
2	Bogichora	26	$26/101 \times 81=21$
3	Nyamaiya	21	$21/101 \times 81=17$
4	Bonyamatuta	18	$18/101 \times 81=14$
5	Bosamaro	27	$27/101 \times 81=22$
	Grand Total	101	81

Source: Researcher (2024)

Sampling Of Pupils to Represent Parents and Guardians

$$N/1+Ne^2=7494/1+7494 \times 0.05^2=380$$

Based on the number of schools to be sampled (81), the proportionate sample allocation per ward of the 380 pupils was as follows:

Table 3: Sampling of Pupils to Represent Parents and Guardians

SN	Ward	No. Schools	No.pupils to be sampled ($n=N/1+Ne^2=81/1+380 \times 0.05^2$)
1	Township	07	$7/81 \times 380=33$
2	Bogichora	21	$21/81 \times 380=98$
3	Nyamaiya	17	$17/81 \times 380=80$
4	Bonyamatuta	14	$14/81 \times 380=66$
5	Bosamaro	22	$22/81 \times 380=103$
	Grand Total	81	380

Source: Researcher

Sampling of Pupils of PP1 and PP2 Strata to Represent Parents and Guardians

The third and final sampling was among the PP1 and PP2 pupils representing parents and guardians' strata as follows:

Table 4: Sampling of Pupils for PP1 and PP2 Strata to Represent Parents and Guardians.

SN	Ward	No. Schools sampled	No.pupils sampled ($n=N/1+Ne^2=81/1+380 \times 0.05^2$)	No. of PP1 sampled	No. of PP2 sampled
1	Township	07	$7/81 \times 380=33$	$302/584 \times 33=17$	16
2	Bogichora	21	$21/81 \times 380=98$	$1127/1989 \times 98=55$	43
3	Nyamaiya	17	$17/81 \times 380=80$	$706/1587 \times 80=36$	44
4	Bonyamatuta	14	$14/81 \times 380=66$	$892/1488 \times 66=40$	26
5	Bosamaro	22	$22/81 \times 380=103$	$972/1844 \times 103=54$	49
	Grand Total	81	380	202	178

Source: Researcher

Random sampling was utilized to pick on required respondents, and no pupil was picked twice if comes from the same family.

Research Instruments

Questionnaires and observation checklist were utilized to collect data. A five-point Likert scale questionnaire was utilised in the questionnaire to collect data based on this scale: strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Therefore, questionnaire was used to collect data on the influence of parental support on early years learners' development of literacy competencies. For the checklist, the investigator utilised this instrument to collect information on how learning resources provided at home affects pre-primary learners' literacy competencies. Respondents were expected to tick the materials available to them that aid in advancement of literacy competencies

Data Analysis and Presentation

Before data analysis, the researcher collected, organized, sorted, edited, and coded raw data gathered from questionnaires and observation guides and then analysed them. SPSS (version 24.0) assisted in data coding, entry and analysis. Each independent variable state was analysed using descriptive statistics. The descriptive statistics that were utilised were frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations to address research objectives. Further, the connection between each independent variable with the dependent variable was analysed using inferential statistics. The inferential statistics that were performed were regression analysis to examine the relationship between parental support factors on learners' literacy competencies (dependent variable). Statistical significance of **0.05 was accepted as the standard threshold**. The analysed data was presented in tables, graphs and narratives.

Results and Discussion

Available Home Resources and Literacy Skills of Pre-school Children

The study evaluated the first aim of the study: Establish how parental support in provision of literacy materials at home affects the earlier years literacy of learners in Nyamira South Sub-County. Table 5 shows the findings.

Table 5: Available Home Learning Resources and Literacy Skills of Early Years Learners

Accessible home resources indicator	M	SD
Unrestricted access to learning resources like storybooks, pens, and play dolls for the preschool children	3.26	1.34
Family values enhance literacy skills in children's skills like storytelling, using storybooks, pictures, and singing	3.59	1.24
Enough space for the pre-school children to do the necessary literacy skills exercises	3.48	1.12
Accessible home resources	3.44	1.23

Source: Research Data (2025)

The findings indicate that home literacy resources available to parents significantly influenced the development of literacy skills among early years pupils in Nyamira South Sub-County ($M = 3.44$; $SD = 1.23$). Respondents noted that providing preschool children with access to learning materials such as storybooks, pens, and play dolls had a moderate impact on literacy skills acquisition ($M = 3.26$; $SD = 1.34$). Additionally, family values that promote literacy, including storytelling, using storybooks and pictures, and engaging in singing activities, were found to have a substantial effect on literacy skill development ($M = 3.59$; $SD = 1.24$). Moreover, adequate space for children to practice literacy exercises was highlighted as a significant factor influencing their literacy skills acquisition ($M = 3.48$; $SD = 1.12$).

Overall, the results suggest that home literacy resources, such as access to learning materials, supportive family values, and sufficient practice space, play a critical role in enhancing the literacy skills of preschool children in Nyamira South Sub-County.

Senechal et al. (2008) is in congruence with the study findings as he asserts that preschool children's literacy skills are significantly enhanced when they have unrestricted access to learning materials such as

storybooks, pens, and play dolls. This aligns with the findings of Crawford and Zygouris-Coe (2006), who emphasized the importance of providing literacy materials at home, noting that access to quality books plays a crucial role in improving children's reading abilities. The availability, quality, and accessibility of literacy resources within the home environment contribute positively to preschoolers' reading development.

Additionally, family literacy practices, such as storytelling, using picture books, and singing, have a strong impact on literacy acquisition among preschool children in Nyamira South Sub-County. Korat et al. (2007) found that exposure to diverse reading materials, including books, newspapers, and magazines, enhances young children's literacy development. These materials can be sourced from home, school, or public libraries (Korat et al., 2007). Roberts et al. (2005) also highlighted the importance of household resources in shaping children's reading skills.

Parent Educational Level and Literacy Skills of Pre-school Children

The research evaluated objective two: Determine the influence of parental education level on the literacy competencies of earlier years learners in Nyamira South Sub-County. Table 4.5 shows the findings.

Table 6: Influence of Parent Educational Level on the Literacy Skills of Pre-School Children

Parent Educational Level Indicator	M	SD
Literacy skills of pre-school children are higher for	3.35	1.29
Parents with a high level of academic qualifications		
Those parents with more professional qualifications	3.22	1.25
have their preschool children attain higher literacy		
skills		
Training of parents on social skills catalyses the	3.58	1.09
Literacy skills of their pre-school children		
Parent Educational level	3.38	1.21

Source: Research Data (2025)

The findings reveal that the education level of parents had a moderate influence on the literacy skills of early years pupils in Nyamira South Sub-County ($M = 3.38$; $SD = 1.21$). Respondents expressed neutrality regarding the claim that preschool children of parents with higher academic qualifications displayed superior literacy skills ($M = 3.35$; $SD = 1.29$). Similarly, there was neutrality about the assertion that parents with multiple professional certifications had children with better literacy skills ($M = 3.22$; $SD = 1.25$). However, respondents agreed that social skills training for parents positively impacted the literacy abilities of preschoolers ($M = 3.58$; $SD = 1.09$).

This suggests that while parental education levels have a moderate effect on preschoolers' literacy skills, advanced academic or professional qualifications do not necessarily guarantee higher literacy levels. Instead, training parents in social skills has a significant and positive influence on the literacy development of early years learners.

These findings align with Epstein's (2007) research, which emphasized the essential role of parental support in the Kenyan education system. Similarly, Davis-Kean (2005) asserted that for preschool children to

develop strong literacy skills, parents must attain a sufficient level of education. Consequently, parental education is a crucial predictor of children's literacy outcomes. Bonci et al. (2011) further reinforced this by highlighting that parents with higher academic achievements significantly contribute to their preschoolers' literacy development. This implies that children of well-educated parents tend to exhibit stronger literacy skills (Myrberg & Rosén, 2009).

Myrberg and Rosén (2009) also established that a parent's educational background plays a key role in shaping a child's reading abilities, identifying it as a vital socioeconomic factor influencing literacy development. Lynch (2009) suggested that parents with limited formal education should actively engage in daily print literacy activities.

The Influence of Parental Economic Status on the Development of Literacy Competencies for Earlier Years Learners.

The research assessed the third objective: determine the influence of parental economic status on the attainment of literacy competencies among early years learners in Nyamira South Sub-County utilizing data collected from the data instrument ranked on a 5-point Likert scale as follows; "Strongly Disagree = 1: Disagree = 2: Neutral = 3: Agree = 4: Strongly Agree = 5". These outcomes are shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Parents' Economic Status and Literacy Competencies of Early Years Learners.

Parent's Economic Status Indicator	M	SD
The income status of parents highly influences the literacy competencies of their early years' learners	3.24	1.32
Parents with low-income earning levels with learners in early years do not attain adequate literacy competencies	3.09	1.22
The poverty of the parent distracts the achievement of high literacy competencies of their early years' learners	3.76	0.94
Failure to acquire suitable employment by the parent makes their early years learners fail to attain better literacy competencies	3.35	1.31
Parents' economic status	3.36	1.20

Source: Research Data (2025)

The findings indicate that, on average, the economic well-being of parents had a moderate impact on the literacy skill acquisition of early years learners ($M = 3.36$; $SD = 1.20$). Respondents expressed neutrality regarding the idea that parents' income levels significantly influenced their children's literacy skills ($M = 3.24$; $SD = 1.32$). Additionally, respondents were neutral about the statement that children of low-income parents in early years did not achieve adequate literacy skills ($M = 3.09$; $SD = 1.22$). While respondents agreed that parental poverty hindered the attainment of high literacy skills among early years learners ($M = 3.76$; $SD = 0.94$), they were neutral on the claim that the lack of proper employment for parents caused their children to fail in developing good literacy skills ($M = 3.35$; $SD = 1.31$).

These results suggest that the literacy skills of early years learners in Nyamira South Sub-County were moderately influenced by their parents' economic well-being on average. The literacy development of preschoolers was moderately affected by their parents' income levels, with children of low-income parents

achieving moderate success in acquiring adequate literacy skills. While parental inability to support themselves financially hampered their preschoolers' literacy development, improper employment of parents led to lower literacy achievements among their children.

Research by Roberts et al. (2005) further suggests that socioeconomic status significantly influences preschool children's early literacy development. However, Strasser and Lissi (2009) argued that low socioeconomic status does not necessarily equate to positive literacy practices at home. Korat et al. (2007) also highlighted the link between financial status and parental involvement in home-based literacy activities. Economic resources greatly impact students' academic performance, with parental financial stability playing a crucial role in shaping the learning environment. Financial hardships can lead to challenges such as low attention spans, frustration, emotional distress, and even health issues, all of which negatively affect academic outcomes.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

The study concludes that while parental education level has a moderately positive yet statistically insignificant effect on preschool children's literacy skills in Nyamira South Sub-County ($p=0.133$; $\beta=0.167$), there is still a significant positive moderate correlation between parental education level and children's literacy skills ($p<0.01$; $r=0.538$). The factors contributing to this moderate, yet insignificant effect include parents' academic qualifications, professional training, and their preparedness in social skills training.

Additionally, the research finds that the availability of home literacy resources has a moderately positive and statistically significant effect on preschool children's literacy skills ($\beta=0.222$; $p=0.042$). Correlation results indicate a significant moderate relationship between home literacy resources and preschool children's literacy skills in Nyamira South Sub-County ($p<0.01$; $r=0.550$).

Finally, the study establishes that parents' economic well-being has a moderately positive and significant impact on the literacy skills of preschool children ($\beta=0.309$; $p=0.009$). Pearson's correlation analysis further confirms that economic well-being has a significant moderate correlation with preschool children's literacy skills ($P<0.01$; $r=0.586$). Key factors influencing this relationship include parental income levels, poverty alleviation efforts, and employment opportunities, all of which contribute to improved literacy development for preschool children in Nyamira South Sub-County.

Recommendations

The study provided recommendations for future research as well as policy reforms.

Based on the findings, some policy recommendations were proposed. First, the study suggests that parents should pursue formal education to enable them to support their preschool children's learning effectively. Additionally, parents should engage in training programs aimed at improving their social skills.

Secondly, the study recommends that parents equip their homes with appropriate literacy resources for their preschoolers. This includes acquiring sufficient learning materials such as storybooks, pens, and play dolls. Parents should also dedicate time daily to activities such as storytelling, drawing, and singing with their children. Moreover, they should ensure that their preschoolers have enough space at home for play and literacy-related exercises.

Finally, the study highlights the need for economic empowerment programs targeting parents of preschool children. Enhancing parents' financial stability would enable them to meet their children's educational and developmental needs. The study suggests that curriculum developers consider designing community-based education programs focused on income-generating skills to improve parents' socioeconomic status. Additionally, both county and national governments in Kenya should review their empowerment strategies and introduce parent-friendly initiatives. Such programs should create economic opportunities for parents with preschoolers, ultimately contributing to poverty alleviation among this group.

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