



## INFLUENCE OF HOME ENVIRONMENT ON STUDENTS' PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC DAY SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MAKUENI COUNTY, KENYA

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**Paper Received On:** 12 May 2024

**Peer Reviewed On:** 28 May 2024

**Published On:** 01 June 2024

### Abstract

*This study sought to determine the influence of home environment on students' participation in public day secondary schools in Makueni County. The study employed concurrent research design of mixed methods methodology. Target population was 250 principals, 380 Form 4 class teachers, 250 PA chair persons and 108 area chiefs. The sample size included 50 principals, 76 class teachers, 50 PA chairpersons and 20 chiefs, making a total of 196 research participants. Data was collected using questionnaires, interview schedules and document analysis. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential analysis and presented using frequency tables and graphs. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically and presented using narratives. Descriptive statistics used were mainly mean and standard deviation while inferential statistics used were both correlation and regression analyses. Pearson's's correlation coefficient was used to determine association /correlation between home environment and student's participation in public day secondary schools in Makueni County. Bivariate regression analysis was used to show the influence of home environment on students' participation in public day secondary schools in Makueni County. The study established that home environment positively and significantly influenced students' participation in public day secondary schools in Makueni County, Kenya. Thus, the study concluded that home environment was a significant family-based determinant of students' participation in public day secondary schools in Makueni County. The study recommends that parents/guardians of students in public day secondary schools should strive to create favourable home environment where their children can learn without disruptions for instance, avoiding alcohol, drugs and substance abuse, solving conflicts in an amicable way and maintain family stability.*

**Key words:** home environment, Students' Participation, Public day Secondary Schools, Makueni County, Kenya.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Education is a stand-alone goal (SDG 4) in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The SDG 4 aims to ensure inclusive and equitable education and promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all. The target 4.1 states that; by 2030 ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education without discrimination. It is against this background that most of the countries have tried to provide free education so that each and every child can participate regardless of individual socio-economic background. In other words, governments are trying to make education accessible to those children from low socio-economic background by abolishing school fees (The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development).

However, despite the government's effort to invest heavily in education, students' participation in public secondary schools continues to be challenged by different factors. Research has shown that home environment has major influence on students' participation in secondary schools. In this study students' participation in education is indicated by enrolment, attendance, physically being present in school and taking part in school activities and completion. Home environment can either enhance or limit students' participation in public day secondary schools.

Home environment refers to the emotional support shown by the parents/ guardians and relatives when interacting with their children, provision of arousing, energizing and learning experiences in the home. Home is the first institution of a learner that has significant relationships with the students' overall life. Home environment includes the mutual interactions of family members and respect in the family. Family members' interactions with learners influence their participation in education. Supportive home environment enhances students' confidence and self-esteem and enable them to be sociable while students living in non-supportive home environment struggle in every walk of life including educational participation (parveen, 2007). Positive home environment is the prominent indicator of students' successful participation in education (Clark et al, 2007). Educational participation of students from parents and relatives who abuse drugs are negatively affected (Nguthan, 2013).

Khan et al (2019) carried out a study on Relationship between students' home environment and their academic achievements at secondary school level in Pakistan. From the research, it was concluded that positive home environment is important for the students' full participation in education.

Muhamad et al (2020) did a study on effects of home environment on students' academic achievement at higher level education in Pakistan. The study findings indicated that a weak positive correlation exists between home environment and students' academic achievements. The study concluded that children raised in loving, caring, secure, consistent and stable home environments have greater probability of developing well socially, psychologically, physically, emotionally and morally, hence participate fully in education.

Uwera (2017) conducted research on home environment and students' academic performance in primary schools of Gicumbi District in Rwanda. The research findings showed that there exist a strong relationship between students' academic achievements and a number of home factors. It was revealed that, the social relationships between learners and household

members, availability of learning materials at home and provision of good time to the learners for revision while at home influenced learners' participation and performance in school. Mwaniki (2016) carried out research on home-based variables influencing enrolment and participation of pupils in rural public primary schools in central division north sub-county, Narok County, Kenya. From the study it was found that retrogressive cultural variables were a setback to attaining education especially among nomadic pastoralists' communities. This explains low enrolment and high dropout rates in the area since the social climate in the schools was not conducive for the development of the need for belonging and learning. This also explained why pupils frequently absent themselves from schools.

Nguthan (2013) did a study on effects of drug abuse by parents on school participation by primary pupils in Abothuguchi division in Meru County, Kenya. From the study, it was concluded that majority of learners took up the responsibilities of the drunken parents at a very tender age since their parents suffered from hangovers due to drugs. The pupils also overworked in the evening and were tired, fatigued from work assigned by the drug and substance abusing parents. In Kenya, Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) was officially launched by late President Mwai Kibaki in 2008. FDSE programme was launched so that the total numbers of learners who enroll in form 1 would participate wholly in education and graduate after 4 years. However, the case is totally different in Makueni County. The data obtained from Makueni County Education Office between the years 2016 -2021 shows that; in 2019, a total of 4,891 students did not complete form 4 accounting for 16.94% of students who either dropped out or repeated. In 2020 a total of 3,731 students did not complete form 4 accounting for 12.98% of students who either dropped out or repeated. Also in 2021, a total of 3,674 students did not complete form 4 accounting for 12.38% of students who either dropped out or repeated. In Makueni County, most households are poor (KNBS Makueni County, 2020) and hence home environment play a big role in students' participation in public day secondary schools. Therefore, it was vital to conduct a study to establish the influence of home environment on students' participation in public day secondary schools in Makueni County Kenya.

## **II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE**

This study was guided by the following specific objective;

- (i) To determine the influence of home environment on students' participation in public day secondary schools in Makueni County, Kenya.

## **III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted Mixed Methods research methodology specifically concurrent research design. The study targeted 250 public day secondary schools and 108 locations (KNBS MAKUENI COUNTY, 2020). Therefore, 250 principals, 380 form 4 class teachers (2022), 250 PTA chair persons and 108 area chiefs were targeted. Random sampling was used to sample; 50 principals, 76 form 4 class teachers (2022), 50 PA chairperson and 20 area chiefs making a total of 196 research participants. Questionnaires, interview schedules and document analysis were the research tools.

#### IV. RESULTS

The study sought to establish the influence of home environment on students' participation in public day secondary schools in Makueni County. The home environment from where these students came from was first assessed.

##### Measures of Home Environment

The students' home environment was first explored by asking the principals and Form 4 class teachers to give their views on three (3) items that were used as measures of home environment. Their responses were based on a five-point Likert scale where they indicated their degree of agreement or disagreement with the statements. The principals' responses are provided in Table 1.

*Table 1 Principals' Responses on Measures of Home Environment*

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	SD
Most students in this school are from stable and functional families	2.00%	12.00%	32.00%	32.00%	22.00%	3.600	1.030
Most students in this school live with both parents	6.00%	6.00%	38.00%	38.00%	12.00%	3.440	0.993
Most students in this school have parents/guardians who do not use alcohol and drugs	2.00%	12.00%	38.00%	42.00%	6.00%	3.380	0.855
<b>Composite Mean and Standard Deviation</b>						<b>3.473</b>	<b>0.618</b>
<b>Valid N=50</b>							

The findings outlined in Table 1 showed that the principals on average agreed that most students in their schools were from stable and functional families as revealed by the mean of responses of 3.600. On the other hand, the principals on average held a neutral view on whether most students in their schools lived with both parents and also whether their

parents/guardians did not use alcohol and drugs. This finding was supported by the means of responses of 3.440 and 3.380 respectively. The overall mean of 3.475 for the home environment construct meant that on average, the principals held a neutral view regarding the statements presented to them on home environment. The reaction of the sampled Form 4 class teachers on the various statements presented as measures of home environment is depicted by the findings presented in Table 2.

*Table 2 Form 4 Class teachers' Responses on Measures of Home Environment*

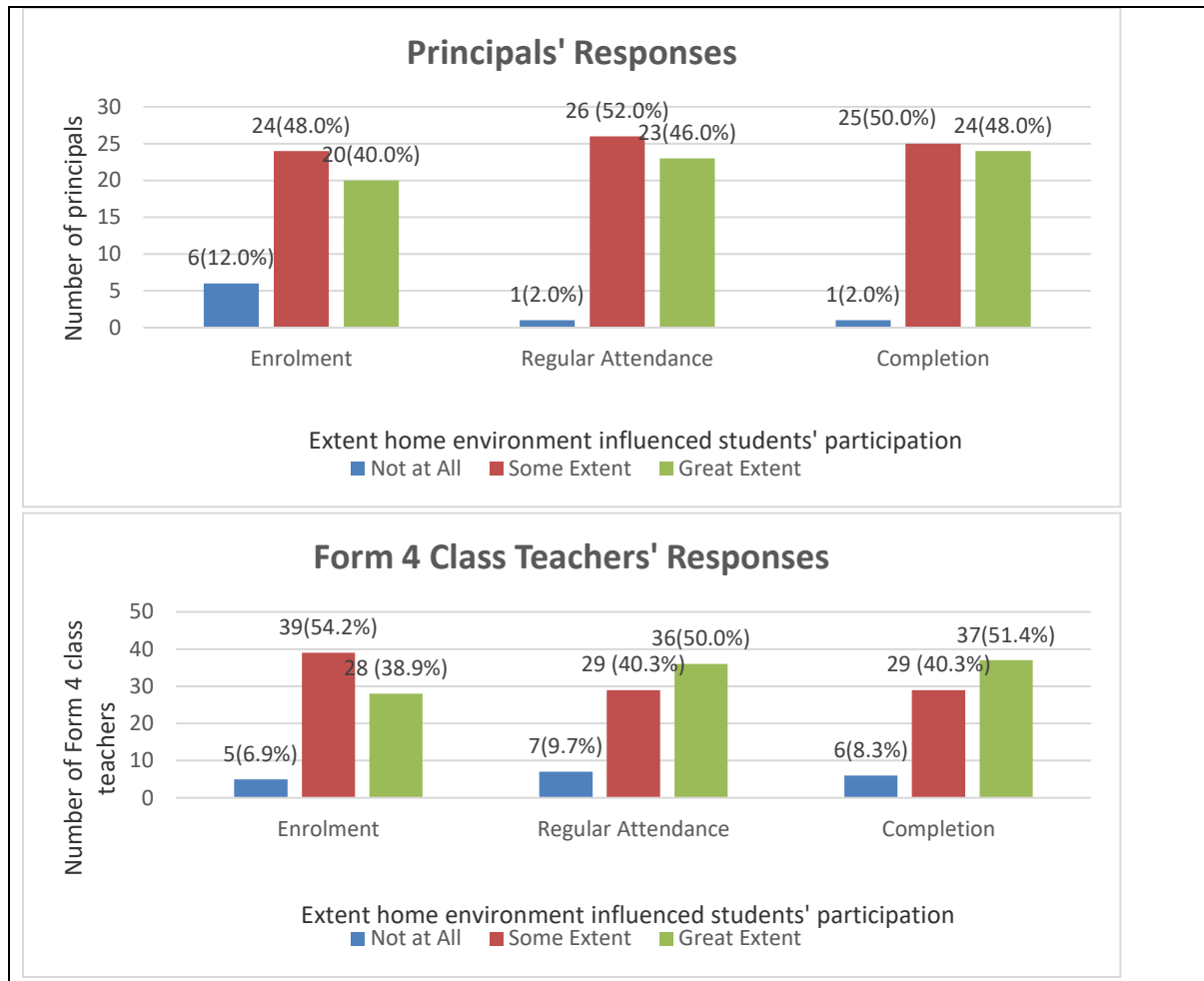
Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	SD
Most students in this school are from stable and functional families	4.20%	15.30%	15.30%	45.80%	19.40%	3.611	1.095
Most students in this school live with both parents	1.40%	13.90%	34.70%	40.30%	9.70%	3.431	0.901
Most students in this school have parents/guardians who do not use alcohol and drugs	0.00%	16.70%	34.70%	41.70%	6.90%	3.389	0.848
<b>Composite Mean and Standard Deviation</b>						<b>3.477</b>	<b>0.592</b>
<b>Valid N=72</b>							

The study based on the study results outlined in Table 2 established that on average, the sampled Form 4 class teachers agreed that most students in their schools were from stable functional families as demonstrated by the mean value of 3.611. They however had a neutral view pertaining to whether most students in their schools lived with both parents and whether their parents/guardians did not use alcohol or drugs as revealed by the means of responses of 3.431 and 3.389 respectively. The composite mean value of 3.477 suggested that on average, the sampled Form 4 class teachers had a neutral view on the statements presented on home environment. Based on the responses of the principals and Form 4 class teachers, it can be argued that on average, the home environment from where students in public day secondary schools in Makueni County came from was moderately favourable.

### Perceived Link between Home Environment and Students' Participation

The study sought to determine if there was perceived association between home environment and students' participation in the public day secondary schools in Makueni County by seeking the views of the principals and Form 4 class teachers on the extent home environment influenced student enrolment, their regular school attendance and completion of studies. The views provided by these respondents are provided in Figure 1

*Figure 1 Home Environment and Enrolment, Regular School Attendance and Completion of Studies*



The findings showed that a considerable number of principals indicated that home environment to some extent or great extent influenced student enrolment, their regular school attendance and their completion of studies in the public day secondary schools in Makueni County. More than half of the Form 4 class teachers observed that home environment influenced enrolment rates in these schools while 50.0% and 51.4% of these class teachers asserted that home environment influenced regular school attendance and completion rates. These findings demonstrated that generally, home environment was perceived to influence students' participation in the public day secondary schools in Makueni County.

## **V. DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS**

### **Home Environment and Students' Participation**

The study found out that on average, most of the students in public day secondary schools in Makueni County were from a moderately favourable home environment. While the study findings demonstrated that most students in these schools were from stable and functional families, whether most of these students lived with both parents or had parents/guardians who did not use alcohol and drugs could not be ascertained with certainty. Based on the correlation results, it was inferred that home environment influenced students' participation in public day secondary schools in Makueni County in terms of their enrolment, regular attendance and completion of studies. The study also established that home environment had a positive significant influence on students' participation in these schools implying that creating a favourable home environment would enhance students' participation in these schools. The above findings supported the argument by Khan et al. (2019) that positive home environment was important for students' full participation in education. The findings also agreed with Muhamad et al. (2020) conclusion that children raised in a loving, caring, secure, consistent and stable home environment had greater probability of developing well socially, psychologically, physically, emotionally and morally which enhanced their full participation in education. Mwaniki (2016) argued that the type of family from where a student came from affected student's participation in education citing retrogressive cultural variables which were setbacks to attaining education among pastoralist communities. Nguthan (2013) also observed that drug abuse by parents adversely affected students' participation in school as majority of learners took up the responsibilities of the drunken parents at a very tender age as their parents suffered from hangovers due to drugs. The students also overworked in the evening and were tired, fatigued from work assigned by the drug and substance abusing parents, a condition that negatively impacted their performance and in worst case scenario, their completion of studies.

## **VI. RECOMMENDATION**

The study recommends that parents/guardians of students in public day secondary schools should strive to create favourable home environment where their children can learn without disruptions for instance; avoiding alcohol, drugs and substance abuse, solving conflicts in an amicable way and maintain family stability.

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