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**PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE LEARNING PROCESS IN PRIVATE  
PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN WESTLANDS SUBCOUNTY OF NAIROBI**

**EMMA MIRITI**

**Submitted in total fulfilment of the requirement for the award of a masters of science  
in education management, at Strathmore University.**

**School of Humanities and Social Sciences**

**Strathmore University Nairobi, Kenya**

**June 2019**

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I declare that this work has not been previously submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the dissertation contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the dissertation itself.

**Emma Miriti**

Signature:  \_\_\_\_\_

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to examine parental involvement in the learning processes in private primary schools in Westlands sub county of Nairobi. Specifically, to investigate the way private primary schools help families establish home environments that support children in studies, examine the home-to-school and school-to-home communication, assess how schools coordinate the recruiting and organizing of parents for voluntary work in the schools and to determine how schools help parents to monitor learning at home. The study was guided by Epstein's theory of parent involvement. The study employed a descriptive research design and approach. The target population of this study included all the 30 private primary schools in the sub county. The researcher drew a random sample of 20% of the schools translating to six schools that were selected using simple random sampling technique. The respondents were 24 teachers and 120 parents of the pupils in the sampled schools. A semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect data from the parents and teachers. The researcher used Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 22) to analyse quantitative data from the questionnaires. It was established that to a great extent, parental involvement in the learning process was taking place. It was established that the parents were regularly invited for meetings at school. The most common mode of communication adopted by the schools included the newsletter, emails, text messages formal letters, school calendar, school circulars and parents' orientation brochures. It was also established that 75% of the schools had volunteer programmes where parents volunteered for three key activities that included donations to charity, fundraising for school development and social work among the pupils in the school especially the girls. The schools provided information on how families could participate in setting the goals of the pupils and gave scheduled homework that required students to discuss and interact with their respective families on what they are learning in class. Schools also provided information on homework policies and how to monitor and coordinate learning at home. To a certain extent, the schools in the sub county were in agreement with the dictates of Epstein's theory of parent involvement with regard to Parental involvement, school – home communication and with monitoring and coordination of learning at home. However, the schools did not comply with the aspect of volunteering whereby Parental involvement workshops are to be expanded to include school administrators and teachers and that volunteer programmes are expanded to include participation of parents in classrooms. Further research was suggested on parental involvement in the learning process in public primary schools.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration .....	i
Abstract .....	ii
Table of Contents.....	iii
List of Tables.....	vi
List of Figures.....	vii
List of Abbreviations .....	viii
Acknowledgement .....	ix
Dedication .....	ix

### CHAPTER ONE : INTRODUCTION

1.1	Background to the study .....	1
1.1.1	Parental involvement in the Kenyan context .....	3
1.1.2	Parental involvement policy .....	4
1.2	Statement of the problem.....	6
1.3	Purpose of the study .....	6
1.4	Research objectives .....	6
1.5	Research questions.....	7
1.6	Significance of the Study.....	7
1.7	Limitations of the Study .....	8
1.8	Definitions of terms.....	8

### CHAPTER TWO : LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1	Introduction.....	9
2.2	Theories of parent involvement .....	9
2.3	Classification of parent involvement according to Epstein .....	12
2.3.1	Parental involvement in learning activities in the home .....	15
2.3.2	Decision-making .....	16
2.3.3	Collaboration with the community.....	17
2.3.4	Comer's theory of parental involvement .....	18
2.3.5	The Gordon theory of parent involvement .....	19
2.4	Empirical Review .....	21
2.4.1	Parenting.....	21
2.4.2	Communication.....	22
2.4.3	Volunteering .....	22
2.4.4	Learning at home.....	22

2.5	Conceptual Framework.....	23
2.6	Research gap .....	24
2.7	Summary.....	25
<b>CHAPTER THREE : RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY</b>		
3.1	Introduction.....	26
3.2	Research Design.....	26
3.3	Target Population.....	26
3.4	Description of the Respondents.....	26
3.5	Sample and sampling procedures.....	26
3.6	Data instruments.....	27
3.7	Data collection procedures.....	28
3.8	Validity and Reliability of the interview Instrument.....	28
3.9	Data Processing and Analysis .....	29
3.10	Ethical Consideration .....	29
<b>CHAPTER FOUR : PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS</b>		
4.1	Introduction.....	31
4.2	Response Rate .....	31
4.3	Demographic information.....	32
4.3.1	Distribution of the Respondents by Gender.....	32
4.3.2	Distribution of the Parents and Teachers by Age .....	33
4.3.3	Distribution of the parents by Marital Status.....	33
4.3.4	Distribution of the parents and teachers by Level of Education .....	34
4.3.5	Distribution of teachers by teaching experience .....	35
4.3.6	Teacher's stay at current station.....	35
4.4	Parental involvement in the learning processes in private schools .....	36
4.5	Communication Channels between schools and parents.....	40
4.6	Volunteer work provided by parents in schools.....	43
4.7	Monitoring of the learning process at home .....	49
4.8	Chapter summary .....	51
<b>CHAPTER FIVE : DISCUSSION</b>		
5.1	Introduction.....	52
5.2	Parental involvement in creating conducive learning environment at home .....	52
5.3	Communication Channels between schools and parents.....	53
5.4	Volunteer work provided by parents in schools.....	57

5.5	Monitoring of the learning at home.....	59
5.6	Chapter summary .....	60

**CHAPTER SIX : CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

6.1	Introduction.....	61
6.2	Conclusion .....	61
6.2.1	Parental involvement in creating conducive learning environment at home.....	61
6.2.2	Communication Channels between schools and parents.....	61
6.2.3	Volunteer work provided by parents in schools .....	62
6.2.4	Monitoring of the learning at home.....	62
6.3	Recommendations .....	62
6.4	Suggestions for Further Studies .....	63
	REFERENCES .....	64

**APPENDICES**

-	Appendix 1: Questionnaire for Teachers .....	69
	Appendix 2: Questionnaire for Parents.....	72
	Appendix 3: Consent Form .....	75
	Appendix 4: Research Authorization – Stathmore University.....	76
	Appendix 5: Research Authorization – Ministry of Education.....	77
	Appendix 6: Research Authorization – NACOSTI .....	78
	Appendix 7: Research Permit.....	79
	Appendix 8: Ethics Clearance Certificate .....	80

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Sampling .....	27
Table 2: Response Rate .....	31
Table 3: Distribution of the Parents and Teachers by Gender .....	32
Table 4: Distribution of the Respondents by Age .....	33
Table 5: Distribution of the Parents by Marital Status.....	33
Table 6: Distribution of the Respondents by Highest Level of Education .....	34
Table 7: Distribution of teachers by teaching experience .....	35
Table 8: Distribution of Teachers by Stay in the Current Location .....	35
Table 9: Teachers responses on the frequency of parents' workshops in schools .....	37
Table 10: Provision of ideas to parents on creating home conditions that support learning..	38
Table 11: Frequency of school meetings with parents.....	40
Table 12: Regularity of sending out report cards to parents .....	41
Table 13: Existence of volunteer programs for parents in schools.....	44
Table 14: Provision of working space for volunteering parents.....	46
Table 15: Teachers responses on parents monitoring of learning process at home.....	49
Table 16: Parental Response on monitoring of the learning process at home .....	50

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Epstein's overlapping spheres of influence: External structure .....	10
Figure 2 Conceptual framework for parental involvement .....	24
Figure 3 Number of school organised workshops attended by parents .....	36
Figure 4 Parents' responses on the key themes of the workshops they attended .....	38
Figure 5 Proposals provided to parents on creating home conditions that support learning .	39
Figure 6 Content of the discussions in the school meetings.....	41
Figure 7 Mode of communication used by the schools as reported by the parents .....	42
Figure 8 Mode of communication used by the schools as reported by the teachers .....	43
Figure 9 Volunteer work that parents took up in schools as reported by parents.....	44
Figure 10: Volunteer work that parents took up in schools as reported by teachers .....	45
Figure 11 Facilities provided in the volunteering room as reported by parents .....	46
Figure 12 Facilities provided in the volunteering room as reported by teachers .....	47
Figure 13 Challenges parents faced in relation to volunteer work in schools.....	48

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DEB	District Education Boards
KCPE	Kenya Certificate of Primary Education.
KCSE	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education.
MOE	Ministry of Education.
SMC	School Management Committees
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Scientists

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## **DEDICATION**

To Alphonse my late father. You constantly reminding me that when it comes to education the sky is the limit.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background to the study**

Parental involvement is the contribution of the parents to schoolwork, which arises out their awareness, and understanding of the link between parenting and student achievement in school. It is an obligation to continuous communication between the parents and the teachers regarding a student's progress (NMSA, 2006).

The priority of the Government of Kenya Since independence, in 1963, has been to provide education to all citizens in order to eliminate illiteracy, poverty, ignorance and disease (Republic of Kenya, 2001). In this regard, between 35% and 38% of the national recurrent expenditure is committed to education. However, the bulk of this expenditure is committed to payment of teachers and the inspectorate with a very little share left for teaching and learning materials. Subsequently, parents have to supplement funds for purchasing of books, buildings, activity funds, uniforms and other associated costs including transport and meals for their children. The schools therefore have to depend entirely on the parents' contribution for the maintenance of non-teaching staff in their respective schools (Republic of Kenya, 2007).

The Children's Act (2013) makes it mandatory for all parents to send their children to school. Many learning challenges are therefore experienced in schools and whereas the government continues to hire more teachers, as a way of addressing the challenges, the need for effective involvement of parents in the education in schools has largely been unrecognized in Kenya save for meeting some of the costs associated with learning. Whereas the degree to which parents are involved in their children's education is manipulable and changeable (Zelman & Waterman, 1998; European Commission, 2000), a myriad of family factors including those associated with poverty, ethnicity, lack of parental education, marital status, and so on make it very difficult for teachers to deal with educational disadvantage among the children.

Symeou (2003) argues that involvement of parents in education is an appropriate means of improving quality of education in a developing country. Such a program would enable parents to be effectually involved in their children's education, and would provide a cost-effective means of addressing educational insufficiencies in Kenya. The government's commitment to the provision of free primary education drastically increased the demand for education and as such, pupil-teacher ratio is an issue of concern in schools. Symeou, (2003) further found out that Parents at all levels, are apprehensive with regard to their children's education and therefore want advice from schools on the ways they could help their children.

The Education Act (2013) provides the requisite legislation for autonomous management of primary schools by the respective stakeholders who include school managers, parents and the school community (Republic of Kenya Education Act, 2001). Consequently, the educational policy advocates for parental involvement in public schools, and for community involvement in the and running of schools. As such, parent teachers' associations (PTAs) in primary schools and boards of management (BOM) in secondary schools are organisations through which parents are involved in schools. A major weakness in the education legislation as Kimu (2012) notes is that the emphasis is mainly on high quality teaching and greater administrative efficacy. Parental organisations in schools largely fulfil the unlegislated functions particularly those revolving around funding, management and schools operations by overseeing the provision of teaching and learning resources (Onsomu, 2001).

Kimu (2012) further posits that the official education policy does not echo parental involvement within the Epstein's levels of involvement where pupils ought to benefit from a broad programme comprised of all six types of involvement advocated by Epstein. According to the Education Policy Framework No. 56. of 2014,) despite all the gains made in this sector with regards to service delivery the department is still facing challenges which include (a) lack of legal framework that enables the effective participation of parents/local communities in school development and governance, (b) local communities and parents do not participate in the development of information management systems, which have been found to assist pupils the most. As a result, the

benefits of this limited policy relating to parental involvement are also likely to be limited (Kimu., 2012). This research therefore embarks on finding out the level of parental involvement in private schools.

### **1.1.1 Parental involvement in the Kenyan context**

The free primary education (FPE) initiative saw a rapid rise in enrolments at primary school level. However, the gains in enrolment are overshadowed by the consequential difficulties triggered by the increased numbers and therefore the sector is currently challenged in terms of access while the retention, completion and attainment rates are decreasing (Republic of Kenya, 2001). Teaching and learning resources are limited while classrooms are in dire need of expansion. An acute shortage of teachers is widely reported coupled with heavy workloads that demoralize teachers. (Mwangi & Kimu, 2003). Eventually, parents are tasked with the provision of chairs, desks, school uniforms, books, and school development funds an action that places a heavy burden on them, resulting in most pupils being taken out of school. Geographical and gender disparities are therefore evident throughout the country (Oketch & Rollerston, 2007).

The government's resolve to improve the quality of education in Kenya has seen an increased provision of teacher training as the untrained teachers are phased out. In addition, funds are provided for instructional materials, teachers' salaries and quality assurance staff. However, none of these efforts have committed parental involvement in schools outside the role of providing funds. While the Education Act provides for parents to be represented in the School Management Committees (SMCs), only a few are legally involved in the school management undertakings. As such, effective parental involvement has not been recognised.

Several authors (Van der Warf, Creamers & Guldemont, 2001; DeSimone, 1999 ;) posit that the most valuable and essential means of improving quality in education is parental involvement in schools. When compared to other interventions, Van der Warf et al. (2001) ascertained that parental involvement is more useful and less expensive when compared to teacher training, teacher development, improvement in education management, books and learning materials.

The interchange towards greater standards in schools entails an assurance from school staff and communities (Machen *et al.*, 2005). As such, parental involvement is a principally suitable for the improvement of educational standards in a developing country like Kenya. The formulation of an inclusive program detailing the many opportunities for parental involvement and parenting training would increase awareness of children's potential while removing obstacles to effective parental involvement. This would in turn be a key strategy for improvement of educational standards for a country with insufficient resources like Kenya.

The education system in Kenya has provided for a number of ways that parents could be involved in education. The institutional governance structures within schools such as school management committees, parent-teachers-associations and school board-of-governors underscore the interests of all the key stakeholders within the wider school community. The system furthermore delegates roles for infrastructure development, and that of ensuring that thorough educational programs are implemented. However, as Machen *et al.*, 2005 note, the actual role of parents in the day-to-day learning is yet to be appreciated.

### **1.1.2 Parental involvement policy**

Since Kenya's independence in 1963, the government has made a number of initiatives aimed at reforming the education sector. The first piece of legislation was the Education Act (1968) whose purpose to governs all facets of education in the country. Since then, the shifting socio-economic environment has necessitated several amendments in order to incorporate the ever-changing circumstances with regard to delivery of education and training services. Republic of Kenya (2001) posits the education system in Kenya as a centralised management unit controlled using a top-down approach. The numerous amendments to the legislature have not successfully addressed issues of governance and education management. Accordingly, school management committees (SMCs) were established under the Education Act with the sole purpose of supervising the management of education in primary schools. Each school committee is comprised of 14 members, 8 of whom are parents representing each of the 8 classes of a primary school. Another 2

members represent the district education board (DEB), while the school's sponsor (usually the religious organization or community that started the school) sends three members. The Head teacher is the secretary of the SMC (Republic of Kenya, 2004a).

The SMC is therefore the legal trustee responsible for the running of the school thus oversees the budget, utilisation of school assets, funds, and the general welfare of staff and pupils. The SMC consequently has to work in tandem with the head teacher in order to maintain school ethos and discipline, and to solicit support of the sponsors, donors and well-wishers. Besides, the committee plays a critical role in the preparation of a school development plan (Republic of Kenya, 2004b).

In 2002, the government of Kenya introduced Free Primary Education and made it mandatory for parents to ensure that all children of school going age attend school. The initiative was aligned to the UN millennium development goal No. 2 on education, whose principal target aimed at ensuring access to universal primary education worldwide by the end of the millennium. Since then, parents are not required to pay primary school fees. However, the head teacher, in consultation with the school management committee (SMC) determines the levies for infrastructural development that each parent is required to remit. The SMC therefore acts as an important communication medium through which parents' cooperation is achieved.

From the provisions within the legislature, one is tempted to believe that parents are sufficiently involved in schools through the SMCs. However, the theory and practice seem to be far apart. Parental involvement, according to Epstein's framework, has six levels where parents are supposed to participate in. They are (a) parenting that entails parental direction and provision of an environment that enables children to become responsible, confident, and self-reliant with socially tolerable behavior (Monadjem, 2003). (b) Communication. It is necessary to established avenues between schools and parents in order to support smooth learning. (c) Volunteering. Schools should provide opportunities for parents to volunteer their services in the classrooms and in sports so that their talents can utilised. This way children will learn to appreciate their parents' abilities and parents will appreciate the work that teachers do. (d) Decision making. Parents are

supposed to be involved in decision making in matters that concern the learning of their children. Schools should not lock them out of such an important aspect of participation. (e) Collaboration. There is need to fit in community resources that promote school programs, family values, and children's learning and development (Epstein & Sheldon, 2005) (f) Learning at home. Schools need to provide information and suggest strategies for families to support pupils at home with homework and other curricular-related activities. (Epstein & Sheldon, 2005).

Based on this frame work then there is need to investigate the extent to which parents are involved in the learning process, with specific reference to private primary schools in Westlands sub county.

### **1.2 Statement of the problem**

Although parental involvement is advocated for in the Kenya's education policy, very little research has been carried out in private primary schools to determine the degrees to which it has been implemented. The study was therefore undertaken to find out the extent to which parents are involved in school and schoolwork. The study was carried out in west lands Sub County because it has the highest concentration of private schools in Nairobi.

### **1.3 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of the study was to examine parental involvement in the learning process in private primary schools with focus on Epstein's framework on parental involvement. There was need to investigate whether schools involve parents in the learning process of the children with regard to parenting, communication, volunteering, decision making, home learning and collaborating with the community in the Westlands Sub County.

### **1.4 Research objectives**

The objectives of the study were to:

- i. Assess the way private primary schools in Westland sub-county help families establish home environments that support children in studies.

- ii. Examine the home-to-school and school-to-home communication in private primary schools in Westland Sub County.
- iii. Determine how private primary schools in Westland Sub County coordinate the recruiting and organizing of parents for voluntary work.
- iv. Establish how private primary schools in Westland Sub County assist parents in monitoring and coordination of schoolwork at home.

### **1.5 Research questions.**

The following were the research questions guiding the study:

- i. How do private primary schools in Westlands Sub County help families establish home environments that support children in studies?
- ii. How is the home to school and school to home communication carried out in private primary schools in Westlands Sub County?
- iii. how do private primary schools in Westland Sub County recruit organise and coordinate parents for voluntary work?
- iv. How do private primary schools in Westland Sub County assist parents to monitor and coordinate schoolwork at home?

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study is to create awareness of the key role that parents play in their children's learning process. It would impact the parents on how important their support is. The results of the study would enhance learning in primary schools by bridging the social gap between home and school. It would make parents to understand that their involvement in the education of their children is priceless (Kimu., 2012). Whereas Bridgemohan (2002) advocates for effective involvement of parents for lessening communication and social status gaps in schools, current information on the degree of parental involvement in private primary schools in Kenya remains scanty, probably because has not been accorded the importance it deserves. Osten & Fuller (2008) underscore the children, teachers, school and educators as the key benefactors of parental involvement. The findings would therefore be used to recommend relevant approaches for school development in the primary level.

### **1.7 Limitations of the Study**

An important limitation is that the study was conducted in private primary schools in one sub-county and therefore caution is required before generalization to all other schools around the country.

### **1.8 Definitions of terms**

**Parents:** people who look after a child's upbringing and may include mother, father, siblings, relatives or guardians.

**Parental involvement:** the participation of parents in activities aimed at supporting learning at home, communication with teachers, school functions, and school governance (Desforges, 2003).

**Primary school:** also known as elementary school. it is an institution in which children attain primary education from the age of about five to twelve years coming before secondary and after preschool. The key players include teachers, pupils and parents (Republic of Kenya, 2004).

**Head teacher:** the individual responsible for all matters and activities associated with school operations. The individual may also be referred to as headmaster in the case of a male or headmistress in the case a female.

**Teachers:** the people involved in teaching and training of pupils in a school (Republic of Kenya, 2004). They are tasked with moral, mental, intellectual and physical development of the pupils (Republic of Kenya, 1999).

**School community:** the key role-players and duty-bearers in a school. They include pupils, teachers, parents, local administrators, old students, religious groups, politicians, and other interested people.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents review of literature on parental involvement in the learning process. It presents the theoretical framework, particularly the Epstein's theory on parental involvement. Two other theories of parental involvement have been incorporated. That is the theory of (Comer, 2003) and that of (Gordon 1977). Thereafter an empirical review of literature is presented and subsequently the conceptual framework. Ultimately, the research gaps are discussed.

#### **2.2 Theories of parent involvement**

##### **2.2.1 Epstein's Theory**

Epstein's theory starts by analysing the relationship between the families and the school in terms of sequential, separate and shared responsibilities (Epstein 1995). In sequential responsibilities, parents start imparting needed skills to their children before they formally begin their education at about age five then hand them over to the school. Once in school, teachers become the dominant players in the education of the children given their professional competences. In that sense, there are separate responsibilities between parent and teachers. Shared responsibilities emerge when both parents and teachers work together acknowledging their different backgrounds and duties.

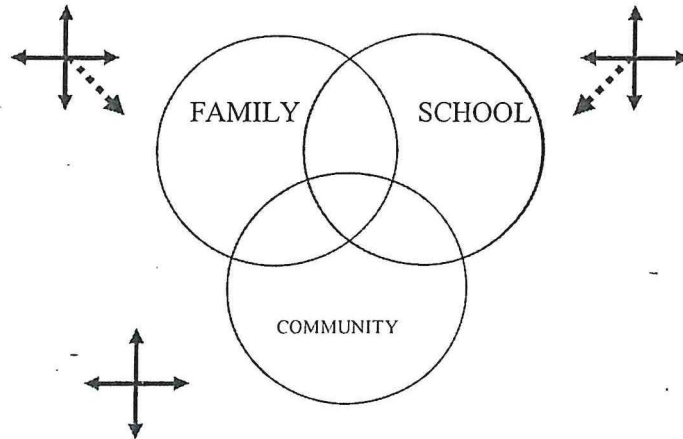
Van Wyk (2008) looks at these responsibilities as spheres of influence. He postulates that the success of pupils comes as a collective effort between parents and teachers, hence overlapping spheres of influence. This is portrayed in Figure 1.

**FORCE B**

Experience,  
Philosophy,  
Practices  
of Family

**FORCE C**

Experience,  
Philosophy,  
Practices  
of School



**FORCE D**

Experience,  
Philosophy,  
Practices  
of Community



**FORCE A**

Time/Age/Grade Level

**Figure 1: Epstein's overlapping spheres of influence: External structure**

**(Adopted from Van Wyk, 2008)**

According to Epstein (1987), there are three forces associated with parental involvement. Force A addresses the impact age, time and grade level have on pupils, families and schools. A degree of departure or overlap is constantly observed with every pupil's age, grade, and the historical stage at which the pupil was in school.

Force B represents the demands placed on families while Force C represents the demands placed schools. These two forces overlap quickly depending on the actions of the parents and that of the teachers. If parents increase their attention on their children's schooling (Force B) an increased overlap is created between families and schools on the other hand, if the teachers involve parents in their regular teaching norms (Force C), an increased overlap is expected between schools and families. Force D represents the influences of the community towards both the schools and families through its practices, and value systems. (Epstein, 1987:128).

Based on the understanding of each of these influences, all the 4 forces can identify their duties, responsibilities and interest with regard to the children and consequently team up to create better experiences and development of the pupils. This is possible through shared actions and responsibilities meant to direct and motivate pupils to be successful in their schoolwork (Epstein, 1995:1).

Whenever schools make a few isolated interactions and communication with families and with the community, the three spheres are relatively separate. Moreover, if schools regularly engage the families and the community, the three spheres come over lapping one another all the more, a situation likely to encourage pupils in their schoolwork, assist one another, think positively, and participate in schooling.

Communities could replicate school-like programmes and activities aimed at rewarding pupils' excellence creativity and progress in school (Van Wyk, 2008:13). Communities could also create family events aimed at encouraging families to improve their support for the children. Community-minded families and schools help their neighbourhoods and

other families. Families in turn emphasize the importance of schooling, attending to homework and to activities that nurture pupils' skills and mental state of success.

(Doyle & Slotnik, 2006) posit that the notion of a community school is gaining recognition. To this effect, programs and services for pupils, teachers and parents, are provided before, during, and after a regular school day. Schools and communities agree on the critical programs and services that are family friendly considering their practicability and the realities of family life. With this cooperation in place, pupils are able to learn happily and in caring environments (Epstein, 1995).

### **2.3 Classification of parent involvement according to Epstein**

According to Epstein (1995), parental involvement should be carried out on six levels: parenting, communication, volunteering, decision-making, collaboration, and learning at home. These levels of interaction are supposed to bring the stakeholders namely parents, pupils, teachers, and the community closer together in order to enhance learning both in school and at home.

**Parenting:** Monadjem (2003) describes parenting as direction and endowment of a family atmosphere that make children grow into accountable, confident, resourceful individuals with socially tolerable norms and values. Schools can encourage parental involvement by implementing programmes that require family assistance on the child and by providing guidelines on how to sustain learning at each grade. The key element of parenting is to meet the basic needs of children that is food, clothing, shelter and health care (Bridgemohan, 2002).

Schools should pay family visits in order for the schools to understand the families and vice versa (Epstein & Sheldon 2005). Schools are therefore required to provide clear information to the parents using all the available means of communication. On the other hand, parents should supply all the schools needs for the children. Schools should encourage cultural exchange and help to build up the talents of the children. (Epstein, 1995).

There are numerous advantages of parenting accrued to pupils, parents and teachers (Epstein & Sheldon, 2005). Family backgrounds are understood including their needs, cultural sensitivities, needs and goals of their children. In return, parents get to know the challenges that other parents are experiencing with parenting. These experiences create a greater cohesion between the parents, teachers and the school as the children grow into adolescents. Parents get to know how to modify the environment accordingly as the children grow, learn and attend school. To the pupils, it becomes obvious that the family is conducting supervision of learning and consequently parents are accorded respect. The children in turn acquire positive personal attributes including values, beliefs and behaviour. They are able to balance out time for the various activities including home chore, homework and other activities. Pupils therefore develop a liking for schooling thus improving participation.

Once parents are engaged in their children's schools and in their social activities, the pupils excel emotionally, socially and academically. Moreover, pupils get to know that their parents are making a concerted effort in following up on their schooling and that excelling in schoolwork is meaningful. Overall, mutual respect grows between the teachers and the parents because they get to appreciate one another even the more (Epstein & Sheldon, 2005).

**Communication:** This is the link that makes the machinery of education to run smoothly. There should be mutual communications between school and home, throughout the year dealing with school programs and pupils' performance. Schools should conduct meetings with each parent on a yearly basis with a follow up where the need arises. The schools should send home weekly or monthly reports of pupils' work to parents. Parents on the other hand should send their comments back to the teachers and do a recommendation if need be (Epstein, 2005). Where communication is not carried out effectively, an impediment develops for parental engagement. It was noted that communication was one way and mostly from schools to parents and more or less revolving around discipline issues or learning challenges identified among the pupils. (Epstein 2005)

When communication is carried out effectively, it has a number of benefits. To begin with, pupils, appreciate their own progress and the need for them to maintain or improve their performance. Pupils understand better the school expectations, procedures for behaviour and attendance as well as other policies. Informed decisions are made about school courses and programmes, as well as understand the part they play, serving as the link between school and home. Parents' awareness of school programmes and policies as well as their ability to monitor their child's progress is lifted to another level. When children's have learning problems parents can make informed decisions. If a barrier exists between teachers and parents, it is brought down by mutual communication. On the side of teachers, they are able to communicate with the diverse families (Epstein 2005).

Bridgemohan, (2005) suggest that when communication between the school and the home is improved, social networks are build up. Parents appreciate their own key roles and personal efficacy and are motivated to continue with their own education. When parents meet other parents, experiencing similar problems their vision is broadened.

**Volunteering:** These are opportunities for parents to participate in the actual learning in the classroom. Parents are recruited to assist the teachers in class and to be the backup during co-curricular activities. (Monadjem, 2003). The school is supposed to create a platform on which volunteers, pupils and teachers can meet and exchange ideas. It is here that talents can be identified that will add to the children's accomplishments in school. (Project Appleseed, 2008). Schools may need to deal with some challenges in the successful recruitment of volunteers by ensuring that families a welcome to contribute their time and talents through volunteer arrangements. The volunteer programmes should in essence be synchronised to the needs of the school, teachers, and pupils while recognising the effort of the volunteers (Bridgemohan, 2002).

Schools could benefit from volunteer programmes in a number of ways. The Pupils could discover many skills and talents within themselves while parents could learn new skills from the contributions of other parents. The pupils learn communication skills for engaging adults and the wider society. Through the volunteer programmes, Parents appreciate the teachers' job and consequently improve the general interaction with the

school and with the take home school activities. Parents develop confidence working in a school environment and with their children. Overall, Families feel appreciated and always welcomed at school once they attain specific abilities during volunteer work (Epstein, 1997). Teachers also get to know the talents among the parents and their key interests in the school. Eventually, they are able to give the desired care to pupils, with the assistance of the parents.(Epstein,1997)

### **2.3.1 Parental involvement in learning activities in the home**

Schools need to communicate with families regarding the skills that are required of pupils in every subject and consequently prepare the pupils for school (Monadjem, 2003). The class activities could either be structured and supervised by the teacher or originated by the parent without the knowledge of the teacher. The teachers could assign homework requiring pupils' interaction with their parents regarding the lessons being taught at school. The activities that the pupils are required to undertake with their parents are organised alongside the homework. In doing so, the pupils are setting goals each year alongside their parents eventually laying future plans pertaining to college or professions.

There are a number of benefits accruing to this kind of parental involvement: homework is completed in time as the pupils develop positive attitude for schooling while developing their confidence, self-esteem skills and abilities that are associated to class work. Pupils get to see their parents as their true teachers and homes as an extension of their school. Moreover, Pupils develop an obligation for sharing schoolwork with parents and are able to apply the knowledge acquired at school to real situations in life. The Parents on the other hand acquire a better understanding of the annual instructional program that outlines the learning areas in each of the subjects. Eventually, parents are able to motivate the pupils while providing the support required. Another benefit is that the children appreciate the teaching skills employed and are able to participate in school, class work and homework effectively (Epstein, 1997).

### 2.3.2 Decision-making

According to Naidoo (2005), parents could take part in advisory committees, school boards, local school councils or actively participate as members of PTA. Under such arrangements, parents would be able to participate in setting of the school goals, development plans, program activities, staff decisions and in allocation of funds for school programmes.

Naidoo (2005) further posits that parental involvement in PTA activities, classroom volunteer work, and home tutoring among other activities prepares them for active roles in decision-making processes at their child's school. Eventually, the Parents appreciate the school programs, and structures. They also acquire a wealth of experience in working with teachers. The parents' knowledge of school programmes coupled with their dependability on teachers makes them effective in decision-making processes.

As such, it is advisable for schools to set up channels that link PTAs to families through parent representatives and to make all information available regarding PTA polls school councils (Project Appleseed, 2008). Consequently, active PTAs, with effective participation of parents need to be established for engaging lobbies, county/municipal level boards and communities in order to promote the welfare of the school (Project Appleseed, 2008).

#### The benefits of successfully

Successful involvement of parents in the decision-making processes of the school gives the pupils the assurance that their rights are secure. A platform is created whereby pupils have an input in the policies enacted by parents' organizations. Since Parents are involved in decision-making, they feel that their input is valued and gain the perception of owning their school. The pupils get motivated when expressing their experiences with other pupils and families because they are confident about their school. On the other hand, teachers get to appreciate, parental perspectives in policy formulation and decisions.

### 2.3.3 Collaboration with the community

The main feature sought through Collaboration with the community, according to Epstein and Sheldon (2005), is to ascertain and to incorporate community resources for the enhancement of school plans, family experiences, and pupils' schooling and growth. Schools should therefore avail information on the community activities that are linked to learning skills and talents to pupils and families. Through the pupils, schools could create activities such as drama, music, art, and others for the communities and families. School alumni could be requested to take part in school activities as a way of linking school programs to the community (Epstein & Sheldon, 2005).

Many benefits are associated with this kind of involvement. Pupils acquire knowledge and abilities through an enhanced school and non-school experiences. The pupils appreciate the future prospects in education and careers. The pupils acquire benefits accrued from the opportunities that link them to the communities. Eventually, they are proud of their communities and of their service to the respective communities. Parents on the other hand obtain skills associated with the use of, locally available resources as a way of increasing skills and talents and eventually attain the desired services. Families network with other families in communal activities and therefore derive some family pride from their participation and contribution to the community. Consequently, the role of the school is made known, as the community's support and contributions to the school are made. (Epstein & Sheldon, 2005).

With regard to teachers, community resources supplement the syllabus and the knowledge gained at school is enhanced. It becomes possible for the teachers to use mentors, business cohorts, and volunteers, among other role models to support pupils with learning activities and with teaching practice. Moreover, teachers would be motivated to refer pupils and families to the required services eventually taking pride in the contribution to their communities (Project Appleseed 2007). According to Monadjem (2003), a school's success is dependent upon the support accorded to it by the community since its impact extends to families, churches, local traders, and the entire neighbourhoods in the community. For that reason, the community has an influential

power on the pupils' progress and growth through fundraising, children rights advocacy, provision of learning events outside of school, communal support, recreation, social and health services (McKenna & Willms, 1998).

When schools communicate regularly with the communities, collaboration is enhanced and the barriers to parental involvement are removed. Eventually links between classrooms and the community are established to provide assistance to pupils both at school and at home (Doyle & Slotnik, 2006). The collaboration pays off with progressive achievements of the pupils. As such, the collaboration can provide the support necessary to deter perilous behaviour amongst the adolescent pupils. (Brown, 2010). A positive school climate leads to a positive family involvement, which in turn enhances parents' opinions regarding the school (Buchman, 2000). Positive family and communal relations are essential mechanisms for effective schools and always nurture higher achievement, improved conduct and healthier backing for the schools (NMSA, 2003).

Communal cohesion excites progressive results for teenagers including improved results, better interactions, conflict resolution skills and direction. Through community based after-school activities, teenagers feel they belong to the community (Brown and Beckett, 2007). Family participation in school matters culminates to overlapping spheres of influence between families, the school and the community. Therefore, schools ought to be reassured to engage parents through parental agendas, establishing communication between families and school, volunteer plans, coordinating home-school learning exercises and by collective involvement of the business community (McNeil & Patin, 2000).

#### **2.3.4 Comer's theory of parental involvement**

A school is an ecological structure whose pupils' conduct, outlook and achievement mirror on its climate and that of its community as well. The relations within a school structure, directly influence the pupils and must therefore be properly articulately designed in order to positively influence pupil's attitudes, performance and attainment. Comer's Social Action Model stresses that pupils have to be seen as belonging to a family, a neighbourhood and a community. These make up the elements of a school's

structure. Comer's school improvement programme, suggests that learning takes place by crafting supportive associations among all the actors in education (Monadjem, 2003).

In order to operationalise the Comer's model, it is essential to establish a school management team, a parental programme and a mental wellbeing team. The team works together to support all the participants' requirements. Teachers and Parents have to cooperate if they were to understand the age appropriate needs of the pupils. The vital components of Comer's line of argument include a school development plan, staff progression undertakings, a monitoring and evaluation program pinpointing the social and educational goals within the school activities. Collective decision making, positive approach to problem solving, and solid collaboration are the key values to the model. Parents are at a lower level of command than the teachers and head teacher. As such their influence is parents' influence is subordinate (Van Wyk 1996 in Monadjem, 2003). Kimu, (2012) posits that the model could be adopted for the Kenyan situation as a means of inculcating discipline and respect amongst pupils in schools where strategies to the effect of requiring parents to inculcate discipline at family level or that of directing communities to mend societal norms and values is largely unsuccessful.

### **2.3.5 The Gordon theory of parent involvement**

A Family environment is vital for human growth and particularly the formative years. Families therefore require support in establishing family environments that are appropriate for children's growth. To this effect, Gordon's (1977) theory proposes three methods by which families and schools could get connected to influence one another. The Family Impact Model suggests that schools could enlighten families on effective parenting and on assisting children's schoolwork. The key assumption in the model is that teachers already have the correct skills for teaching parents, and that the parents are interested and willing to acquire the knowledge. The intent of the model was to support the parents to deal with the demands of the society and of the education system, as a means of raising socially acceptable and academically successful children (Gordon,

1977). In order to accomplish the foregoing among the parents, Gordon (1977) recommended a number of programmes:

Parents Education Follow Through Programmes: where parents are trained by a parent teacher on parenting during the primary years of the education system. This method could generate complications arising from the disagreements among the various specialists on the finest method of parenting. Moreover, unaccustomed practices could be enforced on parents. Again, uncertainties arise on whether the efforts address synthetic issues at the expense of the fundamental issues (Monadjem, 2003).

The School Impact Model: parents and teachers mutually learn from each other. The school works alongside the family culture, eventually improving the relationship between parents and their children's learning. Parents could be invited to volunteer. Alternatively, they could be co-opted into parent advisory committees as a way of promoting the school to be more interested in family needs. According to Monadjem (2003), several programmes adopt this strategy thereby guiding parents with decisions making processes. Parents could also be incorporated into the school committees thereby empowering them to acquire decision-making skills and get the experience with the power structures in the schools. Through this method, parents foster positive outlooks regarding the school and teachers. Participation in school committees enables the parents acquire more support from the community. All the same, Monadjem opines complications with the model could rise if the school and the teachers fail to consent parents in to the positions. Moreover, parents could fail to exploit their authority constructively (Monadjem, 2003).

Gordon's (1977) Community Impact Model is shouldered on the fact that features in homes, schools and communities are interrelated. Eventually the communal resources are focussed in the direction of enabling the home school community cohesion. A comprehensive programme is therefore projected to the effect that parental efforts in education are not haphazardly directed. Rather, they are positioned within a broader social organisational setting. Monadjem (2003) however, reckons that the resource requirements for such a programme could be humongous.

Even though the model tags a number of roles for parents, the fundamental role of parents in their children's education is yet to be acknowledged in Kenya. Oketch and Rollerston (2007) posit that parental roles are restricted to enrolling children to school, remittance of fees for the maintenance of teaching facilities, equipment and staff salaries. Implementation of free primary education (in 2003) further reduced parental contribution in the education system believing that the government took over the obligation. The Kenya National Commission for UNESCO, (2005) observes that, parents largely overlook schools and as such, very few are incorporated in SMCs (Ngaroga, 2006).

The lack of involvement of parents in schools is a great opportunity lost for schools to benefit from the contribution parents could provide. Because parental involvement in schools is known to contribute to pupils' achievement, increase participation in schools, increased-completion rates, and impressive discipline. The pay offs extend to the larger community including parents, teachers and pupils. As such parents should be encouraged to participate by their respective schools.

## **2.4 Empirical Review**

### **2.4.1 Parenting**

A study by Zellman and Waterman (1998) observed that parenting can have two-sided effect. It can influence the parents' behavior positively creating awareness that they can be effective teachers for their children. This in itself will make them influence their children leading to positive outcomes such as a better attitude towards school and homework. Supervision at home encourages the child to read more, reduces television watching, resulting in positive child accomplishments.

Monadjem (2003) found that when it comes to children's reading achievement a positive parenting style was more effective than the extent to which parents were involved at school. Children had less learning problems. According to Egeland and Collins (2008), the level of attainment of the graduates was higher for those who had parental involvement in middle childhood, more understanding parent/child relationships in puberty and higher levels of social skills.

### **2.4.2 Communication**

Hoover Dempsey and Sandler, (1997) pinpoint that parents should have clear communication with their children about their personal and family values, goals, expectations and aspirations for pupils' learning. The communication of these goals and expectations in turn shape pupils' beliefs and behavior related to learning.

On the other hand, effective family school communication influences pupils' academic progress. The value of effective communication is generally strongest when it is characterized by mutual respect, careful listening, and school responsiveness to parents' questions, ideas, suggestions and concerns.

### **2.4.3 Volunteering**

It has been established that involvement of parents as volunteers in schools translates to high academic achievements for the child at all levels of learning Ma (1999). Other studies by Bridgemohan (2005), indicate that whenever parental are involved in Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) programs, positive outcomes evident throughout the children's life including outstanding educational accomplishment, decline in dropout rates while indiscipline become a thing of the past.

A study by Brannon (2008) indicates that parental involvement in the classroom is associated with growth of character in children. This also translates to higher academic attainment, progressive attitude towards assignments, and self-awareness of their own capabilities. Studies conducted by Ma (1999) indicated that the presence of parents in a mathematics class is a very powerful means of understanding their children's development in mathematical education. There is also a great decline in dropouts from mathematics in high school. When parents volunteer in school for events such as drama and athletics there is a decline in incidents of truancy and tardiness, according to Lemmer (2000).

### **2.4.4 Learning at home**

According to Frederick (2007), interaction between parents and children in the home influences not only children's emotional development and academic success, but schools

also get a chance to understand families. He emphasizes that parents need to give guidance to their children. Parental involvement in the home has a great influence on pupil academic achievements and children who are at risk could end up failing if parental involvement in their schooling is lacking. (Baily, 2006). In such cases, parents can help to improve their learning through their interactions with them in the course of doing their home learning activities.

Studies conducted by DeSimone (1999) indicate that high academic accomplishment is achieved mainly because of the interaction that takes place at home, including verbal reassurance and guidance, dinnertime conversation about school program and activities, more than by parents volunteering at school.

## **2.5 Conceptual Framework**

Parental involvement theories are fundamental in understanding the children progress in education of this serious issue in education. The school is an integral part of the larger society in which the parents belong. Henceforth they cannot function in isolation. Families are part of society and thus they affects what happens in school (Kreider, 2002) posit schools are strongly influenced by interactions at both classroom and community level.

Bronfenbrenner (1994) explains that the learning process is influenced by numerous forces and at different levels. His theory underscores that even with numerous social stimuli that breed context for pupils' progress in education, there are many options for intervention as well particularly through parental involvement.

The model formulated by Epstein provides levels of interaction through which parental involvement can be carried out through creating a conducive learning atmosphere at home, communicating, volunteering, decision-making, learning at home and collaboration with the community. The conceptual framework drawn below is based on four out of the six levels of interaction.

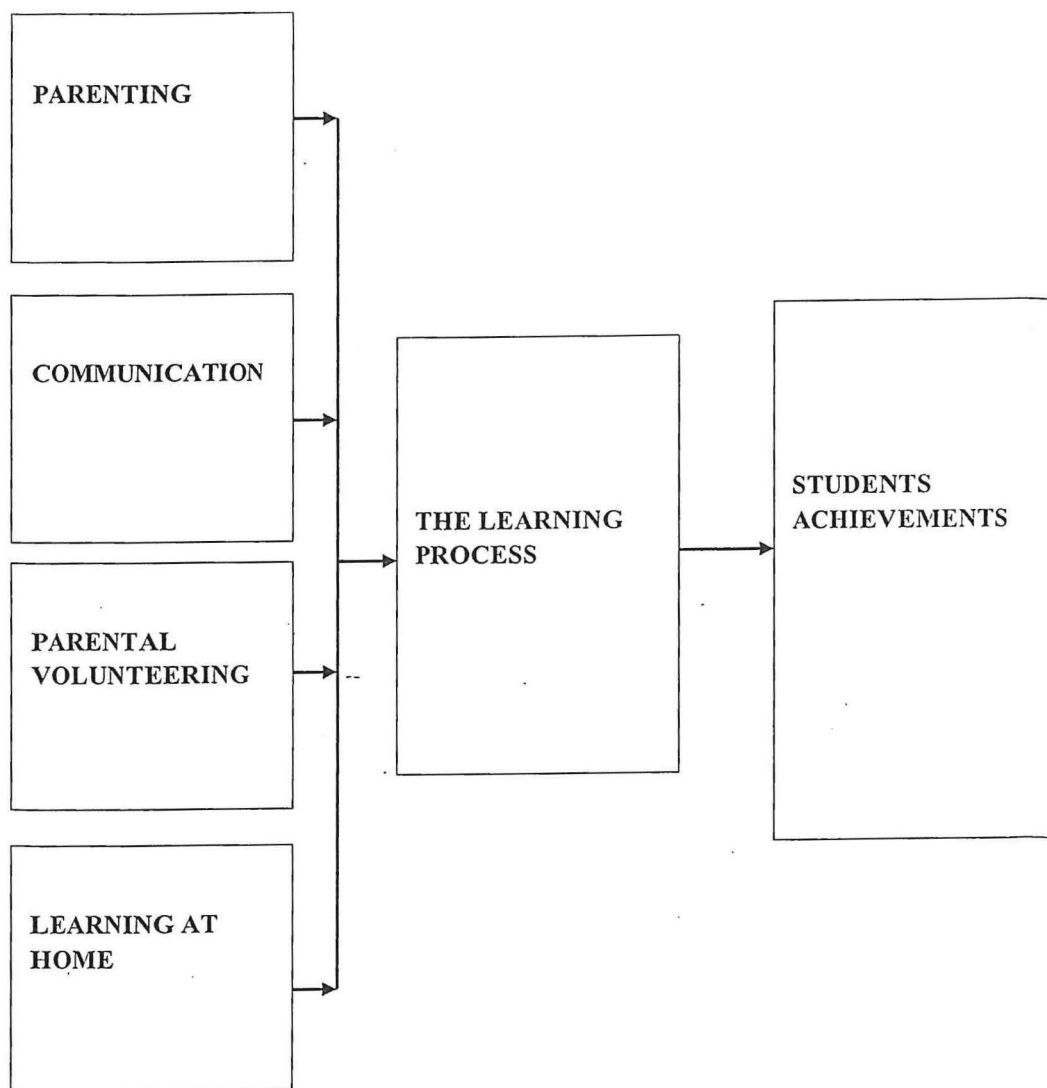


Figure 2: Conceptual framework for parental involvement

### 2.6 Research gap

In Kenya, community and parental participation in the learning process is minimal. This puts a limitation in the improvement of educational programmes (Republic of Kenya, 2001). Besides, the parent- school interactions are rarely friendly

Because most parents are invited to schools only when matters of poor performance or indiscipline arise. Consequently, schools need to be enlightened to the fact that formulation of parental involvement in school programs has numerous long term benefits that are evidenced by improved social and educational outcomes their pupils as advocated by Epstein. this study therefore set out to investigate the level of parental involvement in private primary schools.

### **2.7 Summary**

The chapter has presented an empirical review of literature pertaining to parental involvement in the learning process. The key theoretical framework, advocated was the Epstein's theory on parental involvement. Eventually, a conceptual framework has been provided and research gaps identified. That in Kenya parental and community involvement in the learning process is minimal and therefore the investigation is find out the extent to which it-exists. The methodology adopted for the study is discussed in Chapter three.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the methodology that was utilised for the study. It includes the research design, target population, sampling techniques and procedures, data, and the instruments used for the study. It also discusses the data collection procedures, data analysis techniques, and ethical considerations.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

McMillan and Schumacher (2006) define a research design as the procedure or set of procedures for conducting a study. The study employed a descriptive research design and approach. Kothari (2004) explains that descriptive research is employed to capture information concerning status of some phenomena in order to describe what exists with respect to the variables of interest in a situation. Additionally, Mugenda and Mugenda, (2003) argue that this design helps to obtain data that outlines existing the aspirations and challenges by asking individuals to give their perceptions, attitudes and values

#### **3.3 Target Population**

Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) define a population as a complete set of observations with unique characteristics that differentiate them from other populations. The target population of this study included all the private primary schools in the sub county. There were 30 private primary schools in the sub county as of the time of the study.

#### **3.4 Description of the Respondents.**

The respondents in this study were identified as the teachers and the parents of the pupils in the 30 private primary schools.

#### **3.5 Sample and sampling procedures**

Mugenda & Mugenda (2003) say that a sample size of between 10 and 30% is adequate for studies in social sciences. The researcher drew a random sample of 20% of the

schools for the purpose of the study. This translated to six schools that were selected using simple random sampling technique. This technique gives all members of the target population an equal and known chance of being included in the study.

The standard seven and eight classes were purposively selected to provide the respondents for the ease of data collection. This was because the parents and the teachers in the senior most classes had been in the schools long enough to provide the information sought by the study. To eliminate any form of bias, an equal number of streams were selected for all the participating schools. The schools that were randomly selected had at least two streams and therefore the respondents were drawn from among the teachers and the parents in only two streams in every school.

The class teachers in each of the streams selected in the six schools were selected as respondents for the study. As for the parents, 10 of them were randomly selected in each of the streams in standard 7 and 8 in each of the sampled schools. The choice of ten was based on the fact that the minimum class size in the private schools was 30 pupils in a class. A sample of 10% was selected in line with the recommendation of Mugenda & Mugenda (2003) that a sample size of between 10% and 30% is adequate. The sampling procedure was therefore as summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Sampling

Population of private schools	Sampled Schools (20%)	Sampled Classes	Respondents' Sampling Criteria		Respondents Sample Size	
			Parents	Teachers	Parents	Teachers
30	6	Class 7	10 parents	2	60	12
		Class 8	10 parents	2	60	12
<b>Total sample size</b>					<b>120</b>	<b>24</b>

### 3.6 Data instruments

A semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect data from the parents and teachers. It mainly included closed ended questions as well as a few open-ended questions. The tool was considered critical because the respondents fully understood the involvement of the

parents in the learning process. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), the administration of the questionnaire makes it possible to obtain the requisite data that meets the threshold of the specific objectives of the study in a standardized situation.

The questionnaire was divided into five parts that conform to the research objectives. The first part of the questionnaire sought the bio data of the respondents while the second part sought to determine the involvement of parents in the learning process. The third part of the questionnaire sought to establish the communication channels that exist between the schools and the parents. The fourth part sought to determine how schools coordinate the recruitment and involvement of parents for voluntary work in schools. The final part of the questionnaire sought to establish how schools help parents to monitor and discuss schoolwork at home

### **3.7 Data collection procedures**

A clearance letter was obtained from the School of Humanities and Social Sciences Strathmore University. A research permit was sought from National Council of Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) headquarters, Nairobi. The researcher then consulted with the county education office on the authorization to interact with the staff in the sampled schools.

Once permission was granted, the researcher proceeded to create rapport with the administrators and the respondents in the sampled schools and subsequently booked the appointments to collect the data. For the teachers, the questionnaires were administered through the “fill while waiting” method where the researcher distributed the tools, waited for the respondents to fill and then picked them once the respondents were done. For the parents, 10 pupils were randomly selected to take the questionnaire home for the parent to fill and return the following day. The researcher collected data over a period of two weeks.

### **3.8 Validity and Reliability of the interview Instrument**

Validity is the degree to which a study accurately reflects or assesses the specific concept or construct that the researcher is attempting to measure (Thorndike, 1997). The researcher consulted with the study supervisors drawn from the Department of

Humanities and Social Sciences at Strathmore University. Orodho (2004) asserts that once a data collection tool has been constructed, it should be tried out in the field to ensure further validity. In this regard, a piloting was carried out to check the reliability of the data and to identify misunderstanding, ambiguities and inadequacies of the items in the tool. Pilot questionnaires were therefore administered to four teachers and 10 parents in one of the schools in the sub county that was not part of the sample. Feedback from the responses enable the researcher to review and edit the wording in few items in the tool.

### **3.9 Data Processing and Analysis**

Data analysis entailed coding and tabulation of data collected into manageable summaries. The questionnaires were coded to ensure that all the data collected was entered into the computer, which is a critical prerequisite for its accuracy in the process of analysis. The responses were sorted and organized following the order of the research questions. The researcher used Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 22). Quantitative data from the questionnaire tool was analysed by the use of frequencies, means and proportions to describe the variables. The output informed of frequency tables, diagrams, graphs and certain numerical procedures all aimed at summarizing the material in a form that is distinctive to the analysis.

Qualitative data was analysed by way of content analysis where similar variables were grouped together and results presented in verbatim. This was presented thematically in line with the objectives of the study. The researcher then discussed to what degree to which the results helped to explain the findings (Creswell & Clark, 2011).

### **3.10 Ethical Consideration**

Ethical issues that were of great concern in this study were informed consent, intrusion of personal affairs and mistreatment of participants. Of concern was the respondents' ability to decipher the entire research process, so that the findings are validated (Fisher, 1991). However, in this study, the respondents were apprised with all the relevant information necessary for them to participate willingly in the research. The questionnaires had an accompanying consent note, which provided sufficient information about the study.

The respondents had all the right to withdraw from the research and ask for more information whenever they want before research is published. This ethical consideration links very closely to the notion of privacy invasion, as the respondents taking part in the study acknowledges that the right to privacy has been given for the sake of the research (Fisher, 2010).

Another ethical issue, considered was the precision in data collection, analysis and reporting (Sekaran, Uma, Bougie, & Roger, 2012). In this study, the data collected was processed by means of systematic and scientific methods suggested by scholars as meeting the requirements. Data collected was exclusively used for the purposes of this study not for any other private purpose (Bashir, Javed, Ali, Meer and Naseem, 2013).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the data analysis and research findings on the parental involvement in the learning process in private primary schools in Westlands Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya. According to Kombo and Tromp (2006), data analysis involves separation of data into the basic elements of the study and eventually examining them in relation to the whole. It is therefore more than just probing the data collected in order to make deduction and inference. Rather, it involves scrutinizing the acquired information and making inferences.

The chapter starts with background information of the respondents then assesses the parental involvement in the learning processes in schools. The chapter further determines the communication channels between schools and parents and thereafter explores the parental involvement in voluntary work within the schools. Lastly, the chapter presents the challenges faced by the parents in the learning process of their children.

#### 4.2 Response Rate

Two sets of questionnaire tools were used to collect data among 120 parents and 24 teachers. The response rate was as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Response Rate

Respondents	Questionnaires distributed	Questionnaires returned	Response rate
Teachers	24	22	92%
Parents	120	93	77.5%
Total	144	115	93.2%

The response rate for the teachers was 92% while that of the parents was 77.5%. A total of 144 instruments were distributed out of which 115 were returned. The overall response rate was therefore 80%. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), posit that a response rate below

40% is unreliable, a response rate of 40%-50% is poor, a response rate of 50%-60% is acceptable for analysis and reporting, a response rate of 60% -70% is good and a response rate of 70%-80% is very good while response of over 80% is excellent. A response rate of 80% was therefore considered to be very good for data analysis.

### 4.3 Demographic information

Demographic information was sought from the teachers and parents respective of their gender, age, and education level. Additional background information sought from the teachers regarding their teaching experience and the duration they had stayed at their current station. The purpose of this information was to determine the parents and teachers' characteristics in relation to their involvement in the teaching and learning processes in their respective schools, and their ability to provide the information sought by the study.

#### 4.3.1 Distribution of the Respondents by Gender

Information was sought from the respondents regarding their gender. The purpose of this information was to determine if either males or females were implementing teaching and parenting in the sub-county. The teachers and the parents were therefore asked to indicate their gender and the responses were as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Distribution of the Parents and Teachers by Gender

Gender	Parents		Teachers	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Male	29	31.2%	0	0%
Female	64	68.8%	22	100%
Total	93	100%	22	100%

The statistics in Table 3 show that all the teachers who participated in the study were female. The statistics also show that 68.8% of the parents were female while 31.2% were male. The finding implies that there were more female teachers and parents directly

involved in the day-to-day learning processes in private primary schools in the sub county than males.

#### 4.3.2 Distribution of the Parents and Teachers by Age

The distribution of the respondents by age was as shown in Table 4

Table 4: Distribution of the Respondents by Age

Age	Parents		Teachers	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
21 – 30	3	3.2%	8	36.4%
31 – 40	44	47.3%	10	45.5%
41 – 50	34	36.6%	4	18.2%
51 – 60	12	12.9%	-	-
Total	93	100%	22	100%

Statistics in Table 4 show that 47.3% of the parents were aged between 31 and 40 years while the proportion of those aged between 41 and 50 years was 36.6%. This observation is consistent with the fact that primary school children in Kenya are aged between seven years (at standard 1) and 14 years (at standard 8). On the other hand, 45.5% of the teachers were between 31- 40 years of age while the proportion of those aged between 21-30 years of age was 36.4%.

#### 4.3.3 Distribution of the parents by Marital Status

The distribution of the parents by their marital status is summarised in Table 5.

Table 5: Distribution of the Parents by Marital Status

	Frequency	Percent
Married	89	95.7
Single	4	4.3
Total	93	100.0

Findings in Table 5 show that 95.7% of the parents were married while 4.3% were single suggesting that most of the parents in the private schools in the sub county were married.

#### 4.3.4 Distribution of the parents and teachers by Level of Education

Information sought on the educational background of the parents was as summarised in Table 6.

Table 6: Distribution of the Respondents by Highest Level of Education

Level of Education	Parents		Teachers	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Master's degree	2	2.2%	6	27.3%
Bachelor's degree	75	80.6%	8	36.4%
Post-Secondary Diploma	-	0.0%	4	18.2%
Post-Secondary Certificate	12	12.9%	4	18.2%
Secondary	2	2.2%	-	-
Primary	2	2.2%	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 6 shows that 80% of the parents held bachelor's degree level of education while 12.9% held varied post-secondary certificates. A small proportion of the parents held Master's degree level of education. On the other hand, 18.2% of the teachers held P1 certificate in education with a similar proportion holding diplomas in education. The greatest proportion of the teachers held bachelor's degree in education at 36.4% while 27.3% of the teachers held master's degree in education.

Except for 4.4% of the parents who had primary level (2.2%) and secondary level (2.2%) of education, all the other parents and teachers had acquired tertiary level of education. This implies that majority of the respondents were educated to understand their role in contributing positively to the learning process of their children and possessed the capability to respond to the questionnaire appropriately besides appreciating importance of the research.

#### 4.3.5 Distribution of teachers by teaching experience

Information was sought on the teaching experience of the teachers. The purpose of seeking the information was to ascertain if the teachers were exposed to instructional activities long, enough to enable them assess performance and attitude of learners in their respective schools in order to provide the critical information sought by the study. The teaching experience of the teachers were as shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Distribution of teachers by teaching experience

Teaching experience	Frequency	Percent
1 - 5 years	2	9.1%
6 - 10 years	2	9.1%
11 - 15 years	8	36.4%
16 -20 years	6	27.3%
Over 20 years	4	18.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 6 shows that 36.4% of the teachers had taught for between 11 and 15 years while 27.3% had taught for between 16 and 20 Years. Only 9.1 percent of the teachers had less than 5 years of experience. The findings therefore suggest that most of the teachers were exposed to school systems and processes to be in a position to professionally report on the involvement of parents in the learning processes in their respective schools.

#### 4.3.6 Teacher's stay at current station

Information on the length of time that the teachers had stayed at their current stations was as shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Distribution of Teachers by Stay in the Current Location

Duration of stay at the current station	Frequency	Percent
1 - 5 years	6	27.3%
6 - 10 years	12	54.6%
11 - 15 years	2	9.1%
Over 20 years	2	9.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100%</b>

Findings in Table 8 show that 27.3 percent of the teachers had been at their current working station for less than five years while 54.6% had been at their stations for between 6 and 10years. A further 9.1% had served for between 11 and 15years while yet another 9.1% had served for over 20 years. This finding confirms that indeed the teachers, especially those who had served for over five years, were in a position to respond on the issues that existed in their respective schools as sought by the study.

#### 4.4 Parental involvement in the learning processes in private schools

The first objective of the study was to determine the way private primary schools in Westland sub-county involve parents in the learning process of their children. In order to achieve this, a set of questions was posed to the parents and teachers on their involvement in the learning process. The questions probed the involvement of the parents in school workshops and on home environments that support learning.

To begin with, the parents and the teachers were required to state whether their respective schools organised workshops for parents. It was established that all the schools held workshops on parenting and child rearing. All the teachers and all the parents who participated in the study reported this. The parents were therefore required to indicate the number of workshops they had ever attended and the results were as shown in Figure 3.

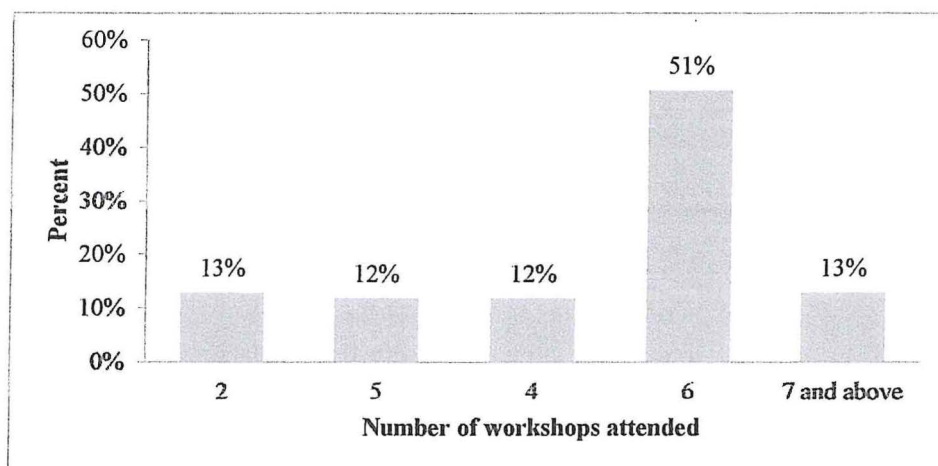


Figure 3: Number of school organised workshops attended by parents

Findings in Figure 3 show that the parents had attended a varied number of workshops where 13% had attended two workshops, while 12% had attended 3 workshops. Another 12% attended four workshops while 51% had attended six workshops. Information sourced from the teachers on the frequency of parents' workshops was as summarised in Table 9.

Table 9: Teachers responses on the frequency of parents' workshops in schools

Frequency of parents workshops in the schools	Frequency	Percent
Once a year	18	82%
Once a term	3	14%
Non response	1	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100%</b>

According to Table 8, 82% of the teachers reported that their schools organised the parents meeting annually while 14% of the teachers reported termly workshops for the parents. The collaboration of the Information provided by the teachers in table 4 and the parents in figure 3 suggests that schools in the county organised the parents' workshops either on a termly basis or on an annual basis. The fact that the parents who participated in the study were sourced from class 7 and 8 suggests that most of the parents should have attended at least 6 workshops if the meetings were held annually and more than 6 where the workshops were held on a termly basis. Findings in Figure 3 also confirm that the concept of parent workshops was new in some of the schools that participated in the study, and therefore some parents had therefore attended only 2 workshops.

The teachers reported that whenever the meetings were planned, parents were normally batched together for sessions that concern a particular class and that age appropriate information is provided to the parents to enable them understand their children's stage of development and consequently be in a position to support them in the learning process. It is expected that by the end of the year, each of the parents in the school would have attended one workshop that is intended for the class his child is enrolled. According to the parents, the themes of the workshops they attended were as summarised in Figure 4

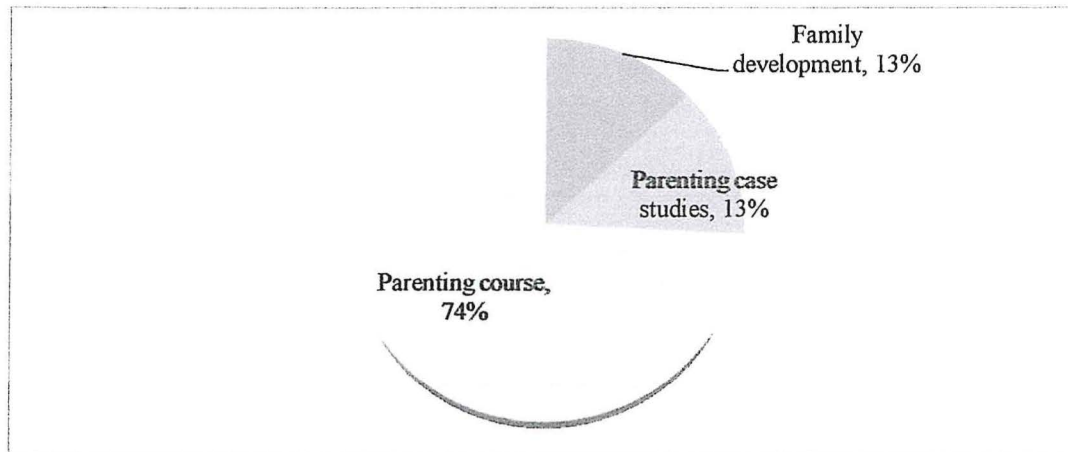


Figure 4 Parents' responses on the key themes of the workshops they attended

Findings in Figure 4 show that the parents' workshops revolved around parenting course as reported by 74% of the parents, parenting case studies as reported by 13% of the parents and Family development as reported by 13% of the parents. The parents further reported that the teachers at times never attended those workshops, a matter that was of great concern given that parents required feedback on some of the issues raised during the workshops.

Information sought from the parents on whether the schools provided them with suggestions on creating home conditions that support learning for the children was as summarised in Table 10.

Table 10 Provision of ideas to parents on creating home conditions that support learning

Enquiry	Response	Teachers		Parents	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Does your school give parents suggestions on how to create home conditions that support learning for the children	Yes	14	64%	81	87%
	No	8	36%	12	13%
	Total	22	100%	93	100%

Table 9 shows that 87% of the parents were provided with information, proposals, ideas and recommendations on creating home conditions that support learning for their

children, a position that was confirmed by 64% of the teachers. The suggestions ensured that parents were actively involved in the supervision of learning whenever children got home from school. The parents were therefore required to indicate the conditions they were implementing in their homes in support of learning for their children. The responses were collated as summarised in Figure 5

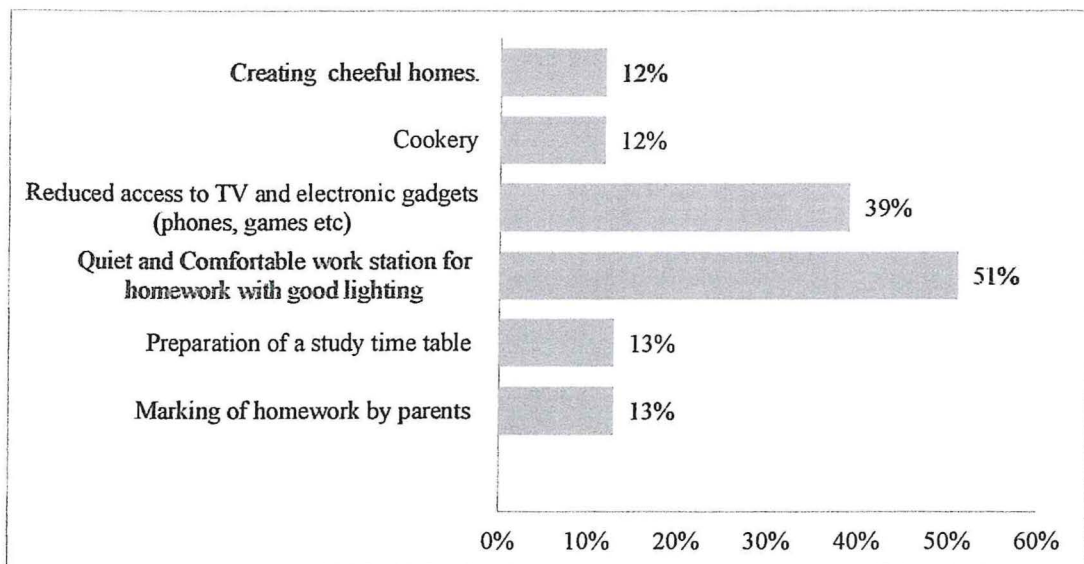


Figure 5 Proposals provided to parents on creating home conditions that support learning

According to Figure 5, 51% of the parents laid their emphasis on creating conducive study spaces that were quiet and equipped with good lighting and comfortable furniture. In addition, 39% of the parents, reduced access to television, and electronic gadgets was another strategy of creating home conditions that support learning. Thirteen percent of the parents reported on the issue of marking homework while another 13% reported preparation of a study timetable.

The physical arrangement of furniture and the layout of a study room can affect the pupil's ability to study. A cramped, crowded room may feel constrained, jammed and definitely not relaxed for any learning experience. Furthermore, adequate and appropriate lighting is essential for successful studying. It is almost impossible to stay focused while one is straining the eyes to see or read in dim lighting. Harsh artificial lighting may at times lead to headaches. A lightbulb that keeps going on and off can be very frustrating

and annoying too. These essentials, however diminutive they seem, may define whether the pupil will have a great studying experience at home or a bad one.

It does not take much noise to get someone out of their reading and distract them into the surroundings. Many pupils are easily distracted and have trouble keeping their attention focused especially when they are studying something they find boring or difficult. It is even harder to keep studying when there is an option of doing something else instead. This can be a problem when it comes to staying focused on the study plan.

#### 4.5 Communication Channels between schools and parents

The second objective of the study was to determine the communication Channels set between schools and parents in private schools in the Sub County. To achieve this, a set of questions was posed to the parents regarding home –to-school and school-to-home communication. To start with, the parents were required to state whether schools invited them for meetings regarding their children. It was found that schools held meetings with every parent regarding their child’s learning process. The frequency of the meetings was as summarised in Table 11.

Table 11: Frequency of school meetings with parents

	Frequency	Percent
Once a year	14	15%
Thrice a year	39	42%
Four – Times a year	14	15%
Over four times a year	26	28%
Total	93	100%

Findings in Table 11 show that 15% of the parents reported that they were invited for meetings at school once a year while 42% of the parents, were invited three times a year, Another, 15 % of the parents were invited for four meetings in a year, while yet another 28% of the parents were invited to schools for more than four times in a year.

Information sought on the subject matter of those meeting is summarised in Figure 6

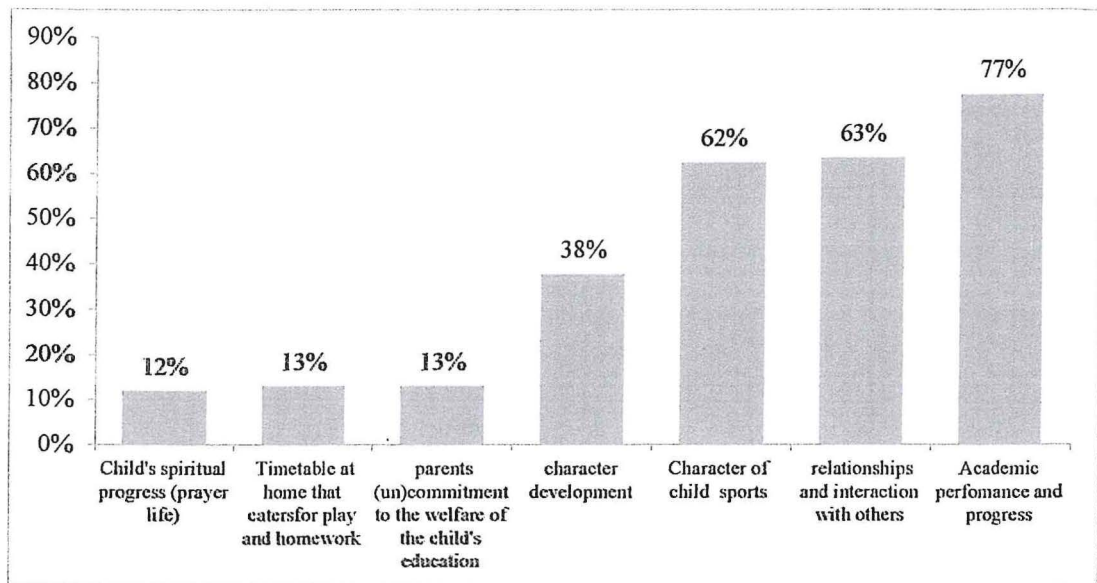


Figure 6 Content of the discussions in the school meetings

Findings in Figure 6 show that the academic performance and progress of the pupils was the single most discussed item between the schools and the respective parents as reported by 77% of the parents while 63% of the parents discussed the child's interaction with others and in sports. Other issues included the parental commitment to the child's welfare (13%), the learning progress at home (13%) and the child's spiritual progress (12%).

Information was then sought from the teachers on whether schools sent out report cards to parents. It was established that report cards for each of the pupils were sent out to their respective parents who were required to review and make comments alongside the items therein. The frequency of sending out the report cards as reported by the teachers is summarised in Table 12.

Table 12: Regularity of sending out report cards to parents

Regularity of sending out report cards	Teachers		Parents	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Monthly	10	45%	35	38%
Termly	12	55%	58	62%
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>100%</b>

Findings in Table 12 show that the teachers sent out report cards at least once in a term as reported by 45% of the teachers. This was confirmed by 38% of the parents who reported receiving communication through report cards once a term. On the other hand, 55% of the teachers sent out report cards on a monthly basis, which was confirmed by 62% of the parents who reported receiving communication through report cards on a monthly basis.

The parents were then asked to state whether schools sent out information to them regarding school policies and programs. All the parents responded in affirmative that their respective schools sent out clear information on all school policies, programs, reforms and transitions. These findings imply that parents gain understanding of school programmes and policies. Schools make it possible for parents to monitor their children's progress. They are able to react to their children's learning problems as needed.

The mode of communication used by the schools as reported by the parents was as summarised in Figure 7

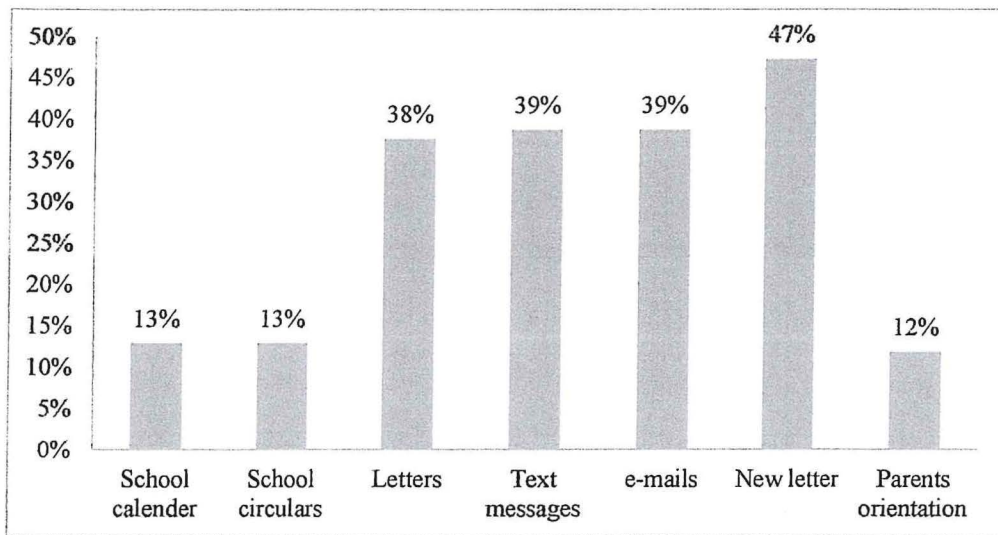
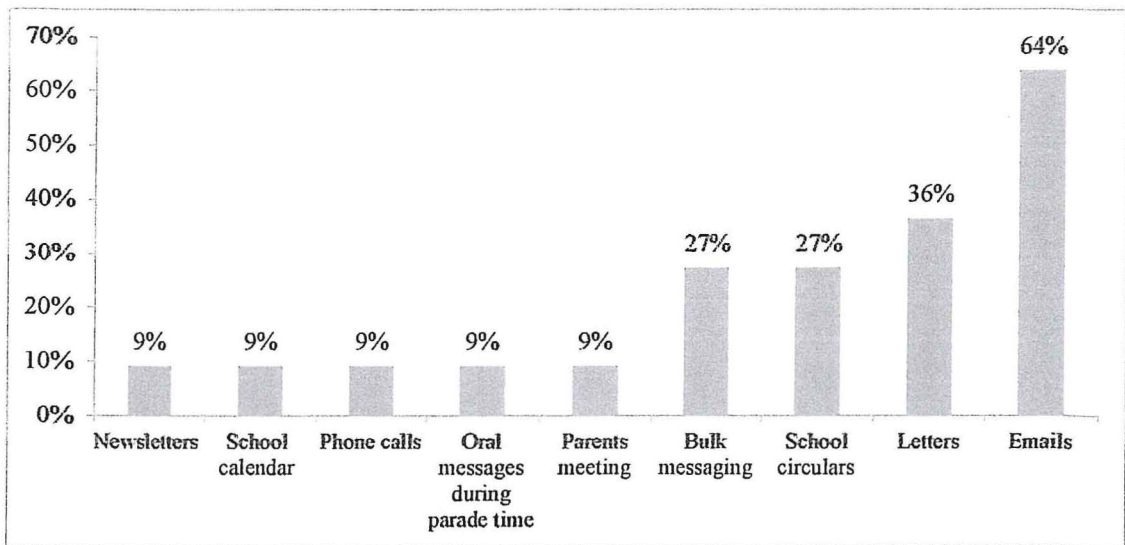


Figure 7 Mode of communication used by the schools as reported by the parents

Findings show that the most common method adopted by most of the schools included the newsletter as reported by 47% of the parents, emails (39%), text messages (39%) and formal letters (38%). Other mediums used include the school calendar (13%), school circulars (13%) and parents' orientation (12%).

The mode of communication used by the schools as reported by the parents was as summarised in Figure 8.



**Figure 8 Mode of communication used by the schools as reported by the teachers**

Findings show that the most common method adopted by most of the schools as reported by the teachers included emails as reported by 64% of the teachers, formal letters (36%), school circulars (13%), and text messages (39%). Other mediums used include, parents' meetings, school calendar, Phone calls, Oral messages during parade time and newsletters as reported by 9% of the teachers.

#### **4.6 Volunteer work provided by parents in schools**

The third objective was to document the recruitment and organization of parents for voluntary work in schools in Westland Sub County. To achieve this, several questions were posed to the parents and teachers regarding the kind of volunteer work they performed at school, the process of recruitment and the adequacy of the requisite resources for their voluntary work. Thereafter they were to report on the challenges associated with the volunteering.

To begin with, the parents and the teachers were to report on whether volunteer programmes to help teachers, administrators, pupils and other parents existed in their respective schools and the results were as shown in Table 13

Table 13 Existence of volunteer programs for parents in schools

Enquiry	Response	Teachers		Parents	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Does your school have a volunteer program to help teachers, administrators, pupils and other parents?	Yes	8	36%	70	75%
	No	14	64%	11	12%
	Non response	-	-	12	13%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>100%</b>

According to the findings in Table 13, 75% of the parents reported having volunteer programmes in their schools while 12% of the parents reported that their school did not. In addition, 13% of the parents did not respond suggesting that they were not sure if such programmes ever existed in their schools. On the other hand, however, the teacher responses contradicted those of the parents in that 64% of the teachers reported non-existence of volunteer programmes in their schools with only 36% confirming their existence.

Further information was therefore sought from the parents regarding the kind of volunteer work that parents took up. The results were as shown in Figure 9

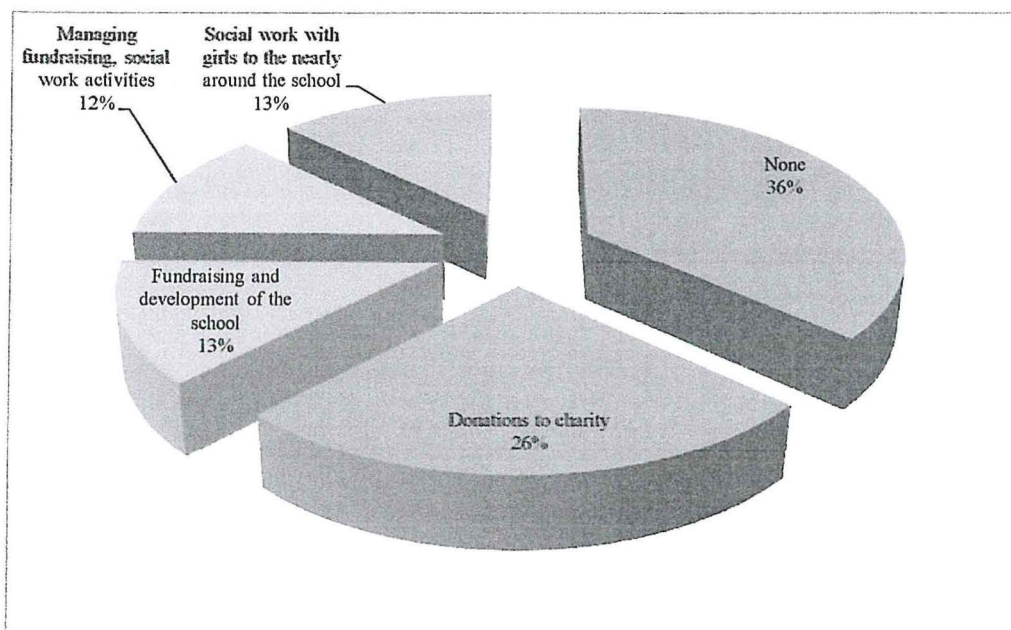


Figure 9 Volunteer work that parents took up in schools as reported by parents

Findings show that parents volunteered for three key activities that included; donations to charity as reported by 26% of the parents, fundraising for school development as reported by 13% of the parents, social work among the pupils in the school especially the girls as reported by 13% of the parents and managing fundraising and social work activities as reported by 12% of the parents.

Information sought from the teachers on the kind of volunteer work that parents took up in schools is summarised in Figure 10

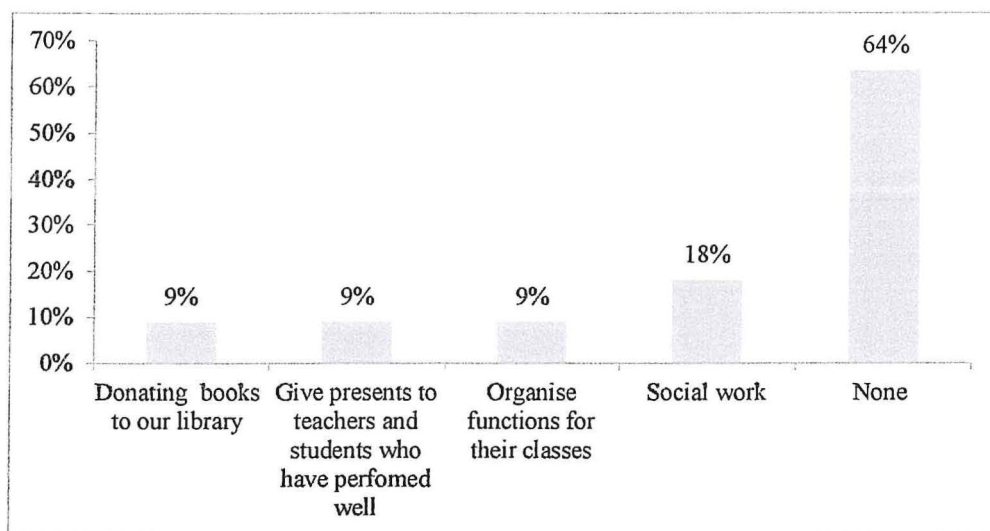


Figure 10: Volunteer work that parents took up in schools as reported by teachers

According to the teachers, parents volunteered for social work as reported by 18% of the teachers, organising functions for varied classes as reported by 9% of the teachers, giving presents to teachers and pupils who have excelled (9%) and donating books to the libraries (9%)

On whether a working space was availed by the school to the parents, the results were as shown in Table 14.

Table 14 Provision of working space for volunteering parents

Enquiry	Response	Teachers		Parents	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Does your school provide a parents room for those volunteering?	Yes	6	27%	58	62%
	No	14	64%	23	25%
	Non response	2	9%	12	13%
	Total	22	100%	93	100%

Findings in table 8 show contradicting reaction from both teachers and parents regarding the availability of a volunteering room. The majority (63%) of the parents reported that parents had a room set aside from where they could proceed with their volunteering activities. In contrary, the majority (64%) of the teachers reported that parents did not have any room from where they could proceed with their volunteering activities.

The parents were then required to state the other facilities that the volunteering room was equipped with. The results were as shown in Figure 11

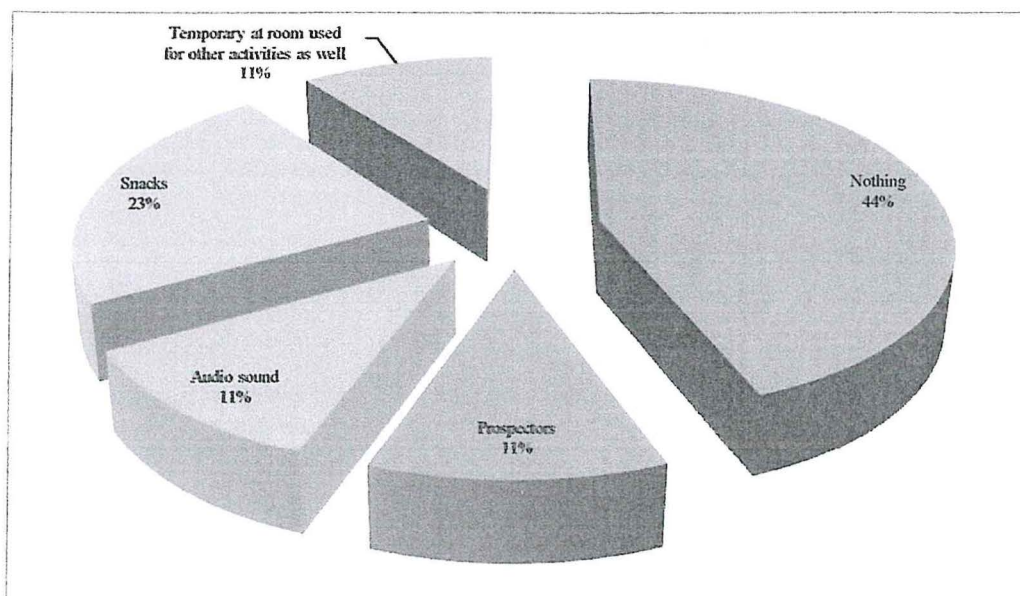


Figure 11 Facilities provided in the volunteering room as reported by parents

From Figure 11, 44% of the parents reported that the volunteer rooms were just empty spaces equipped with nothing except a chair and a desk. Mostly, this was a hurriedly assembled space in a facility regularly used for other tasks. In some of the schools however, the volunteer rooms were equipped with prospectuses (11%), audio sound equipment (11%) and snacks (23%).

The responses from the teachers regarding the facilities that the volunteering room was equipped with were as shown in Figure 12

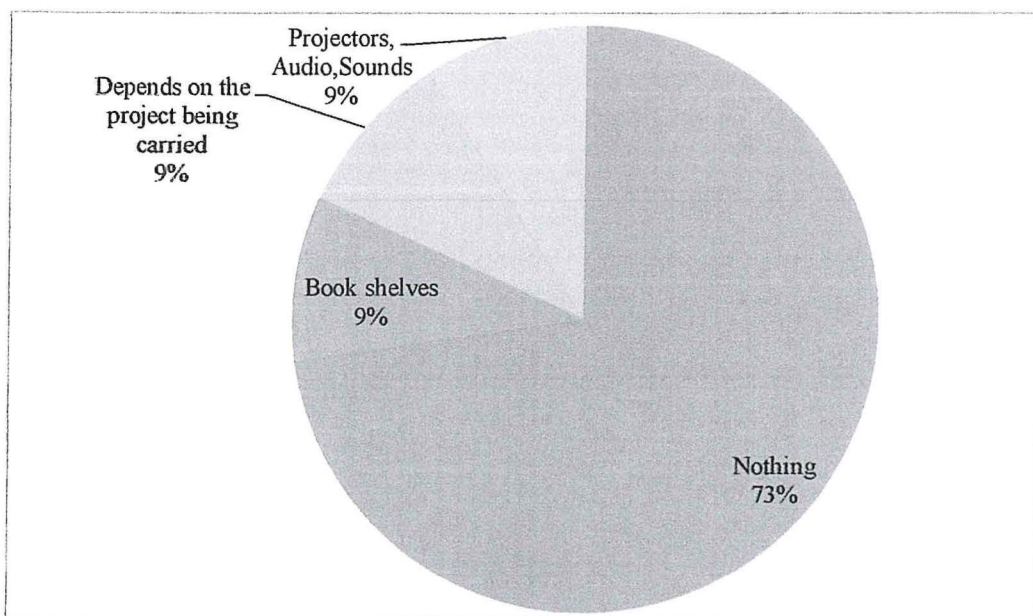


Figure 12 Facilities provided in the volunteering room as reported by teachers

From Figure 12, 73% of the teachers reported that the volunteer rooms were equipped with nothing. However, 9% of the teachers reported that the rooms were equipped with bookshelves, while another 9% reported that the rooms were equipped with audio and visual equipment. To another 9% of the teachers, the equipment in the room depended upon the project that was being undertaken in the volunteer work.

In an open question, the parents were asked to state the challenges they faced with the recruitment of parents for voluntary work in their respective schools. The results were collated and summarised as shown in Figure 13

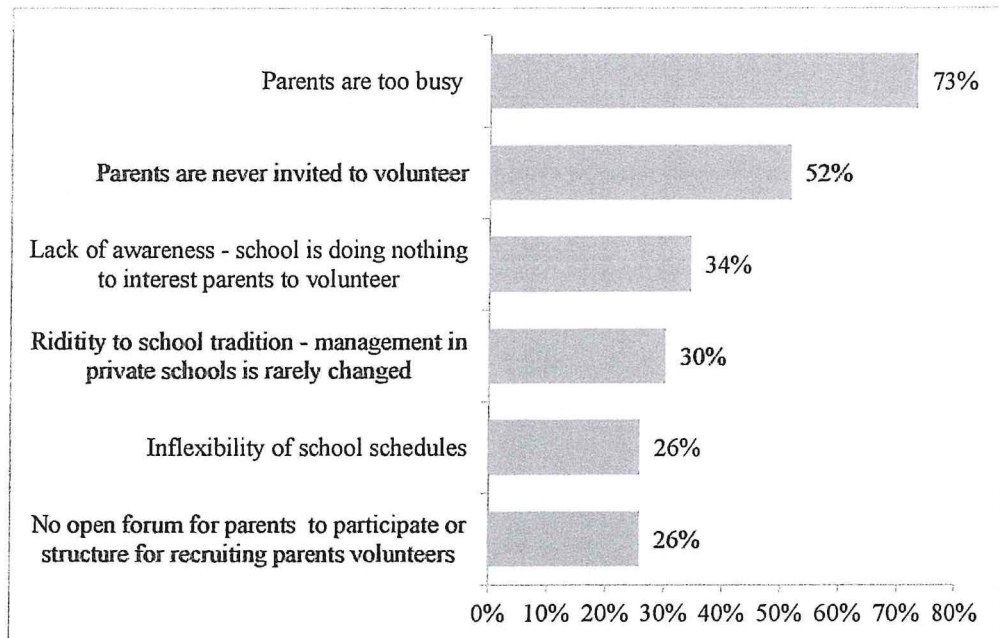


Figure 13 Challenges parents faced in relation to volunteer work in schools

Majority (73%) of the parents stated that parents were too busy to afford any time for volunteer work in schools. The school neighbourhoods in the study area comprised of middle class families where parents were too busy with work commitments for them to be able to sustain their families. As such, it was not possible for the majority of parents to participate in school activities.

According to 52% of the parent, the schools have never taken the initiative to invite parents for volunteer work. This could be attributed to the fact that majority of the schools under the study were privately owned and were therefore closely held. Additionally, parents lacked awareness on school volunteer programmes as reported by 34% of the parents and the schools were doing nothing in that regard. Rigidity was also reported as a challenge by 30% of the parents because management in private schools is rarely changed. As such there are no open forums for parents to contribute or participate as reported by 26% of the parents and school schedules remained inflexible.

#### 4.7 Monitoring of the learning process at home

The fourth objective was to determine whether schools help, parents monitor and discuss homework. To achieve this, the teachers and parents were to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a set of statements that probed family participation in the learning process. The responses of the teachers were as shown in Table 15.

Table 15: Teachers responses on parents monitoring of learning process at home

		Frequency	Percent
The school provides information on how family can participate in setting pupils goals each year	Strongly disagree	-	-
	Disagree	-	-
	Agree	4	18%
	Strongly agree	18	82%
	Total	22	100%
The school gives schedule homework that requires pupils to discuss and interact with families on what they are learning in class	Strongly disagree	-	-
	Disagree	-	-
	Agree	-	-
	Strongly agree	22	100%
	Total	22	100%
The school provides information on homework policies and how to monitor and discuss school work at home	Strongly disagree	-	-
	Disagree	-	-
	Agree	-	-
	Strongly agree	22	100%
	Total	22	100%

From the findings in Table 13, teachers stated that schools provide information on how parents could participate in setting goals for the pupils each year. This was confirmed by 18% of the teachers who agreed and a further 82% who strongly agreed. All the teachers strongly agreed that their respective schools give schedule homework where pupils are required to discuss with their parents or family. In the process, the family gets to know what the pupils are learning in class. All the teachers further stated that their respective schools provide information on homework policies and on the way, school work should be monitored and discussed at home.

The responses of the parents on the monitoring of schoolwork at home were as shown in Table 16.

Table 16: Parental Response on monitoring of the learning process at home

		Frequency	Percent
The school provides information on how family can participate in setting pupils goals each year	Strongly Disagree	-	-
	Disagree	-	-
	Not sure	-	-
	Agree	23	25
	Strongly Agree	70	75
	Total	93	100
The school gives schedule homework that requires pupils to discuss and interact with families on what they are learning in class	Strongly Disagree	-	-
	Disagree	-	-
	Not sure	-	-
	Agree	46	50
	Strongly Agree	47	50
	Total	93	100
The school provides information on homework policies and how to monitor and discuss school work at home	Strongly Disagree	-	-
	Disagree	-	-
	Not sure	-	-
	Not Sure	12	13
	Agree	34	37
	Strongly Agree	47	51
Total	93	100	

From the findings in Table 16, parents agreed that schools provided information on how families could participate in setting the goals of the pupils. This was confirmed by 25% of the parents who agreed and a further 75% who strongly agreed. Findings further show that schools also give scheduled homework that requires pupils to interact and discuss with their respective families and in the process get to demonstrate learning progress in class. This was confirmed by 50% of the parents who agreed and a further 50% who strongly agreed.

The parents further confirmed that the schools provide information on homework policies and how to monitor and discuss schoolwork at home. This was confirmed by 37% of the parents who agreed and a further 51% who strongly agreed. However, 13% of the parents were not sure.

#### **4.8 Chapter summary**

The chapter has presented the data and findings made on the parental involvement in the learning process in private primary schools in Westlands Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya. Consequently, the parental involvement in the learning processes in schools, the communication channels between schools and parents, the parental involvement in voluntary work and in the learning at home. The summary of findings, conclusion, recommendations and suggestion for further research are presented in chapter five.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter deals with the discussion of the empirical findings on parental involvement in the learning process in private primary schools in Westlands Sub County, Nairobi. The chapter starts with the discussion of the findings on the parental involvement in the learning processes in schools. The chapter then discusses the communication channels between schools and parents and thereafter the parental involvement in voluntary work within the schools. Lastly the chapter present a discussion the challenges faced by the parents in the learning process of their children.

#### **5.2 Parental involvement in creating conducive learning environment for the children at home**

The first objective of the study was to determine whether private primary schools in Westland sub-county enlightened parents on how to create a conducive environment for learning at home. It was established that parents attended varied number of workshops either on a monthly or on a termly basis. The parents were batched together for sessions that concerned a particular class. It was expected that by the end of the year, each of the parents in the school would have attended one workshop that was designed for the class his child was enrolled. Age appropriate information was provided to the parents to enable them understand their children's stage of development and consequently be in a position to support them in the learning process. The parents are coached on creating conducive learning environments for their children while at home.

According to Figure 4 majority (51%) of the parents laid their emphasis on creating conducive study spaces that were quiet and equipped with good lighting and comfortable furniture. The physical arrangement of furniture and the layout of a study room can affect the pupil's ability to study. A cramped, crowded room may feel constrained, jammed and definitely not relaxed for any learning experience. Parents ensured that they were actively involved in the supervision of learning when the children got home. Parent's supervision and provision of a good home environment enabled children to become responsible, self-confident, self-reliant persons with socially acceptable behaviour and

who are able to learn. In practice, schools can encourage parental involvement by organizing programs that offer family support to assist families with child rearing skills, health and nutrition, and giving tips for creating conditions that sustain learning at each stage.

Michieka (1983) argues that parent's involvement in pupil's work is a key factor that affects their performance. A positive association exists between parent's participation in the child's schoolwork and academic performance. Children learn better, learn more and remember more if they find pleasure in the learning experience. It is therefore important to bring about desirable change in their attitude because; when learning is associated with a pleasurable experience, it becomes a lifelong endeavour.

The results of this objective indicate that parental involvement is happening to a greater extent. However, the most likely challenge is the concept referred to as Helicopter parenting. This is a situation whereby the parent hovers over the child homework, checking what is being done every step of the way. Georgiou (2008) established that anxiety among parents exerts pressure on a child, which in turn leads to undesirable pupil achievement. On the other hand, pupils whose parents adopt an authoritative parenting style, accept, nurture, encourage, and are emotionally responsive to their children have positive achievements.

### **5.3 Communication Channels between schools and parents**

The second objective of the study was to determine the communication Channels set between schools and parents in private schools in the Sub County. It was established that 15% of the parents were invited for meetings at school once a year while 42% of the parents, who were the majority, were invited once a term. Another, 15 % of the parents were invited for four meetings in a year suggesting that they attended one meeting every term in addition to a general parents' meeting which is organised once a year. The most common mode of communication adopted by the schools included the newsletter as reported by 47% of the parents, emails (39%), text messages (39%) formal letters (38%), school calendar (13%), school circulars (13%) and parents' orientation brochures (12%). The most common method adopted by most of the schools as reported by the teachers

included emails as reported by 64% of the teachers, formal letters (36%), school circulars (13%), and text messages (39%). Other mediums used include, parents' meetings, school calendar, Phone calls, Oral messages during parade time and newsletters.

Ondogo (2011) established that head teachers adopt written, oral and nonverbal communication strategies in their internal and external communication. Memos, notice boards, posters and letters to teachers and pupils are adopted for internal communication. While, PTA reports, staff performance reports, pupil performance reports, phone calls, SMS and school magazines, were adopted for external communication. The appropriateness of the medium of communication is determined by the nature of the information.

According to Berger (1991), communication involves one-way or two-way exchanges. One-way communication occurs when teachers seek to inform parents about events, activities, or pupil progress through a variety of sources, such as an introductory letter at the beginning of the school year, classroom or school newsletters, report cards, communication books, radio announcements, school Web sites, and so on. Two-way communication involves interactive dialogue between teachers and parents. Conversations may occur during telephone calls, home visits, parent-teacher conferences, open houses, and various school-based community activities (Graham-Clay, 2005). Williams & Cartledge (1997) put forward that written communication is the most efficient and effective way of corresponding between school and home. It is a permanent product whose goal is to organize concise, accurate information that parents and teachers would read and understand.

According to Graham-Clay (2005), many teachers use daily communication books to share information with parents, particularly for children who have special learning needs. Several authors propose strategies to enhance the effectiveness of communication books (Davern, 2004) Newsletters are used to share information with a parent community and for that reason a consistent application of specific strategies can make classroom and school newsletters even more effective communication tools through adoption of same colour, quality, and paper size for all newsletters coupled with the use everyday language

(Aronson, 1995). At times, schools develop a descriptive brochure to provide helpful information for new families moving into the school community Chambers (1998).

When weekly or monthly reports of pupils' work are sent home for parents to see, they are supposed to send back their comments to the teachers. The teachers are supposed to invite the parents together with pupils to attend meetings on how to improve grades. Clear information is supposed to be given to the pupil on the way forward. This way the pupils become aware of their own progress and their requirements for them to maintain or improve in performance.

Report cards are the traditional mode of conveying permanent, written evaluative information regarding pupil progress. Report cards should be clear and easy for parents to understand. It should provide an analysis of academic development across content areas, information about pupil strengths and learning style, an assessment of the child's social development, specific goals for the pupil to work on, and associated suggestions for the parent (Aronson, 1995). Graham-Clay (2005) contends that teachers should review parental responses in a timely manner in order to determine the required follow-up. Carefully prepared report cards, coupled with parent conferences as needed, provide effective communication regarding the pupil. Teachers can considerably prevent confrontations with parents by ensuring that the report card is not the first communication tool when concerns arise. Instead, frequent progress reports, phone calls, or e-mail messages should be initiated prior to the traditional report card (Giannetti & Sagarese, 1998). Davern (2004) notes that it is important to consider when a face-to-face meeting is more appropriate than a written exchange, depending on the issue.

Naidoo (2005) argues that parents should play a more dynamic role in their children's education since teachers, pupils and the parents themselves gain from increased parental involvement for the reason that it possibly would lessen the difficulties encountered by communities in dealing with children's physical, emotional and learning needs. Lemmer (2007) concurs on parental involvement in that it could enhance educational outcomes through improved attendance, literacy, numeracy outcomes, self-esteem, social behaviour and completion rates consequently impacting on the larger communities.

According to Matindi (2013), pupils portraying loss of interest in co-curricular activities, could be going through psychological disturbance such as low self-esteem, truancy, drug abuse and restlessness. Eshiwani (2003) argues that the achievement of good grades after sitting for the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education examination is vital to reduce wastage and is a concern for every parent.

According to Epstein, (1995), the collective responsibilities for families and schools stress on coordination, teamwork, collaboration and harmonising between schools and families. They are both responsible for the socialisation of the children and therefore have to work in harmony being acquainted with their shared interest and duty in the pupils in order to setup better programmes and opportunities for the children. When teachers see pupils as children, they are likely to see the families and community as partners in the education process.

Coleman (2005) proclaims that parents' chief interest is to know their children's performance in school for they are prepared to help as much as possible. Schools should, therefore engage with parents for them to contribute actively in school-based activities. Coleman (2005) further suggests that parental involvement should be encouraged as an ongoing process; irrespective of whether there are good or bad things involved. This warrants that pupils are progressively assisted to unravel their potential. Bridgemohan, (2002) perceives that effective communication should be based on a relationship of mutual respect between teachers and parents. The purpose of the communication is to enable parents and teachers to nurture the growth and learning of respective children through sharing of information, insights and concerns.

Bridgemohan, Van Wyk and Van Staden (2005) propose that enhanced communication between school and home reinforces social networks, permits access to information, allows parents appreciate their roles and encourages them to continue their own education. Likewise, interaction with other parents facing similar difficulties is also beneficial.

According to Nistler and Angela 2000 (as cited in McNeil & Patin, 2005), the absence of forthright and supportive communication is the major setback for parent involvement., the most frequent communication between parents and schools is often from the school to parents, and usually occurs in situations where children have behavioural or learning problems.

#### **5.4 Volunteer work provided by parents in schools**

The third objective was to document the recruitment and organization of parents for voluntary work in schools in Westland Sub County. The parents reported having volunteer programmes in 75% of the schools where they volunteered for three key activities that included donations to charity, fundraising for school development and social work among the pupils in the school especially the girls. For 63% of the parents, a room was provided by the school from where they could proceed with their volunteering activities. Most of the rooms were just empty spaces equipped with nothing except a chair and a desk as confirmed by 44% of the parents. In some of the schools however, the rooms were equipped with prospectuses, audio sound equipment.

Based on the findings, it is clear that the kind of volunteering that is recommended by Epstein is not the kind that was taking place in the institutions visited by the researcher. The type of parent involvement advocated aims at recruiting and organising parental support in assisting teachers in the classroom, class trips and parties, library, cafeteria, supervising pupils' sport and cultural activities, fund raising, community events and political awareness (Monadjem, (2003); Barrera & Warner, 2006). This involves creating a school and classroom volunteer program to help the teachers, pupils and parents and setting aside a parent room or centre for volunteer work, meetings, resources and for families.

According to Bridgemohan, (2002) challenges that schools might need to deal with in recruiting the volunteers effectively include guaranteeing that all families know that their time and talents are appreciated; creating flexible programmes for volunteers, assemblies and events to make it possible for parents who come to contribute, Arranging volunteer work, providing training, matching time and talent with school, teacher, and pupils

requirements, and identifying efforts so that participants are industrious. This is critical for effective implementation of this type of parental involvement.

From the study findings, it was apparent that the only activity that parents volunteer for is fundraising. Volunteering in classroom activities was unheard of to most of them. Parent volunteers have talents that could contribute to their children's success in school. Pupils develop an awareness of many skills, talents, occupations and contributions of parents and other volunteers. They also gain skills in communicating with adults, which is important for life in society in future.

On the other hand, parents gain an understanding of the teacher's job. They are more comfortable interacting with school and carry over school activities at home. They gain confidence in their ability to work in school and with their children, or take steps for their own education. Families gain feelings of being valued and welcomed at school and they acquire specific skills during volunteer work (Epstein, 1997).

Teachers are able to involve parents in new ways, including those who do not volunteer at school. They become aware of parents' talents and interest in school and are able to provide greater individual attention to pupils, with help from the volunteers.

Ma (1999:75) indicates that the presence of the parents as volunteers in the classroom results in positive child outcomes at all levels of education. Bridgemohan (2005:1), on the other hand, observes that where parental involvement programs are established in early childhood education programs, the benefits are apparent throughout the child's school career and include higher pupil achievement, lower dropout rates and a decline in behavioural problems, academic initiative and persistence.

When recruiting the volunteers, the major problem faced is the issue of creating flexible schedules for volunteers, assemblies and events to enable parents who come to make contributions in school. Organising volunteer work, providing training, matching time and talent with school, teacher, and pupil needs, and recognising efforts so that participants are productive is also critical for effective implementation of this type of parental involvement (Bridgemohan, 2002).

### **5.5 Monitoring of the learning at home**

The fourth objective was to determine whether schools help parents monitor the learning process at home. The goal of this objective was to provide information and strategies to families on how to help pupils at home with homework and other curricular-related activities. According to Epstein (1997), homework does not just mean “work done alone, but also interactive activities shared with others at home” and the community and linking schoolwork to real life. The school provides information and ideas to families about how to help pupils at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions and planning.

It was found out that schools provided information on how families could participate in setting the goals of the pupils. Schools also give scheduled homework that requires pupils to discuss and interact with their respective families on what they are learning in class. Schools also provided information on homework policies and how to monitor and discuss schoolwork at home.

Epstein and Sheldon (2005) propose that schools device parental involvement in schools through provision of information to families on the skills desirable for pupils in each subject and class. Of key concern are strategies for handling fundamental obligations such as preparation of children for school, discussion and monitoring of schoolwork at home, reading to the child, coaching the child on specific skills, buying books, organising times for study and free time, and taking the child to the library (Monadjem, 2003; Epstein & Sheldon, 2005). These events can be initiated and coordinated by the teacher or initiated by the parent independently of the teacher. Teachers can organise regular homework schedules that require pupils to discuss and interact with parents about what they are learning in school.

The implementation of this type of involvement include designing and organising regular programmes of interactive homework that obligates pupils to discuss important things that they are learning with their parents and keeping them aware of the content of their class work. How to involve families in vital curricular decisions and coordinating family

linked homework activities from several teachers requires consideration (Epstein, et al. 2005:7).

### **5.6 Chapter summary**

The chapter has made discussions on the findings on the parental involvement in the learning process in private primary schools in Westlands Sub county of Nairobi. The conclusion, recommendations and suggestion for further research are presented in chapter six.

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the conclusion, recommendations and suggestions for further research of the study that was on parental involvement in the learning process in private primary schools in Westlands Sub County, Nairobi

#### 6.2 Conclusion

##### **6.2.1 Parental involvement in creating conducive learning environment for the children at home**

Parents in private schools in the sub county attend parental workshops where they were equipped with age appropriate information that enabled them understand their children's stage of development process in order to support them in the learning process. The parents are coached on creating conducive learning environments for their children while at home. Schools therefore can encourage parental involvement by organizing programs that offer family support to assist families with child rearing skills, health and nutrition, and giving tips for creating conditions that sustain learning at each stage.

##### **6.2.2 Communication Channels between schools and parents**

Effective communication should be based on a relationship of mutual respect between teachers and parents so that they are able to nurture the growth and learning of their children by sharing information, insights and concerns. Although parents felt welcome to talk to teachers at school whenever there was the need, the majority of the parents seldom visited schools and did not talk to the teachers frequently. Furthermore, a lack of time because of employment pressures also played a role in their failure to visit the schools. The main form of communication between teachers and parents occurred through text and email messages and written notes that usually dealt with the progress and problems pertaining to their children. Mutual and relaxed communication between parents and teachers is important so that the latter can participate actively in school-based

activities. This will help parents gain an understanding of school programmes and policies as well as the capability of monitoring their children's progress.

### **6.2.3 Volunteer work provided by parents in schools**

Parent volunteers have talents that could contribute to their children's success in school. As such, through volunteer programmes, Pupils could develop an awareness of many skills, talents, occupations from the contributions of parents and other volunteers including skills in communicating with adults, which is a life skill. Parents' volunteering in class was not implemented in any of the schools visited by the researcher. So there were no structures or plans to allow parents to volunteer in the classroom or supervise other activities during the school day. They were neither consulted nor were they allowed to give advice on decisions that involved learning at the school. This is grounded on the fact that although all the teachers were qualified, their training did not prepare them for parental involvement and therefore they give no room for parents in the class.

### **6.2.4 Monitoring of the learning at home**

Although teachers assigned homework to pupils to practise the skills taught in class, they did not use homework as a tool for parental involvement. This was because teachers were unaware of the benefits of parental involvement in homework. Schools lacked a policy on the parents' role in homework.

## **6.3 Recommendations**

From the conclusions drawn above, it is recommended that:

- i. Parental involvement workshops be organised for school managers, schoolteachers and parents in all the private schools on a regular basis. The workshops to be attended by both teachers and parents together.
- ii. Parental volunteer programmes within the private schools in the sub county be expanded beyond fundraising, charity and social work to include participation of parents in classrooms. Schools to set aside specific rooms for volunteers.

- iii. Since most teachers and parents indicated that report forms are sent termly, schools to come up with ways of updating parents on performance such that by the time the report form arrived they already knew what to expect.
- iv. The ministry of education design and develops a practical parent involvement policy and programme for parental involvement that specifies the government's perspectives, services, requirements and expectations concerning parental involvement in the schools

#### **6.4 Suggestions for Further Studies**

Based on the findings of the study further research is suggested on parental involvement in the learning process in public primary schools in the sub county.

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**APPENDICES**  
**APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS**

**Parental involvement in the learning process.**

This survey should take only 5-10 minutes to complete. Be assured that all the answers you provide will be kept in strict confidentiality. Your participation is highly appreciated.

Name of School \_\_\_\_\_

County \_\_\_\_\_

**Background Information**

*(Kindly put a tick in the box that accompanies the option of your response)*

1. Please tick off your Gender

Male [ ] Female [ ]

2. Please tick off your age bracket?

[ ] 21-30 [ ] 31-40 [ ] 41- 50yrs [ ] 51-60 [ ] over 60

3. What is your highest academic qualification?

[ ] Doctorate [ ] M. Ed [ ] B. Ed [ ] 'A' level [ ] 'O' level

4. For how long have you been in the teaching profession?

[ ] 1-5yrs [ ] 6-10yrs [ ] 11-15yrs [ ] 15-20yrs [ ] Over 20yrs

5. For how long have you been a teacher at your current station?

[ ] 1-5yrs [ ] 6-10yrs [ ] 11-15yrs [ ] 15-20yrs [ ] Over 20yrs

**How schools help families establish home environments that support children in studies.**

6. Does your school hold workshops for parents on parenting and child rearing?

[ ] Yes [ ] No

If yes, please indicate the number of workshops organized by your school that you have attended.

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Does your school offer courses or training on how parents can help pupils at home?

[ ] Yes [ ] No

If yes, please indicate the courses offered by your school.

\_\_\_\_\_

8. Does your school give suggestions on how to create home conditions that support learning for the children?

[ ] Yes [ ] No

If yes, please highlight the suggestions that your school has offered you on home conditions that support learning for the children \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Home –to-school and school-to-home communication**

9. Does your school hold a meeting with every parent regarding their child's learning progress?  
 Yes  No

If yes, how many times is such a meeting held in a year?

- once  twice  thrice  four times  five times and above.

Please indicate what is discussed in those meetings. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10. Does your school send report cards of the pupils work for review and comment  
 Yes  No

if yes please tick off the frequency of sending the report cards

- weekly  monthly  termly  annually

11. Does your school send clear information on all school policies, programs, reforms and transitions?  
 Yes  No

if yes, please indicate the mode of communication your school uses to pass this information.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Recruiting and organizing of parents for voluntary work in schools**

12. Does your school have a volunteer program to help teachers, administrators, students and other parents?  
 Yes  No

if yes, what kind of volunteer work do parents take up at your school?

\_\_\_\_\_

13. Does your school provide a parents room for those volunteering?  
 Yes  No

if yes, what other facilities is the room equipped with?

\_\_\_\_\_

**Learning at home**

14. The following questions on learning at home that can be answered with: Strongly Agree, Agree, Not sure, disagree, strongly disagree. Please tick off the right response depending on what you feel about the statement.

Statements on learning at home	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NOT SURE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
i. Our school provides information on how family can participate in setting students goals each year.					
ii. Our school gives scheduled homework that requires students to discuss and interact with families on what they are learning in class.					
iii. Our school provides information on homework policies and how to monitor and discuss school work at home.					

## APPENDIX 2: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS

### PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE LEARNING PROCESS.

This survey should take only 5-10 minutes to complete. Be assured that all the answers you provide will be kept in strict confidentiality. Your participation is highly appreciated.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_  
County \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Background Information**

*(Kindly put a tick in the box that accompanies the option of your response)*

1. Please tick off your Gender  
Male  Female
2. Please tick off your age bracket?  
 21-30       31-40       41- 50yrs       51-60       over 60
3. Please tick off your highest academic qualification?  
 KCPE       KCSE       Post-Secondary Certificate       Diploma  
 Degree  
 Masters

#### **How schools help families establish home environments that support children in studies.**

4. Does your school hold workshops on parenting and child rearing?  
 Yes       No  
If yes, please indicate the number of workshops organized by your school that you have attended.
5. Does your school offer courses or training on how parents can help pupils at home?  
 Yes       No  
If yes, please indicate the courses offered by your school. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Does your school give suggestions on how to create home conditions that support learning for the children?  
 Yes       No

If yes, please highlight the suggestions that your school has offered you on home conditions that support learning for the children \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Home –to-school and school-to-home communication**

7. Does your school hold a meeting with every parent regarding their child's learning progress?  
 Yes  No

If yes, how many times is such a meeting held in a year?

- once  twice  thrice  four times  five times and above.

Please indicate what is discussed in those meetings. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. Does your school send report cards of the pupils work for review and comment  
 Yes  No

if yes please tick off the frequency of sending the report cards

- weekly  monthly  termly  annually

9. Does your school send clear information on all school policies, programs, reforms and transitions?  
 Yes  No

if yes, please indicate the mode of communication your school uses to pass this information.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Recruiting and organizing of parents for voluntary work in schools**

10. Does your school have a volunteer program to help teachers, administrators, students and other parents?  
 Yes  No

if yes, what kind of volunteer work do parents take up at your school?

\_\_\_\_\_

11. Does your school provide a parents room for those volunteering?  
 Yes  No

**APPENDIX 3: CONSENT FORM**

**STRATHMORE UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**RESEARCH TITLE: PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE LEARNING PROCESS IN PRIVATE PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN WESTLANDS SUBCOUNTY OF NAIROBI**

**NAME OF RESEARCHER: EMMA MIRITI**

		(Please Tick Off)
1.	I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.	
2.	I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason.	
3.	I agree to take part in the above study.	

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Researcher

Date

Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX 4: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION – STATHMORE UNIVERSITY**



**Strathmore**  
UNIVERSITY

15<sup>th</sup> February 2017

To whom it may concern

**RE: REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

This is to certify that Emma Miriti (Admission N<sup>o</sup> 088920) is a Master of Science in Education Management student at Strathmore University. To complete her Master's degree, she is required to write a dissertation applying the knowledge and skills she has acquired.

Her dissertation is entitled "Parental involvement in the learning process in private primary schools in Westlands Sub-County of Nairobi".

She is also required to collect data from schools and other respondents in Westlands Sub-County.

We shall appreciate any assistance given to her.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Dimba', written over a faint circular stamp.

**Dr. Magdalene Dimba**  
**Director of Research**  
**School of Humanities and Social Sciences**

APPENDIX 5: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION



REPUBLIC OF KENYA  
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION  
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Telegrams: 'SCHOOLING', Westlands  
Telephone :  
When replying please quote  
Our Ref:

DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICE  
WESTLANDSDISTRICT  
P.O BOX 13788-00800  
NAIROBI.  
10<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2017

THE HEADTEACHERS  
PRIVATE PRIMARY SCHOOLS  
WESTLANDS SUB-COUNTY

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

The bearer of this Letter: Ms. Emma Miriti (ADM No. 088920),  
Strathmore University has been authorized to carry out research on  
*"Parental involvement in the learning process in private primary schools  
in private primary schools in Westlands Sub-County."*

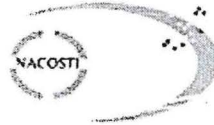
Kindly accord him the necessary assistance.

District Education Officer  
Westland - District  
P.O. Box 74629-00200, Nairobi.

*Julius Mburu Kimando*  
13/03/2017  
JULIUS MBURU KIMANDO

DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICER  
WESTLANDS

APPENDIX 6: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION – NACOSTI



NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,  
TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Telephone: 020-409 2063,  
0713 288787,07735404245  
Fax: +254-20-318245,318249  
Email: [info@nacosti.go.ke](mailto:info@nacosti.go.ke)  
Website: [www.nacosti.go.ke](http://www.nacosti.go.ke)  
When replying please quote

NACOSTI, Upper Kabete  
Off Wanyuki Way  
P.O. Box 30423-00100  
NAIROBI-KENYA

Ref No: **NACOSTI/P/18/95410/20663**

Date: **31<sup>st</sup> January, 2018**

Emma Kariko Miriti  
Strathmore University  
P.O. Box 59857-00200  
NAIROBI.

**RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION**

Following your application for authority to carry out research on "*Parental involvement in the learning process in private primary schools in Westlands Primary School*" I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Nairobi County** for the period ending **31<sup>st</sup> January, 2019**.

You are advised to report to the **County Commissioner and the County Director of Education, Nairobi County** before embarking on the research project.

Kindly note that, as an applicant who has been licensed under the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 to conduct research in Kenya, you shall deposit a **copy** of the final research report to the Commission within **one year** of completion. The soft copy of the same should be submitted through the Online Research Information System

  
GODFREY P. KALERWA MSc., MBA, MKIM  
FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO

Copy to:  
The County Commissioner  
Nairobi County.

The County Director of Education  
Nairobi County.

**APPENDIX 7: RESEARCH PERMIT**


**THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:**  
**MS. EMMA KARIKO MIRITI**  
of **STRATHMORE UNIVERSITY,**  
**48328-100 NAIROBI,** has been permitted  
to conduct research in *Nairobi County*

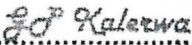
Permit No : **NACOSTI/P/18/95410/20663**  
Date Of Issue : **31st January,2018**  
Fee Recieved : **Ksh 1000**

on the topic: **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT  
IN THE LEARNING PROCESS IN PRIVATE  
PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN WESTLANDS  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

for the period ending:  
**31st January,2019**



  
.....  
**Applicant's  
Signature**

  
.....  
**Director General  
National Commission for Science,  
Technology & Innovation**

## APPENDIX 8: ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

RHImO Ethics - - 1 of 1

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### Completion of Online Research Ethics Review Submission

You have successfully submitted your application for ethics review "Parental involvement in the learning process in private primary schools in west lands sub county of Nairobi"

Certificate awarded to: Mrs MIRITI, EMMA

Reference number: SU-IERC0454/19

Date and Time: 2019-05-05 17:28:31

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