



# Parental Involvement in Children's Education and Academic Performance in Government Aided Schools. Case Study of Kayunga District.

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## Abstract

In government aided schools, there existed a dearth of evidence on how involvement of parents in the learning process was of ultimate importance and this was true in Kayunga district. To this end, the effect of behavioral involvement; cognitive-intellectual involvement and; personal involvement of parents are investigated. To achieve the stated specific objectives, a causal comparative study was adopted on 429 randomly selected sampling units. Designed in a five-point designed by Likert (1967), a questionnaire was adopted as a tool for collecting data. In collecting qualitative information from key informants, the study used a structured interview guide. Regression analysis was adopted as a quantitative data analysis technique. Qualitative data was analyzed by interpreting the narratives of the interviewees and key informants about the state of play of both variables. It was established that behavioral involvement; cognitive-intellectual involvement and; personal involvement of parents were significant in explaining the performance of the students. From the study results, it is recommended that there should be a set of instilled policies and practices to ensure that there is sufficient behavioral involvement for the good of academic performance improvement; the various schools put up strategies to inform the parents of their roles in as far as interacting with the learners about their roles in imparting current affairs into the minds of their children and its effect on performance and; school administrators and teachers put lots of emphasis on improving the effectiveness of personal involvement of parents through parent of the year awards among others.

**Key words:** *Literacy, Numeracy, parental involvement, children, Uwezo.*

## Background of the study

Globally, since the end of the pandemic, it would be relatively unfair to claim that the performance of learners has been improving. In fact, results from UNESCO (2023) indicate that since the pandemic period, the general global academic performance has declined by 0.62% p.a. with significant regional differences. However, in the developed countries, though declines in academic performance existed, they were not as pervasive as in the remote areas (Tan et al., 2021).

In Uganda, evidence of declining academic performance of the learners is cited in Kaahwa et al. (2023) with an average of 8.6% failing over the last ten years of assessment. In the case of government aided schools in Kayunga

district, the academic performance is far from desirable as the ten-year average failure rate stands at 24.62% which is 16.02% higher than the national average.

In contrast, the ten-year average failure rate of learners in private schools in the same district is 18.9% which is 10.3% higher than the national average. The performance effects of Parental involvement has been investigated by a number of scholars (Berg et al., 2019). In line with a number of studies, the current study conceptualizes parental involvement as social involvement, emotional involvement as well as financial involvement.

### **Problem Statement**

We all understand the critical role that foundational literacy and numeracy plays in shaping the child's academic performance (Nalugemwa, 2022). For any child to perform well in the next upper classes the foundational classes must have been well taught and understood (Kaahwa et al., 2023). However, this has not been the case in most government aided schools especially in the underserved communities. Where the ratio of children to teacher is inappropriate among other problems that have affected children performance.

Consequently, this has not only led to school dropout but also created a lot of problems and challenges. This has resulted into high school dropout, cheating exams at Primary Leaving Exams because learners cannot read and comprehend questions. This caused a hefty expenditure on parents to have results retrieved or to pay school fees for a whole year and the learner resist exams. This wouldn't have been the case if many of them had understood the foundational classes.

### **General Objective.**

To examine the effect parental involvement in children education on academic performance in government aided schools

### **Specific Objectives**

- a) To examine the effect of behavioral involvement of parents on the performance of children in literacy and numeracy in foundational classes in Kayunga district
- b) To examine the effect of cognitive-intellectual involvement of parents on the performance of children in literacy and numeracy in foundational classes in Kayunga district

### **Study Hypotheses**

- a) Behavioral involvement of parents positively influences the performance of children in literacy and numeracy in the foundational classes in Kayunga district
- b) Cognitive-intellectual involvement of parents positively influences the performance of children in literacy and numeracy in the foundational classes in Kayunga district

### **Significance of the study**

This study is meant to bridge both the research and management gap and may form a basis for policy. The study will help other organizations especially those working directly with schools to improve learning outcomes.

## Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework is an identification and description of elements, variables or factors to be measured or addressed by the research. The figure below shows the conceptual framework adopted for the study.

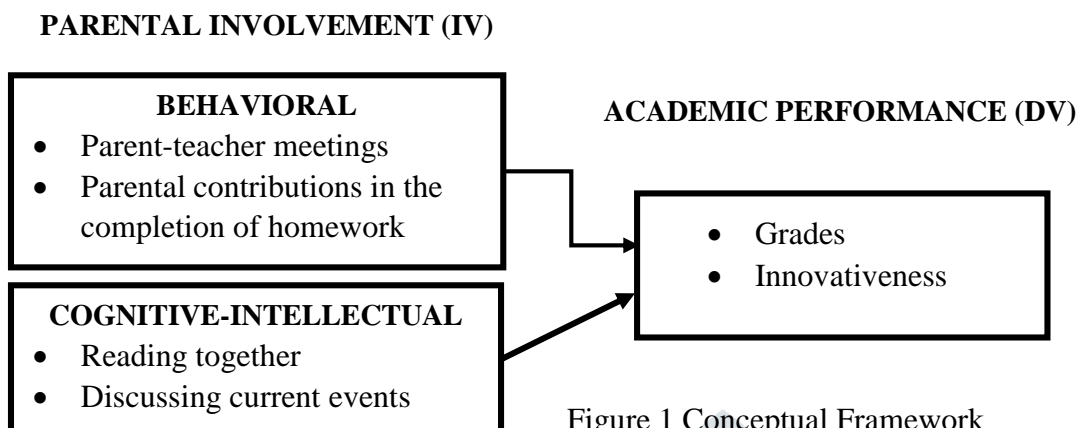


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Source: Grolnick & Slowiaczek (1994), Modified by the researcher

Based on Grolnick & Slowiaczek (1994) Parental Involvement model, it can be hypothesized that the predictor and problem variables are related. However, based on the fact that the theory is limited on grounds of lacking predictive ability, the magnitude of the effects predictors on the problem variables has not been empirically validated especially in rural areas of Uganda. This creates a knowledge gap that requires to be bridged especially in Uganda.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Behavioral involvement, one that models the importance of school has a parent involved in virtually all activities of the school (Seet et al., 2022). This constant interaction shapes performance through collectively identifying the weak points of the child and paving way for improvements (Berg et al., 2019). In addition, this influence is improved when the parent becomes a volunteer or a member of a school committee (McIntosh & Hayden, 2022; Falanga & Gonida, 2022). The effect this has on performance has been found to be positive, albeit not indicating the significance of the effect.

A number of scholars (Treviño et al., 2021; Shaked, 2022) have indicated that behavioral involvement of parents in the learning process is vital for helping the schools deal with behavioral issues of the child so as to prepare direct their emotions and attitudes towards their performance. These studies indicated that behavioral involvement of parents positively influences academic performance although they were carried out using qualitative approaches which do not indicate by how much behavioral involvement influenced academic performance of the learners. The fact that the studies were carried out outside Uganda further complicates the issue in Ugandan settings.

Cognitive-intellectual involvement involves parents stimulating the child's learning process through brain teasing and a number of activities (McIntosh & Hayden, 2022) and this usually takes place outside the classroom without the members of the teaching community in sight which effectively improves the efficiency of the learning process. The zoo, museum, library and so on are best examples where cognitive-intellectual learning process takes place (DiStefano et al., 2020; Ogg & Antony, 2020) yet it is not documented whether learners in the study area follow soot.

A number of scholars (Carrión-Martínez et al., 2021; Tye, 2023) have indicated that cognitive-intellectual involvement of parents in the learning process is vital for helping the learners grasping a number of curricular based aspects in their natural environments which improves their performance in the classroom. In contrast with Joshi et al. (2022) as well as Rickert & Skinner (2021) indicated that quantitative analyses indicated insignificant relationship between cognitive-intellectual involvement and academic performance of the learners. This creates a host of inconsistencies which call for more research on how cognitive-intellectual involvement of parents influenced academic performance in Uganda's context.

## METHODS

A causal comparative study was adopted with mixed approaches to obtain in-depth data from the participants in the study which provided a better understanding to the research problem (Creswell, 2008). The study population included School staff involved in data collection, validation, reporting and utilization of some information at school like registers. The first tool adopted for this study was a self-administered questionnaire for the learners to aid the collection of quantitative data.

To ensure that the data is of the highest quality, a number of steps will be taken up. These entailed training of the data collection team on their presentation, language and the ability to answer a number of questions as posed by the respondents. The tools were pre-tested first to ensure that they are both credible (measure what they are intended to) and consistent (they can be applied on a different sample and similar results are obtained).

For all the study objectives, inferential analysis (regression) because of the need to investigate the magnitude and significance of the effect of the various predictor sub components of the predictor on the problem variable (using SPSS 22) and conclusions were based on the p values.

Voluntary participation and informed consent: Participation of the learners in the assessment would be voluntary. The research assistants sought consent from the head teachers/deputy head teachers and assent from the learners before proceeding with the assessments. Vulnerable participants was taken into consideration. All the learners had the right to participate regardless of their disability and background statuses

## RESULTS

To determine the relationship between the study variables, a Pearson correlation coefficient was computed. This analysis identified the direction and strength of linear relationship between behavioral involvement; cognitive-intellectual involvement; personal involvement and academic performance.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.728	.153		4.756	.000
CINT	.123	.061	.118	2.005	.046
ACC	.301	.052	.303	5.765	.000
GSE	.330	.057	.342	5.831	.000

The statistics ( $\beta_1 = 0.123$ ,  $p = 0.046$ ) indicate that a unit improvement in learners' perceptions about behavioral involvement of parents or guardians led to 0.123 improvements in academic performance of learners. The effect of this behavioral involvement is significant at a 5% significance level. The implication is that when behavioral involvement is improved, the performance of the learners in the study area will improve by 12.3%. Mora-Ruano et al., (2019) and Hännikäinen & Helena (2010) had earlier indicated positive effects of behavioral involvement on academic performance through its effect on innovativeness in problem solving by the learner. However, they had not indicated the magnitude and significance of the effect of behavioral involvement on academic performance. By showing that the effect is significant, the study has added to the existing body of knowledge. In line with the above, the key informant (KI1) noted;

*“...parents can shape the process through offering advice on ethical decision making during the learning process. In normal settings, behavioral involvement improves performance because it stimulates social and emotional competencies and reduces the fear that the learner may have for the teacher. This leads to a state where the learner finds it very easy to ask questions for clarity...”*

The statistics ( $\beta_2 = 0.301$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) indicate that a unit improvement in learners' perceptions about cognitive-intellectual involvement in learning in Kayunga District led to 0.301 improvements in academic performance of the learners. The effect of cognitive-intellectual involvement in learning is significant at a 1% significance level. The implication is that when this cognitive-intellectual involvement of the parents is improved, the performance of the learners in the study area will improve by 30%. Johannsson (2016) as well as Wheeler et al., (2014) had earlier indicated that this form of parental involvement affected academic performance of the learners as well as teacher effectiveness. However, they had not indicated whether the effect was significant or not. By establishing this significance, the study has added to the body of knowledge. In line with the above, the key informant (KI2) noted;

*“...whenever we discuss current affairs with our children, we are trying to improve their perceptions about the real world. In school settings, parents are supposed to coordinate with the teachers on that because the parents can do it in a natural way...”*

The statistics ( $\beta_3 = .330$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) indicate that a unit improvement in learners' perceptions about personal involvement of the parents led to 0.330 improvements in academic performance of the learners. The effect of teacher efforts on personal involvement is significant at a 1% significance level. The implication is that when a teacher effort on personal involvement is improved, the performance of the learners in the study area will improve by just over 33%. In previous studies, Panadero & Alqassab (2019) and Wang et al., (2014b) indicated and documented the benefits of personal involvement of parents. The current study results are in agreement with the scholars' work save the fact that we have added significance to the results to ensure that they have intuitive appeal. In line with the above, the key informant (KI3) noted;

*“...In learning, learners need to learn from the parents or instructors as well as from other learners. In the case of your study, parents are important in improving the efficiency of learners in project execution as well as their behaviors both of which can improve their performance...”*

## Conclusions

Firstly, with regards to behavioral involvement, it was established that behavioral involvement significantly affects academic performance of learners in the study area. We therefore rejected the null hypothesis. The study further indicated that in the study area, a unit improvement in behavioral involvement component of parental involvement could result into a 12% improvement in academic performance.

The study findings further established that cognitive-intellectual involvement significantly effects academic performance of learners in the study area and therefore rejected the null hypothesis. The study further indicated that in the study area, a unit improvement in cognitive-intellectual involvement a component of collaboration could result into 30% improvement in academic performance.

### Recommendations

To this end, the study recommends that there should be a set of instilled policies and practices to ensure that there is sufficient behavioral involvement for the good of academic performance improvement.

The study recommends that the various schools put up strategies to inform the parents of their roles in as far as interacting with the learners about their roles in imparting current affairs into the minds of their children and its effect on performance.

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